

Evaluation of Asociación Oxlajuuj Keej Maya Ajtziib – OKMA Linguistic Research

Final Evaluation

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Roberto Zavala (CIAS researcher), Thomas Smith-Stark (COLMEX researcher)

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OKMA
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Final Report
English Version

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0. Introduction

The Royal Embassy of Norway in Guatemala requested from Roberto Zavala, a CIESAS researcher, and from Thomas Smith-Stark, a researcher from COLMEX, (both are Mexican institutions), to perform an evaluation on OKMA (GTM 0044) and on the current situation of the linguistic documentation of Maya languages in Guatemala. This evaluation began in August 2006. The goals of said evaluation were [to determine OKMA's] academic performance and the quality of the products delivered during the cooperation period, and in particular, to evaluate the cooperation program implemented with Norwegian funds between 2003 and 2006.

The following evaluation was based on a review of OKMA's scientific production, on the interviews held with the different players involved in education and linguistics in Guatemala, and on interviews made to OKMA staff (executive director and researchers), and collaborators in former projects. Interviews were also carried out with players that have collaborated with OKMA as educators and as colleagues in several research projects. The documentary investigation and the interviews were carried out in Guatemala. Roberto Zavala worked in Guatemala for two weeks and Thomas Smith-Stark was there for a week. The institutions that were interviewed were OKMA, *Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala* (Guatemalan Academy of Maya Languages), Rafael Landívar University, *Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe e Intercultural* (General Directorate for Bilingual and Intercultural Education), *Editorial Cholsamaj*, and the Ministry of Education.

In sum, it was determined that the research carried out with Norwegian funds produced excellent results in terms of strictly academic products as well as products for applied linguistics. In a very significant manner these funds made possible the creation of a group formed by expert linguists on Maya languages in Guatemala, who in turn have trained other experts that are currently working at different institutions responsible for planning education in Maya languages in the country. We have compared the team's results with the scientific production of other institutions and have determined that the research team is in fact

very solid. We therefore recommend that NORAD continue supporting this organization and that it require said organization to adopt the recommendations outlined in the conclusions.

1. Scientific quality of the linguistic production and academic skills of OKMA's research team

This section is divided in two parts: a) the comments of the players interviewed from the different institutions, and b) our own evaluation on the linguistic work produced by OKMA, based on our knowledge of the production of Maya linguistics, both at national and international level.

Of the players interviewed, the only person who did not know the OKMA team was a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. This institution has no longer been a significant participant in the production of pedagogical materials or publications on Guatemalan languages since the eighties. For this reason, the SIL's unawareness of OKMA was not deemed relevant.

All of the consulted players acknowledged the excellent quality of the investigations carried out by OKMA and its staff in the areas of descriptive grammars, the production of pedagogical grammars, proposals for standardization, dialectal variation textbooks, and redaction handbooks. They all agreed that OKMA's investigative team was the most qualified in Guatemala to undertake the study of Maya languages. The research team's degree of capability is also reflected in the number of Guatemalan institutions that are currently developing studies, standardization proposals, or pedagogical materials related to Maya languages. These institutions have hired OKMA's services, or the services of members trained by OKMA, to prepare teachers or professionals responsible for producing pedagogical materials. For instance, OKMA staff was hired by DIGEBI and the Ministry of Education in 2001 to produce materials intended for the training of 9000 teachers in the reading and writing of Maya languages. The same materials were later used by PRODESA and DIGEBI to train an additional 2000 teachers. Furthermore, several members that were trained at OKMA are, or have been, instructors at the Guatemalan Academy of Maya Languages, or have been active members of the Academy's diverse linguistic communities responsible for the

production of descriptive materials, grammars and dictionaries. Several OKMA members have imparted courses on linguistics—not only within the institution—but also at the *Universidad Rafael Landívar*, where they utilize the books produced by OKMA for subjects related with the teaching of descriptive linguistics. To conclude, members trained by OKMA are part of the research team or advisors of the Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project, or team members for agencies like USAID, GTZ and the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation.

The evaluation team completely agrees with the opinions of the players interviewed. The quality of the linguistic production and the skills of the OKMA research team is very high at national and international levels. Ninety-one works on diverse subjects have been completed since 1993; some have already been published. Academically speaking, the team's most mature work began to appear after 1997, with the publication of five reference grammars. These series of grammars (Mam, Tz'utujil, Kaqchikel, K'ichee' and Poqom), published by *Editorial Cholsamaj*, represent a notorious advance in the study of the Maya languages of Guatemala¹. Undoubtedly, these are the most complete grammars that have ever been produced and published in Spanish for those languages. Their more than 450 pages incorporate the knowledge that was generated by a group of researchers for over two decades, under the leadership of Dr. Nora England as project advisor. These textbooks delve into diverse grammatical areas that had not been explored before in some of these languages. The most noteworthy contributions of these works are: a) the clarity with which they were written, b) the common theoretical and descriptive framework that allows a comparison among the diverse languages of two different related branches (the Mamean and the K'ichean), c) the profound knowledge of subject matter that had previously been investigated by other experts, and that had not been worked in several of these languages, and d) the extent of the description, which includes the study of phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax. Although none of the members who produced those grammars had a Masters or a PhD at that time, these books reflect their strong academic background in all of the subject matter covered. Conversations were held with several of the authors (some are presently members of OKMA and others belong to other institutions) regarding the different

¹ The names of Maya languages are written as they appear in the titles of the pieces reviewed. The names of the languages are transcribed with capital letters, in the same manner as the name of the linguistic family.

areas of knowledge in the different languages, and it was clear that the members that have belonged to the research team, as well as OKMA's current researchers, have a strong knowledge of the phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax of their own languages and of the other Maya languages that they have studied and do not speak. All the members interviewed also know in detail several historical aspects of the linguistic family branch in which they work; in addition, they are also knowledgeable on all of the historical aspects of the linguistic families. An aspect that draws one's attention in a positive manner was the way in which the group of investigators approaches the new subjects of investigation and projects that they have developed. This topic will be discussed in detail later on. To conclude, the collection of grammars published in 1997 are the best grammars of the Maya languages produced in Spanish. These reflect the team's capability to carry out original, systematic and fully supported analysis, and their profound overall knowledge of linguistics; specifically, of Maya linguistics. Other grammars of Maya languages published in Spanish in Guatemala whose authors were not trained or supervised by OKMA do not have the depth, the extent, nor the academic development of those produced by OKMA. Therefore, even though there already exist grammars in Spanish of other Maya languages of Guatemala, other than those published by OKMA or that are in the process of being published, we recommend that the standard to follow should be the grammars published in 1997, 2003, and the ones recently produced with financing from NORAD and the Endangered Language Documentation Project, ELDP.

