

Endangered Languages in the 21st Century

EDITED BY EDA DERHEMI AND
CHRISTOPHER MOSELEY



ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Endangered Languages in the 21st Century provides research on endangered languages in the contemporary world, the challenges still to be faced, the work still to be done, and the methods and practices that have come to characterize efforts to revive and maintain disadvantaged indigenous languages around the world.

With contributions from scholars across the field, the book brings fresh data and insights to this imperative, but still relatively young, field of linguistics. While the studies acknowledge the threat of losing languages in an unprecedented way, they focus on cases that show resilience and explore paths to sustainable progress. The articles are also intended as a celebration of the 25 years' work of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, and as a parting gift to FEL's founder and quarter-century chair, Nick Ostler.

This book will be informative for researchers, instructors, and specialists in the field of endangered languages. The book can also be useful for university graduate or undergraduate students, and language activists.

Eda Derhemi is Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA. She has a PhD from this university, defended in 2003, on the topic of endangered Arbëresh in Italy. For over 20 years, she has conducted research and published on linguistic endangerment with primary focus on Arbëresh and Arvanitika.

Christopher Moseley is a teaching fellow in Estonian Language at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London, UK. He is the co-editor of the Routledge *Atlas of the World's Languages* (with R.E. Asher, 3rd edition forthcoming) and has been the editor of the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*.



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*Edited by Eda Derhemi and
Christopher Moseley*



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CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Adcock is a consultant specializing in the statistical analysis of Canadian Census data. Robert is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation.

Rob Amery is Associate Professor in Linguistics, University of Adelaide, completed a PhD in 1998 (published 2000; 2016) on Kaurna language reclamation. For more than 30 years he has worked closely with Kaurna people to re-introduce their Kaurna language.

Peter K. Austin is Emeritus Professor in Field Linguistics, SOAS University of London, United Kingdom.

Joshua Birchall is Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of Linguistics at the University of New Mexico, USA, and also affiliated to the Linguistics Division of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MCTI), Belém, Brazil.

David Bradley is Professor of Linguistics at La Trobe University and Honorary Professor of Linguistics at the Australian National University, President of the UNESCO Comité International Permanent de Linguistes 2013–2024.

David Crystal is honorary Professor of Linguistics at the University of Bangor, UK.

Maya Khemlani David is Honorary Professor, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Eda Derhemi is Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA. She has a PhD from this university, defended in 2003, on the topic of endangered Arbëresh in Italy.

For over 20 years, she has conducted research and published on linguistic endangerment with primary focus on Arbëresh and Arvanitika.

Sebastian Drude is Visiting Researcher at the Linguistics Division of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MCTI), Belém, Brazil, holding a Heisenberg grant from the German DFG. He also is *Privatdozent* (Associate Professor) at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Germany.

Hakim Elnazarov is affiliated with the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), London, UK. He is Head of the Central Asian Studies Unit at the Department of Academic Research and Publications of the IIS. Dr. Elnazarov is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation for Endangered Languages and a Series Editor of the *Endangered Languages Yearbook* published by Brill.

Ana Vilacy Galúcio is Researcher at and Head of the Linguistics Division of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MCTI), Belém, Brazil.

Tjeerd de Graaf has, since his retirement at Groningen University in 2003, been Senior Research Associate at the Fryske Akademy (Frisian Academy) and the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert (The Netherlands).

Marleen Haboud is Professor and Researcher, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador.

Lily Kahn is Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Languages at University College London in the UK.

M. Paul Lewis is Senior Sociolinguistics Consultant for SIL International and was General Editor of the *Ethnologue* from 2004 to 2016. He is Fellow of the Pike Center for Integrative Scholarship.

Salem Mezhoud is Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the School of Global Affairs, King's College London. He was Lecturer in Berber linguistics at the Sorbonne (Paris 3) and worked in human rights for the UN and NGOs. He has held visiting fellowships at Columbia University and the Wilson Center. Among his research interests are minority and indigenous rights, and linguistic rights.

Denny Moore is retired Researcher at and former Head of the Linguistics Division of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MCTI), Belém, Brazil.

Christopher Moseley is Teaching Fellow in Estonian Language at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London. He is the co-editor of the Routledge *Atlas of the World's Languages* (with R.E. Asher, 3rd edition forthcoming) and has been the editor of the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*.

x Contributors

Simon Musgrave is Engagement and Partnerships Manager, ARDC Co-Investment Projects (Australian Text Analytics Platform and Language Data Commons of Australia), University of Queensland, and an Adjunct Research Fellow at Monash University, both in Australia.

David Nash is Honorary Senior Lecturer, School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, the Australian National University.

Mary Jane Norris is a consultant specializing in the demography of Indigenous languages in Canada. She previously worked in the Federal Government of Canada as a specialist in Indigenous demography. She is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation.

Fernando Ortega is a Professor and Researcher, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.

Bernard Spolsky was Professor Emeritus in the Department of English Language and Literature at Bar Ilan University. Bernard did research in language policy and management.

Nick Thieberger is a linguist who has worked with Australian languages and wrote a grammar of Nafsan, a language from Efate, Vanuatu. He helped establish the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (<http://paradisec.org.au>), a digital archive of mainly audio language and music records and is now its Director.

Riitta-Liisa Valijärvi is Associate Professor of Finnish and Minority Languages at University College London, UK, and Senior Lecturer in Finno-Ugric Languages at Uppsala University, Sweden.

Hein van der Voort is Researcher at of the Linguistics Division and Coordinator of the Humanities Department of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MCTI), Belém, Brazil.

Michael Walsh is a senior Research Fellow of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra at the Australian National University.

1

INTRODUCTION

David Crystal

It can take a long time before an author or editor can agree a title with a publisher. I recall weeks of discussion over my book that was eventually called *Language Death*. The marketing people were not so sure – ‘a bit morbid’, said one – but at the time it seemed the right title, for in the 1990s several of those writing about language endangerment felt that the world needed an urgent wake-up call, and a dramatic title in a book aimed at a general readership I felt would add to that sense of urgency. I hoped the cover would provide a note of optimism. It shows a cardiogram flat-lining, but just at the end it flickers into life.

I wouldn’t call it that now, and the present volume shows the reason why. It is without a doubt the most refreshingly encouraging take on the issue that has appeared in the past 30 years, and a perfect choice to celebrate the contribution of Nicholas Ostler, whose positive thinking and energetic perseverance in support of the field in general, and of the Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) in particular, has been characteristic from the outset. Titles again. The editors wanted to capture this incipient optimism by calling their collection ‘Holding Their Ground’, before the publisher turned the subtitle into a title. It is a daring claim, but more than justified by the chapters in this collection.

The book has several aims. Its motivation was to give Nick a parting gift, as he leaves his chairmanship of the organization he founded in 1996, and also to celebrate 25 years of the work of the FEL. But the book goes well beyond the role of a simple festschrift. Its 18 chapters provide a wide-ranging snapshot of the state of endangered languages in the contemporary world – including a great deal of historical background – and the methods and practices that have come to characterize the effort to revive and maintain disadvantaged indigenous languages, and the challenges still to be faced. There are also new comparative narratives arising from large geographical areas in which linguistic endangerment has rarely or never been explored so comprehensively. The chapters acknowledge the threat of losing languages in an unprecedented way, but focus on cases from the past

decade which show evidence of resilience, and – through the efforts of individuals, communities, and institutions – which suggest paths to sustainable progress. It is both optimistic and realistic.

The collection is organized under three headings. The first section deals with the general state of endangered languages today in some large regions of the world, such as Australia, Brazil, Central Asia, and Northern Africa, and offers ‘some good news’. Several significant developments have taken place in recent years.

- Michael Walsh sets the tone for the volume in the title of his chapter: ‘The rise and rise of Australian Languages’. Despite dire predictions over several decades, the endangered languages of this area are proving surprisingly resilient. Creative ventures (play and film translations) in some supposedly dying or dormant Australian languages, and the availability of post-secondary education in others, are making us rethink the validity of predictions of certain doom. He presents a series of case studies to demonstrate this dissonance between predictions and reality.
- Sebastian Drude and his co-authors review the situation in Brazil, where over 150 languages are endangered, referring to new findings from the National Inventory of Language Diversity and several local surveys. They focus on the language situation in Rondônia, the most linguistically diverse state in Brazil, and make recommendations for sustainable intervention.
- Hakim Elnazarov provides the first comprehensive review of the endangered languages in central Asia, with a focus on Pamiri languages, the most endangered group. He points out that many of the smaller, non-national indigenous languages of Central Asia are being left behind, in an era of globalization and nationalism, and confined to the mountain ranges, while at the same time, general access to media and communications networks has created global hubs, enabling communication in the mother tongue. Positive institutional change can be observed in the area: many governments now regard indigenous languages as a resource rather than a threat.
- Salem Mezhoud reports on cases of linguisticicide in North Africa, with particular reference to the ‘planned disappearance’ of Tamazight and other Berber languages across the region. Here too, though, there are positive signs, arising from the influence of international declarations of linguistic rights. He makes a historical overview of the situation, including a discussion of the last decade that shows a more cooperative institutional attitude in some African countries.
- Mary Jane Norris and Robert Adcock examine the extent and patterns of language acquisition by young speakers when the language is used at home as a first and second language by different generations, based on Canadian census data from 1986 to 2016. They suggest that growing numbers of second language speakers offset the decline in first-language speaker numbers among indigenous language users.

The second section discusses the theoretical analysis of factors that support language maintenance, with particular reference to the role of new media,

historical materials, intergenerational communication in the home, the classification and measurement of vitality, the role of scholars, and the ethical issues facing fieldworkers.

- M. Paul Lewis explores how bridging the gap between language communities and linguists can help sustain language use, using a Sustainable Use Model that allows a community to evaluate and strengthen its own language use. He identifies an additional set of technical planning and implementation resources that are more broadly interdisciplinary.
- David Bradley notes the way governments have in recent times come to view minority indigenous languages as a resource rather than a problem. He focuses on three general questions: Who decides what is a language? Who decides whether a language is endangered, and how much? What should be done about language endangerment? He discusses several examples of how communities and scholars work together, actively engaging with speakers to achieve resilience.
- Tjeerd de Graaf discusses the use of historical material – sound archives and written records – for the safeguarding of endangered languages. He illustrates from a 17th-century collection of data and artefacts from the Russian Far East, supplemented by learning materials produced by the Foundation for Siberian Cultures.
- Riitta-Liisa Valijärvi and Lily Kahn discuss how endangered language communities have engaged with new digital media such as YouTube, Internet forums, Twitter, memes, podcasts, gaming, virtual worlds, mobile communications, and Wikipedia. These provide a global platform for languages and for activism, and introduce the languages to new domains, creating a digital community, extending terminology, and supporting investment.
- Eda Derhemi examines the main research positions on language change among endangered languages, dividing them into two main groups: the positions that consider the changes to be abnormal and signs of linguistic attrition, and the group that sees them as normal changes that develop as strategies to maintain the language. She draws examples from scholarly discussions, chiefly of the last 20 years, and from personal observation and other data from Arbëresh and Arvanitika. This study maintains that, while endangered languages have shown that they are resisting better than predicted in the 1990s, there is need for linguists to exercise more caution in assisting the communities of speakers with generalizations on the nature of change.
- Christopher Moseley draws attention to the way disparities in the vitality of languages are typically not noted where they cross national borders, in such resources as the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*. He points to the forthcoming World Atlas of Languages as a solution, cites examples of cross-border languages of varying status, and discusses prospects for better planning and communication among cross-border communities.
- The section concludes with a chapter from Simon Musgrave and Nick Thieberger discussing the ethical issues facing fieldworkers, based on a hypothetical discussion arranged at a conference of the Australian Linguistic Society.

Section III brings together a series of empirical studies towards sustainable language maintenance and use, focusing on advances in overcoming challenges, comparisons that confirm best practices, and sustainable strategies for keeping languages in use.

- Rob Amery reports on sustainable pathways for a fledgling language movement, illustrated by the case of Kaurna in South Australia, where there has been considerable success in reconstructing the language and introducing it into the public domain. He discusses the challenge of maintaining momentum in a revival programme arising out of generational change, the need for leadership, and issues relating to codification and spelling policy.
- Bernard Spolsky describes the situation in Israel, where Hebrew has had to compete with, and been modified by, a range of diaspora languages, notably Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo-Arabic. He examines the fate of these languages in the context of a dominant revitalized Hebrew.
- Peter K. Austin describes a legacy project to create an accessible XML-encoded database on the endangered Diyari language of South Australia, tagged for structure and content, to supplement historical dictionary materials currently available only in microfiche. The data are being linked to a multimedia resource containing all published and unpublished materials on the language.
- David Nash draws attention to the way homonyms or near-homonyms with existing words have come to denote newly encountered semantically unrelated concepts in some Australian languages. He calls these ‘loan homonyms’, and recommends scholars of indigenous languages to seek out other instances of them.
- Maya Khemlani David explores the reasons a community shifts away from its heritage language before efforts are made towards revitalization, focusing on the diaspora of Sindhi speakers. She concludes that revitalization programmes which take account of the causes of language shift are more beneficial than bare documentation.
- Marleen Haboud and Fernando Ortega explore the endangerment status of Waotededo, spoken by Waorani communities in Ecuador, as a result of intense contact with Spanish and incursion from mining and oil companies. A shift in traditional values and practices is being offset by activist campaigns to preserve forest lands, language, and culture.

The range of languages covered in this volume, and the theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues encountered, in many ways mirrors the achievements of the FEL over the past quarter-century, and the remarkable breadth of Nick’s personal linguistic interests. I got to know him in the early 1990s when he was working in software and management consultancy, and becoming involved in corpus linguistics. When the British National Corpus was being planned, we were both members of its Advisory Council. It was during this period that a growing number of reports made him – as indeed most linguists – aware of the impending crisis of extinction facing the world’s languages. With little or no awareness

in Europe of the global situation, he decided that the best way of countering this neglect was through the creation of a dedicated organization.

Anyone who has ever tried to create such a beast knows the need for perseverance as well as vision. Nick certainly had both. His first long letter – seven pages – to a small group of linguists proposing the initiative, in late 1994, was full of explanatory background and procedural detail, and asked the crucial question; ‘Do you agree that this is a good time to found a group which will spread information on languages in danger and take such action as is possible to defend them?’ A flurry of meetings followed the enthusiastically positive response, and a proposed FEL came into existence in early 1995, and was formally established the next year. It was the beginning of a long but immensely productive period of annual international and multicultural conferences, widely acknowledged as a highlight of the endangered languages world and an inspiration to all involved in this area, both at academic and community levels. All the papers presented have been published in the Foundation’s annual *Proceedings*, and are still in print.

Nick has always been the moral and emotional core of these hugely varied, warm, and intellectually stimulating gatherings. And it is a testimonial to this long period of visionary commitment that colleagues from all over the world have come together to produce this volume – a volume which celebrates not only his contribution to the field, but the work of the many others who have made the Foundation so successful, both as an intellectual enterprise and as a practical campaigning and fundraising force. And all involved, including the editors and contributors to this book, would certainly want their efforts to be seen as part of a more general celebration – that several of the languages which gave rise to pessimistic gloom in the 1990s are indeed ‘holding their own’. Language death, yes. But language life, too.



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SECTION I

General state of endangered languages today in some large regions of the world

Some good news



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THE RISE AND RISE OF AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGES

Michael Walsh

Preamble

Discourse on Endangered Languages [ELs] tends to be rather dismal. ELs are variously described as critically endangered, moribund and extinct. Thirty years ago Krauss (1992) warned about the potential demise of 90% of the world's languages. A re-examination is a little less gloomy but overall the language situation is still regarded as dire.

My own background focuses on Australian [Indigenous] Languages with particular reference to ELs over the last 30 years. Although the discourse on Australian ELs mirrors that of other regions I continue to encounter Australian Languages that have experienced amazing progress despite having been classified by *Ethnologue* as critically endangered, moribund or extinct. For instance, language translations of Shakespearean sonnets have been prepared and performed at the Globe Theatre in London. A translation of *Macbeth* has been performed on stage and Bruce Lee's *Fist of Fury* has been dubbed. For another EL, supposedly in dire straits, education in the language has become available from the earliest years of schooling through to university and other post-secondary settings [TAFE/ Polytechnic Community College]. The last fluent speaker died in 1929. Apparently new L1 speakers are now emerging!

This chapter will first review the discourse on ELs in general; then the discourse on Australian Languages in particular; a series of case studies from right around Australia of supposed ELs that have experienced amazing progress; a consideration of the tendency to be dismissive of such achievements; some proposals towards reconsidering GIDS and EGIDS. We are left with a dissonance to be explained – a continuing gloomy discourse on Australian Languages in the face of surprising and increasingly numerous counter-examples: the rise and rise of Australian Languages.

General state of ELs

Thirty years ago, Krauss (1992) warned about the potential demise of 90% of the world's languages. A re-examination (Simons and Lewis 2013) is a little less gloomy but overall the language situation is still regarded as dire. Such views persist:

Although my own first-hand experience has mainly been with fragile tongues in Aboriginal Australia and Papua New Guinea, similar tragedies are devastating small speech communities across the earth. Language death has occurred throughout human history, but among the seven thousand or more modern languages the pace of extinction is quickening, and we are likely to witness the loss of half of humankind's living tongues by the end of this century. On best current estimates, every two weeks, somewhere in the world, the last speaker of a fading language dies.

(Evans to appear: Prologue)

For many years, since 1951, *Ethnologue* has been attempting to keep track of the world's languages. It is suggested that 42.27% of the world's languages are endangered and with Australia 89% of its language can be seen as endangered.¹

One way to assess language endangerment is to employ EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, based on the earlier GIDS: Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale.² In EGIDS a language is considered to be extinct when 'The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language'. For Australian Languages it is probably fair to say there is not a single language, under this definition, that can be considered extinct. This is especially because of 'language ownership' (Walsh 2002) which basically refers to an Aboriginal person acquiring ownership of a language, traditionally often from the father, as a matter of birthright. It should be emphasized that this notion is not my idea but, so far as I know, originated in this explicit way from the noted anthropologist and linguist, Peter Sutton. Nari Nari is described by *Ethnologue* (p. 206) as 'extinct' but the author knows several Aboriginal people who retain a sense of ethnic identity because of their language, Nari Nari. So far as we know the total documentation is a mere 27 words. Nevertheless those Aboriginal people define their identity in terms of 'their' language. Nor is there any requirement that a language owner should necessarily be a speaker of that language. Early in my fieldwork I sought out people whose language was Larrakia. I was directed to an elderly woman who was deaf-mute and was told her language is Larrakia. Aboriginal people are routinely described in terms of their ethnic identity, typically using a language label. In more recent times an Aboriginal person may have multiple identities, based not just on the father's language but also the mother's and other relatives'.

ELs in Australia

Accounts about language vitality in Australia have been less than encouraging for quite some time. In the 1980s the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

[AIAS; later the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS]] commissioned a study of the overall Australian Indigenous language situation, published as Schmidt (1990). This account averred that of the 250 Australian Languages estimated to have been spoken at first settlement just 20 were healthy in the sense that they were still being learned as a matter of course by children. It was claimed that 70 were weak or dying and 160 were extinct.

AIATSIS compiled a report in 2005:³

Of an original number of over 250 known Australian Indigenous languages, only about 145 Indigenous languages are still spoken and the vast majority of these, about 110, are in the severely and critically endangered categories. This critically endangered category indicates languages that are spoken only by small groups of people mostly, over 40 years old.

Eighteen languages are strong in the sense of being spoken by all age groups, but three or four of these are showing some signs of moving into endangerment.

(National Indigenous Language Survey [NILS], AIATSIS 2005: 3)

A more recent survey, the National Indigenous Languages Report (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, and AIATSIS 2020, p. 9) declares: The AIATSIS survey found only 12 relatively strong traditional languages and two strong new languages.⁴

Such is the received wisdom on the overall Australian Indigenous language situation spanning some 30 years (see also Arthur and Morphy 2019; Marmion et al. 2014; Meakins and O'Shannessy 2016; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2019).

Case studies

In each instance a language has been assessed for language vitality in *Ethnologue*'s 21st edition (Simons and Fennig 2018). These assessments will be noted for each language.

Adnyamathanha

Nearly extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 194).

It is to the credit of South Australia's Department of Education and Children's Services that they have created language learning resources for this and at least two other Australian Languages: Arabana and Diyari. The resource for Adnyamathanha runs to about 500 pages and is specifically geared for language learning (Tunstall 2004). Another, on Arabana, is more than 500 pages and includes audio clips for all the textual examples (Wilson 2004).⁵ South Australia has a population of less than 2 million but has chosen to invest considerable resources into three Australian Languages, each of which has been described by *Ethnologue* as 'nearly

extinct'. A short animated film, *Wadu Matyidi*, has been produced⁶ and includes five mini-documentaries which show how much involvement and enthusiasm has been generated through the language revitalization process, particularly among the younger generation.⁷

Barngarla

No known L1 speakers. Extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 196).

In response to language decline, Barngarla community members in Port Augusta and Port Lincoln have been working with linguists and language revivalists since 2012 to reclaim, re-learn, document and transmit their language to the next generation. The revival of the Barngarla language offers a unique opportunity to examine whether improvements in mental health and social and emotional wellbeing can occur during and following the language reclamation process. The Barngarla Language and Wellbeing Study is a five-year National Health and Medical Research Council funded project [2017–2021] that aims to systematically assess the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing impacts of language reclamation within Barngarla communities in Port Lincoln and Port Augusta. (For more detail, see Sivak et al. 2018, 2019).⁸

Dharuk

No known L1 speakers. Extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 197).

The reach of Australian Languages into the public domain in recent times has been nothing short of amazing. By 2010 Australia's National Anthem, 'Advance Australia Fair', had been translated into the Aboriginal language of Sydney. This was performed before the 3rd State of Origin Rugby League Football match in Sydney, 7 July 2010, before over 60,000 spectators but with much greater reach through television broadcasts involving millions of viewers. Rough equivalents elsewhere might include the FA Cup Final in the UK or the Superbowl in the USA.

In 2017 the Indigenous Director of the Sydney Festival instituted intensive language classes in Dharuk called Talk Sydney.

Some highlights for me [Wesley Enoch, Sydney Festival Director, 2017–2019] include the huge Indigenous Program which saw booked out language classes throughout the city and the amazing online and broadcast audience for 'word of the day'. The newly commissioned song Bayala: Baraya Sing Up Country for the Wugul Ora Ceremony on January 26 was an emotional high . . . 2018 will see an expansion of the Language classes.⁹

Talk Sydney sessions have continued to be over-subscribed, indicating that there is something of a thirst for Australian Languages among the wider Australian public.

Renewed interest in the Sydney Language has led to the re-printing of the most extensive description (Troy 2019/1993), originally published in 1993. Currently there is a small study group in Sydney re-acquiring this supposedly extinct language.

Dieri

Nearly extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 198).

Linguist Peter K. Austin began research on Dieri in 1974 and has been involved in its revitalization since 2011 (Austin 2014). One product of the revitalization is a rendering of the Johnny Cash song, ‘Folsom Prison Blues’, into Dieri. He shows how adjustments to the original text need to make the Dieri version more compatible:

In English, the third verse reads like this:

I bet there’s rich folks eating
 In a fancy dining car
 They’re probably drinking coffee
 And smoking big cigars
 But I know I had it coming
 I know I can’t be free
 But those people keep a-movin’
 And that’s what tortures me

English adapted for Diyari translation:

They are all eating
 As they sit on the train
 They are drinking tea
 And smoking
 I am a bad man
 I can’t get away
 While they are all going
 I am sitting alone¹⁰

Greg Wilson, mentioned earlier in connection with Arabana, has been compiling similar materials for this language.

Kaurna

No known L1 speakers but emerging L2 speakers. Reawakening (Simons and Fennig 2018: 202).

The last fluent speaker, Ivaritji, died in 1929 but there is substantial documentation of the language from 19th-century missionaries. Building on this foundation and some community knowledge, language revitalization has been proceeding since the 1980s. This language ended up being taught at all levels of education, from the earliest years of schooling through to post-secondary education, including a university. An Aboriginal organization, Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi, has produced

an impressive array of resources¹¹ and Kurna country is being re-populated with Aboriginal placenames.¹² There are radio broadcasts using Kurna language and there are language learning videos freely available.¹³ Unusually, there is a readily available account of Kurna revitalization along with a film featuring a Kurna man who is currently passing the language on to his children: *Warra-parna Kurna! Reclaiming an Australian Language* from University of Adelaide Press.¹⁴ See also the film *Buckskin*.¹⁵

Much more detail about this language's recent rising is provided by Amery (this volume).

Kumbainggar

Threatened (Simons and Fennig 2018: 203).

As was demonstrated in Walsh (2009) the Gumbaynggirr language was tested against GIDS and proved to be 'difficult' to fit into the scheme. Among the 'problems' presented by this language was that appeared to be spoken – to some extent – by all generation levels. Beginning in the 1980s there had been adult education courses in the language conducted in tandem with school-based education. Over more than two decades there had been numerous cohorts of Gumbaynggirr-learning students who increasingly used the language in the home. By now, I estimate there must be hundreds of semi-speakers, given the cohorts of adult education students as well as school students for over 20 years. Another 'problem' for GIDS is that it has been reported that children are teaching the language to their parents and grandparents. That is not supposed to be the way intergenerational language transmission should work!¹⁶

Ngandi

Nearly extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 206).

A linguist, Jeffrey Heath, worked with speakers of the Ngandi language in the 1970s and was not optimistic about its future:

There are probably about six persons who speak Ngandi well now. My principal informant, Sandy (madulpu), is probably in his forties, and so far as I know, persons younger than him do not speak the language well. Most people who speak Ngandi also speak one or more other Aboriginal languages such as Nunggubuyu, Ngalakan, Ritharngu, or Alawa, in addition to Pidgin English. Since the Ngandi speakers are scattered at several settlements (Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Roper Valley etc.), there is no likelihood that the language will survive much longer.

(Heath 1978: 3)

However a short film using Ngandi language, *Lilbois*, was produced in 2019 and language lessons are taught in a local school.¹⁷

Ngunawal

Extinct (Simons and Fennig 2018: 207).

A number of linguists at AIATSIS called a meeting of Aboriginal people with Ngunawal language heritage in September 2013. Two and a half years later the Australian Prime Minister delivered a short speech in Ngunawal to the Federal Parliament.¹⁸

In 2016, then Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull made history by being the first Prime Minister to speak an Australian Indigenous language in a parliamentary speech. He gave an acknowledgment of country in Ngunawal for the annual Closing the Gap speech. The acknowledgment was written by Ngunawal men Tyronne Bell and Glen Freeman, with assistance from AIATSIS linguist Doug Marmion. This is particularly significant as the Ngunawal language has not been spoken fluently for almost a century, but AIATSIS has been working with the Ngunawal community for several years to revitalise it.¹⁹

In 2015 some basic language lessons were presented in primary school. Currently there are continuing efforts to make the language more accessible:

Since 2018, AIATSIS has been working closely with the recently established Winanggaay Ngunawal Language Group, who represent a wide range of Ngunawal families. An important step taken with this work was to employ a linguist to analyse the fullest range of historical materials and draw on them to write a grammar, a technical description of the language. We have continued working with Winanggaay to assist them in using this grammar to develop Ngunawal language learning materials and to continue the work of bringing Ngunawal back in to daily use within the community.²⁰

Nyunga

Threatened (Simons and Fennig 2018: 208).

In 2016 Aboriginal Australian theatre director Kylie Farmer appeared on national television with a performance of ‘Sonnet 127’ in Noongar, the Indigenous language from south-west Western Australia.²¹ But, earlier, in 2012 she had delivered Shakespearean sonnets at the Globe Theatre in London.²² Later she translated and performed *Macbeth* with an ensemble of Noongar actors.²³

More recently Bruce Lee’s *Fist of Fury* has been dubbed by her husband, Clint Bracknell.²⁴

Yawuru

No known L1 speakers (Wurm 2007). Dormant. (Simons and Fennig 2018: 213).

In 1991 a linguist, Komei Hosokawa commented on the status of the Yawuru language:

Young people of Yawuru descent apparently do not have a full command of the language of their parents. However, this does not necessarily mean that the language will never be spoken by the young generation . . . it is intriguing to note that it has repeatedly been reported since the 1930s that the Yawuru language is nearing extinction. As a matter of fact, the situation seems to remain the same after 50 years: Yawuru is still (!) ‘on the verge of extinction’, but somehow continues to survive.

(Hosokawa 2011 [1991]: 13)

A Yawuru website tells us:

Yawuru is an endangered language and has been the focus of NBY’s cultural maintenance at the Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga Yawuru Language Centre. Language specialists have developed resources and innovative solutions that are revitalising the language and training Yawuru people to teach and share the language.

Broome primary schools (up to 1500 children) have Yawuru language programs and it is becoming more familiar in the broader community, increasing respect and understanding for the language and culture of the Yawuru people.

And:

The inaugural Walalangga Yawuru Ngan-ga adult language program was a 2 year program specifically designed to re-introduce language into the homes of Yawuru families.

Nine Yawuru adults completed the first fulltime course and graduates have shared their learning with their community, gaining confidence and experience in public speaking, education and translation. Graduates have not only gained language skills, but also gained self-confidence, cultural knowledge and interpersonal skills that have increased their working experience and their capabilities in a range of areas.²⁵

Peter Yu (personal communication) said that the community used some of the proceeds of a successful Native Title outcome to fund adults to learn their language.

Tasmanian

One of the most shameful episodes in Australian colonial history was the massive disruption to the original inhabitants of the island of Tasmania:

The disintegration and extinction of Tasmanian tribes is well documented; it provides what is perhaps the most horrifying example of genocide from

anywhere in the world. The original population of from three to five thousand – before the white invasion of 1803 – was halved each decade, partly by introduced diseases, partly by murder. Then, during 1829–34, the self-styled missionary George Augustus Robinson gathered together the 300 or so survivors and transported them to an island in the Bass Strait. Separated from their homeland, numbers decreased even more rapidly – there were 82 left in 1838, 16 in 1854 and only 6 by 1863.

(Crowley and Dixon 1981: 396)

Not surprisingly the documentation of Tasmanian languages is quite limited (see also Crowley 1993):

The source material on the now extinct Tasmanian languages is so poor that only very limited conclusions can be drawn concerning the structure of the languages.

(Crowley and Dixon 1981: 395)

Crowley assisted descendants of these languages in their quest to revitalize:

A workshop held in 1994 with the assistance of a linguist, Terry Crowley, showed clearly that none of the records of any of the original languages were enough to build a whole language from or to revive any one of them. The community accepted that instead one language could be retrieved from all the original languages for which records exist. *palawa kani* would be a composite language.

(Reynolds and Sainty to appear: 6)

This marks a departure from ‘normal’ language revitalization in that the new language is a composite created out of the meagre documentation available. It is heartening to see that progress is occurring:

Aboriginal community use and capability has strengthened across all age groups, with the strongest base of speakers in the infant to young adult range – the target group of language teaching. Adults give welcomes and political addresses, create and perform songs and plays, write fiction, and strive to keep pace with their children and grandchildren who *tunapri kani* and carry it into the future with accomplishment and pride.

(Reynolds and Sainty to appear: 17)

Are Australian Languages the only, possible exceptions to GIDS and EGIDS?

I have suggested that no Australian Language can be deemed ‘extinct’ using the definition: ‘The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language’. But it seems unlikely that Australian Languages are the only ones of today’s languages that fail to satisfy this definition.

Of course there have been languages which are no longer used and for which no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language. One example would be Linear B but there would be many others. But currently it seems likely that there would be other Indigenous groups who retain a sense of ethnic identity associated with their language, notwithstanding that the language is no longer used. I suspect this is so for at least some groups in North America, if not elsewhere. If this is so, an adjustment needs to be made to the EGIDS definition of 'extinct'.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the discourse on ELs in general; then the discourse on Australian Languages in particular. I have presented a series of case studies from right around Australia of supposed ELs that have experienced amazing progress. The tendency to maintain a continuing gloomy discourse on Australian Languages persists in the face of surprising and increasingly numerous counter-examples: the rise and rise of Australian Languages.

Finally, I am pleased to be able to contribute to a series of studies in honour of Nicholas Ostler. I have known Nick Ostler since 2003 when we attended the FEL conference in Broome. Since then I have attended nine other FEL conferences so our paths have crossed many times. I see him as a major force that has promoted uplift for ELs from the 1990s onwards. His commitment to, and, enthusiasm for the cause continues to be inspiring.²⁶

Notes

- 1 www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages-endangered.
- 2 www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status.
- 3 https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/research_pub/nils-report-2005.pdf.
- 4 www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/indigenous-arts-and-languages/national-indigenous-languages-report.
- 5 <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/3122989/Copyright?>.
- 6 www.languageofbelonging.com.au/pages/home.html.
- 7 See also <https://mobilelanguageteam.com.au/languages/adnyamathanha/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adnyamathanha_language; <https://mobilelanguageteam.com.au/adnyamathanha-dictionary-launched-in-adelaide/>.
- 8 Also see www.barngarla.com/; www.barngarlalanguage.com/; www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6843244/.
- 9 <http://blog.sydneyfestival.org.au/2017/01/30/thats-wrap-thank-wesley-enoch>.
- 10 <https://dieriyawarra.wordpress.com/2013/08/04/folsom-prison-parkulu/>.
- 11 www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/.
- 12 www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/placenames/.
- 13 www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/resources/.
- 14 www.adelaide.edu.au/press/titles/kaurna/; free download.
- 15 <http://buckskinfilm.com/about-the-film/>.
- 16 For more detail, see <https://muurrbay.org.au/languages/gumbaynggirr/>.
- 17 www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media/stories/lil-bois-waking-language-ngandi.
- 18 www.smh.com.au/comment/turnbulls-address-to-parliament-mark-of-respect-for-gunawals-rediscovery-of-collective-soul-20160212-gmsanf.htm.

- 19 <https://johntsquires.com/2019/08/09/>.
- 20 <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/current-projects/ngunnawal-language-revival-project>.
- 21 www.smh.com.au/entertainment/qa-actress-performs-sonnet-in-nyungar-20160905-4k8s2.html.
- 22 www.phaiwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Indigenous-Storybook-2nd-Edition.pdf, p. 18.
- 23 <https://2018.perthfestival.com.au/event/macbeth-in-noongar>; <https://yirrayaakin.com.au/production/the-noongar-shakespeare-project/>; <http://boomerangandspear.com/about-us/>; www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/feb/11/hecate-is-often-erased-from-shakespeares-macbeth-now-shes-centre-stage-in-noongar-language.
- 24 www.perthfestival.com.au/events/fist-of-fury-noongar-daa/; www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/feb/01/bruce-lee-was-the-unlikely-hero-of-70s-noongar-kids-now-hes-helping-us-share-our-language.
- 25 www.yawuru.org.au/culture/mabu-yawuru-ngan-ga/?doing_wp_cron=1626651323.0936460494995117187500.
- 26 An earlier version of this chapter was delivered at Puliima 2019, Indigenous Languages and Technology Conference, Darwin Convention Centre, Wednesday 21 August 2019.

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3

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN BRAZIL IN 2021

*Sebastian Drude, Joshua Birchall, Ana Vilacy Galúcio,
Denny Moore and Hein van der Voort*

3.1 Introduction

In terms of language diversity, language endangerment and language preservation efforts, the continent-sized country Brazil arguably stands out. Considered one of the ten countries with the most languages,¹ Brazil also has an impressive number of independent linguistic families and language isolates. This holds true even after possibly having lost more than 80% of its languages since 1500 (Rodrigues 1993), in a process that seems to have severely accelerated recently. Brazil furthermore has a vivid linguistic scene that has established and developed indigenous language research, documentation and preservation efforts.

The co-authors of this chapter have participated in these efforts in Brazil in one form or another. They all are affiliated with the Museu Goeldi, which has worked extensively on language endangerment and language documentation. For 25+ years, roughly from 1990 to 2015, Moore was the curator of the Museu Goeldi's linguistic collections, and this position is now occupied by Galúcio. Both specialize in the Tupian languages of Rondônia. Also there, since 1995, van der Voort has been doing linguistic research mainly on linguistic isolates. Drude led one of the first language documentation projects on the continent, on Awetí (Tupian, Mato Grosso). Birchall has worked since 2009 on Chapacuran and other languages in Rondônia and nearby regions of Bolivia.

In this chapter, we first give a brief overview of languages and their endangerment status in Brazil (Section 3.2), followed by an account of language documentation in Brazil (Section 3.3), covering international and national research programmes and assessing the current status in terms of achieved coverage and of capacities for future work. In Section 3.4, we describe Brazilian initiatives to survey and support endangered languages, addressing two national surveying efforts as well as local activities to maintain and strengthen endangered languages. Then Section 3.5 illustrates and further details some of the aforementioned topics by the

example of the state of Rondônia. Finally, Section 3.6 contains some concluding observations and a brief outlook.

3.2 Overview of endangered languages in Brazil

There are approximately 155 different indigenous languages still spoken in Brazil today (Moore 2006). This count, like all others, does not include the unknown languages spoken by several dozens of uncontacted groups (FUNAI; FUNAI: DAF & CGII 2006, cf. also Loebens & Neves 2011). There are much higher counts of even more than 200 indigenous languages (e.g. the *Ethnologue*, Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2021) which often consider mutually intelligible dialects spoken by different peoples as separate languages, and sometimes also include groups that have ceased to speak their traditional language, and/or languages that are currently unattested. Although the details differ, most linguists agree that these languages represent between 16 and 19 different independent language families, many with only two to five member languages, whereas the ‘big four’ families account for roughly two-thirds of all Brazilian indigenous languages: Macro-Jêan ~18, Cariban ~20, Arawakan ~20, and Tupian 40–45 (all these numbers are restricted to languages spoken in Brazil, not counting members of these families spoken only outside of Brazil). Furthermore, eight living languages are isolates, and for several languages there are not sufficient data. With these numbers, Brazil is certainly one of the world’s regions of highest linguistic diversity. This holds in particular for its western and northern Amazonian regions and adjacent areas in neighbouring countries, which are considered a “language hotspot” (Anderson 2011).

As Brazil was hit particularly hard by the demographic and cultural breakdown that affected the native peoples of the Americas in the wake of the European invasion, this still impressive diversity is likely only a fraction of what it was 500 years ago when the Europeans arrived. This is clearly reflected by the geographical distribution of Brazil’s extant indigenous languages: where the European presence started in the early centuries of colonization, only very few (a total of perhaps 12) indigenous languages are still spoken. This holds for Brazil’s coastal (southern, south-eastern and north-eastern) states, but also for a 200 km wide margin on both sides of the Amazon and its major tributaries, as far as they are easily navigable. In contrast, most languages are now spoken in peripheral areas of the huge states of Amazonas (~35), Pará (~25) and Mato Grosso (~25), and in Rondônia (~25), Acre (~10), Roraima (~7), Tocantins (~5), Mato Grosso do Sul (~4) and Amapá (~4). Rondônia is a particularly interesting state that was almost unexploited until just over 100 years ago, but from the 1950s onward it was arguably the state whose rich and very diverse population suffered the gravest consequences of deforestation, colonization and consequently their depopulation. We will take a closer look at this state in Section 3.5.

