

Language Exhibition: A Cultural Center Development in Fiji

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The presentation will outline preliminary ideas on a language exhibition to be developed in Fiji. It will include the reasons for a language exhibition and the expected audience. The presentation also intends to solicit ideas and pathways from the language exhibition at the National Museum in Minpaku as well as from the Fijian Language GIS project on ways to create an exhibition product that is relevant for the people and visitors to Fiji and have a relevant impact on its users and also one that is cost effective.

The main idea that is to be exhibited is the genetic relationship in the languages of the Oceanic region. The languages to be exhibited include the Fijian communalects and Standard Fijian. On another level and if possible, the language exhibition should also include the Central Eastern Oceanic languages in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Rotuma, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. To highlight the Lapita theory of migration and to downplay other migration theories into Fiji, the language exhibition may also include projected language relationships with notable Austronesian languages beyond the Oceanic languages.

The language exhibition showing the genetic relationship will be based on lexical items whose genetic features can be measured or seen by a visitor to the cultural center. These words may or may not include Geraghty's 100 word-list. The aim though is to include lexical items whose genetic relationship is easily identifiable. The number of words in this exhibition will be according to what is feasible technologically. The relationship would depend on studies already undertaken for Oceanic and Austronesian languages.