The second group of products that were evaluated were the six textbooks on dialectal variation (K'ichee', Kaqchikel, Mam, Q'anjob'al, Popti', and Poqom). All six books were written with funding from NORAD and published by *Editorial Cholsamaj* in 2000. For the production of these textbooks, OKMA trained the team that developed the dialectal research. This training took nine months, after which the new teams of researchers—trained in both general linguistics and Maya linguistics—prepared grammatical outlines of the languages they speak. These outlines include grammars for the Q'eqchi', Q'anjob'al, Kaqchikel, K'ichee' and Poqom languages and have not yet been published. The six textbooks on dialectal variation that were published exceeded the expectations raised by their titles. More than just a description of the dialectal differences of each language, these books

are comparative grammars of the most distinctive differences between these languages. These works demonstrate an achievement never obtained before in the field of Maya linguistics, and probably in any other family of Amerindian languages. These books demonstrate a careful work of the dialectal differences, particularly in the phonological, morphological and syntactical aspects of each language. In addition, these books include a comparative lexicon that is very useful—not only to those that study the comparative grammars of Maya languages—but also to attempt the standardization of such languages, a task that was approached in subsequent works by OKMA members. The six books on dialectal variation (and the report that has not been published regarding Q'eqchi') have a common structure that will probably be used as a standard for similar investigations into other Mesoamerican linguistic families. This is considered one of the most relevant achievements of the OKMA research team. In the introduction of these books, the authors informed that databases had to be prepared that include texts that have not been published. These text materials and the rest of the database are important components for the documentation of these languages, and it is recommended that in the near future these texts and database be published either in printing or in digital format with translation; and if possible, with morphological gloss. This material can be an important data source for the documentation of major and minor Maya languages spoken in Guatemala. Another recommendation is that the report on dialectal variation in Q'eqchi' be reviewed and published as soon as possible.

The third group of works reviewed corresponds to the Standardization Proposals for the Q'anjob'al, K'iche', Kaqchikel, Popti', Mam, Poqomam, and Poqomchi' languages, followed by their standard grammars. The development of these works relied on the financial support of NORAD. These unpublished works follow a series of specific criteria for language standardization and unification based on a profound study of historical linguistics and dialectal research. Standard grammars were written with the purpose of being distributed among writers, educators, students, linguists and other scholars that are currently discussing the possibility of standardizing the Maya languages. To solve the problem of distributing educational materials in the different Guatemalan languages, it is necessary to standardize the linguistics and stop the "*localist*" attitudes that are obstructing the acceptance of the materials produced in specific dialects. From OKMA's perspective, standardizing the languages will contribute

toward strengthening them in the long term. The standard proposals and the standard grammars follow patterns for selection of forms and structures founded on the diachronic study of the languages and a deep knowledge of the dialectal differences. These criteria for standardization are appropriate given that they are linguistically based. These works deserve to be disseminated and should be published or distributed electronically. This would allow determining the extent of these proposals in teaching and unifying Maya languages.

As part of the 1993 and 1994 results, four studies on the derivation of words for the Poqom, Tz'utujil, K'ichee' and Kaqchikel languages were completed. Similar studies on the Popti', Poqomchi', and Q'anjob'al languages were completed in 2002 as well as a review of the investigations undertaken on the first four languages studied. These descriptive works include a study of the distinctive morphology of these languages, which is used in the creation of new terms. The works are comprehensive and are carefully written. They demonstrate the profound knowledge of the authors on the morphosyntax of Maya languages; not only on the specific languages, but also of the overall family. With exception of the study on Tz'utujil published in 1998 by the Tz'utujil Linguistic Community in coordination with *Editorial Chosamaj*, none of the studies done regarding the other languages have been published. We consider these studies to be the scientific base that should be consulted by all the interested parties at different Guatemalan institutions that work in the construction of new terms or neologisms. Again, it is recommended that these works be published and disseminated either in writing or in electronic format.

The studies developed for the standardization proposals of the aforementioned seven languages allowed the research team to approach the production of eight standard pedagogical grammars for Mam, Achi, Q'eqchi', K'iche', Q'anjob'al, Kaqchikel, Poqomchi', and Poqomam (seven of them published in 2004 by OKMA, the Ministry of Education and DIGEBI, and one published by the Poqomchi' Linguistic Community and OKMA). Within the same series, and in process of being published, are the standard pedagogical grammars of the Popti' and Tz'utujil languages by the *Universidad Rafael Landívar*. The purpose of these grammars was on the one hand, to promote a standard form of writing the languages, and on the other, to promote the teaching of the grammars of these languages among the students

and writers that are already literate in the Maya languages. These grammars illustrate in a very didactic manner the fundamental grammatical subjects of the Maya languages, and represent a great contribution for the diffusion of this knowledge among non-specialists (speakers and non-speakers of Maya languages). These grammars were developed with great professionalism and reflect a profound knowledge of the morphosyntactical features of these languages. Without doubt these are the best pedagogical grammars that have been produced on Maya languages, and the only proposals on standard pedagogical grammars for Mesoamerican languages.