Sadly, the loss of Brazilian cultural and linguistic diversity is a still ongoing process that has accelerated in recent decades, where official policies and new technologies have enabled further exploitation of its vast hinterlands, mostly in the Amazon region, as is emblematically exemplified by Rondônia. In fact, arguably

each and every Brazilian indigenous language is endangered or threatened in the sense that it is quite possible that it will not be spoken anymore in only a few generations. This is often not sufficiently reflected in endangerment assessments such as *Ethnologue's* EGIDS system (Lewis & Simons 2010) where 31 languages appear as EGIDS level 5 ('developing'), and 4 even as level 4 ('educational'), or in or UNESCO's *Atlas of Languages in Danger* (Moseley & Nicolas 2010) where almost half of Brazil's languages appear only as 'vulnerable', although many of these are actually in a much more advanced stage in the process of falling silent.

Speaker numbers add some more useful information to the picture, although these also are often outdated and unreliable because they tend to be confused with the population size – in many cases only a fraction of community members actually speak the traditional language. Even with this caveat, it is telling that the median value for speaker numbers for Brazilian indigenous languages is below 300 individuals; only about 10% have 5,000 speakers or more, and even the largest one, Ticuna, with approximately 35,000 speakers in Brazil, is small on a global (or national) scale. On the lower end of the gradient, more than 40 languages have ten speakers or fewer.

For an overall assessment, it is probably even more important to note that almost all indigenous communities now have a majority of members with some fluency in Portuguese (differently from just a few decades ago), and the command and use of Portuguese grows stronger every day among adolescents and young adults almost everywhere. Where urban settlements emerge, the forest is cut down, roads reach into formerly isolated regions, and young indigenous individuals have more opportunities to travel and speak Portuguese with outsiders. Except among a few peoples in very remote areas, monolinguals tend to be few and of the elderly generations, whereas Portuguese is learned at an increasingly young age, through schooling and also a growing exposure to Brazilian television and digital media. In situations where the traditional culture of a community is practiced and vibrant, including its religious, social and economic aspects, the indigenous languages are usually strong and being transmitted to the next generations. This, however, is not the current situation in most communities, which have suffered the impact of deforestation and land theft, migration to the cities for educational and economic opportunities, forced labour or relocation, dam building and similar projects, missionary activities, illegal lumbering and mining, incidences of killing of leaders and brutal massacres, and even, in the past, outright genocide, to mention only the most important factors.

One current approach to get a reliable overview of the endangerment/vitality status of Brazil's languages is to compile and combine existing available (published) information. This approach has been taken in the Endangered Languages Project which created the ELCat catalogue (Alliance for Linguistic Diversity 2013ff; Holton 2018). It gives not just estimates of vitality on a 'Language Endangerment Scale' (0 'safe' to 5 'critically endangered') but also an indication of how reliable each estimate is, which is an important step towards getting a more accurate picture. Presumably all living Brazilian indigenous languages (183 appear in ELCat) are listed and hence considered at least 'vulnerable'. Similarly, Glottolog (Hammarström et al. 2021) provides an 'Agglomerated Endangerment Status'

TABLE 3.1 Number of indigenous languages of Brazil and numbers of their speakers, by vitality status

<i>Vitality status</i>	<i>Number of languages</i>	<i>Minimum, median and maximum number of speakers</i>
potentially endangered	18	2240, 6500, 35,000
endangered	76	180, 800, 18,000
seriously endangered	56	1, 62, 712
moribund	32	1, 3, 30
possibly extinct	8	?
extinct	28	0

(6 degrees from ‘not endangered’ to ‘extinct’) for each language based on the publicly available source identified as most reliable.

Another approach is to proactively reach out to language specialists in order to get up-to-date first-hand information for as many languages as possible. Mily Crevels has been working on South American languages in this manner, with the most recent version, published as Crevels (2012), building off of earlier work such as Crevels and Adelaar (2001) and Crevels (2002, 2007). Although there are many gaps that had to be filled with older second-hand data, this is arguably the most comprehensive and sound overview available at this point. According to her, this is the current picture for the 218 Brazilian indigenous languages and major dialects she identified (Table 3.1).

3.3 Language documentation and archives in Brazil

3.3.1 *International programmes*

Language documentation (LD) as a linguistic subfield in the sense introduced by Himmelmann (1998) arguably started² in 2000 with the DOBES (Documenting Endangered Languages) programme, funded by the German VolkswagenStiftung (not affiliated with the car manufacturer) between 2000 and 2016. There were three applications from Brazil for the one-year pilot phase: for Kuikuro (by Bruna Franchetto, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Trumai (by Raquel Guirardello-Damian, then Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics and Museu Goeldi) and Awetí (by Sebastian Drude, Museu Goeldi and Free University Berlin) – by coincidence all of them are spoken in the Upper Xingu area. Luckily, the Foundation was wise enough to require that the three projects join into a project network so that all three languages could be included right from the start. There was a strong constructive collaboration between the project leaders, agreeing, among other things, to collect texts on similar topics and structure the corpora in an analogous way in order to facilitate future comparative research. This cooperation secured Brazil a prominent place in the DOBES programme for many years.

Soon, other DOBES projects on Brazilian languages followed, namely a 2003 project by Sérgio Meira on Mawé, Katxuyana and Bakairi; one in 2006 by Eliane Camargo on Cashinahua; and another in 2011 by Hein van der Voort, on Aikanã, Kwaza and other neighbouring languages. Most of these projects were successful in creating large collections of recordings of all sorts of genres, including dialogues, cultural explanations, procedural instructions, personal accounts, traditional narratives, and even music and culturally important events or daily activities. Many of the recordings have annotation and rich metadata.

The DOBES programme was important for advocating LD (e.g. Drude 2006; Drude 2007) and, especially in the early years, to establish common goals and methods. In particular, it helped by developing tools for annotation, such as ELAN, which is the state-of-the-art tool for linguistic annotation of audio and video recordings until today, and archiving (see Section 3.3.4).

Very soon after the start of DOBES, the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP), funded by Arcadia and hosted at SOAS (University of London), began to also finance LD projects. The first ELDP projects in Brazil started in 2003. Among these was one large project by Denny Moore, involving five Tupian languages. Since then, almost every year, one, two or three ELDP projects have been implanted in Brazil (in total 23, so far covering a total of 32 languages). The ELDP projects have a more diverse scope than those of DOBES. Besides large multi-year documentation projects, ELDP also funds smaller and shorter projects, as well as projects that focus on language description and analysis, or the creation of resources such as dictionaries. The ELDP has been playing a very important role in the documentation of Brazilian languages. Its results are all archived in SOAS' ELAR, the Endangered Language Archive, now arguably the largest of its kind worldwide.

The third major international source of funding for LD projects in Brazil comes from the federal funding agencies of the United States (the National Science Foundation, NSF and the National Endowment for the Humanities, NEH), notably via the ongoing Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL) programme. From 2010 on, so far two major projects (NSF) and three fellowships (NEH) on seven languages have been supported, mostly in recent years. Additionally, the NSF has funded a number of other major projects and doctoral dissertation grants involving Brazilian languages. Similar to the ELDP, the goals and size of projects can vary and include projects with a focus on description rather than documentation.

It is important not to forget smaller funding initiatives that often provide crucial initial funding preceding major documentation projects that can, despite comparatively modest amounts, have an important impact, also in terms of language valorization and language maintenance initiatives. Besides one project funded by the Firebird Foundation (on the Naduhup language Daw), two important initiatives must be mentioned here, the German *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen* (four projects) and, in particular, the UK-based *Foundation for Endangered Languages*, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year (to which we hope to pay homage with this article). Two of the three FEL projects in Brazil have focused on languages which have not been supported by any other programme.

These projects seem to have a positive impact on the languages and communities involved. The ethical requirements of projects such as DOBES demanded that results of documentation be returned to the communities and that practical support be given where possible. Several of these projects led to further initiatives that aim more specifically at language strengthening or revitalization.

3.3.2 *The national Prodoclin programme*

The Museu do Índio in Rio de Janeiro, part of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) within the Ministry of Justice, working in close association with Bruna Franchetto, seized the momentum and managed to secure national funding and support for language documentation and related activities. One major result is the Programme for the Documentation of Indigenous Languages (Prodoclin), which began in 2009 at the Museu do Índio, with financial support from the Brazilian government and administrative support from UNESCO (<http://prodoclin.museudoindio.gov.br>). Prodoclin is part of the larger PROGDOC programme that includes parallel initiatives focused on ethnographic and ethnomusicological documentation (Franchetto & Rice 2014: 256–257).

Prodoclin has so far been carried out in three phases. The first phase of the programme began in 2009 and involved teams of professional linguists who trained and collaborated with indigenous researchers on LD and description. This effort resulted in the development of a substantial documentation corpus and a descriptive grammar sketch of 13 Brazilian indigenous languages: Apiaka, Desano, Haliti-Paresi, Kaiabi-Kawaiwete, Kanoé, Kisêdjê, Karajá, Maxakali, Ikpeng, Ninam, Rikbaktsa, Shawādawa, and Yawanawa.

The second phase of Prodoclin began in 2013 and built on the documentation and training provided during the previous phase of the project, aiming to produce pedagogical grammars of five languages: Ikpeng, Kaiabi-Kawaiwete, Karajá, Haliti-Paresi and also Wapichana.

The third and currently ongoing phase of the Prodoclin initiative began in 2017 and focuses on building documentation corpora and producing multimedia online dictionaries with a new set of languages. This phase focuses primarily on languages that are spoken near the borders of Brazil and its neighbouring countries, with many of the languages being spoken currently or historically on both sides of these borders. There are 12 languages involved in this phase of the project: Arutani, Galibi-Marworno, Guató, Karajá, Karipuna Creole, Kawahiva, Korubo, Moré-Kuyubim (by Joshua Birchall), Sanöma, Taurepang, Werekena, Ye'kwana.

All three phases of Prodoclin have contributed to providing technical training in LD methods to researchers working in Brazil and have helped to train a new generation of indigenous researchers to continue this work within their own communities. This emphasis on local and national capacity building has also aided in combating misguided notions that LD is primarily a foreign enterprise. The program has additionally served as an important source of funding for researchers working at Brazilian universities and research institutions whose financial structure can make the administration of external funding difficult.

3.3.3 Documentation coverage of Brazilian endangered languages

Due to some overlap,³ the ~70 projects dedicated to language documentation that we have mentioned here have covered about 66 of Brazil's endangered indigenous languages. Although we also have to realize that not all projects managed to achieve their goals, it should be safe to state that more than a third of all Brazilian languages (if counted conservatively) have some archived collection of LD materials, and in many cases the projects have resulted in extensive collections. In principle, this material is accessible via the internet (given access permission), although, for instance, the archive in Rio de Janeiro is struggling to be able to provide online access to the material due to technical problems (see Section 3.3.4).

In the map in Figure 3.1, languages that have documentation are marked in grey or black, while languages without documentation are marked in white.⁴ The map provides coordinates from Glottolog 4.4 that are approximate centre-points

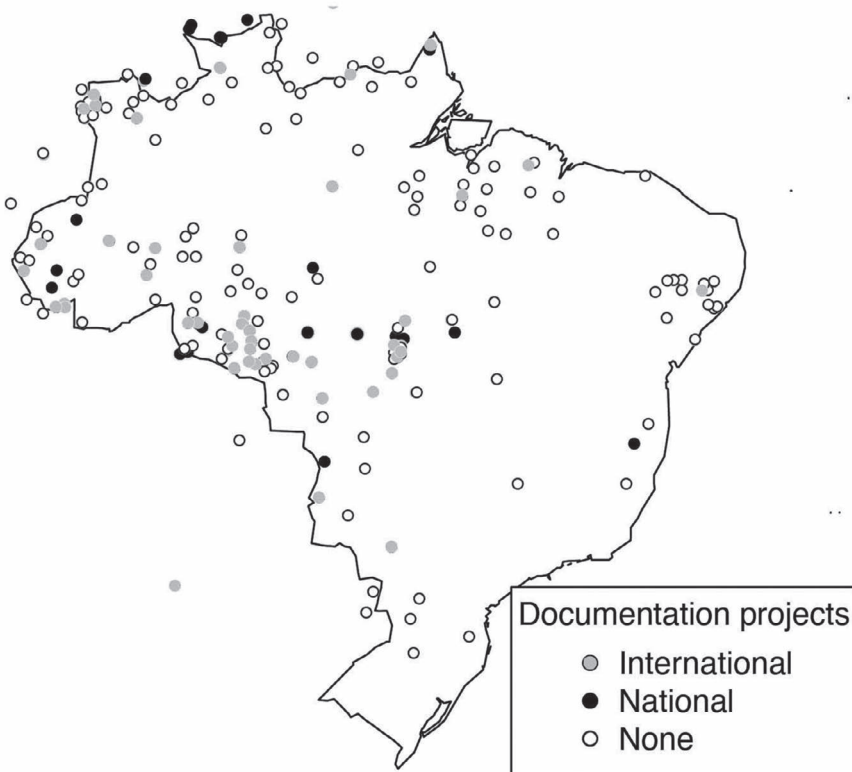


FIGURE 3.1 Map of target languages of language documentation projects in Brazil with identified national (black) and international (grey) funding, together with all the other indigenous spoken languages (white).

Source: Graphic produced by the authors.

for the known regions where speakers of these languages live or are known to have lived (Hammarström et al. 2021). Only languages that have an ISO 639-3 code and that are considered a distinct language (rather than dialect of a language) in Glottolog have been included. Indigenous sign languages, creole languages based on Indo-European languages but spoken by indigenous communities, and languages classified as extinct in Eberhard, Simons and Fennig (2021) have not been included.

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, there is an uneven geographical distribution of LD projects in Brazil. Certain regions such as the Upper Xingu basin, upper Madeira basin, the upper Rio Negro basin and the upper Amazon basin show a greater concentration of projects than regions such as the lower Amazon basin, north-eastern Brazil and southern Brazil.

3.3.4 *Language documentation capacities and archives in Brazil*

The demand by indigenous groups for documentation of their languages and cultures is very strong, and more and more indigenous groups have young people who use computers and recording devices. Given the large number of indigenous languages in Brazil and the increasing amount of documentation being produced, there is a great need for digital archives to reliably store the documentation and make it permanently available to the indigenous groups. In the first decade of this century, a small group of linguists in Brazil rejected documentation programmes and the creation of archives. However, this position did not gain many supporters and the work continued. With the tragic loss of the archive of the Museu Nacional in a fire in 2018, the need for permanent digital storage, with back-up, became especially evident. Currently there are only two digital language archives in Brazil, at the Museu Goeldi in Belém and at the Museu do Índio in Rio de Janeiro.

The archive of Amazonian languages at the Museu Goeldi was established over the last two decades, and hosts the data from all documentation projects in which the Museu was involved, as well as other earlier projects whose data were digitized and catalogued. National and international documentation programmes, as well as financial support from the Brazilian government, were vital to develop this capacity. In the period 2009–2014, projects to create a fully functioning digital archive were carried out. At the present time, the digitized recordings and their metadata are stored in a Network Attached Storage of 32 TB, now copied to a NAS of 96 TB. Data include documentation of 80 indigenous groups, of which 73 are completely digitized, catalogued and stored, using Language Archiving Technology (LAT), with a total of 1,561 hours of audio and 474 hours of video. The archived material also includes edited recordings, mostly for the use of the indigenous communities. In order to promote documentation in Brazil, the Museu Goeldi conducts training in documentation, offers technical advice, lends equipment, and provides digitization and storage services for legacy materials from linguists, anthropologists and native groups and organizations.

The Museu do Índio saw the potential for useful action involving indigenous peoples and supported the new LD movement by establishing a digital archive

and launching the national Prodoclin research programme (see Section 3.3.2). The Museu do Índio has systematically built up its infrastructure over time and has an impressive capacity for digital storage and backup, serving its own extensive documentation projects (carried out by linguists of various institutions) as well as to store donated and heritage documentation material. Its digital archive includes documentation of the languages of 25 indigenous groups, the documentation of cultural aspects of 27 indigenous groups, and five ethnomusicological projects. The question of access is still being resolved, as in the case of the Museu Goeldi. Both archives provide copies of the material to the indigenous communities upon request.

The archives of the Museu Goeldi and the Museu do Índio, as well as a series of other archives in Latin America (Argentina, Peru and Ecuador, cf. Seifart et al. 2008; also in Mexico), were implemented with the support of The Language Archive (TLA)⁵ at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen, Netherlands, using its “Language Archiving Technology” (LAT). Unfortunately, LAT is not maintained and supported any more, so the regional archives are currently struggling to find new technical solutions to keep their archives going.

At the present time, language documentation is well established in Brazil as an integral part of linguistic research on indigenous languages, which changed the field (as it did worldwide) to have a more verifiably empirical and data-based orientation. Therefore, many universities and research centres that work on indigenous languages also have some faculty or team members with skills and experience in LD. The number of such centres has grown recently, despite the lack of personnel. For instance, the Documentation Centre of the Federal University of Amapá in Oiapoque has developed documentation projects of the languages of the Karipuna, the Galibi-Marworno, and the Palikur peoples, which produced large amounts of audio, video and photo material.

Documentation projects in Brazil have produced significant quantities of documentation that need permanent archiving instead of being stored on external hard drives. Currently, some of the archiving needs in Brazil are being met by international archives, since the indigenous LD data produced by international documentation programmes is archived in international archives, as well as remaining in the possession of the project managers. These archives include the ELAR in London (ELDP projects), the DOBES archive (TLA at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen, the Netherlands), the CLA (California Language Archives at UC Berkeley) and AILLA (the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America, in Austin, Texas, USA). A potentially very useful measure would be the establishment of regional digital archives in Brazil, together with audio-visual equipment and the training necessary to conduct documentation and permanent archiving. The regional archives would have the advantages of easy contact with the indigenous groups of the region and easy access by these groups to the recordings. For example, there are programmes for indigenous students at a number of universities in Brazil (such as the Federal University of Amazonas, the Federal University of Goiás, the Federal University of Amapá, among others), where the students could record in their home communities and deposit the recordings in an archive at their university, where they would be available to the communities.

The larger, more permanent, indigenous organizations are also capable of maintaining an archive and documentation programme. Backup for these archives could be provided by the major archives in Brazil in Rio de Janeiro and Belém. Besides continued support for documentation projects, and securing more reliable funding for sustainable maintenance and expansion of the national (digital) language archives, a campaign for preserving materials that are usually held in the private possession of retired researchers or their heirs would be one of the most helpful actions to be taken towards indigenous languages and thus the world's intellectual heritage.

3.4 Brazilian initiatives to survey and strengthen endangered languages

3.4.1 *The Brazilian national 2010 census*

Considering Brazil's great linguistic diversity, it is crucial to understand the actual situation of all languages in order to be better prepared for planning public language policies, including language inventories, as well as registration, documentation and revitalization efforts. An important initiative of the Brazilian Federal Government that created the possibility of identifying, with some precision, the real number of languages spoken in Brazil was the 2010 National Demographic Census. For the first time in recent history, the census included an inquiry about the language(s) spoken by each person. This inclusion was received with great optimism, because before it was not clearly determined officially which languages are spoken in the country and how many speakers each language has. It would be useful to understand the status of indigenous languages and also of immigration languages. However, only people who identified themselves as indigenous were consulted about the languages they spoke. The information would be more useful if it had been preceded by proper planning, since it could have helped clarify the number of speakers of indigenous languages. But the results of the 2010 census regarding the number of indigenous languages spoken in the country and the number of their speakers were surprisingly confusing and inaccurate.

According to the results of the Census (IBGE 2012), the number of indigenous languages spoken in Brazil is 274. This number surpasses the number of languages identified by specialists by more than one hundred, which is estimated to be in between 150–160 languages (Moore, Galúcio & Gabas Jr. 2008). More surprisingly, it is even much larger than the 209 “languages of identification” of the census, which included major dialects as separate languages and were basically names of ethnic groups. The language spoken was self-declared by the indigenous people who responded to the census.

In addition to including self-declared speakers of languages that have long been considered extinct, the IBGE/Census 2010 also produced unreliable results on the number of speakers for at least some of the identified languages. For instance, the Tupinambarana language has been considered extinct for two centuries, but was listed with 251 self-declared speakers. The Aruá language, spoken in Rondônia, had 189 speakers listed, but according to an on-site survey carried out by Moore

in 2010 and confirmed in 2016, there are only five speakers of this language. The Suruí of Rondônia (auto-denomination Paiter) have a population of only 1,300 people, but had 2,886 speakers listed in the Census. These highlights illustrate the problems that exist in acquiring reliable knowledge of the situation of indigenous languages in the country.

3.4.2 *The National Survey of Linguistic Diversity (INDL)*

The degree of endangerment of indigenous languages was largely underestimated for years in Brazil because of the confusion between speaker numbers and group population, and, as we saw in the previous section, the problem still continues. After some years of preparation (see Moore & Galúcio 2016), the National Survey of Linguistic Diversity (INDL) was launched in 2010,⁶ aiming to collect comprehensive information on all languages in Brazil (indigenous and immigrant languages, Brazilian sign languages, and languages or dialects of Afro-Brazilian origin). Such a survey of the real situation of all languages is necessary in order to correct the existing lack of knowledge of the situation of the languages of Brazil and provide the basis for documentation and revitalization programmes, as well as other activities of language policy. Since there was no pre-existing model for how to do a survey of languages on a national scale, a work group⁷ was formed to elaborate a plan. This group defined the content of the proposed national survey, which should include information about the survey team, methodology and results, identification of the language, number and characterization of speakers and semi-speakers, degree of language transmission, linguistic and historical characterization, geographic distribution, language use in society, language status and institutions. It also included a description of writing and literacy in the language, its oral and written literature, available audio-visual materials and studies about the language. The survey should also contain samples of the language, including a word list, independent writing samples to test consistency and orthographic adequacy, and a short video of a conversation with subtitles in Portuguese.

Another open question was the field methodology necessary for such an enterprise. Different approaches were tested by commissioning a few pilot projects with the goal of testing the content and establishing the methodology of what would become the National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity (INDL). In the case of indigenous languages, five pilot projects were supported, which were quite different in scope and cost. Costs ranged from R\$18/person surveyed to R\$456/person, since some projects focused on developing activities and other products that went far beyond the initial scope of trying to find inexpensive yet accurate field procedures for an efficient national survey in terms of cost and time.

Despite the discrepancies in the pilot projects, the guidelines for the National Inventory were settled in 2008. The main point was that the inventory should present the most relevant information about each language, it should follow a standardized methodology, and more importantly, it should cover all the languages of the country in a short period of time, considering that many languages are vulnerable or endangered. However, the programme coordinator was replaced, and

the field manual for the INDL survey published by IPHAN (Chacon et al. 2014) brought back the understanding of the INDL mainly as an official initiative for recognizing individual languages as cultural patrimony. Since the focus is not on providing a detailed evaluation of the situation of each language, many important kinds of information are left as optional, and many other miscellaneous facts and recordings are favoured.

As a result, in the ten years since launching the INDL programme, only a few languages have been comprehensively surveyed. These include the few languages that were objects of the pilot projects, and some other languages that were part of regional surveys, such as the Yanomami languages (Ferreira, Senra & Machado 2018a, 2018b), and the languages of Rondônia (Galúcio, Moore & van der Voort 2018). The latter collected information about 26 ethnic groups and their languages or dialects, including total population, number of speakers (total and by age), level of fluency of speakers, domains of language use, adequacy and use of existing orthographies, effects of missionary actions, situation of the language in school, existence of written materials, etc. Based on this information, it was shown that even with different degrees of vitality, all the indigenous languages currently spoken in Rondônia are highly endangered (see Section 3.5). The survey also showed that the two major priorities of the indigenous groups regarding their language were 1) correction and standardization of the orthographic systems, and 2) documentation of their language and traditional culture.

3.4.3 *Community-based initiatives: language nests, indigenous knowledge, intercultural education*

The Brazilian indigenous peoples are generally very enthusiastic about documentation and maintenance of their traditional languages. In spite of the outside pressure towards shifting to Portuguese (see Section 3.2), the indigenous peoples greatly value their ancestral languages and are interested in learning language documentation techniques. In several cases, where the speech community has shifted to Portuguese, there is currently a growing desire to learn the traditional language. In recent years, we have seen a number of community-based initiatives towards language strengthening and/or (re)vitalization. Some of these initiatives have taken place in the formal educational context, and/or have involved language documentation.

For instance, as reported by Galúcio (2020), for the Puruborá people to have the possibility of learning even a little of their ancestral language and being able to use it at school has been an important social and political means to rescue and strengthen their identity. Due to a violent process of exploitation, the Puruborá people were decimated and their language came close to total silence. From 2001 to 2007, Galúcio carried out a documentation project of the language, but at that time most of the linguistic knowledge had already been lost, and it was only possible to register lexical items and isolated elicited sentences. Nonetheless, even with such limited material, the Puruborá are actively engaged in a process of cultural strengthening and language revitalization, mainly based on the products of the LD project. The community school is the locus of this revitalization process,

which includes inside and outside classes directed to learning their ancestral language.

Traditionally, most Brazilian initiatives for language (re)vitalization have been focused on the school. Their content and methods depend on the vitality status and the vision of the involved institutions, initiatives and individuals. Increasingly, indigenous associations are key protagonists (cf. Trindade, Cabral & Stenzel 2020). The indigenous/heritage language may be taught as a second language, or, in bilingual/bicultural schools, a part of the lessons may be taught in the indigenous language with the content adjusted to the cultural reality and needs of the respective community. Still, some critical voices conclude that the schools so far have mostly contributed to acculturation and hence, to erosion of the traditional languages (D'Angelis 2007, 2012). Paradoxically, however, the schools are also the principal locus for the acquisition of writing (individually and collectively), which, despite many difficulties, is one of the important positive factors in language maintenance activities (Franchetto 2008; Damulakis 2020).

Recent initiatives have employed specific methodologies designed for language revitalization programmes, such as language nests (Nascimento 2020), immersion schools and master-apprentice programmes.⁸ Such initiatives are well aware that language maintenance, let alone revitalization, cannot be delegated to the schools, but depends crucially on the enthusiastic engagement of speakers, learners and language activists (many of which are school teachers). The initiatives and experiences are very diverse and depend much on the region and general environment. In the state Roraima, for instance, a university-based initiative successfully uses creative theatre activities to engage language learners (Machado 2020). Many groups revive cultural practices as an environment of language use and motive for cultural pride, an important ingredient in the mix of factors that foster the traditional culture and language. Another factor is recognizing and using the intimate relationship between traditional knowledge and the indigenous language (Tapirapé 2020).

3.5 Case study: diversity endangered in Rondônia

As mentioned in the overview, the Brazilian state of Rondônia, which is approximately the size of the United Kingdom, has about 25 different indigenous languages of exceptional genealogical diversity. They belong to five different families: Chapacuran, Macro-Jêan, Nambikwaran, Panoan and Tupian. Furthermore, there are three linguistic isolates: Aikanã, Kanoé and Kwaza. There are also perhaps up to 15 uncontacted groups, whose languages are unidentified.⁹ Unfortunately, this impressive diversity is extremely endangered.

By the end of the 19th century, Rondônia was opened up to exploration by Westerners for its natural resources, such as gold, latex and ipecac. Indigenous peoples were recruited or enslaved for work, with unfortunate results. The outsiders brought infectious diseases but no medical treatment, resulting in the depopulation or even extinction of many groups. The quest for rubber during the Second World War brought more intrusion into the forest and disrupted traditional cultures through forced labour. Later, the government planned to open up the

‘unproductive’ Amazon region for ‘development’, starting with Rondônia. In the wake of the construction of the BR-364 highway in the 1960s, the influx of outsiders increased dramatically, and formerly inaccessible native groups came into contact and the invasions of native lands increased greatly, leading to conflicts as indigenous peoples defended their territory. More recently, illegal lumbering and mining operations on indigenous land have brought many problems. The activities of missionaries and local churches have suppressed native religion among various native groups and marginalized the verbal culture (myths, songs, festivals) associated with traditional beliefs. The majority of the original inhabitants of Rondônia are now located in indigenous reserves, which are increasingly coveted by the surrounding society, as most remaining lands have become occupied.

Because the destruction of Rondônia began to accelerate relatively recently, most of the known indigenous languages still have speakers left, though the percentage of the population that speaks the language is highly variable. For example, most of the Karitiana, Karo, Suruí, Zoró, Cinta Larga (all Tupian) and Wari’ (Chapacuran) still speak their language. Other peoples have considerable language loss but still have a fair percentage of speakers, for example the Tupari, Kawahiva (both Tupian) and Aikanã (isolate). However, two-thirds of the languages of Rondônia have few speakers, relative to population numbers as well as in terms of absolute numbers (fewer than 50). Nine of those languages have fewer than five speakers: Aruá, Salamã, Akuntsú, Wayoró, Puruborá, Warazú (all Tupian), Oro Win (Chapacuran), Arikapú (Macro-Jêan) and Kanoé (isolate).

The Kuyubim and Wanyam/Miguelenho (Chapacuran) appear to have lost their last speakers in this century but still maintain their respective cultural identities. In other cases, the extinction of a language and the disappearance of the respective ethnic group have gone together. The ethnic groups and languages for which there is reliable evidence that they existed and have become extinct in the 20th century include Kepkiriwat and Arikem (Tupian), Torá, Jarú and Urupá (Chapacuran), Palmella (Cariban), Matanawi (isolate) and perhaps Karipuna (known until the 1950s as a Panoan language, which may still exist in Bolivia under a different name).

Rondônia is not only known for its different families and isolates. It is also the most likely region of origin of the large Tupian language family, which has dispersed all over the South American lowlands. Furthermore, Rondônia is the host of one of the most remote branches of the widespread Macro-Jêan family, all its other branches being found further to the east in Brazil. Finally, as mentioned, Rondônia has three language isolates, which together with the seven isolates in the neighbouring Bolivian Amazonian lowlands represent an exceptionally, if not uniquely, large concentration.

In addition to the impressive language diversity of the region that covers both sides of the Guaporé and Mamoré rivers (which form the national border between Rondônia and the Bolivian department of Beni), there are many traces of cultural and linguistic contact since pre-Columbian times. Several grammatical, lexical and cultural features that are found across linguistic and ethnic boundaries are indicative of areal diffusion (Crevels & van der Voort 2008). No clear picture of a single linguistic area has yet emerged, although some smaller linguistic areas can

be discerned within this region. The Rondônian genealogical linguistic diversity, its geographical distribution, and its traces of language contact represent a puzzle that has increasingly been drawing the attention of linguists, archaeologists and anthropologists.

As this brief overview suggests, most of the original linguistic diversity of Rondônia still exists, although only few of its representatives can, for the time being, be considered safe. Many languages are gradually being replaced by Portuguese, which all but a very small number of people speak. The disappearance of the indigenous linguistic heritage of Rondônia goes hand in hand with heavy cultural pressure and ecological destruction by the expanding surrounding society. The rights of the indigenous peoples to the preservation of their languages, cultures and territories are laid out in the Brazilian constitution, but are often ignored or trampled in practice.

There are some signs of hope in this panorama. There are efforts at creating sustainable alternative economic projects that are compatible with traditional culture, which is key to maintaining indigenous autonomy. Indigenous university students are choosing topics of indigenous culture for course papers, elevating their status. In the survey of the languages of the state of Rondônia conducted as part of the National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity, the two priorities of the indigenous groups were the correction of defective writing systems, with the production of more written materials, and documentation of language and culture. Digital documentation of traditional language and culture is becoming popular, owing in large part to successful recent documentation projects carried out by linguists and anthropologists. These have often had a revitalizing effect and stimulated pride in the complexity of traditional life. Two of these projects are described next.

One of the more substantial LD initiatives in Rondônia has been a DOBES project on the languages and cultures of the Aikanã, Kwaza and their neighbours (van der Voort 2016). This project was conceived at the request of the Aikanã community, and involved training and participation by young members of the community in documentation, editing of audio-visual material, translation and research. The team included two linguists and an anthropologist, but some of the most significant ideas and recordings were produced by the indigenous participants. During the project, some elderly people passed away (two due to the COVID pandemic), taking with them irreplaceable linguistic, cultural and ethno-historical knowledge. Some of the project's recordings that contain part of that knowledge could no longer be made today. The infrastructure and the criteria for online access to the recordings are still under construction, and for the time being copies of the material have been provided to the community upon request on portable digital media.

Another example of a documentation project in Rondônia, which relied heavily on indigenous intelligence and creativity, was the project "Language documentation with a focus on traditional culture among the Gavião and Suruí of Rondônia", which was supported by the ELDP (2016 to 2019). The organizing idea of the project was that of a digital encyclopaedia. The two groups could make their own encyclopaedias, selecting topics of traditional culture and documenting them

electronically in audio and video, with dialogue and commentary in the native languages. Intensive training was provided to 15 selected young people in both groups, including the use of audio and video recorders, the register of metadata, and also methods for researching topics and planning documentation. Equipment kits and modest payment was provided to support the work of indigenous participants.

The technical quality of the resulting documentation was good and the ethnographic quality of the recordings was outstanding, with topics chosen by the community, such as crime and punishment in traditional society; traditional pregnancy, ideology of conception and taboos; 50 medicinal plants, their names, uses and method of preparation; pre-contact relations among the Gavião, Zoró and Arara peoples (friendship and homicide); and a shaman's description of traditional spirits and their behaviour. The Suruí documented 158 topics. The Gavião, who started later and had less computer experience, documented 33 topics. A problem being resolved is how to return the documentation to the community. For example, there are 26 Suruí villages with ten schools, all poorly equipped in terms of information technology.

3.6 Conclusion and outlook

Brazil is famous for being a land of contrasts. That is also true when it comes to endangered languages: a huge diversity, but much of it already gone, and most languages endangered, many critically. On the other hand, the countermeasures have grown strong in Brazil, starting with language documentation, including a successful national documentation programme. This is now being complemented by community-driven initiatives, many of them supported by linguists. Clearly, enthusiasm for (re)vitalizing languages and cultural traditions is growing, and is having a positive impact, despite often discouraging local circumstances and varying official support, comparatively high in the previous government and very low in the present government.

If this enthusiasm is dampened and wanes, it could easily come to pass that by the end of this century, most if not all Brazilian indigenous languages will only be remembered by a few elderly individuals. If, however, it is nourished, encouraged and supported, it is equally well imaginable that the major part of Brazil's current languages are still being passed on from mostly bilingual parents to bilingual children, as happens with other comparatively stable minority languages. Which of the two scenarios will turn into reality to which degree depends on us all, speakers, native communities and supporters (including linguists) from nearby and from abroad. Everybody can make a contribution.

One obvious step is to train indigenous communities in documentation and revitalization and equip them with the necessary infrastructure. Another step is to introduce language documentation and language revitalization to academic curricula in linguistics and anthropology (a convincing plea and a good conceptual basis have been offered by Amaral 2020). Support for national, regional and local archives is much needed, as well as campaigns to rescue orphaned documentation material. And each community-based initiative needs all the support, financially, morally or otherwise, that it can get.

3.7 Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 See, for instance, the *Ethnologue* (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2021), although this ranking arguably relies on a massively inflated language count. See in contrast Moore (2006).
- 2 There were a few predecessors, notably D. Everett's NSF-funded project on Pirahã, Wari' and Suruahá from 1996 to 2000. Note that we do not cover here a large number of research projects dedicated to the description of indigenous Brazilian languages that have been carried out in the last decades, some of which have also engaged in language documentation.
- 3 About 16 languages have been documented in more than one project, three of them in three projects.
- 4 The complete list of languages and their documentation status can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6359908> (Birchall & Drude 2022).
- 5 The Language Archive (TLA) was worldwide one of the first of its kind to be established, hosting in particular all results of the DOBES programme, most of which are now registered by UNESCO as part of the World Documentary Heritage ('Memory of the World').
- 6 The presidential decree (Brasil 2010) that launched the INDL also officially recognized all languages spoken in the country as part of Brazilian cultural heritage.
- 7 This work group included members of the Institute for National Historical and Artistic Patrimony (IPHAN), a division of the Ministry of Culture; three linguists; and representatives of other Ministries and organizations.
- 8 Several of these community-based initiatives are reported in Franchetto and Maia (2020), some of which are cited here.
- 9 Compare this to all of Europe (without the Caucasus and Malta): almost exclusively Indo-European, a few Uralic and Turkic languages, and the isolate Basque (and no uncontacted groups).

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4

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES OF CENTRAL ASIA. PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Hakim Elnazarov

Introduction

Central Asia is a vast geographical area at the heart of Asia encompassing the conventional Central Asian countries of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, as well as neighbouring regions of Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and Western China which historically formed a common cultural entity with the rest of Central Asia (see Figure 4.1). The region was a meeting point of various cultures and civilisations which left their marks on the linguistic and cultural diversity of the nations which inhabit the region today. Two groups of languages have dominated the linguistic landscape of Central Asia: the Turkic languages spoken in the north, western and central part of the region and Iranian languages in the south and south-east of the region. The mountain regions of Central Asia, namely the Pamirs, Hindu Kush and Karakorum mountains embrace numerous ethnic groups, who speak various languages of Iranian, Aryan and Dardic origins. They survived in the narrow ravines of the mountain ranges primarily due to their geographical isolation. These languages have exhibited a remarkable resistance and vitality for centuries but are increasingly coming under pressure in the modern age of globalisation, nation-building and social and economic transformations.

This chapter traces the historical development of the endangered languages of Central Asia, including the Pamiri, Dardic, Nuristani and other minority languages which predominantly represent Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan groups of languages. Many of these languages were widely spoken in the vast terrains of Central Asia in the form of Scythian, Bactrian and Sogdian languages, but were gradually supplanted by Persian/Tajik and Turkic languages. The globalisation and migration processes have now exposed the minority languages, posing a threat to their survival both at home and abroad. At the same time the unprecedented access to media and networks of communications has enabled the minority ethnic groups to communicate in their mother tongues and create space for articulation



FIGURE 4.1 Map of Central Asia.

Source: Courtesy of Russell Harris. The map illustrates the historical terrains of Central Asia and the countries which occupy the territory at present.

of their identity and cultural expressions in their native languages. This chapter provides an overview of the endangered languages of Central Asia and explores the challenges, trends and prospects for their survival in the new millennium.

Languages of Central Asia in history

In view of its geographical position, Central Asia has been a major confluence of the world's cultural exchange and interaction of the Western and Eastern civilisations for many centuries. The area was also an interface between the Iranian inhabitants of the land and Turkic people originating from Mongolia and Siberia. The central position of Central Asia as a crossroad of civilisations was anchored by the Silk Road which dominated the transcontinental trade route and interactions of nations until the flourishing of the maritime road in the Middle Ages. By the seventh century AD, three main branches of the Silk Road were formed in the territory of Central Asia, particularly in its eastern part or East Turkestan: The northern road which passed Lake Issyk-kul westward towards the northern shores of the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus and the Black Sea to Asia Minor and Byzantium. The middle road crossed the Turfan depression and the northern rim of the Tarim basin leading to the Ferghana valley, Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv and then ran through Iran to the eastern Mediterranean. The southern road ran from the area of Lop Nor in Eastern Turkestan through Khotan and Wakhan to Tokharistan, Bamiyan, the north-western parts of India and further down to Indian Ocean from where it made its way to the Mediterranean (Litvinsky, 1996). Apart

from the exchange of goods, the Silk Road encouraged the movement of people, ideas, cultures, religions and languages. The imprint of the cultural exchange and interactions can be observed in the art, architecture, languages and traditions of the Central Asian nations.

