CHAPTER 6

Mobilities into (and out of) Konomerume (Donderskamp)

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1 Introduction

This chapter explores mobility, language practices, and identity among residents of Konomerume, a predominantly Kari'nja community, ethnically, on the banks of the Wajambo River in Suriname. I examine mobilities among

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1 I would like to acknowledge the kindness and professional courtesy extended to me by the editors and other authors of this volume. Their patient reading and thoughtful suggestions have improved this work immeasurably. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to members of the Konomerume community with whom I have had the amazing privilege of working for so many years. I take full responsibility for any errors, omissions, or oversights.

2 Residents’ auto-designation for the community is Konomerume. Outsiders, including the Surinamese government, refer to the community as Donderskamp. I use community members’ designation throughout. There is a bit of a “chicken or egg” question regarding the name of the community. Most outsiders’ accounts attribute the name Donderskamp to a Dutch missionary, Father Peter Donders, who worked in Suriname in the late 1800s. Elders in the community, however, claim the name Konomerume predates Donders. It should be noted that Dutch donder and Kari'nja konomerume both translate to ‘thunder.’

3 The term Kari'nja is the auto-designation of people who are either speakers of the language or who self-identify as ethnically Kari'nja. This particular spelling also reflects the practical orthography developed in Konomerume. Community members and I have developed a practical orthography that represents more phonetic detail than other orthographies. For example, a regular process of palatalisation following /i/ is represented with digraphs with a second element, /j/, indicating a palatalised consonant (see Hoff 1968: 43 for a detailed discussion of palatalisation in Kari'nja). In some cases, as in §6.2.1 example (5), a prefixed /i/- palatalises the following consonant and then elides. The practical orthography represents the word as it is pronounced. In addition, the /t/ spelling represents the Aretyry dialect—in Tyrewuju, the name is pronounced [kali'nja]. The language name has been spelled in various ways depending on the particular orthography employed. Different spellings include Cariña, Kari'na, Kali'na, Kalihna, and Kalinya, among others. The language is known variously as Carib, Carib of Suriname, Galibi, and Maraworno. A language name or spelling that is more common in one region or context may be less common in another. I employ Konomerume community members’ spelling and designation throughout. C.f. §6 for further detail on dialects.
migrants to Konomerume and describe reasons for and types of movement. In addition, I describe differences among migrant groups in terms of language practice (who speaks which language to whom and why (c.f. Fishman 1991)), language attitudes (including attitudes toward different Kari‘nja dialects), integration (the extent to which migrants participate in the community at large), and identity (especially as it relates to language revitalisation). I adopt here Fishman’s (2010) conceptualisation of identity and its relationship to both language and ethnicity as highly contextualised and dependent on “circumstances and contrasts that play upon it, modify it, and create or recreate it (2010: xxviii).” As such, I explore migrants’ language practices, attitudes, integration, and identity from both insider and outsider perspectives.

Finally, a discussion of implications for the identification of dialect areas is included. This chapter represents a small-scale look at mobilities within an individual community and how they relate to language practices, identity, and attitudes. In addition, I discuss the implications of migration, attitudes, and contact linguistics on the identification of dialect boundaries and posit a sub-dialect area based on initial sociolinguistic findings.

In part 1, I describe Konomerume in terms of location and demographics. This is followed by some background information on the project itself and how data were gathered in parts 2 and 3. Part 4 begins with a description of types of mobility as they relate to the Konomerume situation. I then assess particular groups of in-migrants to Konomerume, including their motivations for migration, language practices and attitudes, and their level of integration into the community. I organise the individual groups in progression from least well- to most well-integrated. Part 5 examines tensions between speakers of the two Kari‘nja dialects spoken in Suriname: Aretyry and Tyrewuju. This is followed by a brief description of the Aretyry documentation, preservation, and revitalisation program in Konomerume. In part 6, I explore social and linguistic indicators of dialect boundaries and use these factors to posit a potential subdialect area. Finally, part 7 provides conclusions and a description of directions for future research projects in Konomerume and elsewhere.

2 Demographics

Konomerume is located in the Sipaliwini District of Suriname, on the banks of the Wajambo River. The Wajambo River flows in a roughly east-west direction, meeting the Coppenname River to the east, and the Nickerie River to the west. The Nickerie River provides access to the Corantijn River,4 which forms the

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4 This is the Surinamese spelling for this river name.