In 2001, the OKMA team was hired by the Ministry of Education and DIGEBI to prepare reading and writing guidebooks for twelve Maya languages: Popti', Q'anjob'al, Tz'utujil, Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi', K'iche', Ixil, Chuj, Poqomam, Achi, Poqomchi', and Mam. These guidebooks were used to train between 6000 and 9000 teachers under the supervision of DIGEBI and the Ministry of Education. According to the players interviewed who were involved with the training, the materials had great acceptance during the training and learning process, and all of them emphasized that the process was a great success. In addition to the first edition, the materials were reprinted for training another 2000 teachers under the supervision of DIGEBI and PRODESA (Santiago Development Project).

In 2001, *Editorial Chosamaj* published a single author book by OKMA consultant Dr. Nora England under the same title, *Introducción a la Gramática de los Idiomas Mayas* (An introduction to the grammar of Maya languages). This book is a different version of another book published by the same author, *Introducción a la Lingüística: Idiomas Mayas* (An introduction to linguistics: Maya languages), which was printed for the first time in 1990 with subsequent editions in 1996 and 1999. The book *Introducción a la Gramática de los Idiomas Mayas* explains the main grammatical patterns of these languages and spans the review of voice techniques to the grammar of simple and complex sentences. It also discusses some of the theoretical aspects on which the division of Maya languages is based in a simple manner for non-specialized audiences. The book is a very important and unique contribution in Spanish for teaching Maya linguistics and an introduction to the grammatical study of these languages. Works of this nature have not been produced for any other language family in

Mesoamerica; therefore, it represents a fundamental contribution, not only within the field of Maya linguistics, but also within Mesoamerican linguistics.

A study begun in 1991 with the purpose of creating a database of comparative vocabularies of Maya languages in Guatemala, was reactivated in 2001 and finally published as a book in 2003 with the title *Maya' Choltzij. Vocabulario Comparativo de los Idiomas Mayas de Guatemala* by Editorial Chosamaj with funding from Adesa. This work includes a study of 1529 terms in 20 Maya Languages of Guatemala that are transcribed using both the phonetic alphabet and the official alphabet to write the Maya languages of Guatemala. The vocabulary also includes a translation into Spanish and English of all the terms. This book is a useful reference for those interested in the history of Maya languages [as well as] theoretical and historical linguists, since its material is organized in such a manner that it allows the simultaneous lexical consultation of all the Maya languages of Guatemala. This volume is also an important contribution by the OKMA team toward Maya linguistics in general.

The last products to be evaluated were the trilogy of text collections, dictionaries and descriptive grammars of four Maya languages and standard dictionaries for Kaqchikel and Mam. These products are part of the two research projects on which the OKMA team has worked during the past three years. Funding for the Uspanteko and Sakapulteko study was received from the ELP (Endangered Languages Documentation Project) managed by SOAS at London University. Financing for the study of Tektiteko, Awakateko, Mam and Kaqchikel was received from NORAD. These projects are unique in their class for many reasons. First, the fact that OKMA researchers began to work on languages they did not speak (this is the case for Sakapulteko, Uspanteko, Tektiteko and Awakateko). The research teams were integrated by a chief researcher (a linguist that did not speak the language under study) and by a group of speakers of the referred languages that were trained by the researchers so they could become part of the research team as text compilers, transcribers and analysts of their languages, for both the creation of dictionaries and grammatical analysis. The second relevant achievement of the projects was that OKMA trained the speakers of these languages on the different tasks of linguistic analysis. It is almost certain that the

speakers of the researched languages, trained in the task of documentation, will become leaders that will promote further work on these four languages that had received little attention in the past. The research processes of the different languages had the support of a great number of people belonging to those linguistic communities. For instance, during the Tektiteko documentation, additionally to the two researchers, it was possible to collect texts from 69 speakers of this language. The project's third achievement was the outcome produced in a very short period of time (only three years). The product presented as part of the final report consisted of a grammar, texts and a dictionary for each one of the languages under investigation. We will offer some comments on the quality of each of the products. The new series of grammars incorporates all the knowledge and experience accumulated by OKMA researchers for over a decade. Each chapter presents a descriptive framework and very complete sections about each relevant aspect of the section. Several of the features that are present in these grammars are of great interest, not only to the scholars of Maya languages, but also for typologists who study the structural characteristics in the languages of different linguistic families, and specialists in Mesoamerican languages. The team's decision to orthographically represent the languages follows the guidelines established by the Academy of Maya Languages, despite the fact that the authors do not agree with some of those decisions. It was decided to represent the long vowels on a third line, which generally does not appear in current reference grammars. Among the new topics that are included in these grammars are:

1. The "*Mayanization*" of the consonants
2. A discussion of proper nouns and last names, plus toponyms
3. Different types of noun derivations
4. Discussion of types of words according to their phonological, morphological, and syntactical characteristics
5. Different types of derivations for all types of words
6. A section for genitive and personal classifiers in Tektiteko
7. Comprehensive classification of verbs,
8. Comprehensive classification of positionals
9. The discussion on the diverse aspects of syntax is one of the most complex that has been published in the reference grammars for Maya languages

10. The section on movement verbs is one of the most comprehensive that has been published to date in reference grammars
11. The study of complex sentences includes a section on secondary predication that has never appeared before in the grammars of Maya languages
12. The chapter on speech is very interesting and not usually found in reference grammars

These grammars will be a point of reference for any other grammar produced in the future regarding Maya languages. These works could be considered as the equivalent of the best doctoral theses that have been produced on these languages. In order to reach these conclusions, the referred grammars were compared with the grammars that have previously been produced on these same languages. For instance, in the case of Tektiteko, Paul Stevenson, a researcher at the SIL, published a 163-page grammatical outline in 1987 that—until 2003, the year in which the OKMA Project began—was the most complete study on this language (*Stevenson, Paul, 1987. Bosquejo Gramatical del idioma Tektiteco, Guatemala: ILV de Centroamérica*). Academically speaking, Stevenson's work is among the most complete grammars of Maya languages produced by SIL members. However, this work does not have the scope nor the depth produced under the project financed by NORAD. Stevenson's grammar does not cover all the topics, it does not include prominent information for the Tektiteko such as the genitive classifiers, nor does it make a formally-based distinction between the different types of roots. Its grammatical analysis is too schematic and it does not emphasize the knowledge that exists for other Maya languages of the Mam branch to explain the characteristics of the Tektiteko grammar. Regarding all these points, the grammar produced by OKMA is extremely superior.