The historical sources point to the dominance of Scythians and Sogdian languages in the region for almost a millennium, until the advance of the Arabs to the region in the seventh century. The Scythians, who were known as Sakas by the Persians, formed a group of tribes which inhabited Central Asian steppes during the first millennium BC.¹ The archaeological and historical evidence suggest that Scythians had prowess as horsemen and warriors and were a driving force behind the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC), founded by Cyrus the Great, and stretched from Greece to the Balkans and Eastern Europe in the west and Indus valley in the east. After the defeat of the Achaemenid Empire by Alexander the Great, the Scythian cavalry retreated, came to terms with Greeks and even served in their army. Scythian's language certainly influenced the formation of Avestian and Iranian languages. Many of its characteristics, such as phonetical and grammatical structures as well as loanwords are to be found in the eastern Iranian languages spoken in the Pamir region. Their speakers have also retained many characteristics of Scythian culture, which can be observed in their cultural practices associated with reverence of fire and hearth in the traditional abodes.²

The Greco-Bactrian and the Indo-Greek kingdoms, which supplanted the Achaemenids in Central Asia, have added another layer to the linguistic makeup of the communities in the region. The Bactrian language, an extinct eastern Iranian language spoken in Central Asia, was an official language of Greco-Bactrian, Kushan and Hephthalite dynasties (fifth and sixth centuries CE) which expended up to the Hindu Kush mountains in the northern regions of present Afghanistan and Pakistan. Indeed, historical evidences suggest that the Hephthalite dynasty had extended up to the upper Oxus and the north-west of Hindu Kush (Bernsh-tam, 1951). This region is currently known by a range of endangered languages, including the Nuristani languages, the oldest languages of Afghanistan. These languages can be traced to Bactrian, which was the official language of Hephthalites in their Tokharistan possessions, the area of present Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan.

The most daring and lasting ancient language of Central Asia was Sogdian, the language of trade and communication across the Silk Road. It was clearly a written language, the remnants of which date back to the sixth and seventh centuries CE. This eastern Iranian language seems to have lasted longer in Central Asia than Bactrian and Scythian languages, due to its commercial enterprise. At the same time, as major eastern Iranian languages, these three languages were closely related, which can be discerned from the common phonetical system they share with the language of Avesta.³ The influence of Sogdian extended beyond the immediate borders of Central Asia to the western and northern regions of present China and Mongolia. The inscriptions and numismatic materials, including Bugut inscription from Mongolia (dated 581 AD) and Ili inscriptions found in present Xinjiang province of China, attest to its commercial significance in the vast territories of Inner Asia in the pre-Islamic period. Its prominence in the administration

of the Turkic Qaghanate (522–744 AD) and Tokharistan (fifth to eighth century CE), is well captured in the minted coins found in the Chach (present Tashkent) oasis and Ferghana valley.⁴ The Sogdians played a role as cultural and commercial intermediaries which turned their language into the lingua franca across the trade route. This included western Iran and India, where 600 Sogdian rock inscriptions were found carved on passes of the high Indus.⁵ The Sogdians had an enduring impact on the region, and the spoken and written Sogdian spread widely before the penetration of Arabic and Pahlavi (old Persian) in the early Middle Ages. The rapid expansion of Islam to Mawara'annahr (Transoxiana, the Land beyond the Oxus river) in early seventh and eighth centuries and the spread of Arabic script weakened the position of Sogdian and eventually led to its downfall. Furthermore, the influx of Hun tribes to Central Asia from Mongolia and Siberia centuries earlier accelerated the assimilation of Sogdians with Turkic speakers, particularly in Western China, where Uyghur became a dominant language by the tenth century. Nevertheless, small pockets of speakers of Sogdian dialect survived in the inaccessible Yaghnob valley surrounded by Zarafshan and Hissar mountain ranges in central parts of present Tajikistan. The survival of Yaghnobi had a valuable contribution in the analysis of Sogdian written heritage (Ghafurov, 2008, 277). Sogdians, along with Scythian and Bactrian languages, survived as endangered languages spoken in the mountain regions of Zarafshan, the Pamirs and Hindu Kush. Remarkably, the affinity between the speakers of the ancient languages and the current speakers of this eastern Iranian cluster is traceable not only in the linguistic structure of the languages, but also in the folklore and traditions of the mountain dwellers.⁶ Many religious, artistic and cultural practices of speakers of the Pamiri languages date back to the pre-Islamic period. The vivid example of this is the construction of a Pamiri house (chid) among the speakers of the Pamiri, Dardic and Brushaski languages. The emblematic meanings of the various elements inside the Pamiri house are associated with the Aryans' worldview and their religious outlook.⁷ The comparative analysis of the phonetics of the Pamiri languages in comparison to other eastern Iranian languages also indicates that these languages characterise not one but several eastern Iranian languages.⁸ Thus, the endangered languages of Central Asia, which are concentrated in the mountain regions, bear the marks and vestige of the traditions of ancient nations which dominated the vast terrains of Central Asia in different periods of its history.

The Pamiri languages

The Pamiri languages as a distinctive eastern Iranian group, as opposed to a western Iranian cluster (Tajik, Dari and Persian), have survived in the ravines and gorges of the Pamir and eastern Hindu Kush mountain ranges. The common denominator of these languages 'Pamiri' is a recent invention. In the middle of the twentieth century, Russian and Soviet linguists applied the term to the various people who inhabited the Pamir mountains and began to use the term Pamiri as an identity marker. Historically and locally the speakers of the Pamiri languages identified themselves according to their toponyms or geographical location (name of the river, such as the case of Bartang as the designation of people who live in



FIGURE 4.2 Map of Badakhshan and the Pamir region.

Source: Courtesy of Russell Harris.

Bartang valley on the banks of Bartang river; the Sariquli language denotes the speakers living around lake Sariqul), administrative entity (e.g. as a Shughnan principality), or some combination of geographical, historical and administrative units, such as the case of the speakers of the Wakhi language.

The endangered Pamiri languages, including Shughnani, Rushani, Wakhi, Yazguliemi, Ishkashimi, Bartangi, Roshorvi (Oroshori), Sariquli, Munji, Sanglechi, have various degrees of mutual comprehension, which prompted linguists to cluster them into related groups. The Shughnani-Rushani cluster, for example, consists of such languages and dialects as Bartangi, Sariquli, Roshorvi, Khufi, Bajuwi, which have evolved within a shared geographical space of this largest group of Pamiri languages. Most of these languages transcend the political boundaries which separate the nation states in the mountain region. The speakers of Shughnani and Rushani are scattered along the border lines of Afghanistan and Tajikistan on both sides of the Panj river. Wakhi speakers take up the largest geographical space in the borders of eastern Tajikistan, north of Afghanistan (along the Wakhan corridor), near Tashkurghan in Xinjiang province in China and the northern regions of Pakistan.

The Shughnani language has the largest number of speakers who are concentrated around Khorogh, the administrative centre of Badakhshan Autonomous

region in Tajikistan. It has acquired the status of lingua franca between the various Pamiri languages in Badakhshan. The Tajik language, however, remains the official language of the administration and education in the region. Similarly, the Dari language retains the status of dominant language of the Pamiri speakers in Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. The number of speakers varies, from approximately 90,000 thousand Shughnani speakers to 2,000 speakers of Ishkashimi.⁹ Ishkashimi, along with the Yazghuliami language (spoken by approximately 3,000), are severely endangered Pamiri languages in the region.

The Pamiri languages have received wide scholarly attention by Russian and Soviet linguists. Since the publication of the first book *Shughnan Dictionary of D. L. Ivanov*, supplemented with commentary and published by a renowned Russian specialist of ancient Iranian languages, K. G. Zaleman (1849–1916), in 1895, the scholarship on the Pamiri languages has expanded rapidly over the last century. Ivan Zarubin (1887–1964), a distinguished Russian iranologist (specialist of Iranian languages) who first visited Bartang valley in the company of French scholar Gauthiot (1876–1916), laid the foundation of systematic research on the Pamiri languages. He founded a new field in Iranian studies known as ‘Pamirology’ (Памироведение), which has evolved into an important body of scholarship in linguistics in Russia and Tajikistan. The research on the Pamiri languages in the Soviet period focused on their phonetical and grammatical structure, their classifications, comparative analysis and the genealogy of the languages.¹⁰ In addition, linguists produced several textbooks and dictionaries on various Pamiri languages.¹¹ In spite of a large body of scholarship and linguistic materials, there is no established orthography and written script on these languages, which is often alluded to as one of the impediments in the introduction of Pamiri languages in schools. A few research studies conducted on the use of the mother tongue in education shows that teachers communicate with their students in their mother tongue at a primary level, and extensively make use of the local languages to introduce Tajik and to achieve their educational objectives.¹² Scarcity of research in the field of sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics poses challenges for defining the socio-cultural vitality and the degree of the endangerment of these languages at present.¹³

The vitality of the Pamiri languages has been influenced by the state policies, multilingualism and the socio-political situation of the regions over the last century. The language policies of the Soviet state were unsettled and changed dramatically in the first decades of the communist regime. The recognition of the linguistic rights of the multi-ethnic republics of the Soviet Union in its formative period encouraged the use of local languages in social and educational settings. Over 20 textbooks in the Shughnani language were produced in a short period of time in the early 1930s based on the Latin alphabet.¹⁴ However, the intensification of control over the ethnic groups and unification of nation states in Central Asia in the middle of 1930s halted the diversification of languages in education. The proponents and activists of minority languages were labelled as ‘enemies of the people’ and ‘bourgeois nationalists’ who ‘created obstacles for a single official language’, which according to the Soviet policy was central to the definition of a nation.¹⁵ As a result, the Tajik language obtained the status of an official and

educational language across Tajikistan along with Russian as an international language of communication among the Soviet citizens.

The second wave of language activism in the Pamirs is observed during Gorbachev's reforms¹⁶ and his policies of openness and restructuring in the late 1980s and the early years of independent Tajikistan in the 1990s. The revival of discourse on the promotion of Pamiri languages encountered a strong opposition from the establishment. The movement did not acquire popular support across the diverse spectrum of the society, which conceptualised the value of the language in terms of its economic benefits and national unity. In recent years, there has been a surge in the positive attitude and perception of the mother tongue among the speakers of the Pamiri languages both in Tajikistan and among the Pamiri diaspora abroad. The emergence of poetry and songs in recent decades in native languages has been unprecedented and can be viewed as a single powerful means in the revival of Pamiri languages and Pamiri identity among the speakers of the languages. The pioneering role in the development of poetry in Pamiri languages is credited to legendary Shughnani poet-bard Lidush Habib (1963–2002), whose songs inspired the younger generations to appreciate their cultural expressions and assert their identity as Pamiri. The rise of self-consciousness and self-identification of the speakers of the Pamiri languages can also be perceived as a reaction to the marginalisation of the community in political and economic domains. Despite the lack of official status and recognition, the Pamiri languages regained their cultural significance in recent years and maintain their communal and social functions at home and abroad.

Turkic languages

Turkic languages have superseded the Iranian languages in most parts of Central Asia in the course of the last millennium. The population of urban and densely populated areas of Central Asia, such as Ferghana valley, by and large, remains bilingual, where Tajiks and Turkic nations (Uzbek and Kyrgyz) have intermingled in a shared cultural space. The demarcation of borders by the Soviet officials in the 1920s and the creation of new Soviet republics in Central Asia further restrained the geographical presence of Iranian speakers, namely the Tajiks in the region, and accelerated the assimilation of Iranian and Turkic speakers in most parts of the region, particularly in urban areas, such as Samarkand, where the population was largely bilingual in recent past. The dominance of Turkic speakers in the communist regime in early Soviet period had influenced the delimitation of borders in the region in favour of Turkic nations, and those boundaries were inherited by the current independent states of Central Asia. Among the Central Asian republics Tajikistan is the only Persian speaking nation. The nationalist agendas of the countries put restraints on the diaspora communities of other nation states and endangers their local survival. However, most of the languages spoken by the diasporas are those with a sizable population and status in other countries (German, Korean, Chechen, Uyghur, etc.). Few endangered languages with no official status anywhere else can be singled out in the Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia. The Dungan (Dzhunyan) language, which belongs to Sino-Tibetan group

of languages, is apparently endangered. It has several dialects, including Yage, Gansu and Shaanxi and is spoken in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The total number of Dungans is around 90,000 and an estimated 40,000 Dungan speakers, apparently the largest, reside in Kyrgyzstan. This ethnic group is related to the Hue people of China, also known as Chinese Mohamedians (Muslims) who settled in Central Asia at the end of the nineteenth century due to their persecution in the Chinese domains by the Qing dynasty (1636–1912).¹⁷ The 1970–80s witnessed a revival of the Dungan language in Central Asia. Textbooks based on the Cyrillic alphabet were developed and language classes have been offered to the Dungan community. The Dungan population is largely bilingual and switching to the Russian language is the current trend among the community. The current state of language use among the Dungan ethnic groups is not known, but bilingualism and multilingualism remain the main feature of the linguistic landscape in Kyrgyzstan and in other Central Asian countries.

Western Iranian endangered languages

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan host several endangered languages, which belong to the western branch of Iranian languages. Bukhari (Bukharic) is one such language which is spoken by the Jewish community in Uzbekistan, mainly in Bukhara from which its etymology derives. A significant portion of speakers of this Judeo-Persian language reside in Israel, approximately 50,000, but there are an estimated 10,000 Bukhari speakers remaining in Uzbekistan. The Bukhari diasporas in small numbers also reside in the United States. The language has a close affinity with Tajik but has a large number of Hebrew and Turkic loanwords. The Jews have a long historical tradition in Central Asia, which dates back to the pre-Islamic period.¹⁸ They retained their Hebrew script in Central Asia until the Soviet era. The language policies of the Soviet Union coerced the community to change their written script into Latin in the 1920s and later to Cyrillic in the 1930s, depriving the community, as other Persian and Turkic speakers of the region, of their past written heritage created in Arabic script. This, however, did not stop the emergence of literature in Bukhari in Cyrillic, which was largely promoted by a branch of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union devoted to Bukharan Jewish literature. There are two synagogues in Samarkand, two in Bukhara and four in Tashkent (and allegedly seven others in other Central Asian countries) which allow the community to socialise and maintain their language and traditions.¹⁹ In the post-Soviet period, many Bukharan Jews moved from Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics to Israel and the US. However, a sizable number of Bukharan Jews still reside in Uzbekistan. The influence of Uzbek and Russian language places strains on the survival of the Bukharic language, but the religious traditions and practices of the community provide a strong ground for the Bukharic speakers to maintain their identity and make use of their language in communal life.

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan host another endangered language, Parya, which belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-Iranian group of languages. The Parya, also known as the Afghani language, is spoken in the Hissar valley in the western border of Tajikistan, and along the Surkhandarya (Surkhan river)

which extends to Uzbekistan and Kunduz province of Afghanistan. The estimated number of Parya speakers is 7,500 in total.²⁰ It remains a mystery as to how the speakers of this Indo-Aryan language have come to settle in Central Asia and preserved their language in close vicinity with the dominant western Iranian and Turkic speakers of the region. The Russian linguist I. M. Oransky, who first discovered this language community in the 1950s, suggested that the speakers of the language had moved from Afghanistan to their current location few centuries ago.²¹ This is also supported by the alternate title of the language (Afghani) and the name of a settlement – Afghaniabad – (literally created by Afghans), where the Parya speakers densely reside. The Parya speakers demonstrate high bilingual proficiency (Tajik or Uzbek) and the language is confined mostly to familial and communal interaction. New research indicates that the vitality of Parya is maintained by multiple territorially based social networks and by strong, positive identification towards their ethnicity and language (Abbess et al., 2005, 60).²² However, the lack of a writing system, high bilingual proficiencies and pressures are leading to language shifts and are making the prospects for the survival of this marginalised language rather slim.

Nuristani and Dardic languages

The linguistic diversity of the communities inhabiting the narrow ravines across the mountain ranges of Central Asia is remarkable. Apart from the Pamiri languages, several other ancient languages have survived and experience various degrees of endangerment. Nuristani languages, spoken in the north-eastern part of Afghanistan in Nuristan province, are classified as a separate group within Indo-Aryan languages and are considered the oldest languages in Afghanistan. The term ‘Nuristan’ (land of light), which the languages identify with, was coined by Abdur Rahman Khan (1840/44–1901), the Amir of Afghanistan from 1880–1901 after his capture of the territory known as Kafiristan (land of infidels) in 1896 and the conversion of its population into Islam. Hence, the people, the languages and the province have been defined as Nuristani. The Nuristani languages apparently emerged at the earliest stage of the split of Indo-Iranian languages and the emergence of Indo-Aryan races some 4,000 years ago. The classification of the Nuristani language was initiated by the Norwegian linguist Georg Morgenstierne (1892–1978) who discovered several linguistic characteristics and archaisms in the Nuristani group that suggested its very early separation from other Indo-Iranian languages. The Nuristani group comprises six languages – Kati, Kamviri, Prasuni, Waigali, Tregami and Ashkun. In addition, each of these languages has several other dialects. The speakers of Nuristani languages, mainly the Kati and Waigali, are also found in adjacent to Afghanistan valleys in the Chitral district of Pakistan. The approximate number of Nuristani speakers is 130,000, and each language is spoken by 25,000–40,000 speakers, which makes them moderately endangered. There is no written literary tradition in any of these languages.²³

The Dardic languages are probably the most endangered Indo-Aryan languages. These archaic languages are spoken by the alpine communities in the valleys and ravines of Hindu Kush and Karakorum in the Chitral districts of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan provinces of Pakistan in the borders of China and Afghanistan. The term Dardic or Dardistan was introduced by the British orientalist Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840–1899); he applied it to the whole region stretching from Hunza to Chitral and the diverse ethnic groups which inhabit this vast territory. In spite of some criticism, the term was adopted for the classification of the Indo-Aryan languages. Leitner was a staunch advocate of the preservation of endangered languages and culture of the indigenous people. The study and analysis of the languages and the legends of the mountain dwellers led Leitner to believe that ‘they preserve the pre-historic remnants of legends and customs that explain much that is still obscure in the life and history of European race’ (Leitner, 1978: Appendix 1:10). Subsequent research provided much insight into the ancient beliefs and practices of the Dardic people reaffirming the antiquity of the languages in which the beliefs were expressed (Jettmar, 1958). The northern areas of Pakistan are also identified as the birthplace of Sanskrit as a dialect of Indo-Iranian branch. It was spoken by people who evidently came from farther north or west and called themselves Aryai or Aryan (noble race) (Ostler, 2005, 176).

The Dardic languages have been clustered into six groups, each having their own dialects: Kashmiri (Kashmiri, Kishtwari dialects), Shina (Brokskad, Kundal Shahi, Shina, Ushoji, Kalkoti, Palula, Savi), Chitrali (Kalasha, Khowar), Kohistani (Bateri, Chilisso, Gowro, Kalami, Maiya (Indus Kohistani), Tirahi, Torwali, Wotapuri-Katarqalai), Pashayi and Kunar languages (Dameli, Gawar-Bati, Nangalami (Grangali), Shumashti). These Dardic languages, in view of their genetic composition, share many features with Iranian languages and are considered a linguistic link between Iranian in the west and Indic languages in the east.²⁴

The number of speakers of each group is hard to ascertain. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics has conducted a nation-wide census in 2017, but the survey does not provide data on minority language communities.²⁵ The census predicts an average of a 2.5% annual increase in the population of the provinces (2.89% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) which could be interpreted as a positive sign for the endangered languages. The surveys conducted a few decades ago also indicate an approximate number of some minority groups deduced from national statistics.²⁶ For example, it was estimated that in 1981 there were over 200,000 Indus Kohistani, 40,000 Kalami Kohistanis, 20,000 Gujars, 60,000 Torwalis and 5,000 speakers of other languages.²⁷ This is double the estimated number of some of the speech communities a hundred years earlier.²⁸ There are however, languages which are clearly on the verge of extinction. Ushojo, a variant of Shina, has about 2,000 speakers, and it is under severe pressure not just from Pashtu, but also from other language communities with a relatively higher number and wider usage in the region. Torwali, on the other hand, is widely used among the Kohistani ethnic groups after Pashtu.²⁹

In recent years, there has been attempts to create orthography and learning materials for some of the endangered languages based on Urdu or Arabic script. It is not clear how sustainable those efforts are, given the multilingualism and dominance of Pashtu and Urdu (and increasingly English) in public domains, education and governance. They are also the primary languages of the inter-ethnic



FIGURE 4.3 Map of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan.

Source: Ethnic map of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan – Bing images.

communication of the minority ethnic groups. The native languages continue to rely on the reported positive attitudes of the indigenous people towards their own language. Most of the endangered languages of northern Pakistan are apparently well-maintained by their mother-tongue speakers as the most frequently used and apparently valued means of communication among the speech community.³⁰

Among the endangered languages of Central and South Asia, Burushaski is unique and is considered one of the oldest languages in the world. Despite having affinity with Indo-European languages, Burushaski remains *Language Isolate* and defies classification. Burushaski is spoken by the communities, known as Burusho in Hunza, Nagar and Yasin valleys in the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan. Some speakers of the language are also found in neighbouring China. The number of speakers is around 90,000 thousand in total, the Hunza and Nagar valleys being the main settlements for the speakers of the language.³¹ Despite the large number of speakers, Burushaski is experiencing a turbulent time and is subject to the influence of various factors which endanger its vitality in the long run. The opening of Karakorum Highway, the highest paved international road connecting Western China and Pakistan, accelerated the socio-economic transformation in the region with far-reaching implications for Burushaski and other endangered languages in the area. Stimulating the tourism industry and small businesses, the highway paves the way for the influx of speakers of dominant and regional languages to the area, which are squeezing out Burushaski from its social and economic domains. The Burushaski is overloaded with loanwords from Urdu, Shina and Khwar which apparently have taken half of its vocabulary. The local agriculture, traditional practices and communal life which sustain the vitality of language are susceptible to the influence of external forces. Burushaski also lacks official status and is not offered in schools. Remarkably, the educational attainment among the Burusho

community, particularly in Hunza, is one of the highest in Pakistan, with both boys and girls encouraged to attend schools and pursue various careers. The educational achievement promotes self-awareness and self-identity of the Burusho community, which often reflects on their positive attitude towards their mother tongue. The emergence of literature and devotional poetry in Burushaski in the second half of the last century has also contributed to the development of positive attitude towards the language among the speakers. Much of the work in Burushaski has been accomplished by the Burushaski Research Academy,³² which was founded by Allamah Nasir Hunzai (1917–2017), a prominent religious scholar and a distinguished poet, who created highly acclaimed poetry in Burushaski.

The state of endangered languages of Central Asia in modern times

It is widely accepted that most of the endangered languages of Central Asia have survived due to their centuries of isolation in the impenetrable mountains of Zarafshan, Pamirs, Hindu-Kush and Karakorum. The geographical factor was a vital indicator of the survival of these languages up to the new millennium. The advance of modernity into the mountain regions and the engagement of the mountain societies in the political and economic development of the Central and South Asian states seemingly jeopardises the vitality and survival of the indigenous people who maintained their way of life for centuries. The globalisation processes which accelerated in the twentieth century and continue to unfold in the new millennium are often seen as the next wave of threat to the survival of the ethnolinguistic qualities of the minorities in the peripheries of the political establishments in the region. The exposure of the indigenous communities with a limited scope of self-determination to the national policies and globalisation forces increases the vulnerability and dependency of the endangered communities from external influences. In such situations, the common and still widely held view of the death of languages has been seen as an inevitable and irreversible process. The research and analysis on the current state of the endangered languages of Central Asia challenges some of these general perceptions about the vanishing of these languages in the near future. Here it is worth highlighting some of the myths which are commonly believed to threaten the endangerment of the languages in the Central Asian context.

Lack of official status

It is often stated that languages without official status and less than 100,000 speakers are likely to vanish.³³ Indeed, none of the endangered languages of Central Asia enjoys an official status and most are unwritten languages. The promotion of languages by the state and recognition of the linguistic rights of the minorities may enhance the vitality of the languages and increase their use in social and public life. However, no evidence has been generated to demonstrate the direct correlation between the death of a language and its official status in the Central Asian region. Official status of the language does not necessarily ensure public

support and funding of the language revitalisation. In Central Asian Post-Soviet republics, the laws and constitutions ostensibly support the minority languages. In Tajikistan, for example, the promotion of Pamiri languages is enshrined in the Constitution, but no perceptible initiatives are proposed and implemented by the government. The lack of funds and human resources are identified as the major obstacles for teaching the languages in school or their use in media. The status of the language in the legislation is a positive step towards language revitalisation, but it does not ensure the preservation of the language. Much of the official support remains at the level of rhetoric and the states do not see the need or have the capacity to invest in multilingual education.

Threat of modernity and globalisation to the survival of endangered languages

The threat of modernity to the survival of the cultures of indigenous people in the mountains of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush was underlined by Western explorers since the early years of the expansion of Western powers (Britain and Russian) to the mountain region. The view that access to isolated regions and exposure of the indigenous people to the forces of modernity may accelerate the extinction of their ancient way of life, including their languages, has prevailed in the discourse on the extinction of the languages in contemporary period. The current development of the endangered languages of Central Asia indicates that the exposure of the mountain communities to the modern education, technologies, developments, etc. has a positive impact on the vitality of the endangered languages. The developmental processes in the region, particularly in the Tajik Badakhshan, where Pamiri languages are spoken, have witnessed an unprecedented improvement in the quality of life during the Soviet time, which resulted in the increase of the number of speakers of the languages in the region.³⁴ Evidently, the countries which invest in economic and social development, infrastructure, education, etc. are already enabling the survival of the indigenous people, including their languages. Increase in number of speakers does not necessarily result in the survival of the languages in the long run, but it remains an important factor in determining the endangerment of the language and an enabling factor in the endurance of the language. The modernisation projects, which are devoid of ideological proclivity and do not aim to obliterate the linguistic and cultural expressions of the communities in the remote areas, create an enabling environment for the survival of the endangered languages. This is observable in the case of endangered languages of the Pamirs and those of northern Pakistan, where the communities have benefited from the socio-economic developments supported by the states and NGOs in the region.

Migration and displacement of indigenous communities

Migration has become a global phenomenon and has affected all nations and communities to different degrees. The migrated communities often struggle to cope with new realities, integrate into the dominant cultures, while also trying

to preserve their identity. Language as an identity marker is probably the hardest to lose. The displacement of the indigenous communities has been observed since the middle of the nineteenth century in Central Asia. The forced migration of the people of Bartang valley and those of Yaghnob to arable lands in the south of Tajikistan in 1950s was driven by economic motives. In subsequent years many have returned to their homeland, while others have settled and created their own communities in the neighbourhood of the dominant Tajik-speaking groups. Within few decades the Bartang migrant community in the south of Tajikistan have expanded, progressed and managed to observe and preserve their traditions and language. Although the number of Tajik loanwords in local Bartangi have increased, the speakers have not lost their language and have continued to uphold it till the present. In recent decades we have witnessed the influx of a significant number of Pamiri speakers to other parts of Tajikistan and Russian Federation.³⁵ Similar processes of migration are observed in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Given the size of the migrants, the ethnic Pamiri groups have been effectively organising themselves according to their local affiliation in the Pamirs and established an ethnic association, known as NUR³⁶ in Moscow. These trends of self-organisation of the minority groups from Central Asia can be observed in other European countries and North America. The Bukhari language community in the US is a good example of versatility, which they inherited from their ancestors and continues to support the revitalisation of their language and culture both in the US and in Uzbekistan. The larger the size of the language diaspora community, the more organised they are likely to become and are in a better position to develop strategies for the preservation of their identity and languages. But the driving force behind the maintenance of the languages by migrant communities seems to be individual activists for whom the language is a means to maintain bonds with their own culture and traditions. The survey of the social networks in the Pamiri culture and languages, for example, reveals that most of the outlets and resources on the website are developed or initiated by the members of migrant communities abroad.³⁷ The intellectual freedom, access to internet and technological information, which many migrants enjoy in the host countries, enable them to actualise their aspirations for the preservation of their languages and traditions through the global means of communication.

Literacy and written heritage in endangered languages

Introducing literacy is widely seen as a necessary pre-condition for the preservation of endangered languages and most initiatives are directed towards the development of a written script. Many communities find it challenging to agree on the type of orthography which best suits the description of their language. The adaptation of the script of the official language is a common trend among the revitalisation efforts of the endangered languages in Central Asia. The Cyrillic alphabet has been taken as the primary writing system in Tajikistan, while the Urdu and Dari/Persian, based on Arabic script, has been adapted as a writing system for the endangered languages in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Some linguists advocate the use of Latin as a form of writing for the endangered languages in

the region. The disagreements on the kind of orthography have not stopped the communication and emergence of textbooks and literature in various scripts in the same group of languages. The initiatives remain at the grass roots or academic level and have not been able to mobilise a great deal of support for the introduction of literacy in endangered languages in education.

The speakers of the endangered Pamiri and some of the Dardic languages have created and inherited a written heritage, which was produced in Persian. Persian or Tajik/Dari has been a lingua franca and a language of literacy among the speakers of the endangered languages in most parts of the mountain region. It is not surprising that some of the literary works in Tajik or Urdu were created by the descendants of the endangered language communities. Many Pamiri, Dardic and Burushaski poets are bilingual or multilingual and write poetry in Tajik, Persian or Urdu as well as their mother tongue. The Tajik/Persian language is also a language of religion and intellectual traditions for the mountain communities. The natives do not perceive the prevalence of Tajik/Persian as a hindrance to the literacy and education in local languages. On the contrary, the presence of intellectual heritage, notwithstanding the language in which it was created, is seen as part of their cultural asset and an indispensable part of their identity.

The literacy in native languages may be essential for the preservation of endangered languages, but it is not self-evident among the communities for whom bilingualism and written heritage in other languages are an integral part of self-identification. As David Crystal has pointed out, 'bilingualism offers a *modus vivendi* between the dominant and dominated language – an option for coexistence without confrontation' (Crystal, 200: 80). The affection of the speakers of endangered languages to Tajik, Persian or Dari does not discourage the promotion of local languages, but it cautions against replacement of literary Tajik/Dari language with the native language. Thereby, literacy and script in local languages does not necessitate the revival of endangered languages in Central Asia. Apparently, the community, which sees the value of their language in communal life, but understands its limit in educational, economic and cultural spheres, does not strive to create literacy in their mother tongue.

Prospects for the development of endangered languages of Central Asia

In the previous discussion an attempt has been made to elucidate some of the nuances in the evolution of the endangered languages of Central Asia. These languages evolve in the socio-cultural and political conditions of their immediate environment, which poses challenges for generalisation regarding the future trajectories of these languages. However, there are some common trends, which are observed in the language ecology of Central Asia.

Most of the speakers of endangered languages, which are spoken in the Pamirs, Hindu Kush and Karakorum, are differentiated from their dominant surrounding communities by their religious affiliation, apart from linguistic differences. The overwhelming majority of the population of the mountain region, including the Pamirs in Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, as well as significant number of the

Dardic and Burushaski speakers in northern Pakistan, adhere to the Shia-Ismaili branch of Islam, while the surrounding communities are mainly Sunni Muslims. The religious differences have significantly hindered the assimilation and integration of the Ismaili communities into the dominant Sunni groups who speak Tajik, Dari, Pushtu or Urdu. The historical persecution of the Ismaili communities in the medieval and early modern period, such as the assault of the Afghans and Bukharan emirate against the population of Shughnan, Rushan and Wakhan at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are well recorded and entrenched in the memory of the communities in the Pamirs and Hindu Kush. The religious differences created obstacles for intermingling of the native population with neighbouring nations. The marriages, for instance, between the followers of different faiths have been discouraged. The religious association, thus, has contributed to the vitality of the endangered languages in the region and is likely to retain its significance for the languages in the foreseeable future.

The mountain communities predominantly retain strong tribal, clan or family relations which are determined by the survival of the community in harsh mountain conditions. In such societies the communal interests usually stand above the individual ones. The interdependence of members of the community strengthens the bonds and relations among the family and community members even when the members of the clan depart from their traditional habitat. The psychological impact of communal dependency is yet to be studied in the context of Central Asia. But the tribal and clan relations can explain the self-organisations of the Pamiri people in foreign lands, such as Russia. Each group member feels obliged to support their fellow member in settling in the host country. Similarly, the support (moral and financial) to the members of family left in the home country is perceived as imperative and a valuable identity marker for the community members. It provides a sense of belonging to the group, but more importantly strengthens the sense of identity. The language plays an important part in self-actualisation as 'a symbol and register of identity'.³⁸ The communal and family relations, thus, appear as a contributory factor in the preservation of the native languages by indigenous communities of Central Asia, although it is hard to foresee if such relations will sustain themselves in the future.

The global means of communication and technological advancement is probably the major impulse which gives hope to the global survival of the endangered languages. This is also evident in the context of Central Asia, where migrant and diaspora communities become actively engaged in the use of social media to articulate their identity through language and culture. Distinctive art, music and dance of different ethnic groups speaking endangered languages have become widely accessible through the web and actively shared through the networks in social media. No limitation is imposed on members of the communities to express themselves orally, visually or in writing, especially outside of their home countries. The web is turning into a documentation and an archive of endangered languages, which is increasingly easy to access from any corner of the world. A good example is the Wakhi language, one of the widely spoken languages in the border of four countries. The Wakhi sources and web links provide an avenue for the speakers of the language from different countries to share their culture, traditions and build

relations. The global means of communications, thus, have become a major factor in the development and preservation of the languages, including the endangered languages of Central Asia.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to provide a brief overview of the endangered languages of Central Asia and shed light onto the prospect and challenges of their development. The globalisation processes, which seem to have threatened the survival of endangered languages in the last century, provide opportunities for their survival in the new millennium. The outward and inward migrations in Central Asia, primarily in mountain regions, have taken a toll on the vitality of languages which continue to evolve in their natural environment without the support of the states. The languages continue to evolve in uncertain forms and directions. However, the research and observations presented in this chapter indicate that there is an increasing positive attitude, and a sense of appreciation for the cultural heritage among the speakers of the endangered languages. The socio-economic developments in the region also positively reflect on the well-being of many indigenous ethnolinguistic communities, and harness the cultural revival and recognition of the local languages as a cultural asset to be promoted and preserved for the future generations.

Notes

- 1 Alexander Lubotsky. 2002. 'Scythian Elements in Old Iranian'. *Proceedings of the British Academy*. Oxford University Press. 116 (2): 189.
- 2 Some cultural practices of the Pamiri speakers are identical with those of the people in Caucasus and Eastern Europe who also share many features of Scythian culture. The common ancestral roots of the Pamiri and some Caucasian people, particularly the Azeris and Ossetians can be observed in the decorative art, food and architecture.
- 3 The phonetical system of the language of Avesta can be considered as a starting point for eastern Iranian languages, including the Pamiri and Yaghnobi languages. For more see A. L. Khromov. 1972. *Yagnobskii yazyk* [The Yaghnob Language]. Moscow: Nauka. 119–135.
- 4 See Gaibulla Babayarov and Andrey Kubatin. 2009. 'Rol' sogdiiskogo iazyka v Zapadno-Tiurkskom kaganate' [The Role of Sogdian Language in the Western Turkic Qaghanate]. In *Endangered Languages and History*, eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath: FEL England. 80.
- 5 Nicholas Ostler. 2009. 'The Pedigree of Nations', *Endangered Languages' Value to History*. In *Endangered Languages and History*, eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath: FEL England. 12.
- 6 There is a popular legend of Alexander Macedonian being killed and buried in the upper reaches of Yazguliarn River in the western Pamirs. His burial place there is surrounded by high juniper trees embodying his soldiers. Such stories are rooted in the tradition of the speakers of the Yazguliarn and other Pamiri languages. See Joy Edelman. 2009. 'Reflection of the History of the Pamiri People in the Pamiri Languages'. In *Endangered Languages and History*, eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath: FEL, England. 155.
- 7 See A. Shokhumorov. 1977. *Pamir – Strana Ariev* [Pamir – the Land of Aryans]. Dushanbe: Vazorati farhangi Jumhurii Tojikiston.

- 8 Joy Edelman. 2009. 'Reflection of the History of the Pamiri People in the Pamiri Languages'. In *Endangered Languages and History*, eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath, England: FEL, England. 153. See also Edelman, D. I. 1990. *Sravnitel'naia grammatika vostochnoiranskikh iazykov. Morfologiia. Elementy sintaksa* [Comparative Grammar of Eastern Iranian Languages. Morphology. Elements of Syntax]. Moscow: Nauka.
- 9 For more see Hakim Elnazarov. 2006. 'Multilingualism in Pamir. Challenges of Preservation and Revitalisation'. In *Vital Voices. Endangered Languages and Multilingualism, Proceedings of the Tenth FEL Conference*, eds. R. Elangaiyan, R. McKenna Brown, Nicholas D. M. Ostler and Mahendra K. Verma. Mysore, India: CIIL Printing Press. 153–158.
- 10 A comprehensive work on the study of the Pamiri languages, including their etymology, phonetics, lexica, grammar and typology was accomplished by prominent Russian and Tajik scholars Ivan Zarubin, D. I. Edelman, M. S. Andreev, B. C. Sokolova, A. P. Pisarchik, T. Pakhalina, I. M. Steblin-Kamensky, A. L. Grunberg, D. Karamshoev. Sh. Yusufbekov, Kh. Kurbonov, P. Jamshedov, M. Alamshoev, etc.
- 11 See D. Karamshoev. 1999. *Shughnano-russkii slovar* [Shughni-Russian Dictionary]. Moscow: Nauka, Vol. 1, 1991, Vol. 2, 1999, Vol. 3. 2005; I. M. Steblin-Kammensky. 1999. *Etimologicheskii slovar vakhanskogo iazyka* [Etymological Dictionary of Wakhi Language]. St. Petersburg: Peterburskoe Vostokovedenie.
- 12 The use of Pamir languages in educational settings finds some elucidation in A. Elnazarov. 2004. *Endangered Languages and Education: The Case of Badakhshan Province of Tajikistan*. In *Endangered Languages and Linguistic Rights. Proceedings of Eighth FEL Conference*. Barcelona (Catalonia), Spain, 1–3 October. Bath: Foundation for Endangered Languages. 207–208.
- 13 Few research studies have explored the role and use of the Pamiri languages in social contexts. This research is presented in *Studies of Languages of Tajikistan* edited by John M. Clifton (2005).
- 14 For the description of Shughnani books published in the 1930s see Tohir Kalandarov. 2020. 'The Pamirian Languages: Between Past and Future (the Case of the Shughni Language)'. *UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities*. Online: <https://ucentralasia.org/media/xplfefam/chhu-rp-5-eng.pdf>.
- 15 The criticism of the promotion of the Pamir language is clearly illustrated in the State archive documents in GBAO, F 1 Case 8, pp. 63–65, 1938. See H. Elnazarov. 2006. 'Multilingualism in the Pamirs. Challenges of Preservation and Revitalisation'. In *Vital Voices. Endangered Languages and Multilingualism*, eds. R. Elangaiyan, R. McKenna Brown, Nicholas D. M. Ostler and Mahendra K. Verma. Mysore, India: CIIL Printing Press. 153–158.
- 16 Mikhail Gorbachev (1931 – 2022) was the last president of the Soviet Union who initiated the reforms of the Soviet system in the middle of 1980s. His policies are believed to have led to the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991.
- 17 For more see Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff Dyer. 1977–1978. 'Soviet Dungan Nationalism: A Few Comments on Their Origin and Language'. *Monumenta Serica* 33, 349–362. Olga Zavyalova. 2017. 'Dungan Language'. In *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics. General Editor Rint Sybesma. Vol. 2*. Leiden – Boston: Brill. 141–148.
- 18 For the historical account of Jews in Central Asia see Michael Shterenshis. 2002. *Tamerlane and the Jews*. London: Routledge.
- 19 Audrey Burton. 1994–1996. 'Bukharan Jews, Ancient and Modern'. *Jewish Historical Studies* 34, 63.
- 20 Elisabeth Abbess, Katja Muller, Daniel Paul, Calvin Tiessen, and Gabriela Tiessen. 2005. 'Language Maintenance Amongst the Parya of Tajikistan'. In *Studies in Languages of Tajikistan*, ed. John M. Clifton. Dallas, TX: SIL International. 25–64.
- 21 See I. M. Oransky. 1977. *Folklor i yazyk gissarskikh par'ya (Sredniaia Aziia)* [Folklore and Language of the Hissarian Parya (Central Asia)]. Moscow: Nauka. 18.
- 22 Elisabeth Abbess, Katja Muller, Daniel Paul, Calvin Tiessen, and Gabriela 22 Tiessen. 2005. 'Language Maintenance Amongst the Parya of Tajikistan'. In *Studies in Languages of Tajikistan*, ed. John M. Clifton. Dallas, TX: SIL International. 25–64.

