

Status planning parameters for the languages of the Guéra region of Chad

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In the Guéra region of Chad, approximately 25 languages are spoken. Most of them are Chadic, but there are also a number of Nilo-Saharan and Boua languages. The language of wider communication is Chadian Arabic, a semitic language.

This paper gives an overview of some sociolinguistic factors that influence the status planning parameters for the languages in the Guéra region. It examines in particular (1)linguistic relationships, (2) social relationships (3)the intergenerational transmission of L1, (4) the role of languages in the ethnic identity, (5) the transmission of Chadian Arabic and French (6) the official diversity policy (7) local institutional support and (8) beneficial L2 literature. It then goes on to propose possible outcomes for the status planning parameters (1)coordination of language development projects, (2) languages relevant for identity, (3) languages for the oral transmission of knowledge and (4) languages for the written transmission of knowledge

The findings and propositions are mainly based on discussions with language committee members during a participatory workshop held in the Guéra region in September 2008. Secondly they draw on information from SIL sociolinguistic surveys, the linguistic literature and personal communications.

Finally the paper describes the challenges in evaluating the sociolinguistic factors in a participatory approach and presents open questions.