The evaluating committee recommends a final review of the grammatical studies before these are published in order to finish editing aspects in Spanish and some details of the analysis. We are certain that all Maya specialists will agree that these works are a relevant contribution for the advancement of the study of the specific languages and of Maya linguistics in general.

The dictionaries produced as part of the trilogy add up to over 400 pages. These contain an introduction, a grammatical outline, an

explanation on the hierarchy that organizes the lexical entries, and a list of abbreviations. The entries appear illustrated with practical and phonemical writing. The entries appear subcategorized with grammatical information (that cannot, for instance, be found in the dictionaries edited by the AML) and illustrative examples. The evaluators suggest that before printing these texts they should be reviewed again to address some stylistic matters and then be published as a model for all new dictionaries on Guatemalan languages. We recommend that the databases for these dictionaries be posted on the Web so they can be accessed by the public, especially by people that do not have the resources to buy the publications or by users outside of Guatemala, where these publications can not be obtained. It would be helpful to consult with other researchers that may have posted dictionaries on the Web. We recommend seeking advice from Dr. Jonathan Smith and Dr. John Justeson, who have vast experience in this respect.

Additionally to the four dictionaries produced by the documentation projects, we reviewed one of the standard dictionaries produced with NORAD funding, the Mam Standard Dictionary, *Pujb'il Yol Mam*, written by Juventino de Jesús Pérez Alonzo. The dictionary requires very little work in order to become a finished product. The reviewed version does not include an introduction to explain the procedures and the decisions made at the moment of producing the work. It does not explain the structure of the entries in the work. All this information was provided verbally by the author, who was interviewed and who informed us about the process and the type of consultations made in order to produce the manuscript. This dictionary is regarded as the most complete lexicographic work on lexicography in relation to a proposal for Maya languages. We recommend that the author carry out the last changes and submit the manuscript to a team of Mam specialists before its publication.

A selection of the texts compiled by the research teams forms the third part of the trilogy. The chosen texts appear in a monolingual version. However; in their introductions several authors mention that they have worked on bilingual versions that include grammatical glosses. This material should be published in a bilingual version and it would be very useful if these glossed texts were posted on the Web or published in electronic format so that other users could have access to them.

In conclusion, the latest research products join a unique linguistic collection that has been developed throughout the years. We believe that such a systematic production is a clear indication of the research group's soundness, the effectiveness of its organization, and of its excellent performance as a group.

Without doubt, there is no other research team in Latin America as firm as this one and with the academic capability of producing such high quality studies in just three years. Even though some members of the team have joined the field of linguistics having no previous instruction in lexicography or historical linguistics, they have made highly original and academically documented contributions to those fields.

Some of the players interviewed from other institutions questioned the fact that several of the OKMA members that have written textbooks have not completed their Bachelors degree, and this was viewed as one of the team's weaknesses. From another perspective, the quality of the production demonstrates that the OKMA team has achieved relevant advances in Maya linguistics regardless of the youth of many of its members and the lack of university degrees. We congratulate them for the dynamics and the quality of the training that they have offered each other and that they have received from their main advisor Dr. England, as well as from a group of Maya scholars that collaborated toward their academic formation such as Laughlin, Hofling, Martin, Haviland, Maxwell, Amith, Barrett, Evans, Kaufman, Grube, Hopkins, Josserand, and Schele. Contact with these researchers, and their solid education, has allowed them to update their investigations and to follow new perspectives regardless of the fact that several of them have not completed graduate level programs. In addition to publications, several members have presented preliminary advances of their research at different forums and conferences at national and international levels, which demonstrates that they also have an impact outside of the Guatemalan academic field. In interviews with OKMA's Director and with members of the research team we were informed that several of its former members have been accepted, or are already coursing PhD and Master's Degree programs in several programs abroad. Though it would seem that this could weaken the group in the short term, in the medium and long terms this group of former members trained by OKMA could

reincorporate as updated professionals on theoretical and practical aspects that will be of great help for the advancement of Maya linguistics in Guatemala.

2 and 3. OKMA's relevance in concluding the groundwork for the country's knowledgebase on Maya languages and the sustainability of the products (dictionaries and grammar books)

Without doubt the family of Maya languages is the most studied among Mesoamerican languages. This has been very beneficial for the members of the OKMA team, who have learned to incorporate the knowledge of many years of research by scholars engaged in the Mesoamerican area into their own academic production. OKMA members have also been trained by several of the most outstanding Maya scholars from institutions abroad; in addition, some OKMA members are been trained in research programs at universities abroad.

Both evaluators are aware of the attempts to form other research teams that have integrated speakers of Mesoamerican languages, but none of them have the academic quality, the professionalism or the formation that the OKMA team has achieved. For instance, in southern Mexico there have been teams where speakers of languages from the southern part of Mesoamerica have participated in the research of Maya and *Otomangue* languages; however, the final results presented by those teams have never reached the quality and professionalism demonstrated by OKMA researchers. Our opinions coincide with those expressed by the players interviewed in Guatemala, as well as those gathered internationally. The researchers that have had direct contact with team members, whether they have participated in the formation of its members, have printed materials produced by them, or have participated in conferences or workshops where members of OKMA have been speakers, agree that OKMA researchers, and their scientific products, are of the highest quality.

Works produced by OKMA are of great relevance not only at national level but also at the level of Mesoamerican linguistics in general. As mentioned earlier, their products have very high standards and without doubt are the most sophisticated within the country, equal to the best research work on Mesoamerican languages. The work produced by

this team represents a solid base for teaching the Maya languages of Guatemala.