- 23 For more see Aleksandr L. Gryunberg. 1980. *Yazyk Kati: teksty, grammaticheskiĭ ocherk* [Kati Language: Texts and Grammatical Essay]. Moscow: Nauka. Eric P. Hamp. 1968. 'On *r in Kafir'. In *Studies in Indian Linguistics* (Volume Presented to Prof. M. B. Emeneau on His Sixtieth Birthday Year). Poona. 124–137; Georg Morgenstierne. 1929. 'The Language of the Ashkun Kafirs'. In *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*. Bindii. 192–289. Richard F. Strand. 2000. 'Nurestani Languages'. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Online. www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nurestani-languages-archive. Max Klimburg, *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush: art and society of the Waigal and Ashkun Kafirs*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999. Vols 1 and 2.
- 24 George Grierson. 1919. *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. VIII, Part 2*. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass [reprint 1968].
- 25 Source: www.pbs.gov.pk/content/final-results-census-2017.
- 26 See Calvin R. Rensch, Sandra J. Decker and Daniel G. Hallberg. 1992. *Sociolinguistic Survey of Northern Pakistan, Volume 1, Languages of Kohistan*. Series Editor, Clare F. O'Leary, National Institute of Pakistani Studies Quaid-i-Azam University and Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- 28 Biddulph estimated the Torwali to have 'upwards of 20,000 souls'. See John Biddulph. 1880. [reprint 1977]. *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*. Karachi: Indus Publications. 69.
- 29 *Sociolinguistic Survey of Northern Pakistan, Volume 1, Languages of Kohistan*, 57.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 31 Shahnaz Hunzai. 2009. 'Economic Ascendancy and Cultural Dominance in the Northern Areas of Pakistan: A Threat to the Existence of Burushaski'. In *Endangered Languages and History*, eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath: FEL England. 84.
- 32 The Burushaski Academy has also published the first Burushaski Urdu dictionary in affiliation with the University of Karachi. For more, see Hunzai Sh. 'Economic Ascendancy and Cultural Dominance in the Northern Areas of Pakistan'. In *Endangered Languages and History*. eds. H. Elnazarov and N. Ostler. Bath: FEL England.
- 33 See, for example, Michael Krauss. 1992. 'The World's Languages in Crisis'. *Languages* 68, 4–8.
- 34 At the dawn of the twentieth century the Russian officials estimated the number of residents of the Pamir as 14,000. By the end of the century the number of speakers of the Pamiri languages have exceeded 200,000 with dozens of thousands settling in other parts of Tajikistan and former Soviet republics.
- 35 There are approximately 15,000 Pamiris live in Moscow and surrounding areas. In total, over 50,000 Pamiri speakers have settled in the Russian Federation in the last decades
- 36 NUR is the name for the Regional Public Organisation for the Promotion of Identity, Development of Languages and Customs of the People of Tajikistan in Moscow, Russia.
- 37 See Hakim Elnazarov. 2021. 'Promotion of Endangered Languages by Diasporic Communities. The Case of the Speakers of the Pamiri Languages in Moscow, Russia'. In *Endangered Languages and Diaspora. XXV Annual Conference – Proceedings*. Foundation for Endangered Languages, Tirana, 16–19 December 2021, ed. Eda Derhemi. Tirana: Mediaprint. 202–207.
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5

THEY KILL LANGUAGES, DON'T THEY? A SHORT CHRONICLE OF THE PLANNED DEATH OF BERBER IN NORTH AFRICA

Salem Mezhoud

Introduction

Language death is as old as . . . language. Although the concept of “dead language” (Latin and ancient Greek among others) has been a staple of school curricula in Europe since the Middle Ages,¹ it is only the recent interest in language endangerment within the linguistic sciences, and since the publication of the pioneering book by *R.H. Robins and E.M. Uhlenbeck, Endangered Languages* (Robins and Uhlenbeck 1991), that the multiple causes of extinction and of the threat of extinction have also been studied in depth by linguists. Stephen A. Wurm (Wurm 1991), David Crystal (2000), Jean Aitchison (1991, 2001), Nancy Dorian (1981) and others have enumerated and, often, classified many of these causes. Economic, cultural, political influences, dominance, invasion and competition for prestige and power have all been cited in various combinations.

Language shift through contact, environmental causes and human-induced erosion and attrition, all point, therefore, to what Jean Aitchison calls the inevitability of change (Aitchison 2001: 3). This seems to mean the inevitability of death. Why, therefore, would Claude Hagège call for, and title his book *Halte à la mort des langues*² (Hagège 2000)? In short, this means that rather than being inevitable, language death can be stopped and must be stopped. Languages, according to Hagège, are capable of resurrection. In part, as language death is due to human action, it can be stopped by human action and human initiative. His call was, at least partly, answered when work on documentation of endangered languages evolved and generated increasing interest in preservation and revitalisation of affected languages.

Of all the human causes of the death of languages, including those stemming from conquest, conflict and dominance, one specific activity is both understudied and underrepresented in the literature: deliberate and planned eradication of a language. The disappearance of a language community, even when premeditated (e.g., genocide), only causes language death as a corollary or a consequence of

the loss of the community (no speakers, ergo no language). Many cases involve discouragement or dissuasion from speaking the – native – language in favour, conversely, of promoting a “national”, or in any case, the dominant language championed by a prestige community or a government/authority. Whether it is for a perceived sense of national unity, nation-building, or the development of a “superior” culture, the main motive is clearly ideology. This was the case in colonial situations and is the case in many post-colonial contexts.

National language: the language of a nation?

The development of a national language, whatever its real or feigned rationale(s), has, in many contexts, been accepted, supported and justified by leading authorities in the scholarly, the media or the political fields. In post-colonial Africa, the establishment of a national language has often been backed by international or regional organisations. While purporting to promote the development of “national languages”, in most contexts, this refers to existing vernaculars, or the more widely spoken languages, to the detriment of all the others. The latter, by contrast, are deemed too numerous, and by this fact alone are not conducive, it is believed, to national unity or are, even, susceptible of leading to disharmony or division.

Beginning in the 1950s, UNESCO organised a series of expert meetings on language education (UNESCO 1953). In Africa, seminars were designed specifically to unify the transcription of African languages and thence to help in language planning and potentially in standardisation programmes. The report³ of the Bamako meeting of 1966 (UNESCO 1966) stipulates that “the wish [le désir] of some African countries to make use of unified transcriptions in their future literacy campaigns in national languages shall affect in no way the status of the official languages of these states” [translation mine, throughout]. In other words, the status quo regarding the official languages, therefore their position of dominance, will be maintained whatever the result of literacy campaigns.

Received wisdom in 1966 and in the following years was that countries need a national language. Whereas education in the mother tongue was deemed useful, the national (and/or official) language is of a higher status than all other languages and it is the unifying instrument necessary for the stability of the nation-state. This was, after all, the case in the colonial states and by perverse logic, its replication in the former colonies is therefore justified.

Recent interest in research into language endangerment, and the urgency to document languages in danger of extinction, to work on the prevention of language loss and, further, for the revitalisation of dying languages, flies in the face of state repression of language and linguistic communities, and suppression of ethnic and cultural expression. Repression itself is a building block of nationalism, or at least of some, albeit very common, forms of nationalism. This chapter will deal with ideology and repression in North Africa and the pursuit of language death for the fulfilment of a constructed nationalist ideology.

The targeted language is Berber, less commonly known by its endonym, Tamazight.⁴ The Berber language (Basset 1952; Chaker 1995: 9ff) is highly

dialectalised, owing to the vastness of the territory and the number of states⁵ it inhabits, together with reduced contact between communities from one end of the area to another. There is, nevertheless, a high degree of mutual intelligibility and linguistic closeness in this long dialect continuum. Berber shares this territory with another native language, referred to as North African Arabic, but known locally as Darja or Darija, and two foreign imports, French (since 1830) and Arabic (since the 1950s and 1960s).

State ideology and scholarly stereotypes

Few places have known a level of linguistic repression equal to that of the North African states. From Morocco to Libya (Egypt, to most North Africans, is part of the Middle East, not North Africa⁶), the state ideology, espoused by all the governments, claims and promotes the concept of a sole “national identity” – which is made of the combination of Arabness and the Islamic creed. It recognises no differences and suffers no contradictions, let alone dissent. All the states uphold and project the same image, and this image is received and accepted unconditionally, without challenge, everywhere outside the region.

According to this stereotype, North Africa is made of “Arab” countries with an overwhelmingly Arab population, with a few minorities scattered over the vast territory. The Berbers are one such minority. In reality, it is now recognised that the Arab stock forms barely 5% of the population of North Africa.⁷ The overwhelming majority of the population, contrary to the cliché, is made of Berbers who, with varying degrees of success have kept their language and their “culture”⁸ alive through centuries of foreign invasions. Eminent historians have stressed this fact countless times. For Charles-André Julien (1966 [1951]: 10) “it is generally not known that Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are inhabited by Berbers who are brazenly called Arabs”. However, both as an old colonial reflex and a survival imperative for North African regimes, this is one reality that is best ignored.

The development of genetic research has brought new evidence which refutes the official narrative. An example is the multi-year genetic study by *National Geographic*, the Genographic Project,⁹ which shattered the established perceptions of population origins in Northern Africa. When the final results were unveiled in 2017, the Egyptian press (Coptic Literature 2020), summarised them with titles claiming “genome project shows Egyptians are not Arabs”. The Genographic project has found that the proportion of Arab stock in Egypt is 17% and in Tunisia it is a mere 4%. A Morocco-based blog, Riadzany.com (February 2020) writes, “One of the intriguing things about Moroccans is their insistence that they are (...) not Arabic (...) And now it turns out that science is on their side”. Only 4% of the people in the region are Arab while 88% have “North African” DNA.

Together with the ethnic makeup, the other significant narrative, one embraced by most linguists specialising in Arabic, applies to the linguistic context of North Africa. The Arabists’ approach to North Africa is characterised by its adherence to an ideological stereotype which has come to colour scientific discourse. As most linguistic research on Arabic focuses on the Middle East, studies of North Africa merely apply the accepted orthodoxy developed for the Middle East, irrespective

of its scientific validity. In this chapter, I am only going to make a few postulations which may serve to enlighten the subject of this study.

First, it is widely claimed that non-Berber-speaking North Africans speak a variety of Arabic diversely known as Colloquial Arabic, dialectal Arabic, North African Arabic (NAA), Maghrebi (sometimes Maghribi¹⁰) Arabic – which is locally called *Darja of Darija*. Secondly, this NAA is a dialect of Classical, or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and therefore, thirdly, North Africans live in a state of diglossia.

Following Charles A. Ferguson's influential paper on diglossia (1959: 325–340), it is now a postulate that every country where Arabic is spoken (and North Africa has been included in the list) is in a situation of diglossia. This, according to Ferguson's original definition, consists, by and large, in the concomitant existence of a high variety (Classical or Modern Standard Arabic) which occupies the realms of education, the media and all intellectual and/or elite activities, and a low variety, Colloquial Arabic, spoken in the domestic environment, in the street, and in all – non-sophisticated – everyday situations. While this is largely true in the Middle East in general, both in the Levant¹¹ and Egypt, this is not the case in North Africa. The Fergusonian model of high and low varieties, however, fits the official ideology like a glove. On one hand, it justifies the superior position of high Arabic over lower Darija and, on the other, by the very existence of the alleged low variety it provides legitimacy to the importation of Arabic as a prestige variety fit to be a national language.

Diehards and diglossia

The concept of diglossia precedes Ferguson and has been revisited many times since 1959 (Fasold 1984: 60). Studies of North Africa rarely escape the basic model that Darija is but a “dialect” of Arabic; indeed Darija's name in French is “arabe dialectal”. The rare studies of diglossia in North Africa (Bentahila 1983; Djennane 2014) use later interpretations of the concept¹² to support their claims. In some cases variations on the theme such as triglossia (Youssi 1995), multi-glossia (Dichy 1994), polyglossia (Srhir 2005) have been tested. Various authors have both recognised the inadequacy of the Fergusonian model in North Africa and struggled to find an appropriate explanation which distinguishes it from multilingualism.

My contention is that most Arabist scholars begin – just like the official ideology – with the assumption that North Africans speak Arabic, albeit in the form of a dialect or a dialect continuum, and all studies thereafter concentrate on the various linguistic features of the local variants of this dialect. As the quasi totality of the researchers are not proficient in Berber, comparative analysis is non-existent, except, more recently, in the case of Berber specialists (Tilmatine 1999) who come from an entirely different perspective. With an alternative approach, and further comparative studies, it may be possible to show that far from being a dialect of Arabic, Darija is a separate vernacular made of a Berber substratum, a mostly Berber syntactic base, with a lexicon made of a combination of Berber and loans from Medieval Arabic, Spanish, Italian, Turkish and, latterly, French.

A few recent studies even by researchers who are not Tamazight speakers, have begun to view Darija as a language of its own, quite separate from, albeit influenced by, Arabic – in equal amounts to the influences from other languages. It must be noted that there is no mutual intelligibility between the North African Darija and all the Colloquial Arabic dialects of Egypt and the Middle East. For Kerras and Mulay Lahssan (2019) “the Algerian dialect is a language variety in its own right. . . . It has its own structure, even though it is close to Standard Arabic. It is therefore a language variety which belongs to a people whose identity must be recognised”. The authors reached this conclusion without a familiarity with Berber and therefore missed even stronger claims to Darija’s autonomy from MSA. Similar conclusions are being reached in Morocco (Caubet 2005: 234).

Arabic before Arabic

The search for the origins of Darija opened new and somewhat unexpected avenues. The Maltese language has long been considered a variety of NAA although in the past it has been argued, most notably by Mikiel Anton Vassalli (Saydon 1953: 124), that it is derived from Phoenician. The findings of the Genographic Project and the discovery of new Phoenician archaeological artefacts have recently rekindled the theory of the Phoenician (and/or Punic) origins. A sign of its popularity is an article in a Maltese newspaper calling for “Renaming Malta the Republic of Phoenicia”.¹³

The idea has recently made its way to North Africa, with, inter alia, Abdou Elimam (2004: 319 ff.) who maintains that Punic is the language which gave birth to Darija, and Arabic only contributed to its development. The reality, it could be argued, is however, that Darija was originally Berber which had been progressively submerged with loans to such an extent that it became a different language. This is now described as a dialect of Arabic.

My second claim against diglossia, is that Classical Arabic, even during the *Islamic Golden Age*, was never spoken widely in North Africa, despite its status as the language of scientific and scholarly output, and, above all, the language of the dominant religion, Islam, which extended from North Africa to Spain.¹⁴ It fulfilled a very similar role to that of Latin in Christian Europe during the same period, when liturgical Latin was also the language of scholarship, and was predominantly the prerogative of clerics, in monasteries and abbeys, and of a small number of aristocrats (Mezhoud and El Kirat 2010). After the fall of Granada in 1492, most Muslims and many Jews from Andalusia fled to North Africa, but in the wake of the upheaval, Islamic culture in the region fell into decline, never to recover.¹⁵

Classical Arabic ceased to be the vehicle of “advanced” secular culture and scholarship, except in a few remaining centres such as the universities of Al-Qarrawiyyin in Morocco, and of Bgayet (Bougie or Béjaïa) in Algeria. Islamic learning, for its part, found refuge in the theological centres of al-Zitouna in Tunisia and al-Azhar in Egypt as well as in numerous religious schools, or *zawiyas* throughout North Africa. The latter confined learning to religious study and the knowledge of Arabic became the ownership of the clerics. These used this

knowledge as both a symbol and an instrument of prestige and would, therefore, not impart it easily to the populace. A number of documents in Arabic from the 15th and 16th centuries speak of imams employing translators to convey their sermons in Berber to the city's believers who did not understand the imam's original Arabic, this, even in the most prestigious centres of Islamic culture (e.g., Fez in Morocco).^{16,17} This situation remained the same until the end of the colonial era.

These circumstances are the reason diglossia is absent today¹⁸ as it was in Medieval North Africa. This is further supported by two facts. First, the propagation of the Darija took place mainly since the 19th century, when the French conquest displaced large numbers of people, especially in Algeria, and later, after independence in the mid-1950s (Morocco and Tunisia) and early 1960s (Mauritania and Algeria), when huge movements of population took place from rural areas to the urban centres. Within a short time, families presented a pattern of language contact with the familiar three tiers: 1) Berber monolingual initial immigrants, 2) their Berber-Darija bilingual second generation offspring, and 3) their monolingual Darija-speaking grandchildren. The populations of most of the largest urban centres in North Africa are made of "Arabised" (i.e., Darija speaking) Berbers or bilingual speakers. Algiers was, until the late 19th century, predominantly Berber speaking as the population came mainly from nearby Kabylia. Before the French conquest there is overwhelming evidence that there was an uninterrupted Berber-speaking continuum from the Tunisian border to ChercHELL and the Blidean mountains west of the capital. Similar continua were, indeed, even more pronounced in Morocco.

Furthermore, as Classical Arabic became increasingly under-used and specialised, beginning in the 15th century, it became restricted to a small number of religious scholars. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, when the so-called Barbary Coast (by then part of the Ottoman Empire) was a major force in the Mediterranean, it waged a constant war against European shipping. The warfare led to the occasional occupation of some North African port cities by the European powers, mainly Spain (Oran, Bougie, Ceuta, Melilla, Tunis). The main language of communication at that time and until the 19th century, was the Mediterranean *Lingua Franca*. Turkish began to assume a bureaucratic role in the local administration(s) and Arabic was increasingly relegated to the religious sphere.

A Spanish missionary who was captive in Algiers between 1578 and 1581 (Haëdo 2004), gives a vivid description of the languages spoken in Algiers during his stay. Although unaware of the Berber dialects spoken there, and he could not distinguish between all the non-European languages present at the time, including those of "African natives" whom he does not identify, he insists, however, that "the conquering Arabs from Arabia, owing to their blending with so many conquered provinces, have so corrupted their own language, that the Arabic spoken today in Barbary¹⁹ is no longer Arabic strictly speaking" (Haëdo 2004: 127). Haëdo goes on to describe what he considers the third language (in addition to Berber and Darija) spoken in Algiers, the *lingua franca*, "so-called by the Muslims not because in speaking it, they believe they are expressing themselves in a language of any Christian nation", but because by the means of this jargon, they manage to understand the Christians.

The lingua franca, explains Haëdo, was mostly a mixture of Spanish and Italian words, with a few additional words in Portuguese. It was used in all business and all matters “between Turks, Moors and Christians” to the extent that “there is no Turk or Moor, including women and children, who did not speak this language and did not understand the Christians”. A cosmopolitan city, Algiers in the 16th century was a thriving multilingual capital. Nowhere, except in the earlier description, is Arabic, the classical variety, mentioned as a language of learning or scholarship, let alone of diplomacy and wider communication. Diglossia as a justification for the promotion of Arabic into the national language stands on very weak ground.

Imports and purports

In addition, as a significant component of the linguistic configuration, Modern Standard Arabic (still called Classical Arabic in North Africa) was introduced (re-introduced?²⁰) as the national, or official, language of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia after their independence (1956 and 1962) and in Mauritania as late as 1991. The national and official language of North Africa has, in conclusion, no more legitimacy than any of the European colonial languages, with the difference, however, that French (English in Libya) has served as an instrument of education and of communication with the wider world for nearly two centuries.²¹ One cruel irony of this circumstance is that an overwhelming majority of North Africans are unable to understand their national anthems (no more than they can understand the passages of the Koran they recite in prayer). Those who can are the younger generations schooled in MSA since the 1960s; their ability is comparable to their knowledge of the lyrics of songs by the Beatles, Otis Redding, or Madonna. It is the result of learning a foreign language at school.

Building blocks of ideology

Why then, does the linguistic situation in North Africa seem so controversial? Primarily because it is the result of the imposition of a specific view of identity which, rather than being based on historical, sociological and linguistic facts, consists of an imported artefact, somewhat ready-made, and which rests precariously on two pillars, the religion of Islam and the Arabic language. The first is the justification of the second and the latter the vehicle for the first. This ideology that takes its source in the Middle East was borrowed from Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser's doctrine of Pan-Arabism. It became *arabo-islamisme* (Arab-Islamism) in North Africa, with very simple goals: strive to achieve “Arab unity” and, for this purpose, to ensure that populations are Arabised linguistically and culturally.

Arabisation became the creed of governments in North Africa. It is so ingrained in all political activities, in internal policy and external relations, that no politician, academic or journalist from every ideological landscape in Europe and elsewhere, would openly question it. Even those (Grandguillaume 1983: 157; Miquel 1983: 7) who criticised the way it was designed and applied, deemed it justified, because it is, according to both the left and the right of the (European) political spectrum,

legitimate for the region's governments to "claim their cultural identity", and this identity is Arab. For André Miquel, "Arabisation is, evidently, the first imperative, the necessary condition for the reconquest [recovery] of an identity concealed, even devalued, by the colonisation". There is no doubt in Miquel's mind, that the recovery of the – real – identity of North Africans can only be achieved through Arabic.

Whether through 1960s zeitgeist, political correctness or sheer opportunism, the unquestioning acceptance of the state dogma illustrates the absence of, and the search for, legitimacy in all aspects of the problem. Legitimacy is, indeed, the linchpin of the national politics promoted by North African governments; or, rather and more accurately, the absence of legitimacy is (Mezhoud 1993). Alone among its Nord African neighbours, Morocco has been able to find a formula which incorporates both dimensions (Islam and Arabic) of the ideology by resorting to dynastic ownership and the king's status as the Commander of the Faithful (see John Waterbury (1970) for an elaborate treatment).

Manipulation of symbols, control of image and message, became substitutes for the missing ingredient in the political systems. Arabic – the mother tongue of nobody – is the national language not by virtue of its role as a vernacular, but for its symbolic roots as the language of Revelation, commandeered for the purpose. It is, therefore, simple logic that no departure from any aspect of the official ideology could be tolerated lest the very foundations of these States be jeopardised. Thus began the war on Berber.

All-Out War on Berber

The War on Berber has its roots in the colonial period. The French administration was often accused of practising a divide-and-rule policy by recognising the existence of Berber culture. The policy permeated the anti-colonial movements (A. Ali Yahia 2013; A. Ouerdane 1990) and later was used to justify the virulent anti-Berber stance of the ruling elites. This confrontation was most acute in Algeria. The very existence of Berber culture is, by definition, a contradiction of the official image of an Arab North Africa. The region it seems, is not big enough for two identities.

If a language is "a dialect with an army and a navy", or, as Randolph Quirk allegedly added, also with a flag, the official language of North Africa had them all. The full power of the State was mobilised in the service of its defence and all available weapons were used to preserve its privileged status. While in Morocco the state channelled its efforts towards confining Berber culture to a folklorised product fit for tourist consumption, in other countries the official policy consisted in complete denial of the very existence of Berbers, and anything in Berber culture that is seen as threatening to the state's ideology. Libya and Algeria spared no efforts to stamp out any signs and claims of Berber identity which M. Gaddafi called "a poison" (Plantade 2011).

While in both Morocco and Algeria early measures include the prohibition of Berber personal names and the Arabisation of toponyms, in Algeria, one of the very first acts of the newly established regime was the abolition of the Chair of

Berber studies at the University of Algiers (Mezhoud 2010: 20) which had been in existence since the end of the 19th century. In parallel, the Arabic language was introduced to primary schools in the summer of 1962 shortly after the 5 July independence, in order to achieve the Arabicisation (widely known as Arabisation) of the educational system.²² Arabicisation was expected, ultimately, to lead to the Arabisation,²³ that is, the transformation of Algerians into Arabs. Arabisation went hand in hand with Islamisation, which largely means the introduction of forms of religious practice closer to those of the Gulf states (mainly Wahhabi), and the rejection of traditional North African practices heavily influenced by the numerous *sufi* brotherhoods, many of which played significant roles in the resistance against French colonial occupation.

The enemy of the people

The process is not devoid of irony. The Algerian government passed a number of laws between 1965 and 2019, imposing MSA as the language of all aspects of government, with the Judiciary as an early target. One is reminded of King François I of France issuing the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêt in 1539, which substituted French to Latin in all court documents and legal acts. The king's intention, explicitly stated, was to enable the population of his realm to understand all court dealings and legislation.²⁴ Although in retrospect, this act which effectively created what became modern French, did so at the expense of other languages and dialects, the king wanted to make his courts and all legislative and legal documents accessible to the ordinary citizen by removing the barrier between the Judiciary and the people – that is, Latin. In Algeria by contrast, with the compulsory use of Arabic in all legal acts and all court business, the government erected a formidable barrier; the Arabic of the legal system, together with the concepts it introduced, increased alienation instead.²⁵

With the promotion of MSA, Darija, for its part, though the mother tongue of a large proportion of the population in all three countries, suffers from a total absence of recognition. The official narrative which promotes the switch to the prestige “national language” has had the effect of encouraging large numbers of youths to also turn to what is now called radical Islam.²⁶ The policy had the effect of 1) strengthening the resolve of the proponents of Tamazight to fight for their identity (see Mezhoud 2010 for examples of resistance initiatives) and 2) heightening the radicalisation of the “Arabisants”. These youths who felt gradually marginalised by being deprived of access to French, ultimately constituted the backbone of the “fundamentalist” groups.

The perception of Tamazight and Berber culture as a threat to the official ideology – and its proponents' hold on power – inevitably marked both as targets for eradication. To paraphrase Richard Henry Pratt,²⁷ the motto of the regime could have been “kill the Berber and save the man”, but, even in Gen. Pratt's own (in his mind, well meaning) scheme, saving the body of the man served only the purpose of making him another man, a “civilised” and preferably malleable, model citizen. This was in the USA. In North Africa, it is akin to “Kill the Berber, save the imaginary Arab”.

As claims for Berber identity grew, the mere mention of the word “Tamazight” was punishable by prison. Identifying as a Berber became criminal and seditious, and deemed to pose a threat to the survival of the nation. Perceived crime entailed real repression.

Measuring repression

The package of measures applied to counter what became known as Berberism was multipronged and wide reaching and beyond the scope of this chapter (see Mezhoud 1993, 2005 and 2010 for more detail). Its two parallel goals are to expand as quickly and as broadly as possible the use of the Arabic language in all domains of government (cf. earlier section “All-out War on Berber”), and to accelerate the demise of Tamazight by all means necessary. Arabic was first introduced in primary schools as a subject, then, gradually, as a medium of teaching. As religious education was made compulsory, Arabic as a medium found there its first discipline.

Total Arabisation, which is still the mainstay of all North African politics, colours all official behaviour towards identity, national politics and international relations. To achieve control of intellectual and cultural life, the Arabicisation of the humanities and social sciences was seen as a priority in Algeria. As Rouadja put it (2017), “contrary to the ‘exact’ sciences which have a reputation for ‘neutrality’, social sciences are ‘insidious’ and . . . perverse. A university reform in 1971–72 included the abolition of the anthropological and ethnological sciences designated as colonial sciences.” For Rouadja, anthropology to the regime, is susceptible of creating disharmony and division because it brings to light “existing differences and identities (Arab, Amazigh)”.

Next, a ban was prescribed on all archaeological research into the pre-Islamic period, in a country replete with World Heritage sites and other monuments from or predating the Roman and Carthaginian empires. At the same time, pre-Islamic history was eased out of history books and school manuals, and the national narrative was made to begin with the 7th-century Arab invasion. Tamazight was completely shunned in the educational system as being synonymous with dissent (cf. earlier), a self-fulfilling prophecy, since this very attitude indeed reinforced opposition to the state ideology.

Tamazight was also completely absent from both the print media and television, as was Darija. The national radio network had programmes in the three languages, French, Darija and Berber (mainly the Kabyle variety) and MSA was used exclusively in news bulletins and formal announcements. Television was mostly the domain of MSA with Darija finding its way to light entertainment programmes. Pre-independence regional radio stations which broadcast in Berber (mostly Kabyle) received special treatment, in three stages: first, their transmit power was reduced so that their range decreased progressively; second, presenters, reporters, newsreaders in particular, were under instruction to introduce Arabic vocabulary while broadcasting in Tamazight; finally many of them were closed down.

In the 1990s, pressure from the Berber Movement, the restructuring of the political system in the wake of the riots of October 1988 and, later, the establishment

of commercial stations outside government control, led to the creation of a new national network with a number of regional stations. Some radio stations were allowed again to broadcast in Berber, but with the caveat that the stations in the Berber areas were obliged to broadcast both in Berber and Arabic, while the stations in other regions (39 out of 48) broadcast only in Arabic or Darija.

Just as broadcasters in Tamazight were compelled to introduce Arabic vocabulary into their shows, other areas of cultural expression were subjected to similar constraints and coercion. Organisers of concerts in the Berber areas were obliged to add Arabophone (i.e., Darija speaking) singers to their programmes, alongside Berber language artists, irrespective of their popularity and artistic or other criteria. This seeming tax on language was a heavy handed way of continuing the mission of television and, on occasion, it triggered riots and, consequently, violent repression.

Television became the favourite instrument in the service of the official ideology. From the early days of independence, a vast quantity of programmes were imported from Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries, usually subtitled in French as nobody understood Middle Eastern Arabic. This was precisely the reason for the onslaught of Arabic language programmes. As the newly available television sets made their way into an increasing number of homes, they became effective instruments of propaganda and indoctrination, and ultimately, of Arabisation.

Like in the movies

Egyptian cinema, like Bollywood films, had been popular since WWII, as they were across the African continent; however, an enormous diversity of films from all over the world were also a familiar staple of Algerian cinemas. The Algerian Cinémathèque was widely acclaimed in the 1960s and was considered the second best in the world for its diversity of programmes; a feat made possible and sustained by a public of very discerning cinephiles. As Algerian cinema was also making its mark and becoming a favourite of critics around the world, this potential source of national pride became, instead, a cause for fear in government. In the early 1970s, the availability of European and American films began to decrease, in part under the pretext of deteriorating political relations²⁸ but mostly because of their supposedly “corrupting” influence. To fill the void thus created, further imports from Egypt were splashed on the country’s screens. True cinephiles kept away and, with the advent of radical Islamists, many cinemas, including historical icons and architectural jewels, were closed down or even demolished.

While Algerian films were at the height of their popularity, they were Arabised by decree. All filmmakers were obliged to use only Arabic (a combination of MSA and Darija) in their films, including those shot on location in Berber-speaking areas, where the storyline and the context called for Berber-speaking actors and narrators. One notorious example is *L’opium et le bâton* (The Opium and the Stick) by Ahmed Rachedi, from a novel by the renowned Kabyle Berber novelist Mouloud Mammeri. Set in Kabylia with entirely Berber-speaking characters, the original novel had historical significance which called for Berber dialogue. Yet this was not acceptable to the regime.

The film, like many others, was entirely dubbed in Darija²⁹ and no version in the Berber language was made. A few years later, another prominent film director discussed with Mammeri a project for bringing another one of his novels³⁰ to the screen with a Berber dialogue and Darija dubbing, but the plan was quashed. It was two decades, and many riots later, that the novel was finally filmed – in Berber – without state support.

African vs. . . . ?

The marginalisation of Berber culture began, as mentioned, very early after independence. At the height of its reputation as the capital of Africa and of African independence movements, in July 1969 Algiers hosted the 2nd Pan-African Cultural Festival, a ten-day event which saw artists, writers, filmmakers from all over the continent perform indoors and outdoors in every square, theatre and conference room of the capital. African-American and African personalities were honoured and Miriam Makeba, Mama Africa, was given an Algerian passport. Yet, throughout the truly unique moment in the history of Africa, hardly any Berber culture was showcased. The world-famous writer and singer, the diva Marguerite Taos Amrouche, who filled theatres in Paris and other capitals with her operatic rendering of Berber songs from Kabylia and ancient Andalusia, and whom everyone awaited with exhilaration, was not even invited. It was later reported that the intention of the regime was to demonstrate that African culture was not all black, as they thought the earlier festival in Dakar, Senegal, insinuated. It seems it was not Berber either.

In the early 1970s the government announced that Hausa and Swahili were soon to be taught at the University of Algiers. This apparent opening in an otherwise closed attitude, was seized upon to request the reinstatement of the teaching of Tamazight. As a result, the former was shelved and the latter returned to confinement. The regime's attempt to pay lip service to the common African heritage did not survive its fears of encouraging home-grown, native, Africanity.

The creed decreed

While academic disciplines and programmes in the universities were either being abolished or reduced to empty shells through Arabisation,³¹ the government embarked on an ambitious building programme of so-called "Islamic Cultural Institutes", institutions of theological studies on which were lavished the latest appurtenances and technology. Designed to present a more modern image of Islamic scholars and theologians, they nevertheless shared their fortune with a plethora of mosques, erected all over the country either officially or unofficially by the radicalised groups and factions. They were all designed to convey more efficiently than the schools and universities the two pillars of the official ideology.

The constant reminder of the "Muslim nature" of the nation, enshrined in successive constitutions, together with the unrelenting imposition of Arabic, through deeds and laws, had the reverse effect of the goal it sought. Not only did it strengthen the resolve of the now famous Berber Cultural Movement in Algeria,

but it also triggered the Amazigh revival – and language revitalisation – throughout North Africa (Mezhoud 2010). The Pan-Berber flag, which adorned Libyan trucks during the Libyan uprising of 2011, was designed partly by Berbers of the Canary Islands and it is now the rallying symbol for all Tamazight speakers all over the vast region. The official stance of total denial has been reversed and first Morocco, in 2011, and then Algeria in 2016, adopted constitutional amendments to provide official status to Berber alongside Arabic, although the symbols are still to be followed by deeds.

It can be asserted that the manipulation of religion had as a logical, direct, outcome the rise of Islamic radicalisation. At the same time, it provoked a stronger, more systematic, effort to preserve but also to revitalise the Berber language and culture. Nevertheless, despite the apparent confrontation between the regime and its product, the radical Islamists, the two sides of the official coin always find unity in their shared opposition to, and common goal of, destroying Tamazight and Berber culture.³²

The script scenario

During its campaign for Tamazight to be taught in schools, the cultural movement made extensive use of Tifinagh, the ancient Berber script which developed from Libyco-Berber, an alphabet contemporaneous with Phoenician. Tifinagh met with strong resistance from the government and became anathema to the Islamists. This began when it became clear to them that far from being a mere object of folklore to be relegated to museums, Tifinagh was a powerful instrument of cultural identity. As an older script – perceived as having more historical significance and authenticity than the Arabic script – it was, to both proponents of the state ideology, tantamount to a rallying symbol of rebellion, perhaps more even than the flag, hence a candidate for suppression.

Only when Tamazight was made an official language, in 2016, was it tolerated albeit not fully accepted. Though for practical reasons, Berber speakers prefer to use the Latin script, Tifinagh holds a special place for its psychological impact and its rallying power. Despite strenuous efforts the government did not succeed in imposing the Arabic script; it is nevertheless unrelenting in its attempts to force Tamazight to be written in it, through attrition or surreptitious means like “hijacking” school manuals by inserting into them, without the consent of the authors and the relevant pedagogues, Berber text written in the Arabic script beside that in the Latin script favoured by Berber speakers. In Morocco, by contrast, as Berber activists and education specialists also reject the Arabic script, and the government is opposed to the Latin script, Tifinagh, an abomination to the Algerian authorities, was adopted by both sides as a compromise.³³

A calendar for all seasons

For much of the early 21st century, another issue polarised relations in Algeria: the request for the official recognition of the Berber New Year, as a date for celebration. The pre-Islamic Amazigh New Year, or *Yennayer* in Tamazight, is a combination

of the Julian and the agrarian calendars both in existence for over 2000 years in North Africa. It has been kept alive alongside the Gregorian and Muslim calendars, and it occupies a special place among Berbers throughout the region, as one salient characteristic of Berber identity. It is only after a long struggle that the Algerian government recognised it, in 2017, as a day of national celebration and an official holiday. Despite this, and despite the official status of Tamazight enshrined in the Constitution, the repression of symbols has not stopped. Both in Algeria and Morocco demonstrators are often arrested for brandishing the pan-Berber flag.

Numerous publications in academia and the media have discussed the long fight for the recognition of Berber identity and, like many aspects of the North African linguistic complex, it merits a treatment that cannot be afforded here. So far, I have presented the ideological context in which the persecution of language takes place. I have tried to lift the veil on many false assumptions and stereotypes which, by being perpetuated, even by scholars, contribute to the crime. Ideological motivations for language endangerment are rife throughout the world. Whether they are based on religion, power politics, nationalism or a combination of these, as is the case in North Africa, they unleash destructive forces with similar results everywhere. Only, some linguistic communities are more vulnerable than others, and in those contexts, the death of language, often the death of the community, almost always the death of the culture, like Jean Aitchison's change, is inevitable.

A thousand ways to kill a language

Perhaps, to use a euphemism, cases such as that of North Africa do not involve the straightforward stabbing of the language, or sealing its fate before a firing squad; it may rather resemble the act of abandoning someone deep in the desert without water or food. It would be a long, slow and painful death, let alone a very lonely one, but death will occur. The death of a language, we now know, is a tragedy from many standpoints. Our recent awareness of the importance of all languages for cultural diversity, and perhaps too, for the sustainability of bio-diversity has given a new meaning to language death. As the crime of *ecocide* is being developed in international law, the discussion centres on both the legal instruments to deal with it and the essential mechanism(s) to implement them, now that the International Criminal Court provides a template for similar courses of action.

Killing a language is either tantamount to killing a community or to creating the premise of its demise. In both cases, the individual members of the community are not necessarily physically dead, though, indeed, sometimes they are. For its part, however, the community itself in its role as a repository of the common knowledge which provides the dynamic for a meaningful relationship with the environment and other human communities does, most certainly, die. Death by natural causes may be accidental, albeit avoidable. Human-induced death is a crime. As a legal definition, this should arguably apply to language too.

