

7.4.5.2. MISSIONARY LINGUE FRANCHE: KÂTE

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7.4.5.2.1. INTRODUCTION

The Kâte language spreads out from the 'Sattelberg' area in the mountains to the north-west of Finschhafen on the Huon Peninsula. The approximately 600 inhabitants of eight villages were the original speakers of the so-called 'Wemo' dialect which was to become the most widespread of the Lutheran Church lingue franche in New Guinea.

7.4.5.2.2. STRUCTURE OF KÂTE

Kâte is a non-Austronesian, i.e. Papuan type language, and, like most Papuan languages, shows relatively complex phonological and morphological features.

7.4.5.2.2.1. PHONEMES

The phonemes of Kâte are the following:

7.4.5.2.2.1.1. Consonants

- /p/ voiceless bilabial unaspirated stop
- /^kp/ voiceless bilabial-velar unaspirated stop
- /t/ voiceless alveolar unaspirated stop
- /k/ voiceless velar unaspirated stop
- /ʔ/ voiceless glottal stop
- /b/ voiced bilabial stop
- /^gb/ voiced bilabial-velar stop
- /d/ voiced alveolar stop
- /g/ voiced velar stop

/f/	voiceless labiodental fricative
/v/	voiced labiodental fricative
/h/	voiceless glottal fricative
/ts/	voiceless alveolar homorganic affricate
/dz/	voiced alveolar homorganic affricate
/s/	voiced alveolar grooved fricative
/m/	voiced bilabial nasal
/n/	voiced alveolar nasal
/ŋ/	voiced velar nasal
/r/	voiceless one-flap alveolar vibrant
/y/	voiced alveopalatal continuant

For the practical alphabet, p, t, k, b, d, g, f, h, s, m, n, ŋ, have been in use for the respective phonemes; q has been used for the voiceless double stop, and the special character q was introduced for its voiced counterpart; c has been used for the glottal stop which was originally not interpreted as a consonant; w has been used for the voiced labiodental fricative; z and ʒ for the voiceless and for the voiced alveolar affricate; /r/ was originally represented by ɹ, which was changed to r in the 1950s; j has been in use for /y/.

7.4.5.2.2.1.2. Vowels

/i/	high close unrounded front vowel
/ɛ/	mid open unrounded front vowel
/a/	low open unrounded central vowel
/u/	high close rounded back vowel
/o/	mid close rounded back vowel
/ɔ/	low open rounded back vowel

For the practical alphabet, i, a, u, and o have been used for the respective phonemes, e has been used for /ɛ/, and â for /ɔ/.

7.4.5.2.2.1.3. Suprasegmentals and Syllable Structure

Vowel length is not distinctive. The first syllable of a word always carries the heaviest stress. The language is non-tonal. There are mainly open syllables, only /ŋ/ and /ʔ/ may occur in syllable-final positions. Prenasalisation may occur with all voiced stops, the voiced affricate, and /k/.

7.4.5.2.2.2. MORPHOLOGY

7.4.5.2.2.2.1. Nouns

With the noun, things and live beings are differentiated. There are ten suffixes which may occur with nouns. Six of them express the following: subject, destination or possession, instrument, presence or company, temporary absence, permanent absence. The instrument suffix may occur only with things, not with live beings. The other four are local suffixes, answering the questions: where or where to? where from? in which direction? from which direction? With things, these locative suffixes are merely attached to the noun, with live beings, the destination suffix is inserted in between the noun and the locative suffix.

The traditional grammar of the Lutheran missionaries treats the noun suffixes as case morphemes of the following cases: Nominativ agentis, Destinativ, Instrumentalis, Komitativ, Karitativ I, Karitativ II, Adlativ, Delativ, Adversiv, Deversiv. If a noun occurs in another but subject position, it is used without a suffix, and that case is named Casus indifferens. Possession with nouns is expressed by possessive suffixes. There are nine grammatical persons, and one possessive suffix for each of them. Possession may also be expressed by personal pronouns with the destination suffix which precede the noun.

7.4.5.2.2.2.2. Verbs

There are five indicative tenses in Kâte: Present, Past I (immediate past: actions dating back one day only), Past II (distant past: actions dating back two days or more), Future I and Future II, the latter being nowadays used exclusively for the eschatology. Besides the Indicatives, there are two irreal forms (called 'tenses'), Imaginative I (Past) and Imaginative II (Future), describing conditional actions, and actions which might happen. There are also two Imperatives, present and future, and two durative tenses (past and present) denoting actions which customarily or routinely take place. Tense and subject are marked by suffixes to the verb stem. One feature of verb structure which Kâte shares with other Papuan-type languages is secondary verb forms which occur sentence-medially, and do not indicate tenses and, if the subject remains the same in subsequent clauses, not even the subject, but only sequence, simultaneousness, or duration of several actions described in one sentence. The tense (and often also the subject) of these sentence-medial verb forms is determined only by the sentence-final primary verb.

The two verbs '*to give*' and '*to hit*' have separate forms for each of the nine grammatical persons which may be the (direct or indirect) object of an action. These two verbs are suffixed to the stems of the transitive verbs to denote the object.

7.4.5.2.2.2.3. Other Words

7.4.5.2.2.2.3.1. *Adjectives*

There are not many primary adjectives. Most adjectives are derived from nouns or verb stems by either reduplication of the first syllable, or the suffix *-ne*, or both.

7.4.5.2.2.2.3.2. *Number Words*

There are only two basic number words, '*one*' and '*two*'. '*Five*' is '*one hand*', '*ten*' is '*two hands*', '*fifteen*' is '*two hands and one foot*'. The figures in between are expressed by sums of hands and feet, and the two basic words which are, when counting, represented by fingers and toes. The figure '*twenty*' is expressed by '*one whole man*' (i.e. all his fingers and toes).