OKMA's activities have not only concentrated on the scientific and technical fields, but its members have also produced works of practical relevance such as redaction handbooks, standardized materials, and reading materials in several of the country's languages. Moreover, they have demonstrated that they are capable of participating successfully in the training of educators who teach bilingual education in Guatemalan Maya languages. In all these activities, the team members have demonstrated great academic maturity in dealing with high level challenges. For instance, it was mentioned earlier that difficult tasks such as the creation of standardization proposals for Maya languages was carried out following the scientific criteria for both descriptive and historical aspects. People without the academic training that the research team has acquired could not make these decisions. A deep knowledge of the particular languages, the study of the differences between the languages, and a profound knowledge of the evolution of the languages under investigation was essential to make these decisions. Other than the OKMA members, there is no other participant in Guatemala capable of carrying out this type of work with professionalism and academic consistency.

Other examples of the important contribution of the team to Maya linguistics have been the most recent studies on the Sakapulteko, Uspanteko, Awakateko, and Teko languages. Before OKMA members began working on these languages, they only relied on partial researches on some of the grammatical and lexicographical aspects of these languages. Undoubtedly, OKMA's work on these languages has closed the gaps and has made possible the formation of native speakers in these languages. Now it can be said that these four languages have a comprehensive basis of documentation that is comparable to that of other major languages in Guatemala.

Before the work produced by OKMA, neither Guatemala nor any other Latin American country had ever produced materials, grammars or dictionaries on standard proposals for Amerindian languages. The relevance of these proposals will be evaluated once the Government agency in charge of education, together with specialists in linguistic planning, make intensive use of these materials. The evaluators agree

that it will not be OKMA's duty to undertake the follow-up since the team would have to concentrate on linguistic documentation, the training of personnel, and the production of linguistic materials with practical relevance for the linguistic communities.

4. Dissemination of linguistic, socio-cultural and teaching materials produced by OKMA

Most of OKMA's scientific production has been printed by *Editorial Chosamaj*. When the director and another employee of this company were interviewed, they were asked about the demand for these academic products at national and international levels. They mentioned that several of these books were sold out and that some had been urgently reprinted—such as the redaction handbook for Kaqchikel—because it is used as a textbook in several private schools. This surprised the evaluators, who usually observe that scientific materials on Mesoamerican languages languish in stockrooms in countries like Mexico, even though they are financed by well-known universities.

In Guatemala, as opposed to Mexico and other countries of Latin America, these technical, practical, and teaching materials are in demand by young students, teachers, and national and international researchers, as well as by players responsible for the application of the linguistic policies of Maya languages in Guatemala.

Several of the players interviewed stated that these works were consulted daily, and that they were models used by other Guatemalan institutions for the production of similar materials on Guatemalan Maya languages. For instance, the redaction handbooks, the reference grammars, and the introduction to the grammar of Maya languages have been the basic models for several of the authors that have published grammars for the AML.

Other institutions that have published works by the linguists trained by OKMA have been the Linguistics Institute of the Rafael Landívar University. In fact, this institution published the works of the members that were part of the first generation of linguists trained in Guatemala by Nora England and other members of the Francisco Marroquín project. The library of the Linguistics Institute holds an important

collection of this first stage; however, as was mentioned earlier, the team's maturity was attained with the production of the reference grammars published in 1997. There is no certainty regarding the degree of dissemination that these products may have achieved, nor of the products that have recently been edited by the Institute; some of them authored by OKMA members. However, university professors informed that the reading and writing handbooks and other works produced by members of OKMA are used by students of the *Diplomado* (technical degree program) in Bilingual Education in several fields.

Finally, the reading and writing handbooks for twelve Maya languages prepared as part of an agreement with the Ministry of Education and DIGEBI, were widely disseminated, as they were used to train between 6000 and 9000 teachers under DIGEBI and the Ministry of Education's supervision. For a second training program, two thousand textbooks were reprinted to train 2000 teachers under the supervision of DIGEBI and PRODESA. Another agreement with DIGEBI made possible the publication and distribution of eight reading books for children in K'iche', Kaqchikel, Mam, Popti', Q'anjob'al, Achim Poqomam and Poqomchi'.

In conclusion, the dissemination of purely scientific research products has reached an important level within Guatemala among all the players interested in the research, standardization, and teaching of Guatemalan Maya languages. The dissemination of reading and writing handbooks has also been very important, and researchers at OKMA also participated as direct players in the training for their use. It is deemed that all these materials should have greater international diffusion, specially in Latin America, but particularly in Mexico and Mesoamerica, where there currently exists a greater level of interest among speakers of Mesoamerican languages. It is of great relevance that these materials be known abroad, since they are contributions of great scientific value for learning these languages, and whose quality should be emulated by research teams in other countries that are currently in the process of development.

5. Training. Quality and impact of the training programs for young linguists at OKMA, contributing toward training and recruiting experts and researchers in the country (*sic*).

One of the main contributions of the OKMA research team is the creation of a unique educational structure in the country and in Latin America that has allowed the formation of a team of linguists that work with great professionalism and academic commitment. The learning/teaching model, which has demonstrated its efficiency, is one of the team's most relevant achievements; it has allowed the formation of a team of researchers that represent a highly valuable asset for the country. This teaching model has allowed the development of linguistics in Guatemala and of Maya linguistics in general, given that it has trained personnel of the highest quality that participates in several Guatemalan institutions and are involved both in the description of the particular languages and in the production of materials with practical application for the teaching of Maya languages in Guatemala. Several players that were interviewed repeatedly emphasized that OKMA is a unique institution in which training and research is inseparable. The model is based on recruiting young people (both women and men) that speak Maya languages in their communities of origin. They are invited to participate in a linguistics workshop where the more proficient ones are selected for intensive training during nine months. OKMA's most experienced investigators participate in these trainings. We interviewed several of the students that participated in these workshops, and they provided an accurate idea of the progress of their preparation, which included computer courses, redaction and training in the areas of descriptive and historical linguistics, as well as Maya linguistics. As an outcome of this workshop, the students prepared a grammatical outline of their native languages. Several of these works have been developed more completely and have become very thorough descriptions of those languages. Because the training received by the students does not provide them with an academic title, many of them have enrolled in the linguistics department of the Rafael Landívar or the Mariano Gálvez universities; others have enrolled in different academic careers. The professors interviewed at the Landívar University mentioned that the students that had received training at OKMA could always be distinguished from the rest of the group that had not received the training. The Bachelor degree students trained by OKMA had greater knowledge in the field of descriptive linguistics; in addition, their participation and the works they presented stood out from the rest. Furthermore, the professors also informed that some of the professors were OKMA members and that in several