Claude Hagège (2000) calls *linguicide* the act of killing or provoking the death of a language. Whereas Jean Aitchison's ([1991] 2001: 2242) *language murder* refers to a language killing another, Hagège makes it clear that languages die at the hands of men. The holders of political power, usually States, argues Hagège,

do not limit their action to adopting measures which limit the use of minority languages. Not only do they not make any effort to prevent certain death, but they go even further, they hunt down languages, but without necessarily exterminating their speakers (2000: 141). For Hagège, State linguicide is, “the deliberate elimination of one or several languages by explicit political measures” (2000: 141). When the concept of genocide was created by Raphael Lemkin during WWII, it applied to the deliberate slaying of a group of people on the basis of their – common – characteristics, or, in other words, identity, whether “national, ethnic, racial or religious”. The Genocide Convention³⁴ further defines genocide as a series of acts which aim at “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part” (Art. 2). Even if the word “physical” is removed, the destruction of the *cultural entity* (the group targeted) could be achieved through the planned death of their language.

Attempts to bridge the conceptual gap have derived *cultural genocide* from Lemkin’s legal concept, initially coined by Lemkin himself to expand on genocide, but this has not been a satisfactory substitute and cultural genocide is not always understood to mean, or to apply to, the same thing. As Novic writes (2016: 313),

The existence of “cultural genocide” in the legal sphere lasted less than two years, i.e. during the negotiations of the Genocide Convention of 1948. However, . . . it is still uncertain whether the rejection of the draft provision on cultural genocide from the final Genocide Convention really rendered the issue a settled one.

One great irony is that one of the favourite concepts to represent the situation was a footnote to Lemkin’s book on genocide. “Ethnocide”, a close lexical relative of genocide, purports to address the linguistic and cultural dimensions in a way that links physical and cultural death. The American Bar Association³⁵ gives a concise, yet clear, genesis and definition of ethnocide, but its full (redefined) modern meaning and significance were first presented by an anthropologist, Robert Jaulin, in his *La paix blanche* (Jaulin 1970) which emphasised the end, rather than the means, of the perpetration of cultural destruction, in his case, in South America. In distinguishing spiritual and cultural death from the physical (genocide), Jaulin is closer – though with a converse perspective – to Richard Henry Pratt’s view. From Jaulin’s standpoint, to kill the culture is to kill the man.

The Arabisation in North Africa is no less than a programmed ethnocide, through acculturation by decree, supported by the State’s legal, bureaucratic, political and, not least, security (military, police, intelligence services) arsenal. Its purpose for the self-appointed rulers is to remain in power indefinitely by resuscitating and re-establishing a long gone, and supposedly glorious, past, more like a video game fantasy³⁶ with nihilistic aims.

Linguistic rights on the horizon

In his allegorical play *Le Banquet*³⁷ (1973: 13), Mouloud Mammeri reflects on the death of the Aztecs: “From there stems the geometric rigor of the death of

the Aztecs. A world which accepts its own condemnation facing another which sees itself as ordained by God". For Mammeri, awareness may prevent the fate which, then, is no longer inevitable. It is a lecture he was scheduled to deliver at the university of Tizi Ouzou on 20 April 1980, that sparked a historical resurgence of Berber awareness which spread through the whole of North Africa. The title of the lecture, "Ancient Berber Poetry",³⁸ was deemed subversive and it was banned. That was the straw that broke the proverbial dromedary's back. The ensuing revolt became the "Berber Spring", a landmark now celebrated throughout the region. Two notable facts deserve special consideration. The revitalisation of Tamazight is entirely community based, albeit involving numerous communities in many countries. Second, the Berber Movement, of necessity but conforming to its ancient traditions,³⁹ has been the vector of the struggle for human rights and the return of democracy (Mezhoud 1993), first in Algeria, then in the whole of North Africa.

The cultural revival of Tamazight began as a reaction to an act of repression. It now extends to all aspects of national life (Mezhoud 2010). Traditions and social structures which were on the way to becoming obsolete were revived and new technologies, new media, new concepts have been introduced and used for language revitalisation. In the words of Mouloud Mammeri (1973: 21), "One does not resuscitate lost horizons. What is needed is to define new horizons . . . the great service one can do to the prospective victims of ethnocide,⁴⁰ is to abstain from civilising them and defining their happiness for them".

As an echo to Mammeri, the Berberists have advocated the same rights for Darija, despite the lack of enthusiasm of its speakers and occasional criticism for "telling Darija speakers what is good for them". This approach may, however, have borne its fruit. During the nationwide anti-government mobilisation which took place in Algeria in 2019 and 2020, several demonstrators voiced demands for a higher status for Darija, and stressed their rejection of official Arabic. Some incidents went viral on the social media. The position of official Arabic is now "officially" challenged by Darija speakers too.

In conclusion, a quick examination should be made of the human rights approach adopted by the defenders of Tamazight, and by the Berber Cultural Movement in particular. From an early reliance on the broad principles contained in the International Bill of Human Rights, the concerted action expanded to more specialised rights, in particular the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and minority rights. In recent years, diverse groups, mainly from Kabylia, but also from elsewhere in North Africa, have made numerous submissions to the UN Human Rights Council and to various Treaty Bodies. This approach does not always provide effective remedies, as language and cultural rights are dispersed in a multitude of instruments, not all of them binding.

Linguistic rights are still a concept with no real legal force, not even a proper definition. They are nevertheless a legitimate aspiration for all endangered language communities, and they may, even in their current state, constitute a way to invoke legal protection and prevent language loss and language death. The opinion of this author, first expressed in the birthplace of linguistic rights (unpublished paper delivered at FEL VIII – 2004 Barcelona) and more recently in Manila,⁴¹ is that since language is central to culture, central to identity, and, moreover,

is recognised as a key element of cultural diversity, linguistic rights should be considered as a peremptory norm of international law. It is time, therefore, to make the proverbial first step in the thousand-li journey to achieve, for Linguistic Rights, the status of *jus cogens*.

Notes

- 1 As Latin was in continuous use as a language of learning and religion, it is not easy to determine when it became officially a “dead” language, albeit not a vernacular outside Italy after the fall of the Roman Empire. For a thorough examination of the various historical roles played by Latin see Ostler (2007).
- 2 Claude Hagège (2009). *On the Death and Life of Languages*. New Haven: Yale University Press. The English title does not, unfortunately, convey the sense of urgency of the original (“Stop Language Death”, “End Language Death”).
- 3 Meeting of a Group of Experts for the Unification of Alphabets of the National Languages, Bamako, 28 February–5 March 1966. (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/N-EXPLORE-6babb5b6-b637-4bf6-97f0-9ed4c0239e46>). Final Report issues on 15 September 1966. French version at www.bisharat.net/Documents/Bamako1966.htm.
- 4 Tamazight is both the name of the language and the feminine gender. The latter is often transcribed as “amazighe” in French, as a declension of the masculine “amazigh”.
- 5 Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Egypt (in the Oasis of Siwa on the Libyan border).
- 6 Contrary to the – mostly – Anglo-Saxon construct, despite the existence of an Arab-Berber identity divide, and conflicting loyalties towards the so-called “Arab World”, it can be safely asserted that, by contrast, *no one* in North Africa, whatever their background and ideology, identifies with, and sees themselves as part of, the Middle East. The very concept of “Maghreb” is, by definition, a contradiction of that view.
- 7 In recent years, for example, the CIA World Factbook has recognised the predominance of Berbers in the composition of North African population. For Algeria (last updated: 25 January 2022) the Factbook describes the population thus “although almost all Algerians are Berber in origin (not Arab), only a minority identify themselves as primarily Berber”. The last half of the statement is, of course, purely impressionistic, with no empirical basis.
- 8 This is a subjective concept since on one hand, there are different Berber cultures in different regions, and the non-Berber-speaking communities also have a Berber culture.
- 9 The Genographic website was retired in July 2020 among other things to enable better control of the results.
- 10 Again, this is a reflection of the Arabist’s “purist” view of North Africa. The most common pronunciation is Maghreb, which is well reflected in the French spelling.
- 11 I use the term Levant advisedly, its roots in Orientalism notwithstanding, and in effect, precisely because of those roots, as I consider the entire conventional understanding of North Africa (not just the linguistic descriptions) even today, to be replete with Orientalism.
- 12 For example, A. Fishman, 1967. Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism, *Journal of Social Issues*, 32, 29–38.
- 13 *The Times of Malta*, 30 September 2011. Renaming Malta the Republic of Phoenicia. Opinion by Rustam Vafiev, Samarkand, Uzbekistan. <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/Renaming-Malta-the-Republic-of-Phoenicia.387184> (Retrieved 22/04.2022).
- 14 Another stereotype is the reference to Andalusia as “Arab Spain” when the predominant Muslim population from the conquest (by Berber generals and troops) in 711 AD, through the re-conquest by the Berber Almohad and Almoravid dynasties, to the completion of the Spanish Reconquista in 1492, was Berber. The reference to the Umayyad Caliphate was only a question of political allegiance. Andalusian culture for the seven centuries of Muslim predominance was largely Berber, and it involved, of course, the

- native Spaniards and a sizeable and vibrant Jewish population. It was “Arab” the way that the rest of (Christian) Europe was Latin.
- 15 The Ottoman and the Mughal empires took over as centres of Islamic culture until the 18th century.
 - 16 For example, the 1326 *Rawd al Qirtas* (a history book attributed to various authors). Available in French in a translation by Auguste Beaumier (1858), *Roudh el Kirtas* (1964 and 1999 as *Rawd al Kirtas*). *Histoire des Souverains du Maghreb et Annales de la Ville de Fès*. Reedited by Editions La Porte, Rabat, 1999. Fragments in English translation elsewhere.
 - 17 Many North African and Andalusian universities in the Middle Ages attracted European scholars and students. The 13th-century Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci (1170–1250), known for the so-called Fibonacci numbers or the Fibonacci Sequence, was a student at the University of Bgayet where he acquired the sum of knowledge he later introduced to Europe. Bgayet, currently officially Béjaïa, is situated in Kabylia, the main Berber region of Algeria. Today, barely any Arabic is spoken there, except by outsiders to the region. This is but one, albeit a powerful, example that defeats the notion that (Classical) Arabic was a vernacular language in Medieval North Africa. Even in cities where Darija is prevalent, the “Arabisation” process can be traced to very recent times and, consequently, not stemming from a prevalence of Classical Arabic.
 - 18 Multilingualism, instead, is the norm.
 - 19 The French translation used the word *Berberie* in usage at the time of Haëdo, while the Spanish in general speak of “*Berberiscos*”.
 - 20 In both cases, it was imported from outside the region, in a literal way, with teachers of Egyptian and other Middle Eastern nationalities.
 - 21 To answer the official rhetoric that French is a colonial language which should be replaced by Arabic, the world renowned Algerian writer Kateb Yacine liked to repeat that “the French language is ‘our spoils of war’ which we should use to enter the modern world”. He added that it was more effective for that purpose than building minarets which he compared to “rockets which never lift off”.
 - 22 This article elaborates on material I developed in Mezhoud (2005 and 2010).
 - 23 The French word *arabisation* covers both meanings.
 - 24 See www.britannica.com/topic/French-language#ref603561.
 - 25 The measure allowed the elimination of provisions of modern law inherited from the French and discarded Berber customary law, replacing both with a hybrid system laced with a large dose of Islamic law.
 - 26 Wahhabism and Salafism, hitherto very little known, became associated with the armed groups that have been active since the 1990s.
 - 27 “Kill the Indian and save the man” speech by Captain, later Brig. General, Richard Henry Pratt. Various cited but its context is provided in <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/> (Retrieved 04/05/2022).
 - 28 In particular, the repercussions of the attack at the 1972 Munich Olympics, known as “Munich Massacre”.
 - 29 Most films from Egypt, at the time, especially epics and period dramas were in Classical Arabic. This allowed the younger generations to understand them – and translate to their older relatives.
 - 30 *La colline oubliée* (The Forgotten Hill) which was released in 1997 as the first commercial feature film in Tamazight.
 - 31 As the overwhelming majority of people read French language publications, the government sought to promote Arabic books by limiting the importation of French material, thus starving university libraries of academic publications.
 - 32 During the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, the Islamists on numerous occasions equated the Berbers with “miscreant Europeans” and called for their destruction. An inordinate number of Berber intellectuals were assassinated by them.
 - 33 By coincidence, some of the negotiations over the script were conducted while the FEL annual conference was being held in Agadir, southern Morocco. A number of the

- Moroccan participants left the conference for Rabat where the meetings were taking place.
- 34 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. UN website: www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf.
 - 35 www.americanbar.org/groups/human_rights/dignity-rights-initiative/ethnocide-project/what-is-ethnocide/ (Retrieved 01/03/2022).
 - 36 Many Islamists, on occasion, armed themselves with replicas of scimitars during their raids on communities considered as non-believers.
 - 37 Translates as *The Banquet. The Absurd Death of the Aztecs*.
 - 38 The existence of a very vibrant “protest song” in Berber at the time, critical of the government, made “ancient Berber poetry” seem inoffensive in comparison. This made the reaction of the government all the more inexplicable and it precipitated what was tantamount to a revolution. The Berber Spring and its spirit spread throughout the region, and it opened the way to further challenges which arguably nearly brought the regime down.
 - 39 French anthropologists in the 19th century extolled the democratic nature of Berber society and made facile comparisons with ancient Athens.
 - 40 Mammeri uses the neologism “ethnocidés”, that is, *the ethnocided*.
 - 41 Sustaining Languages, Sustaining the World. International Conference on Language Endangerment. Commission on the Filipino Language, 10–12 October 2018. Manila, Philippines.

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6

FIRST- AND SECOND-LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN THE HOME

Perspectives on the state and revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada

Mary Jane Norris and Robert Adcock

Introduction

Indigenous peoples across Canada are deeply engaged in the revitalization of their Indigenous languages. Their languages range substantially in their vitality and states: some languages are relatively healthy, others endangered in varying degrees. But none of the Indigenous languages spoken in Canada today can be considered “safe”, where transmission is uninterrupted and the language is used at all ages from children up, in all domains (e.g. home, school).

This study examines the mode of acquisition and degree of home use of Indigenous languages, using Statistics Canada language data for Indigenous peoples from the Census.¹

The analysis focuses on the acquisition of an Indigenous language as a first-language (mother tongue) or second-language; and the use of an Indigenous language as the main or secondary language in the home. Acquisition and home use are explored in relation to the speaker’s age and area of residence, and the vitality and endangerment of languages. Four streams of speakers who use an Indigenous language at home are examined: two groups of first- and second-language speakers who use their Indigenous language as the main language at home, and two groups of first- and second-language speakers who use their Indigenous language as a secondary home language. Findings and their implications are assessed in terms of significance in the state and revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada.

Approach: four streams of Indigenous home language users

This study builds on previous Census-based research regarding the acquisition and home use of Indigenous languages. It provides 2016 Census updates of findings from earlier census years (1986 to 2011) about transmission, second-language

acquisition and home use by age, area of residence and levels of language vitality and endangerment (Norris 1998, 2003, 2007, 2011).

The analysis expands 2016-based Census studies (Anderson 2018; Norris 2018) to four separate streams of home users. Whether a language is spoken in the home “most often” or “regularly” does not imply whether the speaker had acquired their Indigenous language as a mother tongue or as a second-language. The two independent variables (acquisition and home use) cross-classified yield four streams comprising first-language and second-language speakers, each using their Indigenous language as either the main or secondary home language.

Census data, variables, indicators and definitions used in this study

Data sources

This study employs Indigenous population and language data² from Statistics Canada’s Census of Population for 2016, supplemented by data from earlier census years (Statistics Canada 2018).

Census variables

“**Indigenous**” is used here alternatively for “**Aboriginal identity**” which, as defined in the census,

refers to whether the person identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis, or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

(Statistics Canada 2018)

Area of residence

Employs Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs) to define four mutually exclusive and exhaustive area of residence categories:

- 1 On reserve (Indian reserves and settlements)
- 2 Rural (off reserve)
- 3 Urban non-CMA (off reserve; small urban areas, small cities (CAs))
- 4 Urban (CMA) (off reserve; large urban areas, large cities (CMAs))

Census language variables

Mother tongue refers to the first-language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

Home language refers to the language the respondent reports as the one spoken either most often or on a regular basis at home at the time of the census. This study treats these two groups as mutually exclusive.

“**Most often**”, alternatively referred to here as “**Main**” home language, is defined as the language the individual speaks “most often” at home.

“**Regularly**” (introduced in 2001), alternatively referred to here as “**Secondary**” home language, is defined as the language the individual speaks on a “regular” basis at home.

Knowledge of non-official languages: languages, other than English or French, in which the respondent reports the ability to carry on a conversation of some length on various topics.³

Linguistic indicators and definitions

The census does not directly collect data on acquisition and transmission, but estimates can be derived by combining different language and population variables. The following indicators provide estimates of second-language acquisition, and the extent of transmission based on the index of continuity and the average age of the mother tongue population.

Type of acquisition: refers to whether Indigenous language speakers acquired their language as a mother tongue or as a second-language.⁴

Indigenous language speakers, based on the knowledge variable, refer to those who reported the ability to speak an Indigenous language well enough to conduct a conversation.

First-language speakers – acquisition as a mother tongue: refers to those who reported their Indigenous language as a mother tongue *and* who can speak their language well enough to conduct a conversation.

Second-language speakers – acquisition as a second-language: those who reported the ability to speak an Indigenous language but did *not* report an Indigenous language mother tongue.

Estimates of second-language acquisition

- 1 **The index of second-language acquisition (SLA)** is an indirect⁵ measure, calculated as the ratio of the number of people who can speak an Indigenous language to the number with an Indigenous language mother tongue, expressed per 100 mother tongue population.
- 2 **Proportion of Indigenous language speakers who are second-language speakers:** calculated as the number of second-language speakers divided by the number of total speakers able to conduct a conversation in an Indigenous language.

Estimate of continuity (measure of vitality for prospect of intergenerational transmission)

Index of Continuity is an indirect measure calculated as the ratio of the number of people who speak an Indigenous main (most often) home language, to the number reporting an Indigenous mother tongue, expressed per 100 mother tongue population.⁶

Average ages of mother tongue, speaker (knowledge) and home user populations who report an Indigenous language can serve as indicators of language vitality, such as intergenerational transmission.

2016 census Indigenous language highlights

According to the most recent 2016 Census, 1,673,785 people in Canada reported an Aboriginal identity. Among this population, 208,720 indicated an Indigenous language as a mother tongue. Considerably more people, 260,550, reported they were able to conduct a conversation in an Indigenous language, implying some are learning Indigenous languages as second-languages (O'Donnell and Anderson 2017). Almost all (99%) of the total (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) 263,840 people who could speak an Indigenous language reported an Aboriginal identity.

For the first time in the census, there were more people in 2016, 223,380, who spoke an Indigenous language at least regularly at home, than people with a mother tongue (Statistics Canada 2017). Among home language speakers, 135,430 spoke an Indigenous language “most often” at home; while another 87,950 spoke an Indigenous language “regularly” at home, in addition to reporting a non-Indigenous main home language. A small number (590) of individuals reported speaking one Indigenous language most often at home and another Indigenous language regularly at home. These 590 people are included in both the “spoken most often” and “spoken regularly” categories in this study, thereby yielding a total of 88,540 Indigenous people speaking an Indigenous language regularly at home.

Part I: Acquisition and home use by age and residence

Trends in acquisition and home use

Between 1986 and 2016, the transmission of an Indigenous language mother tongue underwent a steady decline. The average age of the mother tongue population rose from 27.7 to 37.2 years of age. Within the aging mother tongue population, the share of children and youth aged 0 to 19 years steadily declined from 41% to 27% while that of older adults aged 55 years and over rose continuously from 12% to 25%.

Second-language acquisition has partially offset the decreased growth of the mother tongue population. Though not a substitute for mother tongue transmission, second-language learning may be the only option to sustain the growth of speakers. Of the 260,550 Indigenous people able to conduct a conversation in an Indigenous language in 2016, an estimated 63,940 or 25% had acquired their language as a second-language.

From 1996 to 2016, despite a minimal estimated growth of 0.5% in the mother tongue population, the number of Indigenous language speakers increased by about 8%. This 20-year growth in total speakers reflects the influx of second-language speakers, with their proportion of speakers rising from 18% to 26% (Anderson 2018), and the SLA index rising from 117 to 126 speakers.

The distinction between main and secondary home use is important in understanding the implications of home language use for maintenance and revitalization. Main home use has significant implications for prospects of transmission to the next generation and, hence continuity (Norris 2011, 2018). Long-term declines in main home use have contributed to the non-transmission of a mother tongue.

The ideal conditions for intergenerational transmission (Norris 2003) are more the exception than the norm today. Secondary home use may help slow language loss and contribute to second-language learning (Norris 2018).

The number of people who spoke an Indigenous language at home grew significantly, especially as a secondary language. Over 2001–2016 the population speaking a main or secondary home language increased 24%, surpassing the respective increases of 3% and 10% of the mother tongue and speaker populations. Most of this growth was attributable to the substantial 73% increase in secondary users compared to 5% for main home users (Norris 2018).

Recent increase in main home use dampened the long-term decline in language continuity. Between 1981 and 1996, for every 100 people with an Indigenous mother tongue the number who used an Indigenous main home language declined from 76 to 65 (Norris 1998). The continuity index declined further, from 64 to 63 persons between 2001 and 2006, and to 59 by 2011. Over 2011–2016 the greater increase in the number of main home users (14%) than that of the mother tongue population (3%) yielded a higher continuity index of 65 persons in 2016.

While Indigenous languages are increasingly being spoken in the home, their use is shifting from the main language to the secondary language. A similar situation was also noted for Inuktitut in Nunavut (Lepage and Langlois 2019). In Canada overall, during 2001–2016 the use of an Indigenous language as a main language shifted from 70% to 60%, and correspondingly, to secondary use, from 30% to 40%. A partial language transfer, when a mother tongue is no longer spoken as the main language at home but is still spoken as a secondary language, could be a factor in this shift. This situation was observed for the Inuktitut mother tongue population in Nunavut over 2001–2016 (Lepage and Langlois 2019).

Distinctions between first- and second-language acquisition and between main and secondary home use are especially relevant in situations where main home use and mother tongue transmission is low. These situations are most common in three groups of Indigenous peoples: 1) youth, 2) urban residents, and 3) those whose traditional languages are one of the more endangered Indigenous languages. Their speakers are more likely to have acquired their traditional language as a second-language, and more likely to speak it as a secondary rather than as a main home language (Norris 2018).

Acquisition and home use by age

Second-language speakers are younger than the mother tongue, total speaker and total Indigenous populations. Over 1996–2016 the mother tongue population has remained consistently older than total speakers, with the Indigenous population the youngest of all three. In 2016, the estimated average age of second-language speakers (30.8 years) (Anderson 2018), was not only younger than those of the total speaker (35.3 years) and mother tongue (37.2 years) populations, but also the total Indigenous population itself (32.1 years).

Average age differences between younger speaker and older mother tongue populations reflect the influx of young second-language speakers. Second-language acquisition is most pronounced among younger generations. Between 1996

and 2016, the increase in average age for the mother tongue population (6.2 years) was greater than that of speakers (4.9 years).

In 2016 about a third (34%) of children aged 5 to 14 years who could speak an Indigenous language had acquired their language as a second-language; the highest proportion compared to other age groups. Second-language acquisition declined steadily thereafter with increasing age through to older adult speakers (65+), with just 13% second-language acquired. Older cohorts reflect outcomes of transmission in earlier periods, when speakers were more likely to have acquired their language as a mother tongue compared to today.

In 2016, the majority, 60%, of home language users reported speaking their Indigenous language as their main language at home. An Indigenous language was the main language for a large majority (68%) of pre-school aged home users (children 0–4 years), followed by youth and young adults (65%), children 5–14 years and older adults 65+ (61%), and adult-age groups 25 to–64 years (57% to 58%). Across every age group, at least 90% of main users were first-language speakers. Taken together, these pre-school age and first-language speaker patterns likely reflect those associated with the main home use of a mother tongue in parent-child transmission.

Second-language speakers are more characteristic of secondary, than main users of Indigenous home languages. Second-language speakers made up the highest proportion of secondary users among younger generations aged 0–24 years at 59%, followed by a decreasing percentage with rising ages, from adults 25–44 years (42%) and 45–64 years (25%) to 65+ years (16%).

Acquisition and home use by residence

Language situations, acquisition and home use correlate with their areas of residence. Languages are spoken in locations ranging from remote areas to cities, on reserves, in settlements, rural and urban areas. Between 2001 and 2016, the proportion of Indigenous people living in large urban areas and cities rose from 29% to 36%. Given increasing urbanization, and that languages fare better within reserve or rural communities than in urban areas (Norris 2011), the contrast between where their total and their speaker populations reside is an important consideration.

Previous studies showed that the home use and transmission of an Indigenous language mother tongue is low among Indigenous populations in urban areas (Norris 2003, 2007, 2011). Proportions reporting an Indigenous language as a mother tongue or a main home language were low among the populations of the more urbanized Métis and non-status (non-registered Indian) First Nations; but higher among those of Inuit and Registered Indians on reserves and in rural areas. Second-language acquisition and secondary home use are both more likely in urban than in rural or reserve areas. A study of Inuit and the implications of increasing urbanization observed the erosion of Inuit language skills and that maintenance would depend on the availability of language and cultural programs in the city (Morris 2016).

The share of speakers who acquired their language as a mother tongue is lower in urban areas where transmission is low, than in rural or reserve areas. In 2016

first-language speakers made up the highest share of speakers in rural (80%) and reserve (78%) areas, followed by 69% in small urban areas, and the lowest in large cities (57%).

The proportions of home users who spoke their Indigenous language as the main language in the home were highest among home users in rural areas (70%) and on reserves (61%), followed by small urban areas (53%) and large cities (41%). At least 90% of main home users were first-language speakers in rural (94%), reserve (93%) and small urban (90%) areas with the exception of large urban areas at 73%.

Second-language acquisition and secondary home use are similar in their residential variations. In 2016, second-language speakers accounted for the highest proportions of secondary home users in large (48%) and small (46%) urban areas, and the lowest in rural (40%) and reserve (38%) areas.

Four streams of home language users

Distinguishing home users by their type of language acquisition allows us to see how they vary in their patterns of main or secondary home use by age groups and areas of residence. The two groups of first- and second-language speakers, combined with the two categories of main and secondary home language users, yield four streams of home users:

- F:M **First-language** speakers using an Indigenous language as a **main home** language: 124,315 speakers (56%)
- S:M **Second-language** speakers using an Indigenous language as a **main home** language: 11,105 speakers (5%)
- F:S **First-language** speakers using an Indigenous language as a **secondary home** language: 52,410 speakers (23%)
- S:S **Second-language** speakers using an Indigenous language as a **secondary home** language: 36,020 speakers (16%)

In 2016, the proportion of second-language speakers using an Indigenous home language (74%) was lower than that of first-language speakers (90%). However the proportions of second-language speakers using main and secondary home languages saw greater growth between 2011 and 2016, rising from 9% to 18%, and from 42% to 56% respectively, compared to corresponding increases from 60% to 63% and 26% to 27% for first-language speakers.

Indigenous people differ sharply between where their overall total population resides and where their speakers are concentrated. In 2016, while reserves made up the smallest share, just over 20%, of the total Indigenous population, they accounted for the largest shares of the mother tongue (59%) and main home user (60%) populations. By contrast, large urban areas accounted for 36% of the total population, but only 8% and 5% respectively of the mother tongue and main home user populations.

The 27% share of children and youth (aged 0 to 19 years) in the total mother tongue population is disproportionately lower than the corresponding 36% of the total Indigenous population. Looking at other parameters, shares of children

and youth were 30% of total speakers, main home users (34%) and secondary users (29%).

Figures 6.1 to 6.4 are mosaic plots of 2016 Census data allowing us to visualize the intersection of language acquisition, home use and population size with age and area of residence. Both the y- and x-axes run from 0% to 100%, and the size of each partition is proportional to its respective population size.

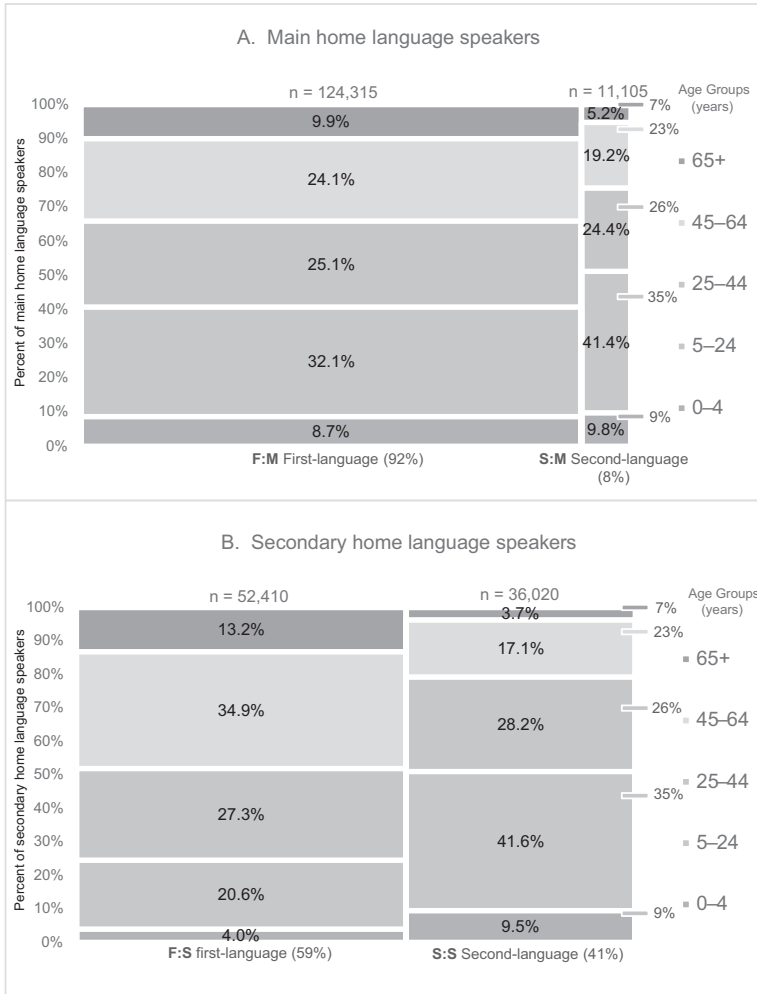


FIGURE 6.1 Age distribution of first- and second-language speakers, who spoke an Indigenous language as a main or as a secondary language at home, Canada, 2016.

Note: The age distribution of the total Indigenous population (IP) is shown in tick marks along the right vertical axis.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2016. Authors' calculations.

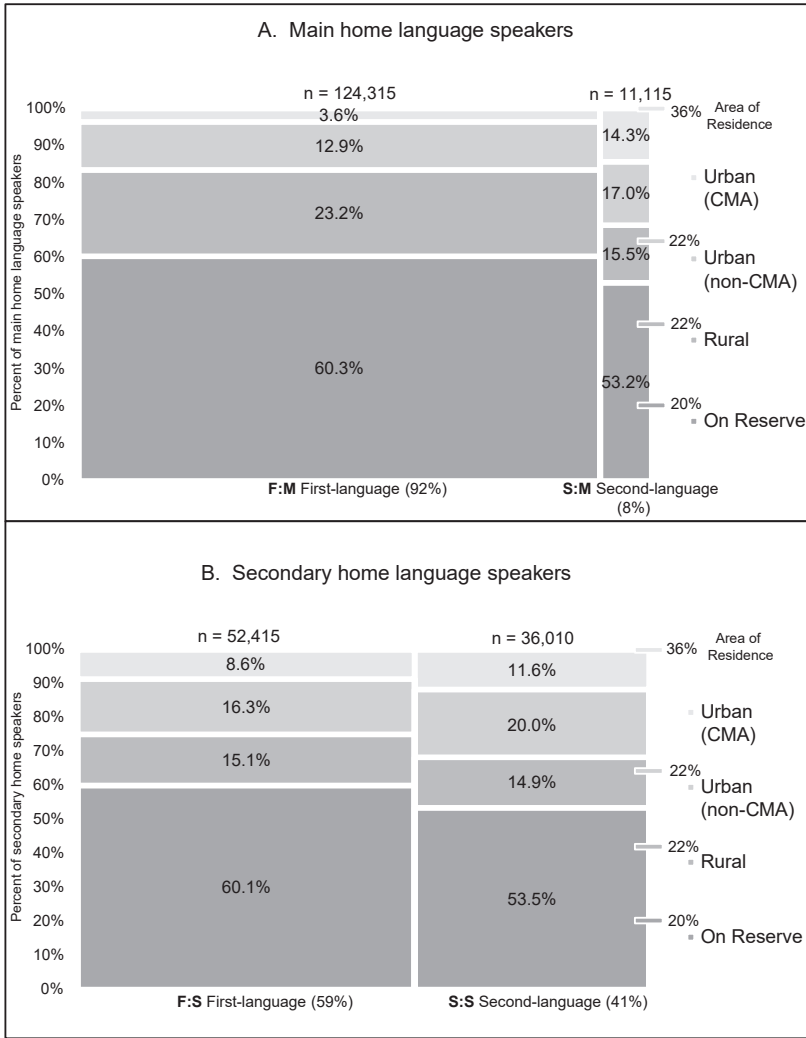


FIGURE 6.2 Residential distribution of first- and second-language speakers, who spoke an Indigenous language as a main or as a secondary language at home, Canada, 2016.

Note: The residential distribution of the total Indigenous population (IP) is shown in tick marks along the right vertical axis.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2016. Authors' calculations.

First- and second-language speakers of Indigenous home languages vary in their age and residential distributions by main and secondary home use. Age differences in home use between younger second-language and older first-language speakers are more pronounced with secondary users; while residential differences are more pronounced with main home users.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 compare age and residential distributions respectively, between first- and second-language speakers by main and secondary home use. Key observations are:

- Practically all speakers, 92%, of an Indigenous main home language were first-language speakers; and the other 8% second-language speakers (Figure 6.1A). First-language speakers accounted for a smaller majority, 59%, of speakers who used a secondary home language (Figure 6.1B).
- Children and youth 0–24 years make up the largest shares of both first- (41%) and second- (51%) language users of a main home language.
 - Figure 6.1A 0–24 years; F:M 8.7% + 32.1%; S:M 9.8% + 41.4%.
- About a quarter of both first- and second-language main home users are adults aged 25–44. Young adults who acquired their Indigenous language as a second-language as well as those as a first-language, are now using their language as the main language at home, and if parents, are potentially passing it on as a mother tongue to their own children.
 - Figure 6.1A: 25–44 years; F:M 25.1%; S:M 24.4%.
- Residents on reserve make up the largest shares of both first- (60%) and second- (53%) language users of a main home language.
 - Figure 6.2A: On reserve; F:M 60.3%; S:M 53.2%.
- First- and second-language speakers differ in their off-reserve distributions; second-language users of a main home language are more urbanized. Almost a quarter of first-language users are in rural areas and less than 5% in large cities; compared to a corresponding 16% and 14% of second-language users.
 - Figure 6.2A: Rural F:M 23.2%, S:M 15.5%; urban (CMA) F:M 3.6%; S:M 14.3%.
- Second-language speakers who use an Indigenous home language as a secondary language are considerably younger than first-language secondary home users. Just over a third (35%) of first-language speakers who are using their mother tongue as a secondary home language are older-aged (45–64) adults.
 - Figure 6.1B: 45–64 years; F:S 34.9%.
- Among secondary home users, the median age of second-language speakers at 25 years of age is much younger than that of first-language speakers at about 45 years.
 - Figure 6.1B: 0 to 24 years; S:S 9.5% + 41.6%; 0 to 44 years; F:S 4.0% + 20.6% + 27.3%.
- About a third of second-language speakers who use a secondary home language reside in urban areas compared to a quarter of first-language secondary home users.
 - Figure 6.2B: Urban (non-CMA) and urban (CMA); S:S 20.0% + 11.6%; F:S 16.3% + 8.6%.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 compare age and residential distributions respectively between main- and secondary home users by first- and second-language speakers. Key observations are:

- First-language speakers of a home language were more likely to use a main than a secondary language at home. About 70% of the 176,725 first-language home speakers used a main home language (Figure 6.3A). Conversely only about 24% of the 47,125 second-language home speakers used it as a main home language (Figure 6.3B).

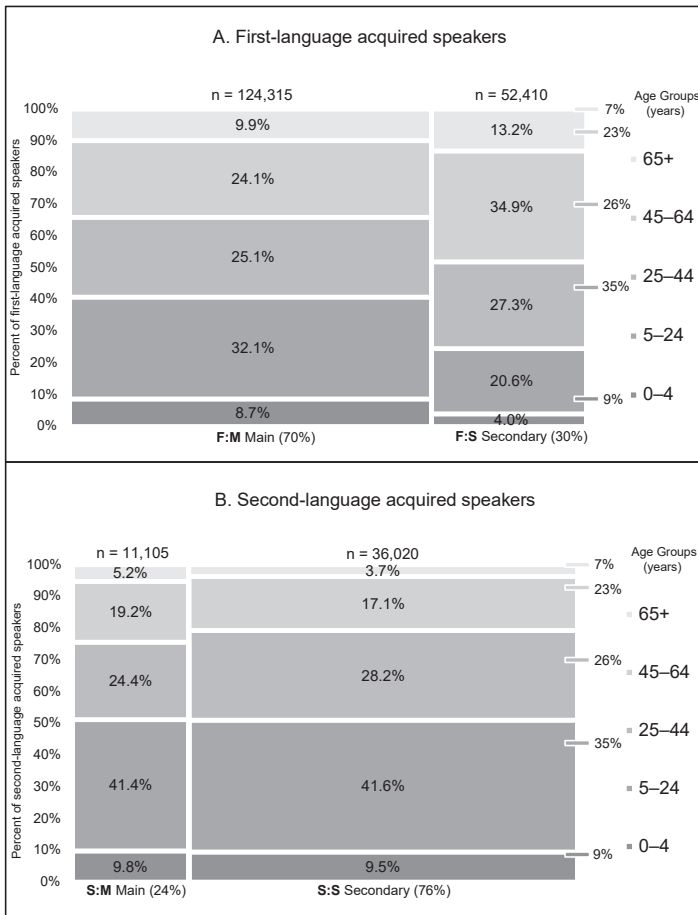


FIGURE 6.3 Age distribution of main and secondary home language speakers who acquired their Indigenous language as a first or second language, Canada, 2016.

Note: The age distribution of the total Indigenous population (IP) is shown in tick marks along the right vertical axis.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2016. Authors' calculations.

