

The CoPLACo Project: Creating a Multi-use, Digital Platform of Oral Language for the Comorian Islands

This poster will present an ongoing project, CoPLACo (Corpus of Linguistic Heritage of the Comorian Archipelago), which aims to create a multi-use digital platform of oral language for research, teaching and archival purposes. The inhabitants of the Comorian islands, situated between Mozambique and Madagascar, speak a variety of Shikomori. A mainly oral language, little documentation exists on dialectal variation and few linguistic archives are available for Shikomori. The CoPLACo proposes to be an open site where researchers, educators and community members can go to access a variety of oral language observed in the archipelago.

Through inter-island collaboration using the CoPLACo, community members can better understand their language, manage their heritage archives and reflect upon language planning and teaching issues. Given the oral preference of this language, the corpus also entails transcription of the archive through a unified orthographic system, which has yet to be seen. Finally, the corpus will encourage linguists to conduct various types of research on the language, including issues related to phonology, morphology and syntax.

This poster will present the background of the project while elaborating on data collection and field methods, including types of oral data to be gathered and solicitation methods. In addition, the poster will discuss the structure of the corpus, including the interface, creation of an app, and the various components of the website, such as sections on teacher resources, transcription practices, and field methods. Future collaborations with community members through workshops will also be discussed.