classes they use texts written by the students. Both evaluators have had ample experience as educators in Mexico and the United States, and if we were to compare OKMA-trained students with students of their same level at institutions in which we have taught, we would reach the same conclusions. OKMA-trained personnel are well prepared in descriptive and Maya linguistics. However, we believe that several of them should continue their postgraduate education at institutions abroad, as some are already doing, with the purpose of returning to Guatemala and creating a program that could offer university titles not only at the Bachelors' level but also at postgraduate level.

We also recommend that, in the near future, the training dynamics followed by OKMA be the same as used when the team participated in the dialectal variation studies. That is to say, that the training should last no less than nine months, and that the result should be the production of a grammatical outline of the languages studied. The evaluators and the project director agree that the students that participated as collaborators in the research of the Sakapulteko, Uspanteko, Teko, and Awakateko languages received less time in training. Therefore, their preparation was not of the same quality as the one received by other generations of students. This was due to the time restrictions for funding that ruled the agreements with the donor institutions (3 years).

II. Cooperation Program implemented with Norwegian funds from 2003 to 2006

6. OKMA's effectiveness in reaching the goals established in the agreement with Norway for the 2003-2006 period

The goals established in the cooperation agreement plan with Norwegian funding (3,700,000 NOK \approx US \$600,000) for the period between May 26, 2003 to May 2006, with two extensions for a total of 5 months until October 31, 2006 were as follows:

- 1) To strengthen the language of the Awakateka and Tektiteka linguistic communities through documentation of the native language of the speakers

- 2) To document the lexicon of the Mam and Kaqchikel languages by means of a bilingual dictionary
- 3) To evaluate and strengthen OKMA's capabilities for the implementation, administration, coordination and evaluation of projects

Although it was not possible to view the published materials in the expected time, Norway has accepted that the agreement did not imply that all materials would be published. Accordingly, Norway has signed a new agreement with OKMA for additional funding in the amount of 1,300,000 NOK until May 2007, with the intent that OKMA publish the 27 books and other documents in progress and thereby accomplish the proposed objectives. It is important to note that, including this last agreement, Norway will have contributed US\$1,300,000 toward OKMA's projects since 1999 (including two projects in cooperation with *Editorial Cholsamaj* and CIRMA).

We have amply delved into the scientific quality of the materials produced from the documentation of the Tektiteko and Awakateko languages in Section 1. In both cases, the general and the specific objectives were widely and successfully achieved.

Two grammars, two collections of texts, and two dictionaries were produced in a period of three and a half years. A comprehensive review of the materials allowed the evaluators to conclude that all of these works exceeded expectations given the project's short duration. It can now be affirmed that these languages have a very strong descriptive base that will allow the creation of pedagogical and academically related materials. In the case of Awakateko, 50 texts were translated and another 100 were compiled and put into digital format; this is twice as much as planned. In the case of Tektiteko, 25 hours of recordings were transcribed. In addition, two dictionaries were produced, one in Awakateko containing 6200 entries and another in Tektiteko with 6500 entries. The final drafts of the grammars were also completed. Part of these materials has already been distributed informally with the intention of receiving comments from experts on Maya languages for their correction. In addition, a team of native speakers was trained to analyze their respective languages. The total number of people trained was four: two men in Tektiteko and two

women in Awakateko. As well as being qualified as researchers of their languages, they offer conferences at national and international levels on different subjects. Likewise, the researchers also presented preliminary advances of their work at forums of specialists. This demonstrates that the project was carried out in a very successful manner and that the objectives were entirely achieved. In Section 1 we also stated that it was necessary to carry out a final review of the dictionaries, the collection of texts, and the grammars by a specialist and a native speaker of Spanish in order to make the final stylistic, typographic and contents corrections. We believe that these products can therefore be ready for publication in brief.

As to the second goal, when the products were being reviewed, the Mam dictionary, whose contents were discussed in Section 1, was entirely finished. This dictionary is the first proposal for a standard dictionary in a Mesoamerican language, and will have to be evaluated in its entirety by experts in the Mam language. Until it was reviewed, the dictionary lacked an introduction that explained the methodology used to select the entries, the criteria used in the selection of the standard terms, the formalization of the entries, and the lexicographical criteria that was followed in order to establish the definitions. The Kaqchikel dictionary was being reviewed at the time we were conducting the evaluation; therefore, we were not able to review the printed version. We believe that once the introductions for both dictionaries are written and the reviews of the experts are concluded, the dictionaries will be ready for publication. One of the reviewers has had direct experience in lexicographical work with two Mesoamerican languages, and both of us were surprised with the final quality of the product, considering that it usually takes more than three years to carry out these types of academic projects. Therefore, the project's goals were achieved and now the research team has the task of submitting the products for review for their future publication. We believe that Dr. Andy Hofling would be an excellent reviewer for these dictionaries and for the dictionaries produced for the Tektiteko and Awakateko languages (in addition to the Sakapulteko and Uspanteko funded by ELDP).