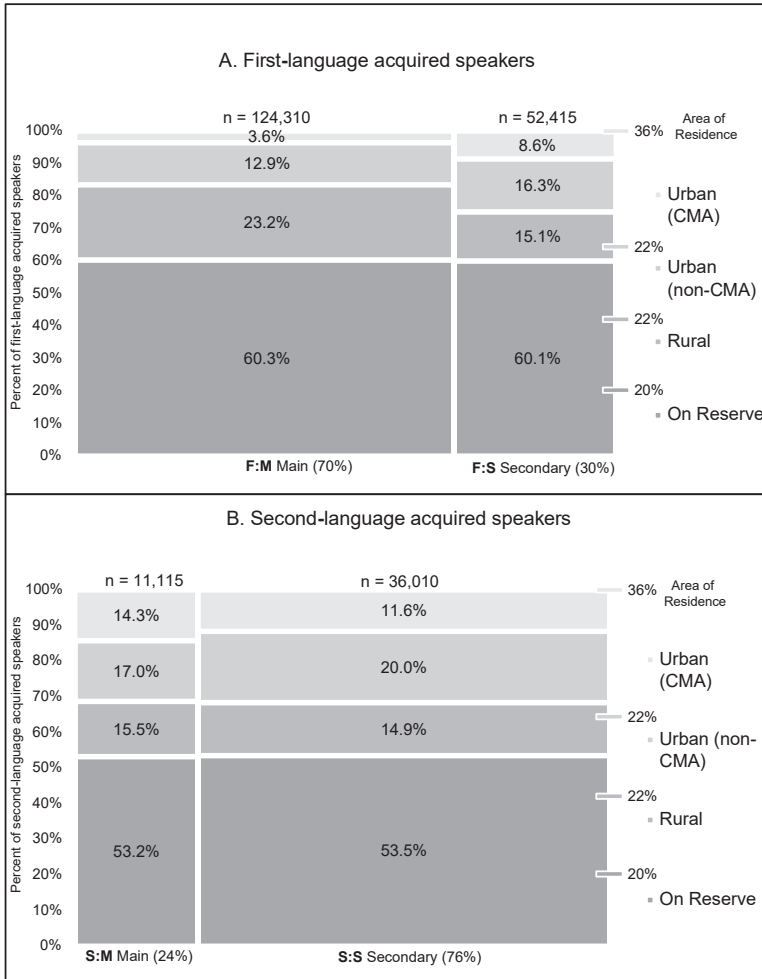


FIGURE 6.4 Residential distribution of main and secondary home language speakers who acquired their Indigenous language as a first or as a second language, Canada, 2016.

Note: The residential distribution of the total Indigenous population (IP) is shown in tick marks along the right vertical axis.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2016. Authors' calculations.

- Whether speaking a main or secondary home language, second-language speakers are very similar in their young age structures, with slightly over 50% aged 0 to 24 years. At a median age of about 25 years, they are younger than the total Indigenous population, with 44% of people under the age of 25 and a median age of 29.1 years.
- Figure 6.3B: 0–24 years; S:M 9.8% + 41.4%; S:S 9.5% + 41.6; IP 9% + 35%.

- Second-language speakers are similar in their residential distributions regardless of main or secondary home use; and more highly urbanized than first-language home users. Close to a third of second-language home users (main or secondary) reside in urban areas (small and large).
 - Figure 6.4B: Total urban (non-CMA and CMA); S:M 17.0% + 14.3%; S:S 20.0% + 11.6%.
- First-language speakers who use an Indigenous language as a secondary language at home are older than those who use it as a main language; as well as considerably older than the total Indigenous population. Older adults aged 45 and over account for almost half of first-language secondary users, about a third of first-language main users, but less than a third of the total Indigenous population.
 - Figure 6.3A: 45 years and over; F:S 34.9% + 13.2%; F:M 24.1% + 9.9%; IP 23.0% + 7.0%.
- First-language speakers of a main home language are less urbanized than first-language secondary home users; as well as considerably less urbanized than the total Indigenous population: just 4% of first-language main users reside in large cities, while 84% live outside of urban areas; compared to a corresponding 9% and 75% of first-language secondary users; and 36% of and 42% of the total Indigenous population.
 - Figure 6.4A: Large urban (CMA); F:M 3.6%; F:S 8.6%; IP 36.0%; and, total non-urban: F:M 60.3% + 23.2%; F:S 60.1% + 15.1%; IP 20.0% + 22.0%.

Part II: Language-specific acquisition and home use by vitality

Second-language acquisition and home use varies from one Indigenous language to another as a function of its vitality (Norris 1998, 2007, 2011). Relatively healthy languages are more likely to be acquired as a mother tongue and to be spoken at home as a main than a secondary language. In contrast, critically endangered languages are more likely acquired as a second-language and spoken as a secondary home language.

Indigenous languages discussed here comprise both “Living” (having at least one mother tongue speaker) and “Non-living” languages (with no mother tongue speakers). The Non-living group is sub-divided into three categories of “Secondarily Surviving”, “Dormant” and “Extinct”. This approach yields a total of 107 languages in four broad vitality levels (Norris 2022; NRI 2021):

- 86 **Living** languages.
- 1 **Secondarily Surviving** language: second-language speakers only (Huron/Wendat).
- 10 **Dormant** languages: no known first- or second-language speakers, but with potential for revitalization (e.g. Tagish).
- 10 **Extinct** languages: no speakers, and no prospect of being revived (insufficiently documented) (e.g. Beothuk).

The language status of the 86 Living languages is based on a modified version of the UNESCO (2003) levels of vitality and endangerment (LVE). It employs the LVE factor of “intergenerational transmission”, as used in the third edition of the UNESCO *Atlas* (Moseley 2010) for Canada (Norris 2010). Endangerment reflects the extent to which languages are spoken as a first-language across generations, based on the average age and size of the mother tongue population. The most recent 2016 Census-based estimates (NRI 2021) are as follows:

- 22 **vulnerable/unsafe**: most children speak parental language as mother tongue.
- 6 **definitely endangered**: mother tongue of parents and up, no longer children’s.
- 21 **severely endangered**: mother tongue of grandparent and older ages.
- 18 **critically endangered** (100 + speakers): mother tongue great-grandparental age.
- 19 **very critically endangered** (less than 100 mother tongue speakers).

Languages vary in their vitality and endangerment. For example, Cree and Inuktitut are relatively healthy (vulnerable/unsafe); while Nisga’a and Michif are critically endangered.⁷ From 2001 to 2016, many Indigenous languages saw a shift towards secondary home use. For example, secondary use among home language speakers of the Aivilingmiutut dialect of Inuktitut, increased from 7% to 30% and similarly Nisga’a from 68% to 85%.

Mother tongue acquisition is high in languages which have a young mother tongue population such as Aivilingmiutut, with an average age of 23.9 years; while second-language acquisition is low, with a SLA index of 106 indicating that the vast majority of its speakers, including children, acquired their language as a mother tongue. Conversely, second-language acquisition can be high in endangered languages with older mother tongue populations, such as Nisga’a with an average age of 55.8 years and a SLA index of 232, indicating that for every 100 people with a Nisga’a mother tongue, another 132 speakers acquired Nisga’a as a second-language.

The difference in average ages between a language’s total speaker and mother tongue populations is an indicator of the influx of young second-language speakers. For Aivilingmiutut, the difference in average ages between the total speaker (23.4 years) and mother tongue (23.9 years) populations is minimal at 0.5 years. In contrast the average age of Nisga’a speakers at 45.2 years of age is much younger than its mother tongue average age at 55.8 years.

Figure 6.5 is a scatterplot of the SLA index versus the speaker-mother tongue average age differences, for languages by varying degrees of endangerment. There is a strong direct relationship between these two indicators, with just a few outliers.

“Healthy” languages with minimal differences in average age years between their mother tongue and total speaker populations, such as Aivilingmiutut (0.5 years), Atikamekw (0.0 years) and Northern East Cree (0.1 years) correspond to lower SLA indexes (106, 105 and 109 respectively). Endangered languages have

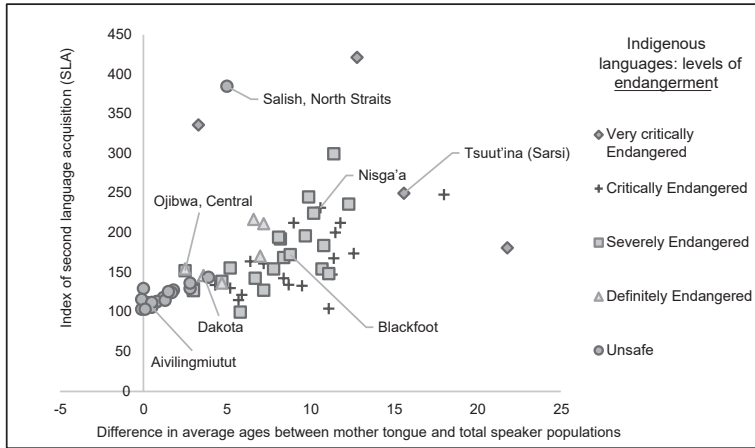


FIGURE 6.5 Index of Second Language Acquisition versus difference in average ages between mother tongue and total speaker populations; showing Levels of Endangerment, Canada, 2016.

Note: The difference in average ages between mother tongue and total speaker populations is expressed in years.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2016; NRI Linguistic Classification and estimates (2021); Authors' calculations.

generally large differences in average age years between their total speaker and mother tongue populations such as: 1) Dakota (definitely endangered) 3.6 years of difference, 2) Ojibwa, Central (severely endangered) 2.5 years, 3) Blackfoot (severely endangered) 8.8 years, 4) Nisga'a (critically endangered) 10.6 years and 5) Tsuut'ina (very critically endangered) 15.6 years. They correspond to increasingly higher SLA indexes (146, 153, 173, 232 and 250 respectively).

Part III: Acquisition and home use in strategies of revitalization

According to the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) of British Columbia, restoring intergenerational transmission is the major goal in language revitalization (FPCC 2013: 15). A key strategy of reversing language shift in restoring transmission is through the creation of young speakers so that the language is once again the first-language spoken by all children.

For healthy and endangered languages alike, reversing language shift is a recognized goal in language revitalization. One of the aims of Nunavut's Inuit Language Protection Act is "to reverse language shift among youth; and to strengthen the use of Inuktitut among all Nunavummiut" (Cloutier 2013: 15, Lepage and Langlois 2019).

Among critically endangered languages, such as those of British Columbia, reversing language shift requires sufficiently fluent adult second-language speakers who as parents can speak their traditional language as a main home language to their children (FPCC 2014).

In BC the aim is to create: “more fluent speakers from younger generations . . . to raise a new generation of first language or mother tongue speakers” (FPCC 2014: 22).

We know anecdotally of several communities where young adults have gained enough fluency in their languages that now as parents, they are speaking their language as a first language to their infants and children. This appears to be a growing trend. . . . This change is an extremely positive sign which has the potential to dramatically reverse the direction of language shift.

(FPCC 2014: 20)

Some census-based findings add further evidence to accounts of reversing language shift among the “critically endangered” languages of the BC Salish language family. An age-specific analysis of 2011 data indicates signs of children learning the Salish North Straits language as a mother tongue (Norris 2022 manuscript). 2016 Census estimates of the second-language acquisition and average ages of speakers for North Straits yielded a high SLA index of 385; and unlike other languages with high second-language acquisition, a young mother tongue average age (33 years) and a relatively small five-year age difference with that of total speakers (Figure 6.5). Taken together, these findings suggest a reversal of language shift for North Straits, as it moves from critically endangered to the second-language of young parents and the first-language of their children.

In his discussion of North American Indian languages undergoing language loss, Victor Golla (2007) described the evolution of a “secondarily surviving” language.

A language that has no first-language speakers, but that is being actively taught as a second language and has a definable speech community, may be better considered to be *secondarily surviving* rather than extinct. Since many of the North American languages that are on the verge of extinction as first languages are associated with (often vigorous) heritage communities, it can be anticipated that the number of secondarily surviving languages will grow considerably in the next few decades. In addition, some languages that at present must be considered extinct may attain secondary survival status as communities of heritage learners create and learn codes based on the extant documentation (Hinton 2001).

(Golla 2007: 9)

Growth in numbers of secondarily surviving Indigenous languages can be anticipated in Canada. Differentiation across “Extinct, Dormant or Secondarily Surviving” categories recognizes the possibilities of language recovery in the outlook for languages without first-language speakers but still with prospects for revival. Second-language acquisition has been on the rise, and some critically endangered languages show signs of young second-language speakers (Figure 6.5).

Currently dormant languages having no known speakers also have prospects as secondarily surviving languages given sufficient documentation. Huron/Wendat is an example of a language, previously dormant for several generations in both Canada and the USA, which is being revived as present-day Wendat (Wendake Huron) at Wendake (Quebec City), based on written materials (Dorais 2016).

Conclusion

Mode of acquisition and degree of home use are important factors when considering the state of Indigenous languages and their prospects of revitalization and revival.

Second-language acquisition among young speakers has sustained the growth of Indigenous language speakers in Canada. The steady increase in the numbers of speakers who have acquired their traditional languages as a second-language has offset the declining growth of mother tongue first-language speakers.

Long-term decline in the main usage of an Indigenous home language has contributed to an aging mother tongue population, older than both the total speaker and Indigenous populations. In contrast, second-language speakers are not only younger than the mother tongue and total speaker populations, but also the total Indigenous population itself.

Indigenous languages are increasingly being spoken in the home, though more as a secondary language than as a main language. Growth rates of home users surpassed those of both the mother tongue and total speaker populations over 2001–2016. Most of their increase was attributable to a substantial rise in home language use as a secondary language.

First-language speakers are more likely to use a home language as a main than a secondary language, and conversely, second-language speakers more likely a secondary language. An Indigenous home language is spoken more as the main language in rural, reserve, and small urban areas, and more as a secondary language in large urban areas and cities. In 2016, first-language speakers made up at least 90% of main home users in every age group, and in rural, reserve and small urban areas. Large urban areas (73%) were an exception. Second-language speakers accounted for the majority (59%) of secondary home users among children and youth, and across all areas of residence the highest proportion of secondary users in large urban areas (48%).

Whether speaking an Indigenous home language as a main or secondary language, second-language speakers are very similar in their age structures and residential characteristics. Their populations are young, both with a median age of about 25 years, and highly urbanized. By contrast, first-language speakers differ significantly depending on their main and secondary use of their home language. First-language speakers who use their language as a main language at home are characterized by high proportions of children and youth and young adults (aged 25–44), and are the least urbanized of all home users. In contrast, first-language secondary home users are much older, with a significant proportion of adults (aged 45–64), and more urbanized with higher proportions residing off-reserve and in large cities.

Both populations of first- and second-language speakers who use their home language as a main language are characterized by high proportions of children and youth, and young adults (aged 25–44), who, if parents, in using a main language at home could potentially be passing it on as a mother tongue to their children. Where they differ is in their residential distributions, such that first-language home users are considerably less urbanized.

The first- and second-language speakers of a secondary home language represent different dynamics of home use. The notably older population of first-language speakers who are speaking their mother tongue as a secondary home language may reflect past as well as current shifts from the main to secondary use of a mother tongue. In contrast, the considerably younger second-language speakers of a secondary home language, more similar to their counterparts speaking a main home language, could also potentially be passing it on as a second-language to children.

From the perspective of language revitalization, the fact that young adults who acquired their Indigenous language as a second-language are using it as their main language at home is significant with respect to reversing language shift. Contrasts in residential distributions between first- and second-language main home users, and the much larger population of fluent speakers on reserves and in rural areas, point to the challenges of language situations in urban areas and of access to language learning, resources and fluent speakers. Nevertheless, what is important from these findings are signs of young second-language speakers, and residents in large urban areas, using their Indigenous home language as either a main or secondary language at home.

Second-language acquisition and language vitality are significant considerations for the prospects of critically endangered and dormant languages. The language-specific assessment of mode of acquisition revealed second-language acquisition among young speakers of Indigenous languages in varying degrees of endangerment. Findings suggest that the transition into secondarily surviving languages with the loss of first-languages speakers is possible for some of the estimated 43% of Indigenous languages that are currently critically endangered.

Improving the prospects of currently critically endangered languages and reversing language shift depends on the involvement of youth and young adults in second-language acquisition and home use. Various factors can affect home use, acquisition, transmission and transfer such as family, household and community linguistic composition (multilingual and multigenerational); exogamy (one partner of a couple not having an Indigenous language mother tongue); different child and parent languages; and, sources of learning from other family members (e.g. grandparents) and from outside the home (e.g. pre-school immersion). Area of residence – where speakers live and learn – is important, especially in relation to access to language resources, such as access to second-language learning opportunities among youth. Expanding the learning environment including language and cultural programs, and domains of use, within urban Indigenous communities is becoming crucial for the state and revitalization of Indigenous languages throughout Canada.

Notes

- 1 This study employs the term “Indigenous” both generally and in reference to persons reporting an “Aboriginal” identity in the Census. Special thanks to Sarah Adcock for editorial contributions.
- 2 The support of the Department of Canadian Heritage is acknowledged with special thanks to Julia Collier and Statistics Canada in the preparation of census data retrievals. Opinions and statements of the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of Canadian Heritage or the Government of Canada.
- 3 Since ability is self-reported, varying degrees of fluency may be represented in the data (Norris 2007).
- 4 This study includes the relatively small number of Indigenous language mother tongue speakers, who are also second-language speakers of other Indigenous languages, in the first-language rather than second-language category.
- 5 The SLA and Continuity indexes are indirect measures (Norris 2011), which have utility for language-specific and community-level estimates. Interpreting their change over time is complicated by the declining growth in the mother tongue population. These indices are only calculated for languages with a mother tongue population of at least 50.
- 6 In this study the continuity index is based on the population who speak an Indigenous language “most often” at home; other approaches refer to the population who speak either “most often” or “regularly” (e.g. Anderson 2018).
- 7 Classification of Indigenous languages of Canada and mother tongue population are available online at https://norrisresearch.com/ref/lang_nri_mt.htm; linguistic indicator data for languages and their communities at https://norrisresearch.com/ref_tables.htm.

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SECTION II

Theoretical approaches –
supporting language
maintenance



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7

SUSTAINING LANGUAGE USE

Bridging the gap between language communities and linguists

M. Paul Lewis

Introduction

Endangered languages and their safeguarding have become a major focus of applied linguists, linguistic anthropologists, sociolinguists, and practitioners of documentary linguistics. At the same time, the communities which are experiencing these shifts in their language ecologies are faced with significant social, economic, spiritual, and cultural changes. While the community may share an awareness and concern for what is happening with the academicians who bring diverse sets of expertise to these situations, it is often the case that the varying agendas of community members of various ages and social strata and the perspectives of the technical experts do not align well. This leads to less-than-optimal outcomes for all the stakeholders as they sometimes work at odds among themselves or as they favour one agenda over another. This chapter discusses these differences and suggests an approach that empowers the community and provides practical direction to the technical aspects of language development broadly understood. Before considering those separate agendas, however, it is important to look at the broader issues surrounding language reclamation and revitalization.

The ethics and effectiveness of language revitalization

While the call to recognize the threatened state of linguistic diversity (most notably Krauss 1992) has resulted in much concern and burgeoning advocacy for the preservation of that diversity, not all linguists have shared the same level of alarm regarding the potential loss of a language. Newman (2003) for example is described by Lüpke as arguing

forcefully that linguists are not prepared to engage in revitalization activities, that taking part in these efforts takes some of the already scarce

resources away from their central task of scientific language description and documentation, and that Westerners are ill equipped to develop efficient revitalization models.

(Lüpke forthcoming, 1)

Others (for example, Mufwene 2000, 2001, 2008, 2011) have argued that language shift and death are natural phenomena that should not be resisted. Attempting to contravene the evolutionary processes by which species rise and fall in an ecological system is, in this view, uncalled for and futile.

Another ethical issue is the tension in academic circles between the scientific demand to be disinterested observers, avoiding the observer's paradox of becoming part of the phenomenon that is being studied, and the moral dilemma of standing by while a tragedy (language and culture loss) is unfolding. Applied linguists, those who most often are concerned with providing solutions to real-world problems, have similarly wrestled with how much their role as practitioners of beneficial and remedial methods and techniques should be accompanied by advocacy for more just and equitable language policies and the recognition of linguistic human rights. In general, the consensus has been that the moral obligation is the prior claim and that interventions are called for on the grounds that people and the improvement of their lived experience is more important than the goals of science or any discipline.

Even that concession to issues outside of language, such as economic, social, and political agency, however, has been subject to a healthy critique, as the agency of speech communities in making their own decisions regarding language and identity maintenance has often not been taken into consideration adequately in the design, funding, and implementation of language documentation and reclamation projects. Westerners (or any outsiders) are not only "ill equipped to develop efficient revitalization models" but do not automatically have the right to do so. The history of language planning and policy is littered with what may have been well-intentioned and benevolent language and culture policies which have violated the linguistic human rights of minority speech communities.

Roche (2020) identifies an even more fundamental ethical dilemma in that the dominant paradigms adopted by those engaged in endangerment linguistics are inadequate and so omit important perspectives, most importantly the issues of justice and human rights.

Speakers and signers of Indigenous and minoritized languages have repeatedly explained that their languages are endangered due to failures of social justice – the oppression, marginalization, stigmatization, exclusion, deprivation, and so on – that take place in the context of imperial, colonial, and nationalist domination (Davis 2017; Mac Ionnrachtaig 2013; Jacob 2013; Taff et al. 2018; Thiong'o 1981). The field of endangerment linguistics (Crystal 2018), however, has mostly failed to hear this and has continued searching for the "drivers" and "causes" of language endangerment while seeking solutions primarily in technology and pedagogy.

(p. 164)

The “drivers and causes” of language endangerment are more often social, economic, and political than they are linguistic. These are issues which the discipline of linguistics, in all its areas of specialization, is not competent to address. Roche asserts that endangered language communities are subject to intersectional discrimination which encompasses their languages and identities as well their legal and political standing. At the same time, he notes that there is a similar lacuna in the work of those who promote social justice in that they fail to take into account the role of language in that intersectional bias.

Roche refers to this glaring omission in the now-well-established discipline of endangerment linguistics and calls it “abandonment” as minority language communities are left on their own to negotiate an equitable place in the dominant society. Moreover, Roche sees a similar blind spot in the work of those promoting human rights and social justice:

The failure of linguists to see politics, and of justice-oriented scholars to see endangered languages, constitutes what I call a state of abandonment for the signers and speakers of endangered languages: a lacuna where several disciplines intersect, conspiring to deny users of endangered languages *the theoretically informed analyses and comparative perspective* they need to generate effective methods for addressing “language endangerment.”

(p. 164, emphasis added)

In a similar discussion of the ethics of language revitalization, Adams (2016) discusses some of the disjunctures between outside interventionists and members of the speech communities in which they are working. With the focus of descriptive linguistics traditionally being on the collection of the “Boasian trilogy” (a grammar, dictionary, and texts; Jakobson and Boas 1944) and even with the expansion of that paradigm by the more recent development of documentary linguistics (Boerger et al. 2016; Gippert et al. 2006; Himmelmann 1998; Woodbury 2011, 2003) to include a more comprehensive record of language in use, the “ethical loneliness” (Roche 2020, 164) has not been addressed. Adams points out that even when participatory methods, which aim to foster local participation, are employed by language developers there can be distinct differences in perspectives among language developers and the community. Adams attributes this in part to the short-term relationships that exist between the outside experts and the community. He states: “no method or goal can replace the quality of the nuanced interaction that is possible with long-term relationships between researchers and the minority groups with which they are involved” (Adams 2016, 6).

Finally in this regard, Roche points out that, despite a great deal of activity and investment, and largely because of the gaps created by the biodiversity/species endangerment metaphor and the social justice paradigm, endangerment linguistics has not been able to stem the tide of language loss. No more moving an expression of that failure can be found than the lament of Wharehuia Milroy, a

Maori archivist, who in an interview reported by Winitana (2011, 311–312; cited in Roche 2020, 166):

We must write down our language. Well, we've written the Maori language down and it still continues to die. We must produce a dictionary. Same again, we have, and what, it's still on the decline. We must produce people who are expert in the language. And we have, yet it hasn't halted the regression. We must produce expert linguists who are also expert teachers. No joy there, the language is still on the slide. We must establish bilingual schools, English and Maori in our case. All done, but still no difference. We must let the schools teach the language – we do, but no luck there. We must produce our cultural arts as catalysts for awakening the language. There's our carvings and our artworks, but still the language hasn't returned. We must bring in the international language experts – the likes of Fishman and Spolsky – who have all been here, and not one shred of difference. We must take our recording machines and capture the words of our old people as they fall from their mouths. We must visit the sound and film archives and gather their speeches. All done, I'm afraid, and the language hasn't budged. We must produce CDs – again, all completed, but still no difference with the language.

Where endangerment linguistics has made great strides is in its own development as a field of inquiry and in making the plight of minority languages more widely known. Those efforts are beneficial but are largely directed away from the communities which are struggling through the process of language and identity shift.

This is not to say that all language revitalization efforts are futile or bear no fruit. None of the activities and products of language development identified in the Maori case, for example, are bad or harmful in and of themselves. What is lacking is a working framework that is big enough to encompass the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of language shift, loss, death, and revitalization yet straightforward enough to be understandable by members of local communities. A framework that focuses only on language is not sufficient – nor is any framework that focuses on only one or just a few of the factors affecting shifts in identity and language. In a very real sense, technical experts “know too much too deeply” and struggle to adequately communicate the complexities of their expert knowledge to non-experts in a way that is practical and which fosters local participation. It is essential, therefore, that those who wish to engage in language revitalization recognize their own agendas and the limitations thereof and make every effort possible to clarify the values and goals of the speech community and other stakeholders in order to develop effective strategies to sustain language use.

The complexities of language maintenance and revitalization

Language specialists are very aware of the complexities of language and even non-sociolinguists recognize that language is inextricably embedded in an individual's and a community's identity, shaped by that community's cultural norms (and in

turn shaping those norms), and used in many dynamic ways to express a complex set of meanings that go far beyond the purely lexical and semantic content of any utterance. Theoretical linguists spend their lives examining the structures which languages develop as part of that complex semiotic system. Discourse analysts and semanticists look at the ways in which messages are communicated through the manipulation and elaboration of those morphosyntactic and phonological systems. Anthropological linguists consider how cultural themes and values are embodied in linguistic forms and how language both shapes and is shaped by society. Sociologists of language look at how non-linguistic factors – social, economic, political, religious, and cosmological – affect language use. All of that to say that language in its social context is a complex phenomenon, one not given to quick and easy analysis and description. Each of these areas of specialization bring different areas of focus and research methodologies to the understanding of language and its role in society and each is prone to delve deeper and deeper into a universe of detail requiring long years or even lifetimes of study.

At the same time, each speech community is unique, made up of unique individuals living in relationships with each other and with their environment like no others. The demographics of each community differ from that of all others. The mix of elderly, parents, children, and grandchildren is unique. The configuration of the languages in those communities, the linguistic ecology, differs based on all the factors listed previously. And even the language varieties in each community's repertoire vary along a continuum. Those varieties may be nominally identified as a single language, but the geographic, social, and temporal variation creates a complex situation which may be quite difficult for an outsider to fully comprehend.

Language development, the maintenance or addition of functions of a language in a linguistic ecology (Simons 2011), whether considered from the etic perspective of outside experts or from the emic perspective of the community members themselves, is not a straightforward endeavour. It is therefore not surprising that linguists often lack the knowledge and skills needed to interact with and organize a community-based language development project. At the same time, community members lack the needed understanding of the nature of language and its use in society to be able to make theoretically informed decisions about how to sustain language use.

The complexities of community involvement

Language development specialists who have engaged with communities recognize that fostering community involvement in something as abstract as language development, or even language documentation, must also confront several complex issues. The complexities are of three kinds: representation, decision making, and management.

Issues of representation

Though community participation in the language development process from start to finish and ongoing ownership of that process is ideal, full community representation and participation is rarely achievable. Communities are rarely

homogeneous and of the same mind on almost any issue. In most cases, it is simply impractical for an entire community to engage with the language development process in any meaningful way. Almost always, some group of influential people or an individual champion for the language and identity initiates a campaign of advocacy for the language. Whether a single person or a small group of leaders is at the forefront, their ability to bring others along and to create a movement is crucial to the ultimate broader acceptance of the values and goals of the language development project.

Development specialists have adopted a model of participatory action research which depends on the involvement of a representative body of community members to identify the strengths and resources which the community already possesses and to develop plans for building upon those strengths. Promoters of language development, in many cases, have adopted this model but are immediately confronted with the dilemma of determining how representative of the entire community any group of participants may be.

For language development, this may be evidenced by a lack of clarity about the geographic or linguistic scope of the speech community itself. Where identity boundaries are not clear or where the language may vary along a geographic continuum such that no clear lines between “our language” and a neighbouring variety can be determined, bringing together a group of people who represent the community may be challenging. Even when variation is not a significant factor, participants in early discussions may be self-selecting and so come with an existing agenda for (or against) language development. The composition of the group of participants who should speak on behalf of the community is not only a sampling issue but is also related to the process by which decisions are made in the community.

Issues of decision making

Adams (2016, 10–12) describes the decision-making process as a point of criticism of the participatory approach. Primarily, participatory development activities assume that a democratic model of decision making is the ideal and is universally desirable and accepted. In many societies, decisions are not made based on majority opinions publicly expressed but may be handed down by community leaders or negotiated in private before being publicly presented by leaders as a *fait accompli*. In such situations, the “average citizen” participant in discussions about language maintenance or reclamation may be reluctant to speak, but instead look for clues from those who have the responsibility to make such decisions. In addition, in practice, a participatory process often masquerades as being inclusive, collaborative, and “bottom up”, but is in fact, a way for outsiders to “sell” their expert-based decisions to an uninformed and seemingly compliant audience. When accompanied by the prospects of funds and employment, those proposals may outweigh any local preferences and ignore more relevant and pressing issues which the community is facing. Decisions made in ways that are not authentic to the local culture may be meaningless when it comes to their implementation.

Issues of management

As in many development efforts, ongoing management of language projects is not a given. Even where outside technical language expertise has been recruited and profitably applied, the capacity of a community to sustain that expert work without outside funding and guidance cannot be assumed but must be a clearly identified component of the planning and implementation process. Where the goals of a project are determined, funded, and implemented by outsiders, the sustainability of language revitalization efforts may be in doubt. Community participants who are merely employees will find other work when the funding ends. Products which don't address community needs will lie dormant when the experts leave. The causes and drivers of language loss will continue unabated and unaddressed.

The Sustainable Use Model (SUM): an overview

In response to many of the issues described earlier, the Sustainable Use Model (Lewis and Simons 2016) has been proposed in an attempt to provide the language expertise that community members need in order to be able to make informed decisions about the development of their language(s). The model begins with a set of assumptions and principles that reflect an awareness of both sociolinguistic theoretical principles and the complexities of community-based development:

- 1 Language loss may be of interest to linguists, but it is a critical matter of identity maintenance and survival for many minority communities.
- 2 Influenced by globalization and increased mobility and contact among communities, nearly all non-dominant speech communities are under pressure to use dominant languages to a greater extent.
- 3 As a result, almost all speech communities make use of a *repertoire* of languages in their day-to-day interactions.
- 4 What is of primary concern for members of minority communities is not their language *per se* but the life-crucial knowledge which they must maintain and transmit from generation to generation in order to maintain that distinctive identity.
- 5 The goal of language development, therefore, is to identify those bodies of knowledge which must be preserved and sustained and to make decisions and engage in activities which will safeguard that knowledge in the most appropriate language and modality (oral, written, digital). Achieving this requires that the local language be at a sustainable level of use.
- 6 The role of the outside expert is to foster awareness and perspective, not to make decisions or determine outcomes.

By starting with bodies of knowledge rather than with language, community members have something that is more concrete and identifiable. Language, like the air we breathe, often goes unnoticed until it begins to become scarce. Individuals rarely think about how to teach their children their language. They do think about how to teach their children the knowledge and skills they need to be

functioning members of their community. Most adults assume that a child either has the language genetically encoded and will automatically learn it without conscious effort, or, more accurately, that the child will acquire the language naturally through daily exposure to it. Knowledge and the skills needed to sustain one's life and lifeways, however, are consciously taught either formally or through modelled behaviours. A discussion about what our community knows that no one else knows or how we do things in ways that no one else does, can very quickly help a community become aware of what the loss of that knowledge or those skills might mean. The logical next step in that discussion is to ask what can be done to preserve those life- and identity-crucial bodies of knowledge.

The SUM provides a structure that presents the general principles identified by sociolinguists as operative in language maintenance and shift in ways that community members can grasp. By starting with general concepts community members are not overwhelmed by the technical details that the experts would happily delve into. The discovery process, initially implemented through a set of participatory activities (Hanawalt et al. 2016), includes three major components: observing current language use, assessing the sustainability of that use, and strategizing for sustainable use.

Observing current language use

It is important that minority speech communities become aware of their current language ecology and understand what the status of their language of local identity is in that ecology. Community members may not always be aware, or care, that a dominant language is gaining use and that the local language is losing ground. A commonly repeated (but unattested) maxim among language reclamation practitioners is that by the time language loss reaches the level of awareness of enough people in the community, it is probably too late for the process to be reversed. A description of the life-crucial bodies of knowledge can be helpful in bringing about this awareness earlier on than the putative point of no return. Knowing that certain bodies of knowledge are associated with one language and that others are associated with a different language can help to bring about that awareness. Observing that certain people use the local language and that others don't, especially if that difference is age-based, will also bring language shift into sharper focus. And identifying that some knowledge and skills are being lost because young people no longer know the words or because the most skilled practitioners are no longer alive or are isolated and no longer able to pass on their skills and knowledge, further emphasizes that there may be cause for concern. An inventory of these important and distinctive bodies of knowledge can serve as a starting point for thinking about how they should be preserved and passed on.

This inventory need not be confined to traditional knowledge carried forward from the past but may also be applied to new bodies of knowledge being brought into the community from the outside. Life-crucial bodies of knowledge of all kinds can be evaluated and decisions made about how best to communicate important concepts to as wide an audience in the community as possible. Choice of language and of modality is an important aspect of this forward-looking analysis.

Assessing sustainability

The SUM uses two conceptual tools to guide a community in an assessment of the sustainability of their language. The first tool, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis and Simons 2010), provides a way to identify the vitality status of a language. In community settings it is often presented using the metaphor of a mountain with the top of the mountain (EGIDS 4 or higher) being the safest place. Other analogies (e.g. a river) have been developed for contexts where mountains and mountain climbing may be unfamiliar. Community members can be led through a process which helps them identify where their local language is on that mountain.

In addition, the SUM identifies four levels on the EGIDS that are sustainable: sustainable literacy (EGIDS 4), sustainable orality (EGIDS 6a), sustainable identity (EGIDS 9), and sustainable history (EGIDS 10 with adequate documentation). Using the mountain metaphor, each of these sustainable levels are represented as plateaus, safe places to rest on the upward climb (or to stop one's fall). The community must decide which sustainable level will be their language development goal. If the community identifies the status of its language as being somewhere between one of the sustainable levels, it must recognize that the tendency will be for their language to slide downward on the scale unless there is some intervention to either move upward or to find a safe resting place and make a "soft landing" at a lower sustainable level.

That level of awareness is helpful but is not enough for the development of strategies that will move the language to the desired sustainable level. While sociolinguists would desire a much greater depth of understanding of the language situation, the complexities of ethnolinguistic vitality and language maintenance can be condensed into a set of five conditions which when analyzed can be helpful in developing effective language development interventions. The five conditions can be identified by the acronym FAMED: Functions, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation. The FAMED conditions comprise the second conceptual tool that a community can use to evaluate the status of their language.

A central notion of the SUM is that language shift occurs when a language loses either uses or users or both. Quite often descriptions of language shift focus on the loss of users, intergenerational language transmission, and the level of its disruption. Both Fishman's GIDS (1991) and its expansion in the EGIDS are structured around the generational maintenance or loss of users of the language. Equally significant, however, are the *Functions* that a language serves in society. A language with few uses will find itself with fewer and fewer users. As a language loses users, it will find itself to be less and less useful. A community needs to determine what uses it has for the languages in its repertoire. The identification of life-crucial bodies of knowledge, the *Functions* of a language, is a central part of this evaluation as those Functions represent important uses of a language which the community may wish to preserve and maintain.

The second condition is *Acquisition*. If a language is to be used for a Function, there must be an adequate means for members of the community to acquire the proficiency they need to be able to use the language for that Function. If no

acquisition mechanism is in place, that lack may become a priority for the community as it plans its language development effort. If acquisition isn't occurring in the home, there may be a need to develop community-based language learning opportunities. Many language reclamation projects focus on language learning and language re-acquisition as a way to increase the number of users of the language to a more sustainable level. And if the goal of the community is to achieve written, in addition to oral, use of the language, opportunity for literacy skills acquisition will need to be part of a language development plan.

The third condition is *Motivation*. If a language is to be used for a designated Function, community members must perceive that there are benefits to be derived from doing so. Often dominant languages begin to replace non-dominant languages because there are economic benefits to be had if one can use the dominant language. Not all benefits are economic, however, and the community must clarify what it is that it values and the role that their heritage language plays in promoting those values. Again, the identification of life-crucial bodies of knowledge may be a way to bring into focus the benefits of local language maintenance.

The policy *Environment* is the fourth condition that must be analyzed. Minority language communities must have the freedom to use their language and language policies must, at the very least, tolerate those uses and the further development of the language for the desired Functions. Where the policy environment is hostile, there may be a need for advocacy for better, fairer, and more just policies. Where policies are apathetic or agnostic regarding minority languages, campaigns to raise awareness and develop resources may be called for. This condition also addresses the abandonment and "ethical loneliness" identified by Roche (2020) in that it directly confronts issues of linguistic justice and linguistic human rights.

The fifth condition is *Differentiation*. This condition corresponds to the concept of compartmentalization or domains of use. If a Function for a language is identified, it must be protected from encroachment by the dominant (or any other) language. In practice, Differentiation may look very similar to language promotion where persistent and pervasive reminders to "Use your language" develop general awareness and a consensus regarding which language should be used for which Functions. Language development champions and activists may need to engage in a certain amount of "policing" to remind members of their community that for this body of knowledge, the local language rather than the dominant language should be used.

If a community engages in an analysis of the FAMED conditions, they can quickly see which of these conditions are weak or missing and can begin to think about what needs to be done to strengthen the weaker conditions and how to reinforce and maintain the stronger ones. This analysis provides the starting point for strategy development and identifies priorities for language development activity.

Strategizing for sustainable use

When developing strategies aimed at achieving sustainable language use, the community can take the results of the observation and analysis work that they have done and set goals and establish priorities for their ongoing work. The general

goal that will shape much of what follows in a language development project is the decision that must be taken regarding the desired sustainable level of use. If the goal is to achieve Sustainable Literacy (EGIDS 4) the community can see from their EGIDS analysis how many levels on “the mountain” they must traverse to get there. Plans can be made to move incrementally from one EGIDS level to another until they reach their goal. At the same time, they can use their analysis of the FAMED conditions to shape their effort so that they dedicate resources to the highest priority areas of need. It is often the case that a lot of effort is invested in activities which don’t effectively address the weakest conditions. In addition, how those priorities are addressed may differ considerably depending on the desired sustainable level of use.

It is almost a certainty that as the community works through these processes, they will begin to gain insights that may affect their earlier analysis. They may recognize that they were overly optimistic, or unnecessarily pessimistic, about the EGIDS level of the language. As they begin to work, they may discover that one of the FAMED conditions, perhaps Motivation, isn’t as weak as they initially thought it to be. They may find that their advocacy efforts or the efforts of others have resulted in improved language policies. And they may find that they have allies and potential collaborators with whom they can share resources. All of these discoveries can be reason to adjust the plan, alter a strategy, or change the priorities of the work.

It is often at this stage that the participatory approach fails, however. In most of the cases where the SUM framework has been used with communities, moving from observation and evaluation to strategizing and implementation has not happened (Eberhard 2017). Eberhard reports that at the time he was writing the SUM approach had been applied, using the participatory activities provided by Hanawalt et al. (2016), in at least 84 languages in 14 countries. While pointing out a number of variables which might affect the effectiveness and practicality of the methodology, an important discovery is that in only one of the communities did an actual working plan emerge. In 14 cases, a tentative example plan emerged as the result of a training exercise, but not based on an actual set of interactions with the community. In all of the other cases, the community never reached the strategizing and planning stage, or no data is available on the outcomes.

