An online collaborative framework for orthography system development

Sook-Kuan Chin[1], Alvin W. Yeo[2], Nadianatra Musa[3]

[1]Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
Sarawak, Malaysia.

[2]Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
Sarawak, Malaysia

[3]Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
Sarawak, Malaysia.

Abstract

This paper describes a collaborative project for orthography system development involving the Daro community and linguists. We proposed a new model which integrated with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to simplify the orthography system development. Besides, collaborative work also introduced for expanding the relationship between the linguists and community in orthography system development. Currently, our project focuses on Daro community, but we anticipate that this project will extend to other indigenous communities in Sarawak as well.

This study investigates how community able to contribute their efforts in orthography system development. Hence, Daro community required to use the online platform to upload data. Their response towards the online platform was observed.

Keywords: Orthography system development, collaborative work

1. Introduction

Many endangered languages in Sarawak, Malaysia are not written yet. Thus, the endangered languages need to be written down to provide a standard spelling guide for the community. Orthography system is the initial step to write down the endangered languages. An orthography system is a writing system with respect to a set of symbols and writing rules [1]. However, orthography development largely difficult as it requires many costs and time from linguists. Thus, a new method was proposed to solve the current situation. The new method is applied together with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide an online workspace for linguists and community to conduct the orthography system development collaboratively. One of the most developed cases of the use of the Internet to preserve and strengthen an indigenous language has occurred in Hawai'i [2].Since ICTs is an important tool to preserve the indigenous languages, thus we applied it in orthography system development to improve on the manual method.

In this study, Melanau Matu-Daro language was chosen as the development of orthography system for this language does not exist yet. Melanau Matu-Daro is a language spoken in Matu River from North Channel of Rejang River to the sea, Daro and Matu areas [3].This study is located at Daro, Sarawak.

Melanau Matu-Daro is mostly used within the community, mainly at home or some community activities. They are able to converse with their family members or relatives but not familiar in writing.

Furthermore, so far this language does not have standard orthography. Words are pronounced and spelled based on individual's background and preferences. Based on the criteria of this language, this language had been identified as a suitable case study language to be used in this project.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine that the community can contribute towards orthography system development.

This paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the project framework. In Section 3 we explained the process to implement the online platform. After this, Section 4