With regards to the third goal, it is clear that OKMA has the qualifications to administrate and implement the projects it approaches. We have thoroughly reviewed its annual reports, particularly from the

academic and implementation points of view, and in all instances the executive director and project coordinators have closely followed-up each particular case. The financial reports are impeccable, as is clearness with which emerging problems and decisions are made to solve such situations. The results speak for themselves: The researchers, assistants, and the overall administration widely covered the established commitments and timely informed on any delays in the investigations, taking the pertinent actions to solve the problems and accomplish the proposed goals.

7. The effectiveness of the method and of OKMA's human resources with respect to the proposed work and the products generated

The process through which the programs were accomplished confirms that OKMA is a very efficient organization and reflects the vast experience it has accumulated throughout a decade in the field of research. A carefully-planned calendar that anchors the advances of the investigations demonstrates that the executive director and the main project researchers have clear goals and specific objectives throughout the year. The reports delivered to the cooperating agency clearly underline the advances and the accomplished and unaccomplished goals. Moreover, these reports mention the actions that will be taken to correct the problems and it is clear that the following report will contain an explanation on how they were solved. All these steps demonstrate that a careful method is being followed and that all research projects are closely monitored.

We interviewed all the Tektiteko, Awakateko, Mam, and Kaqchikel teams and it was clear that the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the advances of the research projects was a daily task carried out by the directors, instructors and OKMA's executive director. Some problems occurred with the Uspanteko language staff, but the directors solved them by moving to La Antigua to finish the project. The problems were related to the electrical infrastructure in the communities.

As previously discussed, the training received by the Awakateko and Tektiteko teams was shorter in duration and less comprehensive

compared to other teams trained by OKMA in the past. This also had a bearing on the research and in the new research team's responsibility. Regarding the development of the Awakateko and Tektiteko grammars, the entire responsibility was placed on the project directors, while in other projects that OKMA implements the responsibility is always shared with the speakers of the languages under investigation. We recommend a longer training period in the future so that all the project participants can help to write the final document. We think that in order to make this possible, the projects should last five years, so that in the first year the project directors exclusively dedicate themselves to training the native speakers that will act as researchers until the project's conclusion.

8. Cost/benefit of the projects funded by Norway

The type and the results of the research carried out by OKMA would come to about US\$ 400,000.00 per language according to the estimates made for other projects proposed by other research agencies like the National Science Foundation and the Endangered Language Documentation Project of SOAS, in London. The projects funded by Norway have cost approximately US\$ 135,000.00 per language. This cost is relatively low considering the quality of the outcomes.

It should be taken into account that, unlike other similar projects, the projects funded by Norway are also building invaluable human capital that other research projects in other regions of the world are not generating in the countries in which they carry out their studies. To date there are no other linguistic projects in Mesoamerica that have the characteristics of those developed by OKMA. We want to assure the donor agency that their funding for the development of linguistic research projects has produced excellent academic results and prepared linguistic teams of the highest quality. The donor agency's contributions are an extremely important investment for the documentation of Guatemalan languages and will help to continue strengthening the rights and the culture of the Maya in this country.

9. Conclusions and recommendations regarding the future direction of OKMA studies

Undoubtedly, OKMA is the most important linguistic research organization in Guatemala for several reasons:

- 1) It has the best-prepared staff to conduct the research
- 2) It has demonstrated great responsibility in the implementation of the projects undertaken
- 3) It has produced the best grammars on Maya languages in the country
- 4) It has produced the only proposals for the standardization of Maya languages based on firm scientific principles
- 5) It has built invaluable human capital in the field of descriptive linguistics.
- 6) It has encouraged the continuous training of its staff
- 7) It has administered its budget in an impeccable manner
- 8) It has not become a bureaucratic organization
- 9) It is capable of handling the research demands of diverse linguistic communities
- 10) It prepares didactic and reading materials that follow scientific guidelines
- 11) It comprehensively reviews the quality of its publications
- 12) At present, several of its members have enrolled in post grade studies abroad. When they return, they will certainly help to strengthen the institution even further

We recommend that they continue prioritizing the documentation of Maya languages in Guatemala, particularly the documentation of those languages that have been scarcely studied, such as Chorti, Mopán,

and Chuj. These three languages need comprehensive work in the areas of lexicography, grammar and in the documentation of texts and conversations. In addition, several of the Guatemalan Maya languages lack grammars, dictionaries, or text collections. This situation requires urgent attention.

We also recommend that, for future investigations, the management and the instructors choose to train the speakers of the language under research for a year. It is also important to invest more time when selecting the candidates in the linguistic communities, to find young people that are truly interested in linguistic research. This will result in the development of specialists in different languages that will become linguists in the future and not just collaborators in the research process.

We urge that in the future the same care be taken for the descriptive aspects, and that this area not be neglected for the sake of products that focus more on applied linguistics, as it is OKMA's greatest strength.

It is recommended that the pedagogical products generated be reviewed by specialists such as pedagogues and specialists in applied linguistics.

It is recommended that the standard dictionaries be reviewed by specialists in the linguistic communities to which these dictionaries are aimed, before they are published.

It is recommended that the databases that have already been corrected (dictionaries, texts) and possibly the reference grammars, be posted on the Web to allow public access to the speakers, people responsible for linguistics planning in Guatemala, and researches of Maya languages.

The creation of a digital file of the recordings that were obtained during the research process is recommended. These should be deposited at an international archive such as AILLA at the University of Texas at Austin.

It is recommended that all the products that are completed be published as soon as possible, and that the products that are almost completed be concluded in order to publish them in an electronic format or in print.

In order to continue with the lexicographical work, the creation of a guidebook is recommended to facilitate the work of future researchers that will work in this area from within and without OKMA. This will be an extremely relevant work for those research teams within Guatemala that are currently dedicated to lexicographical research.

Lastly, we recommend that a group of experts in linguistics planning evaluate the effectiveness of the normative materials and their practical application. We believe that prior to investing more effort and money in the creation of normative materials their effectiveness should be evaluated in the linguistic communities for which they are intended.