Even when fully aware of the status of their language, and when they have a strong desire to do something to strengthen their language, community members may not know what to do nor have the capacity to carry out effective strategies. While their observations and analysis may be adequately informed theoretically, they still lack the important comparative perspectives to be able to develop effective practical strategic responses. If the role of the outside expert is to provide theory-based awareness in the early analysis stages, at this point in the SUM process, that role is to provide those comparative perspectives. Non-expert community members are not often aware of what can be done or what resources they can call upon. They may not have enough information about what interventions are most appropriate or most effective given their identified goals. Often, they can find funding for the traditional responses to endangerment (dictionaries, documentation, literacy materials, etc.) but those products, as valuable as they may be,

may not be what the situation most urgently requires. The community may not be fully aware of what it takes in time, effort, and funding to achieve an ambitious goal, such as restoring a moribund language to sustainable orality or literacy. An outside expert can be helpful in providing guidance at this point, not to set the goals nor to veto them, but to help the community make informed decisions based on good information and on the experience of others. Further, the development of project plans, administrative mechanisms, and ongoing management systems requires skills that are often outside of a linguist's area of expertise or interest. As Adams (2016) emphasizes, the ability to provide that guidance is crucially dependent on a well-developed longer-term relationship of trust between the external advisor(s) and the community itself.

Conclusion

Given the complex nature of language(s) in societies, the work of sustaining language use requires a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach that empowers communities to manage their own language and identity maintenance. While linguists and other external specialists bring important theoretical and practical perspectives to that task, those perspectives often fail to consider all the factors that communities experience in their day-to-day struggle for survival. One important gap, as discussed earlier, is the failure to adequately address linguistic human rights and to advocate for just and equitable language policies. Another disconnect between linguist and community is the tendency for linguists to want to document the language, a valuable enough goal in itself, while the community is facing urgent needs to restore intergenerational transmission or the loss of domains of use. Linguists frequently remind themselves that the results of their research need to be made available to the community, but often those results are technical linguistic descriptions which are not immediately or practically useful to the community. Documentation is essential if a no-longer-spoken language is to be awakened, but few new users and uses will be the direct result of a comprehensive grammatical description or an extensive dictionary, especially if there are few people who can read and understand those work products.

At the same time, while communities are acutely aware of their minoritized status in many cases, they are often unaware of how language functions among other markers of distinctive identity and of what can be done to foster ongoing use of a language in safe social spaces. Many individuals have unfounded notions about language and how it is passed from one generation to another. Some, though multilingual themselves, may believe that a child can only learn one language at a time and so opt to expose their children only to the language which they believe will be most beneficial to their child in the future.

The Sustainable Use Model (SUM) is an attempt to bridge those gaps. It provides a set of sociolinguistic generalizations which can be communicated to community members in order to provide them with a step-by-step process for observing and analyzing the current sociolinguistic situation, and for planning for the future of their language. It helps them to avoid having to make the choice between one language or another and promotes stable multilingualism where the

community's language repertoire adequately meets their needs to maintain their identity and to participate in wider bodies of knowledge. Heritage language maintenance need not be solely backward looking but can profitably serve to advance the community into the future.

Because the SUM presents sociolinguistic generalizations, it may not fully satisfy sociolinguists who would prefer more detailed and fine-grained analyses of the language use dynamics in each situation. The model is also framed in terms of a Fishmanian understanding of language in society (the identification of discrete languages, X vs Y, domains of use, diglossia) which some contemporary theorists may question. Nevertheless, the SUM builds a basis for ongoing analysis as the action component of the participatory-action research cycle progresses and as the community itself acquires the capacity to dig deeper, explore more carefully, and revise their understanding of how to move forward to achieve (or revise) their own language development goals.

Where the SUM has been shown to have significant weaknesses is in the crucial transition from observing, analyzing, and strategy formulation at a high level to strategy implementation. Implementation and execution of language revitalization strategies require a knowledge of what interventions are available and which of those are most appropriate for the current situation, at what cost. Project management also requires a set of skills that communities need to acquire, and which linguists are often unprepared to offer.

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8

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

What it is, how to measure it
and how to act

David Bradley

Who decides what is a language?

We must not rely only on our ‘scientific’ definitions, such as mutual intelligibility and shared literary norms, in deciding what should be recognised as a language. This is fundamentally a decision which should derive from in-group identity within a community; language is a social phenomenon, not just a theoretical construct. It may be that some groups wish to have recognition as separate languages where some outsiders might view them as ‘similar enough’ to some existing national or other standard to be kept together. It can also be that groups which are linguistically somewhat distinct may choose to amalgamate and converge toward a particular speech and literary variety. Here, one example of each of these two possibilities will be briefly discussed.

Lahu Si

Lahu Si (lhi) is also known as Lahu Shi which means Yellow Lahu, and by the Shan and Lao name Kui or Kwi. There are various named subvarieties: Banlan spoken in Thailand, Burma, China (also known as Nakeo) and Laos (also known as Ahpubele ‘bent gourd’); Bakeo spoken in Burma and China, also formerly in Thailand, and various other subvarieties spoken in China. Banlan, Ahpubele and Nakeo are the same subvariety under different local names. There are over 200,000 speakers: 120,000 in China, 60,000 in Burma, 15,000 in Thailand, 10,000 in Laos and about 1,500 from Laos in Visalia, California and elsewhere in the US. Christian speakers of this language in Burma and Thailand initially used Lahu Na or Black Lahu (lhu; Shan and Thai name Musur, from which Burmese Muhso) for religious and other literary purposes; many Lahu Si were converted to Christianity by Baptist Lahu Na who used a romanisation for Lahu Na since the mid-1930s. The differences between Lahu Na and Lahu Si are substantial: there are two vowel

mergers in Lahu Si and one vowel merger in Lahu Na from a likely original ten vowel system; also, Lahu Si merges the two uvular stops of Lahu Na with velars; the phonetic values of most of the seven tones are different; and there are very extensive lexical and some syntactic differences (Bradley 1979). Lahu Na is an established lingua franca in the area, and nearly all Lahu Si can also understand and most can speak Lahu Na. However, very few Lahu Na can understand Lahu Si and none would ever attempt to speak it. The use of Lahu Na for literacy and religious purposes further increased the knowledge of Lahu Na among Christian Lahu Si and gave Lahu Na increased prestige among the Lahu Christian community as a whole.

In the late 1980s, a movement started among a few Lahu Si pastors in Thailand to create a separate writing system to represent the Banlan variety of Lahu Si. This resulted in the creation of a romanisation which partly follows the conventions of the Lahu Na romanisation. It uses postscript consonants instead of postscript diacritics to represent tones and distinguishes the Lahu Si vowel /ʌ/ which is absent from Lahu Na by using the digraph *uh* which exists in Lahu Na but only to represent the [u] allophone of /u/ and the [ɨ] allophone of /i/. It eliminates the redundant *f* and *v* in the representation of the Lahu Na syllables *pfuh* /pu/ [pfu], *hpfuh* /p^hu/ [p^hfu], *bvuh* /bu/ [bvu] and *mvuh* /mu/ [mvu], instead writing Lahu Si *puh* /pʌ/ [pfʌ], *phuh* /p^hʌ/ [p^hfʌ], *buh* /bʌ/ [bvʌ] and *muh* /mʌ/ [mvʌ]. It also writes *ph th kh* for aspirated stops /p^h t^h k^h/, while Lahu Na writes /p^h t^h k^h q^h/ as *hp ht hk hk'*, among other small differences.

This new orthography led to a major split and a great deal of unpleasantness among the Lahu Christian community in Thailand; most Lahu Na pastors wanted to keep Lahu writing united and nearly all rejected the Lahu Si script; even some Lahu Si pastors kept using Lahu Na script, especially those working in communities which were not Lahu Si. In an anonymous survey which I did at the time, the Lahu Christian leadership was divided about 50/50. However, the Lahu Si persisted, and now the Lahu Si script is used in a few Lahu Si communities in Thailand and California. A New Testament was published in 2015 (Wycliffe International 2015) and the script is now well-established. This shows that it is possible, though potentially initially problematic, to create a new written standard for a speech variety previously categorised as part of another language.

Lisu

Various diverse varieties of Lisu (lis) have been spreading westward and later southward from north central Yunnan Province in southwestern China over the last millennium or more, reaching northeastern Burma in the early 19th century, northern Thailand in 1919, and northeastern India in the early 1940s. Others were moving north and east into southern Sichuan Province; there are now nearly 700,000 Lisu in China, 330,000 in Burma, 75,000 in Thailand and 3,000 in India. A distinct group of Lipo (lpo) are concentrated southeast of the original Lisu area in north central Yunnan Province and nearby in Sichuan and speak a closely related language. Despite this long-standing and distant dispersal, Lisu from different areas continue to recognise their unity as a group, despite major linguistic

and cultural differences. Confusing the issue further, the official ethnic group classification in China still treats about a third of the 250,000 Lipo as members of the Lisu ethnic group; the rest are included in the composite Yi ethnic group. A few Lipo have gone to the Yunnan Minzu University to learn Lisu, the language of 'their' official ethnic group, but otherwise no Lipo speak or understand any variety of Lisu, and no Lisu can understand or speak Lipo.

There are four main varieties of spoken Lisu. Central Lisu is spoken by nearly 500,000 in what are now Dehong, Baoshan and southern Nujiang Prefectures in western Yunnan and nearby in the southeastern part of the Kachin State of Burma. Northern Lisu is spoken by about 380,000 in what are now northern Nujiang Prefecture in northwestern Yunnan, Putao District of the northern Kachin State in Burma, and one village nearby in India, also a distinctive subvariety spoken along the Mekong/Lancang River in Weixi County east of Nujiang Prefecture and nearby. The approximately 90,000 speakers of Southern Lisu living in various parts of the Shan State and Mogoke in Burma and in northern Thailand speak a distinctive variety with a larger component of Chinese loanwords due to recent contact and intermarriage with Yunnanese Chinese. About 120,000 speakers of Eastern Lisu living in Sichuan and further east in north central Yunnan have yet another very different variety. Northern Lisu is documented in Bradley (1994); Southern Lisu in Bradley et al. (2006), and Central and Eastern Lisu are documented in Yu (2007).

Missionary efforts led by James O. Fraser led to the creation of a romanisation for Lisu from 1914, based on the varieties spoken in western Yunnan. A separate missionary effort created a Pollard script for Lipo (initially called 'Eastern Lisu') as spoken in Wuding and surrounding counties at almost the same time. The Fraser script is now in widespread use among Christian Lisu, though other scripts have also been created since (Bradley & Bradley 1999). This Lisu script was extended and developed in the 1920s and 1930s in conjunction with Lisu Christian leaders, and a composite variety mostly based on Central Lisu but also including elements from Northern Lisu developed and was extensively used for Bible translation and later for other purposes. This 'Bible dialect' is grammatically simplified from any spoken variety of Lisu, so that it is a kind of least common denominator dialect. It also has some structural and many lexical additions and changes (Bradley 2006). There are no mother-tongue speakers of this artificial literary variety, though it does influence the speech of many literate Christian Lisu from all areas.

When they first meet, speakers of the four main subvarieties of Lisu have great difficulty in understanding each other. Since the early 1970s, Northern and Central Lisu speakers have moved in very substantial numbers into Thailand and are now in close contact there with each other and with speakers of Southern Lisu, and comprehension has increased, especially among Christians who also have some experience with the literary 'Bible dialect'. One problem is that literacy is still mainly associated with Christianity, thus many Lisu who are not Christian resist using this script. Nevertheless, the creation of a compromise written variety has succeeded in linking the Lisu across a very wide area, and it has started to be used in some formal spoken domains.

Who decides whether a language is endangered, and how endangered?

It should be up to the community to decide how to categorise the status of its language, including its degree of vitality. Some communities are eager to have their language identified as endangered, like Jeju (jje) in South Korea; others feel that their language should not be viewed as endangered at all or assigned as low a level of vitality as scholars have suggested, like Miami (mia) in the US. There is often a delay of in-group awareness that a language is becoming endangered (Schmidt 1990), and hence scholars must be very careful what they say. Positive attitudes, strong group identity and hope for the future must be supported wherever possible.

The various scales of language endangerment are numerous and are applied in diverse and inconsistent ways. The terminology for the degrees of language endangerment has evolved considerably over the last 25 years to remove negative terms and replace them with more neutral terms: ‘critically endangered’ rather than ‘dying’ or ‘moribund’ and ‘sleeping’ rather than ‘extinct’ or ‘dead’, for example. Sometimes the terms used and the position attributed to a language on a scale, or the inclusion or omission of a language in an inventory of endangered languages, can be counterproductive and hurtful. For a discussion and comparison of the various scales in use, see Bradley and Bradley (2019: 14–32); none of these include all of the multitude of factors involved in language endangerment, as discussed in the remainder of that book; most are based primarily on the degree to which the language continues to be transmitted.

One major problem with such scales is that they suggest that the process is unidirectional and irreversible; this is not so! Sleeping languages can be re-awakened, and many now are being re-awakened around the world; reversals of language shift from less extreme stages of endangerment are less difficult and now widespread. Existing community resources and relevant linguistic data or preferably fluent older speakers are essential to reclaim linguistic heritage, as well as strong motivation. Often this process involves formal study in educational contexts rather than use in the community, but language nests, the learning by observing and pitching in model (Henne-Ochoa et al. 2020) and other kinds of in-group activities as well as the ideal method, socialising children in the language in the home, are also widely implemented. When a language has become more vital through such efforts, from an outsider perspective there may be some issues with the authenticity of the reclaimed language, but it is certainly a strong support for the group’s identity and positive attitudes about themselves (Bradley & Bradley 2019: 208–227).

Sometimes national boundaries and confusion in ethnic group classification make the situation problematic. For example, Bisu (bzi) is spoken in three countries. In Thailand it is endangered in two villages (more severely in Doi Chomphu and less so in Doi Pui Kham), critically endangered in one village (Phadaeng, with one elderly speaker who now lives in Doi Chomphu) and sleeping in another (Tako). In Burma it is said to be relatively vital in two villages (Yaw Tan and Nam Theun) and in China it is starting to become endangered in one village

(Laopinzhai). The Bisu in Thailand used to be included in the general category of Lua (Northern Thai) or Lawa (Thai); those in Burma are officially classified as the Pyen ethnic group from the Shan and thus Burmese name for them; and those in China are unclassified for ethnic group, but locally called Pin; Laopinzhai means ‘old Pin fortified village’. Mutual intelligibility is very high, especially considering that the villages in different countries were almost completely out of contact with each other from the 1850s until recently. Pyen has a separate ISO 639-2 code (pyy), and Bisu in China is incorrectly included in the ISO code of related but distinct Laomian (lwm) spoken further north. The Bisu village in China was located by scholars in the late 1980s and later visited by Bisu from Thailand; Bisu from Burma came to Thailand asking for help with their language in the early 2000s. Desultory contact has since been maintained among the five villages where the language is still regularly spoken, but by then a Thai-based script had been devised with the Bisu in Thailand in accord with Thai government policy, and now a Lahu-based romanisation has been devised with the Bisu in Burma, who are literate in Lahu Na (Bradley & Bradley 2019: 32–36). Thus an endangered language spoken in three countries is classified within three distinct official ethnic group categories under three different ISO codes and now has two new orthographies. There are about 1,500 people who identify as Bisu, of whom about 1,100 can speak the language with some degree of fluency, though this is decreasing. The language is at different stages of endangerment in each village. So how do we classify its overall degree of endangerment? The Bisu care about their language, and are aware that it is endangered; see Bradley and Bradley (2019: 14) for a poem by the longest-term language worker about this: “If we do not continue speaking Bisu, who will?”

What should be done about language endangerment?

Communities and scholars can and must continue to work together, preferably with a community-driven focus, which has been one of the many positive outcomes of the efforts of FEL in the last 25 years. This means empowering and training in-group experts and redirecting the outside scholars’ efforts away from ‘extractive linguistics’ and into efforts and outputs relevant for community use. We must strive for what each community wants, in a realistic way that can succeed, to achieve resilience for their language.

Many indigenous scholars have reacted very strongly against outsider-driven and mainly research-focussed work; see for example Perley (2011) and Leonard (2020). For a jocular but heartfelt view, see Mauldin et al. (1994), cited in Bradley and Bradley (2019: 38). Some groups react to bad experiences with previous scholars by controlling outsiders very carefully or excluding them altogether. On the other hand, scholarly participation is almost essential for any kind of reversal of language shift where endangerment is relatively advanced and the community lacks the necessary internal resources.

Resilience thinking is an approach which observes all relevant factors in a changing ecological situation and attempts to make adjustments to achieve a new stable situation, recognising that this will be different from the earlier situation

(Gunderson et al. 2010). This approach is exactly appropriate for efforts to reclaim language heritage, and we have been applying it in Thailand and elsewhere for over 40 years (Bradley 1978, 1985) and calling this resilience linguistics since 2010. For numerous case studies, see Bradley (2011a, 2011b), Bradley and Bradley (2002, 2019) and Premsrirat and Hirsh (2018). We cannot expect to restore the original language ecology, but we can attempt to overcome prior negative experiences and move forward.

There have been many successes in language reclamation, notably Hebrew in Israel since the 1880s (Bradley & Bradley 2019: 162–172), as well as major advances for Hawaiian, Māori and many other indigenous languages around the world. These combine community-driven efforts, political recognition and support, and ongoing assistance and participation of scholars. Keren Rice (2009) and many other scholars have urged us to reach out to communities and participate in their language reclamation efforts; FEL under the leadership of Nicholas Ostler has helped us to do so!

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9

USE OF HISTORICAL MATERIAL FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Tjeerd de Graaf

The Witsen project

During a stay in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia, Siberia) in 1994, local linguists in Yakutsk told us about the history of the Yakut language. They mentioned the fact that the first written information on this language could be found in a book by the Dutch author Nicolaas Witsen (1641–1717), but that they were not able to read this text, which was written in 17th-century Dutch.

In the 17th century Witsen played an important role in establishing and maintaining relations between the Netherlands and Russia and during his entire life, he devoted his time alternately to his political obligations and his love for scholarly activities. He was engaged in impressive correspondence all over the world and owned a highly reputed collection of maps, travel accounts, coins, antiques, shells, natural history objects, curiosities, and much more. He had personal contacts with Peter the Great, especially when the czar visited Amsterdam in 1697, and he was an important informant for the Russians regarding life and culture in Western Europe.

Witsen's interest in Russia was raised during his stay there in 1664, when as a young member he took part in a diplomatic mission sent to Moscow by the government of the Dutch Republic (Witsen 1996). During the remainder of his life, Witsen kept a lively interest in Russia and continued to collect information about this country, in particular about Siberia. Most of his information Witsen received through correspondence with many dignitaries in the Russian empire.

In 1687, Witsen was the first in the world to publish a large and very detailed map of the 'Northern and Eastern parts of Europe and Asia', a vast area about which little was generally known at that time. As a companion to this map, he published a book, in 1692, of 660 pages titled *Noord en Oost Tartarye*, which was expanded to two folio volumes with a total of more than thousand pages (1705). Witsen's map and book are typical products resulting from the economic and

scientific prosperity that the Dutch Republic enjoyed in its Golden Age, which represents a period of intense Russian-Dutch co-operation and exchange. The book not only informs us about the flora and fauna of this huge territory called *Tartaria*, which was part of the large continental region of Eastern Eurasia, but it also provides details about the languages and traditions of the peoples living there. In his book, Witsen provides word lists and other data on 26 languages.

Long ago, Russian scholars realized the importance of Witsen's book as a unique source of information about the history, geography, ethnology and linguistic data concerning the eastern part of their country (Naarden 2010). At the beginning of the 20th century, a Russian translation of the book was prepared by Wilhelmina Triesman, a Dutch employee of the *Kunstkamera* (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography) in Saint-Petersburg, the city where the manuscript was shown to us in 1992. This manuscript was used by members of the joint Russian-Dutch *Witsen Project Group* for the preparation of the three-volume Russian edition of *Noord en Oost Tartarye*, which was published in Amsterdam in 2010 by Pegasus publishers (Witsen 2010). The first two volumes include a translation of the entire text and all the illustrations from the two-volume edition of 1785. A third volume contains introductory articles along with notes, indexes and other explanatory materials.

Under the supervision of Bruno Naarden a bilingual digital version of Witsen's work was launched by the Huygens Institute in 2015. Next to the complete Russian edition, this publication presents the original Dutch text of 1705 in facsimile and in digital form together with Witsen's large map of 1687 and a number of English and Dutch supplements (Witsen 2015).

In 2018, a team of scholars prepared a separate volume devoted to the study of all 26 language samples in Witsen's book, titled *The Fascination with Inner-Eurasian Languages in the 17th Century* (Witsen 2018). The volume contains a historical introduction and articles written by specialists (Naarden 2018) on the following languages, with word lists, short texts (translations of the Lord's Prayer), specific writing systems and other data.

Caucasus languages: Georgian, Kabardino-Cherkess, Ossete;
 Samoyed languages: Nenets, Enets, Nganasan, Selkup;
 Finno-Ugric languages: Mordvin, Mari, Zyrian Komi, Mansi;
 Turkic and Tungusic languages: Crimean Tatar, Uygur, Yakut, Even, Manchu;
 Mongolic languages: Kalmyk, Mongol, Dagur;
 Other languages: Yukagir, Chinese, Korean, Tangut, Persian.

The first part of *North and East Tartary* describes the remotest areas of Eastern Asia, where not only the civilizations of Russia, China, Korea and Japan influenced each other, but where additional actors played their part too: for many centuries this was also the territory of several other ethnic groups, such as Mongolian, Tungusic and Manchu. Some of their languages became extinct or have become severely endangered. This holds for the Ainu and Nivkh (Gilyak), Paleo-Asiatic peoples in the northern border areas of Japan, called Eso (Jesso) and to which Witsen devoted a special chapter in his book.

One of the maps in the book shows this eastern part of Asia with the Southern Kuril Islands: Kunashir as a part of Hokkaido, Iturup as Staten Eylant (State Island) and Urup as Compagnies Lant (Company Land). The latter names are related to the government of the Netherlands and the United East-Indian Company (VOC). In 1643, the Frisian sea captain Maarten Gerritszoon de Vries was sent on an expedition from Batavia (present-day Djakarta) to explore this part of the world and gave the islands these names. In the centuries following Nicolaas Witsen's publication of *North and East Tartary*, these territories played an important role in the relationship between Japan and Russia (De Graaf and Naarden 2007). They were invaded by Japan from the south and by Russia from the north, and the border areas shifted several times from one of these states to the other and back. The well-known problem of the disputed Southern Kuril Islands (in Japan called 'Northern Territories') is one of the consequences of this situation. The strait between the islands Iturup and Urup is named after De Vries (Proliv Friza) and it could become the border between Japan and Russia in case the Southern Kuril islands were to become Japanese territory.

Quotations from Witsen's book show that in the 17th century a great deal of information was available about the northern and eastern parts of Asia in these border areas and that most of this information was published for the first time in Witsen's book. More in particular, these texts contain important data on the life, culture and traditions of the local population, in particular the Ainu and the Nivkh, the first inhabitants of these regions. As an illustration, a quote is included, taken from page 22 of the book (in English translation), where Witsen reports what he heard about the local aboriginal people from a Chinese-Dutch interpreter:

Because they live in a very harsh climate, they have to hide in closed tents during the winter; but in the summer they move north over the high mountains, where they find good pastures for their cattle and enjoy a pleasant, moderate air. This population tells us that from the top of these mountains, far over the sea to the East, they can see several lands, probably Japan, Eso or the land of America.

This text fragment could describe the Paleo-Asiatic people of the Nivkh, also called Gilyak, who nowadays inhabit the north of Sakhalin and the Amur delta area with a total number of about 4,000 people. In Witsen's days, they were probably more numerous and lived in a larger territory. On Witsen's map of East Tartary we find this territory indicated as Nivchi and Urup (Compagnies Lant) as an island or peninsula, then by some people assumed to be part of America.

In those days the Ainu people lived on what is known today as Hokkaido (Japan), Sakhalin and the Kurile islands (Russian Federation), but at present their language is only spoken by a small community on Hokkaido, where we met them in 1988. At that time we were also able to conduct fieldwork and talk to one of the last speakers of the Sakhalin Ainu language, who came to Japan after the war. She died in 1994 and with her the Sakhalin Ainu language became extinct. However, thanks to the work of the Japanese scholar Kyoko Murasaki, the language is still represented by numerous fieldnotes and recordings, all of

which have been used for further study and even for teaching courses (Murasaki 2001).

In 1990, Murasaki sensei organized an international expedition to Sakhalin, which made it possible to visit the places where the Ainu had been living. The language was no longer spoken on the island, but we met with other ethnic groups and since then we have had the opportunity to continue the study of Nivkh, to collaborate with local scholars and contribute to several conferences organized by the Sakhalin Regional Museum (De Graaf 1992, 2001, 2004a, 2004b; De Graaf and Shiraishi 2004).

Using a Nivkh phrase book for school children (Taksami et al. 1982) we recorded a native speaker during our fieldwork trip in 1990. Our Japanese colleague Hidetoshi Shiraishi published a series of books with Nivkh stories, songs and conversations in which for the first time ever the corresponding texts were recorded on a CD. The series, *Sound Materials of the Nivkh Language I–XIII* (Shiraishi 2002, 2016) appeared as a result of the Japanese programme on *Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim* (ELPR), the research programme *Voices from Tundra and Taiga* and other projects. This unique material is used not only by linguists, but also by the language community itself, where it can be applied for teaching purposes. In 2006, Hidetoshi Shiraishi finished a dissertation on the Nivkh language with the title *Aspects of Nivkh Phonology*, which he defended at Groningen University (Shiraishi 2006).

At the beginning of the 20th century, sound recordings of Nivkh were made by the Russian ethnologist Sternberg. These recordings are a part of the historical collection in the Phonogram Archive of the Russian Academy of Science in Saint-Petersburg. In 1995 we started a reconstruction programme of these sound recordings, which will be described in the following section.

Voices from Tundra and Taiga

Archives not only contain written material, but also other data, such as sound recordings. Prior to 1890, linguistic and ethnological fieldwork was based on direct contacts with representatives of various cultures, in which the investigator took notes by hand after many repetitions of tales and songs during recording sessions. At the end of the 19th century, the great invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison changed all this. For the first time in human history, people were able to store and rehear acoustic data, in particular speech, songs and music. As recordings were made, it became obvious that a central facility was needed for the preservation of the valuable material which had been collected. At the turn of the century this led to the establishment of sound archives, the earliest of which in Europe were located in Vienna and Berlin. Soon after, the first Russian collections were made, which later also found their way to sound archives.

The sound archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, nowadays housed in the Institute of Russian Literature (the Pushkinsky Dom) in Saint-Petersburg contains more than 6,000 wax cylinders of the Edison phonograph and 350 old wax discs. In addition, there is an extensive number of gramophone records and one of the largest collections of tape-recordings of Russian folklore. These recordings

represent the history of Russian ethnography and contain a wide range of materials. Examples are recordings made by well-known Russian ethnographers and linguists, such as W. I. Jochelson, S. M. Shirokogorov, L. Ya. Shternberg, V. K. Shteinitz, A. V. Anokhin, N. Karger, Z. V. Evald, Y. V. Gippius, S. D. Magid, B. M. Dobrovolsky and V. V. Korguzalov. These recordings represent the history of Russian ethnography and contain folklore material of the peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of Russia. These collections are supplemented by metadata and dictionaries in Russian and the national languages. They show the richness of this material for the Finno-Ugric, Samoyed, Turkic, Tungus-Manchu and Paleo-Siberian languages of the Russian Federation.

Many of the aforementioned recordings form one of the basic collections used in our collaboration projects with Saint-Petersburg. The first of these projects on the *Use of Acoustic Data Bases and the Study of Language Change* (1995–1998) was financially supported by the INTAS organization of the European Union in Brussels. We were able to reconstruct part of the many recordings in the Pushkinsky Dom and to make them available for further research, which is not only important for historical and cultural reasons, but also for language description and for studying direct possible evidence of language change. Following a second INTAS project, *Saint-Petersburg Sound Archives on the World Wide Web* (1998–2001), part of the sound recordings were listed in a catalogue, published on a website and are now available for further study (Burykin et al. 2005; De Graaf 2002, 2004a; De Graaf and Denisov 2015).

Within the framework of our INTAS projects we first completed the reconstruction of sound archive material of the Zhirmunsky collection. Zhirmunsky was a specialist of Germanic languages, who worked in Saint-Petersburg/Leningrad at the beginning of the 20th century. One of his main interests was the study of German dialects spoken on the territory of Russia. During the period between 1927 and 1930, he recorded many utterances, in particular songs of German settlers and German dialects. During our INTAS project, most of these recordings were digitized. At present, it is possible to study the remaining German dialects in Russia with the aid of existing linguistic databases and new fieldwork. One of these dialects is the Plautdietsch language of the Siberian Mennonites, the topic of a PhD thesis defended at Groningen University (Nieuweboer 1996/1999; De Graaf 2006). Many of these dialects are now severely endangered and shall probably become extinct in the future.

Important activities related to linguistic databases in Saint-Petersburg concern the many recordings of Russian dialects and minority languages in the Russian Federation, such as Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Nivkh, Tungus, Yakut, Yukagir and other ones. One of our aims was the construction of a phonetic database of the languages of Russia which has many scientific, cultural and technical applications. In the framework of the NWO project *Voices from Tundra and Taiga* (2002–2005), we combined the data from old sound recordings with the results of modern fieldwork, in order to describe the languages and cultures of ethnic groups in Russia. It is now possible to use this information for the preparation of textbooks on certain languages, collections of folklore, data on ethnomusicology and for the study of language contact, language change and migration movements.

From 2006 until 2008 and from 2010 until 2012, we received grants from the *Endangered Archives Programme* of the British Library, which made it possible to re-record material from mainly private collections on historic sound carriers with the help of modern, up-to date technology and to store them in safe places together with the related metadata. The storage facilities provided by the project can help to modernize the possible archiving activities in the Russian Federation.

In 2008, we completed the research project *Safeguarding and Preservation of Sound Materials of Endangered Languages in the Russian Federation for Sound Archives in St. Petersburg* and as a follow-up we received a new grant in 2010 for the project EAP 347 on *Vanishing Voices from the Uralic World: Sound Recordings for Archives in Russia (in particular Udmurtia), Estonia, Finland and Hungary*. The work was completed in accordance with the standards of the International Association of Sound Archives IASA (Schüller 2005), and many important data on various, mainly Finno-Ugric languages have now become available for further study and use (De Graaf and Denisov 2015).

Language extinction is a process which takes place nearly everywhere in the world. The rich variety of languages which must have existed in the past is diminishing rapidly. As estimated by various linguists, in the next 50 years many of the 6,000 languages which are at present spoken in the world will disappear. At the moment 20 to 50 per cent of these languages are no longer used by children, which makes their survival highly uncertain. It has been stated that also quite a few languages on the territory of the Russian Federation are under threat of total extinction and that measures should be taken to put an end to this process of degradation and languages dying out. Linguists and ethnologists should work together with representatives of endangered languages in order to find solutions to these problems. A UNESCO study group has prepared several publications on this matter and a special Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger has been published, which is also available on the Internet (De Graaf 2012, 2017). Several organizations are involved in the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages, such as the Foundation for Endangered Languages and the Foundation for Siberian Cultures. This latter Foundation will be introduced in the next section.

Foundation for Siberian cultures

In 2010 the Foundation for Siberian Cultures (FSC) was founded by Erich Kasten (De Graaf and Kasten 2012, 2019). It is dedicated to maintaining cultural diversity in Siberia and the Russian Far East. The Foundation documents endangered languages, indigenous ecological knowledge and art and craft traditions and uses contemporary technologies to co-produce with indigenous experts learning materials and web portals for their communities. The Foundation thus participates in the effort to counteract the loss of cultural diversity, as well as local and ethnic identities. Published print and open access electronic learning tools on the languages and cultures of Kamchatka, Northern Yakutia, Sakhalin and Central Siberia respond to the pressing need of local communities to sustain their cultural heritage. Together with other publications on the research history and the

cultures of the Russian North, they provide useful materials for anthropological and linguistic research. From the results of fieldwork and data based on archived materials important information can be obtained for the preparation of language descriptions, grammars, dictionaries and edited collections of oral and written literature. These can subsequently be used to develop learning tools, in particular for younger members of indigenous communities to whom their native language could not have been transmitted properly, and to those who are interested to preserve it.

Publications by the *Verlag der Kulturstiftung Sibirien* | *SEC Publications* of the FSC and former works are distributed both in print and in electronic form in order to provide scholars and in particular indigenous communities in Siberia easy and free access to these materials. They consist of a number of series, such as new editions and the digitization of older sources, monographs on social and cultural anthropology, ethnographic documentaries on DVD, and edited volumes on exhibitions and symposia (Kasten and De Graaf 2013; Kasten 2017).

From the entire publishing programme, the series *Languages and Cultures of the Russian Far East* is of particular interest. The electronic and print editions of texts in indigenous languages with Russian translations, along with their supplementary DVDs, are especially designed even for individual extracurricular use at home. English translations aim to stimulate interest not only in Russia itself, but also beyond, among other peoples of the North. Some texts are presented in linguistic transcription as well, and serve as a source for international research in this field. Recordings of dialects, often by some of the last speakers, document the languages of these peoples. Among the recorded themes are life histories, tales, dances and songs, rituals and worldviews, arts and crafts and ecological knowledge.

The earlier mentioned publications intend to motivate in particular young people to learn more about the language and traditional knowledge of their elders and ancestors. Accordingly, these materials have also proved useful as learning tools in school classes and at community events. The presentation of the texts is in the regional minority language and in Russian on facing pages rather than in an interlinear form, which corresponds more to the common standard of polyglot literature editions than to common linguistic conventions. When reading the Russian text on the right-hand side, readers will likely become interested to learn more about a particular expression in the original regional minority language. While readers move to the corresponding lines on the left-hand page from time to time, more interest can be generated when they recall not only single words, but also full phrases in their language. Therefore, in the given form the texts fulfil the practical purposes of sustaining indigenous language and knowledge. In order to make the texts available to readers from other parts of the world, the books also contain English translations. Latinized transcriptions with interlinear glosses facilitate linguistic analysis of the texts and these transcriptions are available on the Internet for those with more academic interests.

The accompanying DVDs, which are recommended for all user groups as they contain full audio and video files, are also available on the Internet. With the help of the video time count that corresponds to the lines in the book, particular

phrases or sections can be listened to and viewed. This is certainly not only more informative, but also triggers additional interest among the youth, who can see and remember their grandparents and ancestors. Such visual materials, together with the spoken and translated texts, have aroused particular interest during earlier presentations even in other northern indigenous communities outside Russia, where they have encouraged useful cultural exchanges.

Approaches and strategies on how to contribute with recorded language data and relevant learning tools to sustaining – in particular – endangered languages, have been discussed at regular workshops at the Foundation for Siberian Cultures (Kasten and De Graaf 2013; Kasten and Dürr 2015). Here, we consider the project on the Itelmen language and culture on Kamchatka as a specific illustration of the more general situation which applies to many minorities in the Russian Federation. For the analysis and assessment of the meaning and role that the preservation of the Itelmen language can play today, especially for the younger generation in the wider context of sustaining Itelmen culture, it was important to study this culture and to participate in a variety of community-driven projects that take place in the spirit of Itelmen cultural revitalization.

Fragments of Itelmen speech are preserved in greetings and some general chatting, although code switching sets in as soon as terminology becomes more specific, in which case people use Russian more comfortably. One of the domains in which people were most motivated to keep up the language and where the use of Itelmen (or fragments of it) has been encouraged are ceremonial settings and traditional feasts, that is, activities and occasions that centre on the expression or celebration of Itelmen ethnic identity, where the native language is a central element. Furthermore, performing arts such as traditional Itelmen songs and dances, with their respective staged performances, appear to be a domain of continued use of the Itelmen language.

Itelmen cultural revival activities have centred on the Alkhalalai festival that has been held in Kovran every autumn since the late 1980s. A DVD on that festival, recorded in 2001 and published by the Foundation for Siberian Cultures in 2015 (Kasten and Dürr 2015), highlights various episodes, in which the Itelmen language is used at times of certain rituals, as well as during song contests when traditional Itelmen songs are presented by young singers.

It is remarkable how local speech variants of Itelmen and other indigenous languages have managed to survive until the present day, side by side with the formal teaching of these languages in school. In the mid-1990s elders still occasionally used their local vernacular (although with strong diglossia) at home while they had not become confused by Itelmen language standards that were encouraged during school days. Experience from the Itelmen project and more recent similar project work on Koryak and Even language preservation has shown that the DVD format in combination with print editions, and respective online editions for free download on the Internet, provide an effective basis for developing useful learning tools that sustain indigenous language and culture. Through the web portal at [dh-north https://dh-north.org/en](https://dh-north.org/en) and the Elar archive www.elararchive.org the film and language data are hosted for open access. This type of access is more convenient, especially for younger members of indigenous communities

who increasingly often surf the Internet via their smart-phones. This may well ultimately replace the print editions and DVDs, as new technologies provide more practical options for this region.

Learning Itelmen first at school and using the same methodology as used for learning ‘foreign’ languages (such as English) seems to be not so effective: among other things, it requires particular justification concerning the question of motivation: ‘what for?’ – especially when other options such as English classes provide young Itelmen with the prospect of better professional career opportunities, and the possibility to manage their local resources more independently later. Unless specific native language pedagogy is used along with a philosophy and viable approach that indicates the importance of preserving a language, the students’ motivation is usually low. In the Itelmen context, the coupling of cultural knowledge with language acquisition in textbooks was one way in which the project team attempted to counter this effect.

The Pallas project

A team of researchers, coordinated by Nicoline van der Sijs, is currently preparing an annotated digital edition of the 18th-century Russian *Comparative Dictionary of all Languages and Dialects*, compiled by the Prussian scholar Peter Simon Pallas on the initiative of the Russian Empress Catherine the Great (see Van der Sijs 2021). This dictionary contains language data on hundreds of different languages, some of which are now extinct, while others are severely endangered. For some languages the data in the dictionary are in fact the oldest or one of the oldest known sources.

In 1784 Empress Catherine initiated this project by preparing a list of some 300 Russian concepts which had to be translated into all the languages and dialects she could find. In 1785 she received the help of the Prussian scholar Peter Simon Pallas, who was an internationally renowned scholar and had a great knowledge of languages. He expanded Catherine’s word list and composed a *Modèle du Vocabulaire qui peut Servir à la Comparaison de toutes les Langues* with 443 concepts in Russian, German, Latin and French. This ‘model’ was sent not only to the administrators of the provinces of the vast Russian empire, but also to Russian diplomats all over the world, and it was handed out to foreign diplomats in Russia. All recipients were asked to provide translations of the concepts in as many languages as possible. As a result, a great amount of language data was submitted to Pallas, to which he himself added material from printed dictionaries.

In 1787 the first part of the *Linguarum Totius Orbis Vocabularia Comparativa Augustissimae Cura Collecta* (Сравнительные словари всѣхъ языковъ и нарѣчій собранные десницею всевысочайшей особы) was published and the second part of this *Comparative Glossaries of All Languages and Dialects in the World* came out in 1789. The two parts contained 273 concepts with their translation in 200 numbered languages, ending with the names of some numerals in 222 languages.