7.4.5.2.2.2.3.3. *Pronouns*

There are three persons and three numbers, i.e. nine grammatical persons, three each in singular, dual, and plural. The first persons dual and plural have inclusive and exclusive forms, thus bringing the number of personal pronouns to 11. (The distinction between inclusive and exclusive forms in the first person non-singular is not found with the possessive suffixes and the subject markers with the verb.) The pronouns are treated like nouns, i.e. all suffixes occurring with nouns, except the instrument suffix, may also occur with the pronouns. The pronouns have the same locative suffixes as the live beings.

7.4.5.2.2.3. SYNTAX

The usual word order in a clause is Subject-Object-Predicate. There are no principal and subordinate clauses in a sentence, but non-final clauses in a sentence depend on the final clause with regard to the tense and quite often the subject of this verb, since in the sentence-medial clauses mainly the secondary (sentence-medial) verb forms (see 7.4.5.2.2.2.2. above) are used. Any clause can assume the function of a subordinate clause (temporal, conditional, final, causal, etc.) by the destination suffix or the local suffix being suffixed to a primary

verb form. The negation word is *mi*, and always precedes the predicate. Questions are indicated either by intonation (rising, and sudden fall at the end of the clause) only, or by that same intonation followed by the interrogation word *me* (high pitch). There are many interjections expressing emotions.

7.4.5.2.3. KÂTE AS A LINGUA FRANCA

7.4.5.2.3.1. HOW KÂTE BECAME A LINGUA FRANCA

After the Lutheran missionaries in the Finschhafen area had been working mainly at the coast for six years, they proceeded, in 1892, with their work inland, up into the mountains, and established a mission station on a mountain called Qeraharuc by the people, and named Sattelberg by the German administration, because of its shape. Kâte was the first Papuan language the Lutherans encountered. The missionaries J. Flierl, and then especially C. Keysser and G. Pilhofer, both aided by Dr Dempwolff of Hamburg University, were engaged in Kâte language research.

Sattelberg became the centre for far-reaching missionary activities. From 1908 on, the Kâte congregation sent mission workers from their villages to the Hube and Dedua tribes further inland. At that time, the Kâte language had already a special status as a 'written' language, so that not only school work in those areas was started in Kâte, but also the adults wanted to learn it, and wanted it as medium of baptismal instruction for themselves. Later on, it spread with Lutheran mission work to practically all inland areas of the Huon Peninsula so that the Lutheran Mission in Finschhafen decided that it should be the school and church lingua franca for all people speaking Papuan languages.

7.4.5.2.3.2. THE USE OF KÂTE AS A LINGUA FRANCA

As soon as the missionaries had a working knowledge of the language and had used it for school work, they produced the literature needed for the schools, especially a reader and Bible stories. As early as 1902, Keysser compiled a grammar which was not published. In 1925 Keysser published a Kâte-German-English dictionary, and in 1933 Pilhofer published a grammar.

In 1910 Pilhofer started to train Kâte teachers and evangelists, and established a formal training school at Heldsbach, Finschhafen, in 1914. A four-year village school programme was inaugurated, followed by two years of 'middle school'. All school materials and the syllabi for

the teachers were produced in Kâte, mainly by Pilhofer. The school books brought religious as well as secular knowledge to the pupils.

Besides the school textbooks, a considerable amount of other, mainly religious, literature was produced. A Hymnal was compiled which contained Christian hymns that had been composed over the years. In 1939, the New Testament, translated by Pilhofer, appeared in print. After World War II, parts of the Old Testament were translated, and commentaries to Biblical books were written. A monthly newspaper was published which, besides congregational and devotional materials, also offered general news to the people.

After Kâte had spread, through missionary activities and school work, through the entire Huon Peninsula, it was, as from the 1930s, introduced into the Central Highlands as far as the Hagen area, and it remained the school language of the Lutheran Church in the Highlands up until 1960, in some areas even longer. The legislation of the Australian Administration at the end of the 1950s concerning school policy and church *lingue franche* which discouraged the use of church *lingue franche* for educational purposes was a severe blow for all Lutheran schools. The result was a breakdown of the Church's school system in many areas, because English was unknown to the teachers, and there was no school material which could have been substituted for their Kâte textbooks and syllabi. In some areas however, the Kâte schools survived and were conducted secretly with or without the knowledge of the Australian Education Officers. The missionaries were divided on the issue: should they be obedient to the Administration, or rather disobey and continue with the Kâte schools? The Australian language and school policy terminated the further expansion of Kâte at least in the Central Highlands.

7.4.5.2.3.3. THE PRESENT SITUATION

The estimated number of people who have an active knowledge of Kâte is nowadays given as 75,000; the number of people with a passive knowledge may be approximately 40,000. Kâte is being used extensively in the services, i.e. for the liturgy, and for preaching, in the Papuan Lutheran congregations of the Huon-Finisterre area and the Finschhafen-Lae-Morobe area. A new training centre for Kâte teachers has been established at Heldsbach, and in the areas mentioned, village schools are again being conducted in Kâte.

In Bible schools and in pastors' training, Kâte is being used as the medium of instruction side by side with Pidgin. The translation of the Old Testament into Kâte is under way.

In the Central Highlands, Kâte has vanished from the village schools except in a few places, and has been replaced by Pidgin and/or local vernaculars. There is still some limited use of Kâte in some training institutions for church workers in the Central Highlands.

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