

**A Summary of**  
**Ethnographic Methods and the Hawaiian Creole Regenesis Movement**  
**by Dr. Kathryn Davis (University of Hawaii)**  
*delivered on September 29,1997*

Dr. Kathryn Davis, of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, gave a talk entitled "Interpretative Qualitative Research Methods" in early September, 1997, in which she briefly reviewed second language interpretive qualitative research or ethnography in terms of philosophy, theories, methods, analysis, and research reporting. Dr. Davis provided examples of the ethnographic approach from her own research with indigenous language revitalization, specifically with Hawaiian and Micronesian, bilingualism among immigrants in Hawaii, and language maintenacne and shift in Luxembourg, a multilingual country.

In the opening remarks, Dr.Davis suggested that interpretive qualitative research encompasses both a macro perspective and a micro perspective. Social, political, economic, and cultural views on language shift, maintenance, and revival form the sociocultural contexts within which language socialization, acquisition, and use take place. With regard to the philosophical and theoretical bases for this approach to research, there are several main concepts, in particular the emic, holistic, and semiotic nature of this research paradigm, which must be acknowledged by the researcher. Dr. Davis explained thick vs. rich description and commented on the questions of credibility, dependability, and transferability of findings and generalizations drawn from the collected data. She emphasized that the main aim of the interpretive approach is to describe the conceptual framework of the social actors, of the people being studied as they live and understand their lives, resulting in "grounded" theory.

Following these generalizaitons, Dr. Davis described the steps in setting up a

project, the research techniques which tend to be used by ethnographers, common forms of analysis of the data collected, and then caveats about writing up an ethnographic research report. There was a constant reminder throughout that the researcher must be open and reflective about the fact that his/her own background and point of view are embedded in the research project, from the start to the finish. The researcher has to acknowledge his/her subject position vis-a-vis the informants or people being studied. Another important point was the need for triangulation, in other words, the use of more than one source of data to produce a rich, valid, and reliable ethnographic report. For example, in addition to observation, the researcher needs to conduct interviews with a variety of people in the setting being studied and collect documents, including such items as demographic data and even local newspaper reports, all of which provide data from various points of view. This process assures validity of the researcher's actual findings and final report. A bibliography of suggested readings was provided on the handout.

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