Terms of reference

OKMA Evaluation (GTM 0044) and review of the situation of the linguistic documentation of Maya Languages in Guatemala

1. Background

Asociación Oxlajuuj Keej Maya`Ajtz`iib` – OKMA is a Guatemalan organization for linguistic research on Maya languages. OKMA prepares young Maya people from different Maya linguistic communities to collect and analyze linguistic data. Since its inception in 1990, OKMA has developed several dictionaries, grammar books and teaching materials. The goal is to ensure the survival of the oral tradition of Maya languages; particularly of endangered languages.

Norway (first FAFO and then Norad), through the Royal Embassy of Norway in Guatemala, has supported OKMA since 1997 with approximately US\$ 1.7 million. The current agreement and its approved extension is for a total amount of US\$ 600.000, and covers the period between May 2003 and October 2006. The main goal during this period is to collect, document and analyze two Maya languages: Tektiteko and Awakateko, as well as to develop materials in the Mam and Kaqchikel languages.

OKMA prioritizes the research of minority Maya languages, not only Tektiteko and Awakateko, but also Sakapulteko and Uspanteko with funding from donors. In Guatemala there has traditionally been a certain “division of work” between OKMA and other institutions, mainly the Rafael Landívar University. These institutions of higher learning have concentrated on major Maya languages such as K’iche’, Kaqchikel, Mam, and Q’eqchi. There is also the impression that efforts have been duplicated or are complementary in some languages. Guatemala does not seem to have a standardized national systematic policy for writing and harmonization. The *Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala* (ALMG) also undertakes linguistic research and has an official mandate to authorize and document their written forms and linguistic systems. The General Directorate for Bilingual and Intercultural Education, the vice ministry that is responsible for bilingual education, lacks a policy regarding the use of bilingual materials in elementary schools, and the materials that are available have been

developed as part of private projects financed mostly by international cooperation.

As part of OKMA's evaluation, and foreseeing a possible new phase for the program "*Investigación Lingüística de Idiomas Mayas*" (Linguistic research of Maya Languages), as well as its general interest in supporting bilingual education in Guatemala, the Royal Embassy of Norway wishes to commission a consultancy to carry out an academic evaluation on OKMA's linguistic research, and a study of the situation of the linguistic documentation of Maya languages in Guatemala. The national scope of OKMA's work must be kept in mind. Furthermore, other institutions that undertake the linguistic investigation of Maya languages should be identified in addition to the universities. Concurrently, the Royal Embassy of Norway would like to take the opportunity to commission an investigation/ inventory on the situation of the research, documentation, harmonization, and writing standardization of Maya languages in Guatemala.

1. Purpose, context, and intended use

The job's main goal is to analyze the scientific and academic relevance of the linguistic research undertaken by OKMA, to evaluate its contribution and impact on the national knowledgebase of Maya languages in Guatemala and offer suggestions for the future direction of OKMA research.

2. Scope of work

This job includes the following components:

- A. OKMA's evaluation as per its academic and cooperation appraisal**
- B. A preliminary investigation of the linguistic documentation of Maya languages in Guatemala.**

The work will include a description and evaluation of the following aspects:

A. In relation to OKMA's academic evaluation

1. The scientific quality of the linguistic production and the academic competence of OKMA and its research team
2. The relevance of OKMA's work in achieving a national knowledgebase of Maya languages
3. The sustainability of the products (dictionaries and grammar books) in terms of the recognition of OKMA's contribution toward the national and international knowledgebase of Maya languages
4. The dissemination of linguistical, socio-cultural, and teaching materials produced by OKMA
5. The quality and impact of the linguistic training programs for young people at OKMA, [and their contribution] toward training and recruiting scholars and researchers in the country.

In addition, the evaluation performed on OKMA should focus on the cooperation program undertaken between 2003 and 2006 with funds from Norway.

6. OKMA's effectiveness in reaching the goals established in the agreement with Norway for 2003-2006
7. The effectiveness of OKMA's method and human resources in relation to the proposed work and the products achieved
8. Cost/benefit of the projects funded by the Royal Embassy of Norway.

OKMA's evaluation must enclose main conclusions and recommendations on the future direction of OKMA's linguistic research.

B. Regarding the preliminary study of the condition of Maya languages

1. A preliminary evaluation and description of the collection, documentation, and analysis of the materials and linguistic

documents of Guatemalan Maya languages (dictionaries, grammar textbooks, and socio-cultural materials).

2. Usefulness and possible impact of the research and linguistic materials produced in the country for the creation of a linguistic knowledgebase and the substantial development of bilingual education in the country.

The first part of the investigation must include an inventory and a preliminary evaluation of Guatemalan linguistic research at international level, as well as identify the gaps and pertinent recommendations for a future and more extensive investigation on the condition of linguistic research.

3. Job execution

The job will be executed by two professional linguistics (the team) with the capability of undertaking socio-cultural analyses linked to language investigation. The team will decide on the selection of sources, manuscripts, and documents that will be part of the academic evaluations. Additionally, they will interview players from the following institutions as well as other relevant players or institutions.

- OKMA
- Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (ALMG)
- Universidad Rafael Landívar
- Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe e Intercultural (DGEBI)
- Royal Embassy of Norway in Guatemala

The work will be performed in 20 days between both consultants. This timetable includes time to prepare, time for the fieldwork, and the completion of the reports. The team makes its own arrangements, including the distribution of its responsibilities. The formal responsibility falls to the team leader, appointed by the Royal Embassy of Norway in Guatemala.

The budget is US\$ 250.00 per day plus airfare, hotel and travel expenses in Guatemala.

4. Reports

The report will be written in Spanish. In addition, it must be possible to disseminate the study on the state of the linguistic research in a separate document. The OKMA evaluation must contain an executive summary. The report on the study must include an inventory of Maya languages investigated in Guatemala.

The report will be delivered before September 22, 2006.

Royal Embassy of Norway in Guatemala, August 21, 2006