After the publication of the dictionary new language data were added and a new version of the dictionary appeared, in which the words in the various languages

were arranged alphabetically. In the period 1790–1791 this new edition was published in four volumes titled *Сравнительный словарь всѣхъ языковъ и нарѣчій, по азбучному порядку расположенный* or *Comparative Dictionary of All Languages and Dialects, in Alphabetical Order* (Adelung 1805/1976).

Most scholars outside of Russia are unfamiliar with the dictionary, because it is written in Russian and Cyrillic. Even within Russia it is largely unknown, since most of the thousand copies of the second edition were immediately stored at the Imperial Cabinet. This ignorance is regrettable, since the dictionary contains a wealth of language data. A team of researchers in the Netherlands started to digitize and annotate the second edition of the Pallas dictionary in 2020. With a special Lexicon Interactive Tool the ‘*Digital Pallas*’ was prepared and the data of the dictionary have by now been added to a database: 61,960 words for 296 concepts in 328 different languages.

The next task will be to add transcriptions and the original (non-Cyrillic) spelling to the words in the various languages, and to add modern English names to the language names and language classification as used by Pallas. After completing the annotation process, we plan to publish the annotated database on a public website, which can then be used for research in comparative linguistics, lexicostatistics and other fields. Publications will be prepared on the historical background of the Pallas dictionary and on the various language families that are included in it. For specific languages systematic work can be undertaken about the comparison of the historical data with words in the present-day language, or the study of an extinct language in its historical context. We collaborate with language consultants in various countries who are specialists in these languages and who have access to the archive material in Russia, in particular the data stored in Saint-Petersburg. There, the material compiled by Pallas and other scholars can be found, all of which can inform us further about the origin of the wordlist.

As one of the first examples of our investigations we mention the word list of the language that Pallas called Курильски (Kurilisch/Kamtschadalisch), which is related to the Kurile islands and Kamchatka in Eastern Asia. Most of the words on this list are of Ainu origin, whereas the Ainu language, as was mentioned before, is no longer spoken in this part of the world. Further research in the archives has to be conducted in order to determine whether these words were indeed used in the 18th century by Ainu people, who were then living on the Kuril islands, where they and their language have disappeared since then. Considering the Finno-Ugric languages, the database contains four dialects with items for Khanty (Остяцки) and seven for Mansi (Вогульски) dialects. A future investigation of the database will possibly provide more information about the historical relationship of these languages and their position within the Finno-Ugric languages.

In another investigation we considered the Frisian (Фризски) wordlist which could be obtained from the Digital Pallas database. The Frisian language belongs to the family of Germanic languages. In this family the coastal West-Germanic subgroup is represented by English and Frisian, whereas the continental subgroup consists of (High- and Low-) German and Dutch. Historically (in the days after the Anglo-Saxons invaded the British Isles), Old-Frisian and Old-English were very similar.

As late as the 8th century the Germanic languages Old Saxon, Old Franconian and Old Frisian were also still closely related.

In later times Frisian, which was spoken along the entire coast of north-western Europe, lost more and more speakers and nowadays it has its most numerous branch in the province of Friesland (Fryslân) in the Netherlands. To distinguish it from the smaller branches in Germany (North-Frisian and East-Frisian), it is also called West-Frisian. The three languages, West-Frisian, East-Frisian and North-Frisian, are not mutually comprehensible and in Germany there are very few speakers left in an area with various dialects, all of which are severely endangered.

We compared the Frisian words, presented in the Pallas database as Фризски (Friesisch/Germanischer Sprachstamm) with the present-day standard West-Frisian language and found many similarities, such as мемъ (mem) for English ‘mother’ (Dutch ‘moeder’), берне (bern) for ‘children’ (‘kinderen’), найлъ (nail) for ‘nail’ (‘nagel’), молко (molke) for ‘milk’ (‘melk’), салтъ for ‘salt’ (‘zout’) and сюнъ (sûn) for ‘healthy’ (‘gezond’). In an article by Hoekstra (2013) the author identifies the Frisian words presented in the dictionary by Pallas as one of the endangered North-Frisian dialects. It will be interesting to determine how and by whom at the end of the 18th century these words were recorded in Russia. A future investigation of the archives’ materials will possibly solve this problem.

Similar research has to be planned for the identification of the other languages represented in the *digital Pallas* database, which will become available on the Internet. In the future, a further comparison can be made with modern languages, and the origin of the material and other topics can be studied.

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10

THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN MINORITY- AND ENDANGERED- LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

Riitta-Liisa Valijärvi and Lily Kahn

10.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the role of new media in the endangered-language context. In contrast to traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, new media denotes everyday digital formats such as social media (including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, among others), internet forums, podcasts, and video games.

UNESCO (2003) identifies the response to new domains and media as one of the factors that determine the linguistic vitality of a language: the more new domains a language has, the better are its chances of survival. Soria (2016) highlights the importance of Digital Language Diversity that can guarantee equality of linguistic rights and digital opportunities for all languages and all citizens; it ensures access to services and information for everyone, guarantees equal technological development and digital dignity, and provides opportunities for the survival and maintenance of an endangered or minority language (see also McDonough Dolmaya 2017; Wiggers 2017). Menjívar and Chacón (2019: 11) have noted that new media connects Indigenous people across different localities by helping them form networks, combat language loss, and raise political awareness. Online spaces can be digital counter-discursive and decolonising loci of resistance, activism, political unity, and self-determination (e.g. Carlson & Frazer 2018; Carlson et al. 2017; Carlson & Dreher 2018). New media is ideal for this as it allows democratic user-created content and user-led innovation, it is dynamic, ubiquitous, visual, and interactive, and it can reach global audiences (see Hjorth et al. 2016). Therefore, examination of the role of new media in endangered-languages contexts can contribute an important perspective to our understanding of these languages' linguistic vitality in the 21st century.

The chapter complements the FEL XVI conference proceedings on endangered languages and new media (Ka'ai et al. 2012), as well as Jones and Uribe-Jongbloed's (2013) edited volume on social media and minority languages. It adds

to the examples mentioned in Jany's (2018) paper on the role of social media in endangered-language contexts and the survey on European minority languages in new media by Ferre-Pavia and colleagues (2018), as well as Gómez Menjívar and Chacón's (2019) edited volume on technology and social networks in Indigenous communities in Mexico and Central America.

10.2 Theory, method, and data

Theoretically this chapter relies on Post-Colonial Studies (Ashcroft et al. 2013), specifically how colonial and imperial linguistic and other practices of the past and present as well as globalisation can be counteracted online and with the help of social media. The selection criteria for the types of new media examined in this chapter are based on Flew (2014), who defines it as media containing the three dimensions of 1) computing information technology, 2) a communication network, and 3) content. As such, the present analysis excludes digital materials not containing all of these three dimensions, such as online dictionaries, Wikipedia, digital corpora, Unicode, machine translation and similar technological solutions (see e.g. Buszard-Welcher 2018), and apps created specifically for language learning (see e.g. Rosell-Aguilar 2017).

The research questions are: How have different minority- and endangered-language communities used and engaged with new media? What is the significance and function of different types of new media in the endangered language for the speech community? What recent developments have taken place in the use of new media in selected endangered-language communities across the world?

The chapter provides a literature review and synthesis of recent studies on Indigenous and other endangered-language new media. It examines the uses and functions of different new media platforms by including case studies from different parts of the world. The data include extracts from new media, where relevant. The authors acknowledge the Eurasian and Anglo-American focus of our chapter, and their subject-position as scholars based in Europe.

10.3 Case studies

10.3.1 *The global reach of YouTube*

YouTube is a hugely popular video-sharing site that can serve as an important tool for endangered-language speakers as it is a way of creating and disseminating content to a large global audience without the need for largescale funding or the support of commercially driven mainstream TV channels and music labels. In majority-language contexts, YouTube content includes music videos, comedy, short and longer films, and other forms of media, and these different genres are also increasingly appearing in minority and endangered languages as well.

Recent years have seen the proliferation of endangered-language music videos on YouTube. These fall into two categories, both of which play a role in the revitalisation of endangered languages. The first category consists of original

musical compositions created by endangered-language speakers. For example, Estrada (2019) has analysed the way in which Maya musicians have harnessed the power of YouTube to reach global audiences and get young and diaspora Maya interested in Maya language and culture. A prominent case in point is the Maya rock group B'itzma Sobrevivencia, which has used YouTube as a way to gain visibility for their Maya-language songs and music videos. The band's videos include elements of Maya spirituality and focus on land rights, and their songs contain depictions of Maya people, culture, and language. According to Estrada (2019: 101), the fact that the songs and videos are created by community members facilitates more positive and complex representations of the Maya people and language on a global scale, while the visual element makes it possible to transmit and celebrate embodied spiritual practices and histories (106–107). B'itzma Sobrevivencia use three languages – Maya, Spanish, and English – in their output, which further contributes to their global reach (cf. Vincze 2012).

The second category consists of covers of majority-language hit songs translated into endangered languages. For example, Dlaske (2017) studied two endangered-language covers of popular songs: an Irish Gaelic version of the Swedish DJ Avicii's song *Wake me up* and a North Sámi version of a popular Finnish artist Jenni Vartiainen's ballad *Missä muruseni on?* 'Where is my sweetheart?'. The Avicii remake was created by students and teachers of the Irish-language summer school Coláiste Lurgan, and contains Irish instruments and a choir. Making Irish-language versions of hit songs and accompanying videos is a tried and tested language learning method at the summer school and as such serves a clear function as a pedagogical aid. The remake of the Jenni Vartiainen song was produced by a North Sámi comedy duo Märrät säpikkää/ Njuoska bittut 'Wet Gaiters' consisting of the young Sámi women Suvi West and Kirste Aikio to promote their TV sketch show. Dlaske (2017) analyses the response to these two videos with Ahmed's (2004) theory of affect, noting that the comments on each video are positive, expressing excitement and appreciation. The commentators also acknowledge the way in which these videos are an excellent way to introduce Irish and Sámi culture to the masses. Similarly, the late Canadian Inuit vocalist Kelly Fraser used YouTube as a way of disseminating her Inuktitut-language covers of popular English-language songs such as *Taimantitit* 'Diamonds', based on the Rihanna song of the same name. These examples highlight the important role that YouTube song covers can play in fostering a sense of empowerment, inclusion, and relevance among endangered-language speakers and heritage communities by creating high-profile, easily shareable, endangered-language equivalents of the most recent majority-language musical hits.

In addition to music, there are also YouTube channels featuring Indigenous and endangered-language comedy sketches and informational videos. For example, YouTube has been used as a platform for Indigenous activism by the Native American comedy troupe the 1491s. Berglund (2017) highlights the way in which the 1491s' YouTube channel is a direct and powerful way for Indigenous comedians to be a force for social change. In contrast to the music channels discussed

earlier, the 1491s' content is in English, perhaps highlighting the fact that in some cases, endangered-language content is secondary to considerations of accessibility and global reach for activism. Conversely, the Hasidic Yiddish YouTube channel *Yiddishe Vinkel* 'Yiddish/Jewish Corner' serves as a global platform for the dissemination of Yiddish-language videos including topics such as current events, short comedy sketches, informational videos (for example, how to perform CPR), and scenes from high-profile weddings and other important occasions within the Hasidic community. The channel has around 24,000 subscribers, which is a significant number considering the relatively small size of the Hasidic Yiddish-speaking community (with a maximum of approximately 750,000 speakers worldwide) and the fact that many Hasidic community members do not have internet access. These examples again highlight the important and unprecedented role that YouTube can play in reaching diaspora endangered-language audiences which are highly dispersed geographically.

10.3.2 *Opposition culture on internet forums*

Internet forums are online discussion boards for private or public interaction. Unlike many social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter, internet forums do not usually involve downloading an app. This difference is significant because it means that communications on internet forums are less susceptible to being monitored or blocked by multinational corporations or the states in which the posters live. These kinds of forums can thus serve as effective loci of opposition culture in minority- and endangered-language settings, as the following case studies demonstrate.

One striking example of the ways in which online forums can power opposition culture can be seen in the case of the Uyghur minority in China. The Uyghur have used online forums for resistance and opposition, as well as cultural preservation by sharing music, film, and literature (Clothey & Koku 2017). For Uyghurs online forums have been a way to form a collective consciousness and to make silenced voices heard. The following extract from Clothey and Koku (2017: 358) illustrates the link between religion, language, and heritage in the diaspora.

This kind of information is very rare in our region because foreign websites are blocked and so we cannot get information and also most people do not use English so what I do I just read some good website, good articles, and write about it in Uyghur, and post it (with reference of course), so that other people use it. And also I written [sic] articles in Uyghur about religion. The reason is because the Chinese government does not allow any religious education. People getting [sic] their education on the street or at home, because the source of their information is so complicated. . . . My purpose is to let people know what is the right Islamic [sic]. Because people get the wrong information . . . so I post these kind of things.

*(Interview with munbar¹ user, 19 June 2014 from
Clothey & Koku 2017: 358)*

Another instructive case study of the use of internet forums as loci of resistance and opposition for endangered-language speakers concerns the Yiddish-speaking Hasidic Jewish community, particularly in the New York area. In recent years online forums such as *Yidische Velt Forums* ‘Yiddish/Jewish World Forums’ and *Kave Shtiebel* ‘Coffeehouse’ have become centres of anonymous communication for Yiddish-speaking Jews from the strictly Orthodox Hasidic community. In contrast to the Uighur situation, the Hasidic use of Yiddish internet forums is regarded as somewhat taboo and edgy by the community itself, which traditionally considers use of the internet to be outside the bounds of moral acceptability within Hasidic society (see Fader 2020). The anonymity of the forums allows Yiddish speakers to address and discuss topics of interest and concern without worrying about judgement from other members of the community: as Bleaman (2020: 3) notes, ‘KS [*Kave Shtiebel*] prides itself on giving writers the freedom to post socially critical content, alongside other topics including history, science, religion, politics, and poetry. This commitment is codified in its guidelines for new members’. As such, the forum may over time serve to broaden the parameters of socially acceptable discourse within Hasidic society. See Fader (2020) for further discussion of the societal implications of the use of *Kave Shtiebel* and other Yiddish internet forums within the Hasidic community. In addition, Bleaman (2020: 18) has found that *Kave Shtiebel* serves as a conduit for the spread of new linguistic forms, as well as conversely exerting a unifying influence on a language which has never had an orthographic standard.

10.3.3 *Hashtags and beyond on Twitter*

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook can offer another insight into the role that new media play in endangered-language revitalisation. Twitter operates with messages shorter than 140 characters that users can create or retweet (that is, repost to their own followers), and also includes the function of thematic hashtags that make it possible to search for and classify specific topics, thereby creating bottom-up networks centred around these topics. Twitter is used extensively for political purposes (see e.g. Gainous & Wagner 2014), and Indigenous and endangered-language communities are no exception to this practice.

There are numerous examples of Twitter hashtags being utilised to raise awareness of Indigenous and endangered-language issues. For example, since 2012 the #IdleNoMore hashtag has been used as a way of classifying and identifying tweets relating to Indigenous resistance, and has spread around the world (Alia 2009; Raynauld et al. 2018; Richez et al. 2020). The use of hashtags with a more specifically linguistic Indigenous focus is explored in Cocq’s (2015) case study of the Sámi hashtags #gollegiella (‘golden language’), #samegiella (‘[North] Sámi language’), and #aarjel (‘south’ for South Sámi). Cocq describes the function of Indigenous-language tweeting as follows: ‘More than a tool for communication, an indigenous language functions as a symbol of identity, and its visibility in a majority society is part of revitalization efforts and a way of questioning minority/

majority relations’ (Cocq 2015: 274). The following example from Cocq’s (2015) data illustrates this well:

‘Dekolonisering,’ guktie dam maahta jiehtedh? Jih mij lea ‘återta’ aarjelsacmien gilesne? #aarjel

‘Decolonization,’ how do you say that? What is ‘to take back’ in South Sami? #aarjel

(Twitter, December 31, 2012, Cocq 2015: 273)

The quote shows how terminology development, revitalisation, decolonisation, and global Indigenous networks of resistance are all connected. In terms of accessibility, the content associated with endangered-language hashtags is often multilingual, which widens its reach and allows heritage speakers as well as non-speakers to engage with it. For example, Cocq (2015: 278) cites the post ‘Gaerjagaetesne. På biblioteket “At the library”’ (Twitter, 13 January 2013), which appears in South Sámi and Swedish/Norwegian and can therefore be read by speakers of all three languages. On a related note, the use of endangered-language hashtags can serve as a potent pedagogical resource: Cocq (2015: 278–279) noted that many of the Sámi posts were by learners who had questions about vocabulary items or study resources, or who were documenting their language-learning journey and receiving positive and encouraging comments, such as ‘It will come! It takes 8 years to learn a language, so let the time be your assistance #samegiella’ (Twitter, 17 February 2013; in Swedish) (Cocq 2015: 278). The choice to use Sámi-language hashtags and to post associated content partially in Sámi enables ethnolinguistic identification (cf. Vincze & Moring 2018), even in the absence of fluency or confident skills during one’s language reclamation journey.

Despite their importance, hashtags only tell part of the story where endangered-language use and revitalisation are concerned. The need to look beyond hashtags is highlighted by McMonagle and colleagues (2019), who conducted an analysis of the Twitter hashtags #cymraeg, #frysk, and #gaeilge in order to gain an understanding of the use of Welsh, Frisian, and Irish on the platform. Their analysis (McMonagle et al. 2019: 41–44) revealed that in many cases, tweets in these languages were not accompanied by one of the aforementioned hashtags, while conversely, sometimes the hashtags were actually used by companies for commercial purposes rather than reflecting grassroots endangered-language activity; for example, the hashtag #frysk was found to have been used by a Frisian liquor company in a promotional context that was not related to the Frisian language.

The use of Twitter in endangered-language contexts beyond the hashtag has been explored by Jones et al. (2013), who conducted a survey about the use of Welsh on the platform as a whole. Given that in recent decades Welsh has enjoyed increasing state support and a more prominent public presence, with a concomitant growth in speakers of all ages, it is perhaps unsurprising that this extends to the online sphere in general and to Twitter in particular. Thus, Jones and colleagues (2013: 669) found that the use of Welsh on Twitter had been normalised, and that Welsh speakers are likely to use the language on the platform and to build

language-based networks. The choice by bilingual speakers to use Welsh on Twitter rather than English can have symbolic as well as practical motivations, with speakers selecting the language either in order to raise its profile and promote it, or because they want to communicate with other Welsh speakers and find Welsh the most natural medium for that.

10.3.4 Group cohesion on Facebook and QQ

Facebook, a hugely popular global networking and sharing site, plays a prominent role in the endangered-language context. As one of the older social media platforms, in Facebook's earlier years there were challenges translating its interface into smaller languages (Scannell 2012), but the situation has since improved and Facebook is currently available in a range of minority and endangered languages, including Basque, Breton, Corsican, Frisian, Galician, Iñupiaq, Irish, Sardinian, Silesian, Sorani Kurdish, Tamazight, Welsh, and Zaza. Despite the progress that has been made in this regard, the selection of languages remains relatively Eurocentric.

One of Facebook's characteristic features is that it allows users to create specific groups based around specific topics or interests. This includes groups dedicated to endangered languages, and these can often highlight the ways in which views on language policies and (identity) politics can intertwine in such contexts. For example, Wagner (2013) studied the ideologies governing different Luxembourgish language groups. The names of the groups included: *Et soll Letzeboiech an Letzebuerg geschwaat ginn* 'Luxembourgish should be spoken in Luxembourg', *Lëtzebuerg ass lëtzebuergesch, weist datt Ierch eis Identitéit net eegal as* 'Luxembourg is Luxembourgish, show that you are not careless about your identity', *Lëtzebuergesch soll een haaptfach an der Schoul gin !!!* 'Luxembourgish should become a main subject at school!!!!', *Fir dass d'Ausländer an Frontalieren sech un Letzebuerg unpassen sollen!!* 'Foreigners and cross-border workers should adapt themselves' (Wagner 2013: 93–94).

Another aspect of Facebook that is significant for endangered-language revitalisation is the fact that it can provide a forum for everyday writing in such languages without the constraints of standardisation or linguistic purism. This can free speakers to use the language unselfconsciously among a much wider audience pool than if they were restricted to more formal writing and/or to speech with friends and family, and can also serve (sometimes unintentionally) to raise awareness of the language among non-speakers. Cru (2015) studied this type of bottom-up networked revitalisation activity among young Yucatec Maya Facebook users, finding that they write non-normatively using spoken language and mixing in Spanish. In addition, Cru (2015) found that metalinguistic conversations about Maya can turn into Maya language lessons on Facebook. Similar organic bottom-up and non-normative uses of minority languages on Facebook have also been reported for Balinese (Stern 2017). Some of these points are highlighted in the following Facebook conversation from Cru (2015), which illustrates the use of non-standard Maya spellings, the use of both Maya and Spanish within the same exchange, and the positive response by non-speakers regarding the Maya

speakers' use of the language. The text in bold is in Maya and the non-bold is Spanish. The translations in italics are Cru's own.

Post on Blanca's Facebook Wall (9 November 2012)

Blanca:

jach ya'ab in ts'üib máax ku antiken????

I have lots of writing tasks to do. Who can help me????

Sergio:

mak in woojwli' jajaja

I don't know hahaha

Adrián:

es maya? K chido eh!

is it Maya? How nice eh!

Sergio:

jajajja asi es amigo jajajja

hahaha that's right my friend hahaha

Adrián:

Mi admiracion para las personas k ablan ese lenguaje tan chingon! Nta camarada.

My admiration for those people who speak such a cool language! Cool comrade.

Sergio:

jjajaja gracias se agradece krnal jejeje

Hahaha thanks it is appreciated buddy hehehe

Blanca:

y tambien

Me too

Blanca:

Sergio, a'alti' a amigo ka u t'aan maya xan

Sergio, tell your friend to speak Maya too

Adrián:

jejeje k digiste?!! Presumiiiiida jeje ntc

Hehehe what did you say?!! Viiiiin hehe jk

Sergio:

Dice mi amiga Blanca que tambien hables maya jajajaja

My friend Blanca says that you should speak Maya too

(Cru 2015: 288)

Like Facebook, the Chinese social media site QQ can serve as an informal way for minority-language speakers to interact with each other. For example, in China urban migrant speakers of Wa (an Austroasiatic minority language with around 900,000 speakers in China, Myanmar, and Thailand) are able to use texting and blogging on QQ to voice their views of the dominant Chinese language and challenge accepted language hierarchies (Liu 2015: 337). The existence of QQ can help combat Wa speakers' perceptions of themselves as second-class citizens due to their relative unfamiliarity with Chinese by giving them a space to exchange their experiences in their own language. Sub-groups on QQ called *laoxiang* (literally 'co-ethnics' or 'fellow villagers' who come from the same homeland regions or provinces) help to create a sense of community far away from the Wa region, and indeed can even mobilise fights for labour rights (Liu 2015: 344). In addition, Liu (2015: 346) points out that QQ gives migrant Wa speakers the opportunity to make use of their newly acquired literacy in Chinese characters by adapting them for writing in their own language, which does not have a standardised orthography.

The experience of being a fluent and competent speaker of one's own Wa language and then migrating to the city and being regarded as lacking *wenhua* 'culture', as well as the rural/urban, migrant/elite, and spoken/written dichotomies, are evident in the following translated quote from Liu's data:

I experienced it. Urban residents looked down on me since I did not know how to write my Chinese names properly even though I received education at an elementary school in the past. Without competence in writing standard Chinese, I am like someone who has not received any Chinese education. There are a lot of places in which I need to know how to write standard Chinese [referring primarily to online networking]. I feel bad about my lack of competence in written Chinese. Living in the city as a minority worker is different than my experience living in Wa communities where I can speak my native language and do not need to use Chinese writing in communication. I am not good at Chinese writing.

(Liu 2015: 341)

In contrast to the relatively extensive study of Facebook and similar sites like QQ, there has been less research conducted into the use of minority- and endangered-language groups, conversations, and memes conducted via encrypted private messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Signal, and Telegram. Research into such platforms is rendered difficult by the fact that they are by nature inaccessible to the public, but is a desideratum because it would be instructive to see how they contribute to endangered- and minority-language networking.

10.3.5 Popular culture through memes

A common feature of Facebook (as well as other social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram) involves the sharing of memes, namely images or videos accompanied by humorous text snippets (Shifman 2014). Among the wide variety of societal functions that memes serve, they can be used for political purposes,

and are known to be a means of expressing sometimes even extreme political views (e.g. DeCook 2018). As in the case of YouTube and internet forums, Indigenous peoples have used memes to express post-colonial resistance, for instance in Australia (Frazer & Carlson 2017; Welcome to the Country²).

Memes can also be harnessed more specifically in the service of endangered-language revitalisation efforts. A prominent example of this is the Mother Language Meme Challenge inspired by UNESCO's International Mother Tongue Day and coordinated by Rising Voices, the Living Tongues Institute, First Peoples' Cultural Council, Indigenous Tweets, Endangered Languages Project, First Languages Australia, and the Digital Language Diversity Project.³ The campaign page contains instructions on how to create a meme, how to upload it on social media, how to tag it, and how to challenge others to share it and create their own memes in turn. Many minority- and endangered-language communities accepted the challenge, and the memes they produced serve to raise awareness of and popularise the languages in question, particularly among younger speakers who often share memes on a regular basis. One of the ways in which they accomplish this is by associating the minority language in question with trendiness and global youth culture through utilisation of popular pre-existing meme imagery well known from majority-language contexts.

For example, one of the Basque memes created as part of the challenge utilises a widespread GIF and meme image of a brain,⁴ thereby explicitly forging associations between Basque and popular global meme culture and implicitly linking the language with 21st-century concepts of hip and trendy communication. Similarly, Guernésiais memes created as part of the challenge link the language to global popular culture by combining classic Star Wars images with the text 'May the Force be with you' in Guernésiais.⁵

A systematic study of the outcome of the UNESCO Meme Challenge remains to be conducted and would be enlightening as the project is likely to have increased the amount of Indigenous and endangered-languages content online.

10.3.6 *Collective identities in podcasts*

Podcasts enable creators to produce online audio content directly without needing to involve national or commercial radio stations in the process (similarly to YouTube in the case of video production). As Florini (2017) has argued, podcasts can serve as a way to combat the dominant neoliberal focus on the individual by enabling a networked collective identity, including in minority contexts. For example, the podcast TWiB! (This Week in Blackness!) included a discussion of George Zimmerman's acquittal for fatally shooting the unarmed Black 16-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012, in which listeners could call in and contribute to shaping the discourse in a process that can be classified as 'collective meaning-making' (Florini 2017: 447). As in the case of other types of new media discussed earlier, podcasts have also been used in language learning, and student-produced podcasts are an excellent way to encourage collaborative learning, improve productive skills, and develop transferrable skills (e.g. Phillips 2017).

Aspects of these broader themes can be identified within the podcasts produced in minority- and endangered-language settings. For example, there are numerous podcasts produced partly or wholly in the Māori language and/or focusing specifically on issues of relevance to Māori listeners. Such podcasts are devoted to a wide range of topics including business, Christianity, history, science, folklore, and the arts, all from a Māori perspective. One such podcast, the (predominantly English-medium) programme *A Year in the Life of a Māori Medical Student*, whose angle is ‘What’s it like to work in a system that doesn’t do right by your own people?’, won a recent podcasting award. Further examples of the diversity of Māori podcasts can be seen in Table 10.1, which includes a selection covering topics such as language learning and language reclamation journeys (as in the case of Twitter, discussed earlier), aspects of Māori identity, values, and culture, and contemporary issues in Māori life. Many of these podcasts embrace bi-/multilingualism, which (as with YouTube and Twitter) makes them accessible to heritage speakers and other learners of Māori, thereby broadening their potential audience and making it easier for people to incorporate the Māori language into their everyday routine.

The Meänkieli language in Sweden can serve as another case study of podcast-mediated collective identity. Meänkieli podcasts are produced by the national Swedish radio and, like many of the Māori podcasts, are bilingual. An example is the show *Kielestä kiini/Det handlar om språket* ‘It’s about language’, which

TABLE 10.1 A selection of Maori podcasts

<i>Name</i>	<i>Blurb⁶</i>
Te Ahi Kaa	The philosophy of Te Ahi Kaa is to reflect the diversity of Māori in the past, present and future. While bilingual in delivery, the programme incorporates Māori practices and values in its content, format and presentation
Back to Kura	We are two Māori millennials who are taking a year off work to undergo a one year full immersion Te Reo Māori course at the renown Te Wānanga Takiura. Join us as we share our journey of reclaiming our identity
The Everday Māori	Helping you to learn and speak everyday Māori, every day. Hei āwhina i a koe ki te ako me te kōrero i te reo Māori o ia rā, i ia rā.
Kōrerorero	A bilingual podcast for learners and enthusiasts of Te Reo Māori.
Māori Initiatives	On Māori Initiatives guests share influencing factors that contributed to te ira tangata (improved quality of life) in their lives, whanau and mahi, including how they learned to handle life’s challenges

focuses on various features of the Meänkieli language.⁷ Listeners can call in and speak either Meänkieli or Swedish. The topics have varied from language reclamation and learning to sport, humour, animal names, weather, and food. Another minority-language podcast-related project currently in production in Northern Sweden is Storydox, which will invite people to tell stories in Meänkieli and the various varieties of Sámi spoken in the country. This project serves not only to affirm the identity of endangered-language speakers, but also encourages speakers and listeners to use it more widely, and heightens the visibility of Meänkieli and of Sámi varieties in mainstream Swedish media.

10.3.7 Modernity and language learning in video games

Interactive video games played on PCs, or with different consoles such as PlayStation and Xbox, are an excellent way to learn English, the international language of gaming. For example, Zheng and colleagues (2015) studied vocabulary learning in *World of Warcraft*, a massive quest-based role-playing game, and found that learners gained a solid acquisition of vocabulary items relating to the quests. Similarly, Ranalli (2008) studied the authentic life-simulation game *The Sims* as a language learning tool and found that it could be used successfully in this capacity, particularly if the game-playing was accompanied by supplementary materials and exercises. These findings are supported by Chen and colleagues' (2021) recent study on vocabulary learning with the help of adventure games.⁸

As this research indicates, the potential of video games in language learning for minority- and endangered-language communities is great, but this potential has yet to be comprehensively realised. For example, Fernández-Costales (2018) criticises the lack of video game localisation into minority and regional languages of Spain, such as Basque, Catalan, Valencian, and Galician, drawing attention to the mismatch between the market-driven localisation choices of gaming companies and the European Union's focus on linguistic diversity and minority languages. Similarly, Rami Ismail, co-founder of the gaming studio Vlambeer, lambasts the gaming industry's reliance on English (Ismail 2015), stating that 'as video games as a medium becomes more globalized, our shortcomings in the department of understanding and supporting non-Western languages becomes increasingly obvious and painful'.

However, there are recent signs that this status quo may be starting to change. 2018 saw the release of two minority-language video games, a Breton version of the futuristic shooter game *Steredenn*⁹ and a Corsican version of the fantasy adventure game *Winterfall*.¹⁰ The translator of *Steredenn*, computer engineer Gwenn Meynier sums up the significance of being able to use minority languages in all areas of life, including gaming and other hobbies, saying:

'I want my computer and my games to speak to me in Breton. . . . When the game was announced, I questioned its name, which means star in Breton, so I offered to run with the idea and translate it. The developers had thought about it but as they didn't know any Breton speakers, they didn't go any further.'

(Berhouet 2018)

Meynier's comments also highlight the fact that the translation of video games into minority languages can often run aground as a result of obstacles not experienced in minority language contexts, such as difficulty on the part of developers accessing contacts in the community. The case of *Steredenn* illustrates the point that in many cases, a game's translation into a given minority or endangered language is not the result of corporate localisation plans but rather is ascribable to lucky coincidence and the determination of a single person combined with the willingness of the developers to support the endeavour.

An important aspect of video game development in minority and endangered languages is the fact that it serves as an effective way of creating neologisms. As in the case of memes, the existence of video games and the concomitant terminology in minority and endangered languages shows the younger generation that these languages are compatible with 21st-century life rather than relics of a bygone age. Meynier gives some insight into the creation of new gaming terminology in Breton:

'We have to experiment and see what works, or doesn't. For me it's a breath of fresh air, it's much more interesting to translate than error messages!' In Breton a 'boss' becomes 'enebour-meur' (which could be translated as 'great enemy') or 'pennenebour' (main enemy).

(Berhouet 2018)

Professional designers and translators are not the only stakeholders engaged in promoting the use of minority and endangered languages in the gaming world. The interactive streaming platform Twitch has in recent years become a global locus of grassroots minority- and endangered-language use. An important example of this phenomenon is the ongoing struggle by minority-language Twitch users to lobby the platform to include tags that would allow them to accurately label the medium of their streams. While Twitch streams in English, Spanish, German, and other majority languages can be labelled as such, allowing users to find them easily, many minority languages lack specific tags and streamers are forced to classify them as 'Other', making them difficult to locate (Sinclair 2021). In May 2021 Twitch added a number of minority languages, such as Catalan, to its list of tagging options, but other languages including Basque, Gaelic, and Galician, still lack tags, and users continue to fight for their recognition (Sinclair 2021).

Many minority- and endangered-language gamers all over the world actively choose to stream in their language despite the possibility that they would have larger audiences if they used a more dominant language instead. For example, Outakoski and colleagues (2018: 24–25) have written about Sámi gamers posting their play-throughs with Sámi-language commentary of popular games like Minecraft on YouTube, rather than in a majority language. Many minority- and endangered-language speakers view the act of streaming in their language as a form of activism and a powerful expression of their cultural identity. These individuals are not driven by financial gain but by their love of the language, and their efforts can play an important role in ensuring that minority and endangered

languages are extended over a greater range of domains than in the past, thereby enhancing the perception of their viability as a vehicle for communication in 21st-century life. As a Basque user of Twitch notes:

‘I believe that at the end of the day, all of us who create content in Basque are [activists]. . . . For many of us, the relationship we have with our mother tongue is fundamental for us when it comes to enjoying what we do.’

(Sinclair 2021)

Similarly, the Māori streamer Rangiora explains the importance of using Māori on Twitch within the context of decolonising and language reclamation:

‘I don’t stream entirely in Māori, but I try to share some knowledge such as having Māori word of the week or Māori phrase or saying as something viewers can redeem with their channel points. Hopefully we can inspire more people to speak [the language] because I’m aware that a lot of Māori [people] aren’t confident due to colonization and the suppression in the past. I feel as if people are learning something every time I stream as we try to normalize Māori in this space.’

(Sinclair 2021)

This sentiment is shared by the Welsh-language streamer Morgan, who echoes Rangiora’s desire to be able to use the minority language in all contexts, including online:

‘I feel it’s important to be able to express yourself in the language you feel most comfortable. For Welsh as a language to grow quicker, there has to be a space for people to do everything in Welsh and this includes the digital realm.’

(Sinclair 2021)

While most minority- and endangered-language video game production is designed specifically for the communities in question, in some recent cases endangered languages have actually been incorporated into games intended for more general audiences. For example, the serial stealth action-adventure role-playing game *Assassin’s Creed* (more specifically the 2012 instalment *Assassin’s Creed III* and the 2020 instalment *Assassin’s Creed: Valhalla*) contains Mohawk characters, as well as (untranslated) dialogue and a story in Mohawk, which were produced by the gaming company Ubisoft with consultation from the Montreal Kanien’kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa Language and Cultural Center (Newman 2012; Venables 2012). As is typical of new media, the launch of *Assassin’s Creed* with its untranslated Mohawk-language portions led to interactive engagement by users: fans of the game were inspired to translate the Mohawk dialogue (with the help of the Kanien’kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa Language and Cultural Center that had participated in its creation) and to post it on YouTube (Stanton 2021). *Assassin’s Creed* demonstrates the

potential power of video games vis-à-vis minority- and endangered-language revitalisation in that it introduces millions of players to the Mohawk language and may indeed inspire some of them to explore it further and decide to learn it, as well as teaching the general gaming public about Native American history and traditions.

10.4 Summary and conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that new media have a wide variety of applications in minority- and endangered-language contexts extending far beyond the basic function of language teaching. The case studies have highlighted a number of salient points regarding the uses of minority and endangered languages in new media and their significance both to the language communities themselves and to outsiders. First, certain types of new media such as video games can enrich the languages themselves by acting as a conduit facilitating the creation of neologisms. Second, social media and gaming platforms can be used effectively to create global grassroots language-based communities. Third, online forums can serve as safe and accessible loci of opposition, both to hostile states and to more conservative elements of the language community itself. Fourth, social media, memes, podcasts, and video games can have a potent symbolic value, helping users to express their linguistic and cultural identity while helping to raise the languages' status and prestige. Fifth, the existence of popular digital media such as memes and video games in minority and endangered languages can help younger users connect to their heritage and appreciate their relevance in the contemporary world; concurrently, they contribute to the languages' vitality by introducing them to new domains. Sixth, new media such as YouTube and Twitter, with their widespread global popularity, can provide an excellent platform for language-based activism and for raising awareness of minority and endangered languages. Likewise, they can serve to challenge stereotypes and provide a more nuanced picture of the communities in question. Thus, the case studies discussed in this chapter highlight the fact that, while new media are often regarded as hastening the destruction of minority and endangered languages, they can actually act as a powerful, user-generated tool which supports speaker agency and can guarantee a bottom-up process of revitalisation.

Notes

- 1 *Munbar* is the Uyghur word for an online discussion forum.
- 2 www.welcometocountry.org/top-50-aboriginal-resistance-memes/.
- 3 <https://mememotherlanguage.wordpress.com/>, also <https://rising.globalvoices.org/blog/2018/03/06/the-mother-language-meme-challenge-2018-highlighted-the-internets-amazing-linguistic-diversity/>.
- 4 www.ekogunea.eus/es/ekogunea/noticias/nos-unimos-al-reto-de-memes-en-lengua-materna-en-kutxa-ekogunea/5-13-0-737/.
- 5 <https://rising.globalvoices.org/blog/2018/03/02/creating-memes-in-the-guernesiais-language-to-join-the-big-friendly-family-of-tiny-languages/>.
- 6 <https://player.fm/podcasts/Maori>.
- 7 <https://sverigesradio.se/grupp/26095>.

- 8 Video games have even been developed specifically as language-learning tools (e.g. Bado 2014; Alavesa & Arhippainen 2020), but the present study will not focus on this type of product.
- 9 <https://pixelnest.io/presskit/steredenn-binary-stars/>.
- 10 www.winterfallgame.com/.

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11

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF CHANGE IN ENDANGERED LANGUAGES WITH SOME REFERENCE TO ARBËRESH AND ARVANITIKA

Eda Derhemi

Introduction

At this point in human history, language death typically occurs as a gradual and not a sudden process, and language contact is the necessary environment for it. The most common type of language death today is not abrupt, and the one most critical case of language variation is the gradual shift to the dominant language(-s) in a contact situation. Wolfram (2004: 765)¹ has a different perspective on what he calls “abrupt” change, but it is simply a terminological mismatch. Rapid language change is a typical characteristic of the phase of advanced endangerment during language contact,² and it grows wider as its vitality diminishes. But language contact per se and the natural phenomena that develop with it are not automatically the cause of the endangerment. Throughout history, languages in contact have exchanged linguistic material such that they contain features of the languages with which they are in contact. Contact between and among languages has been the norm for most of human history, often producing as an outcome a steady phenomenon of “flourishing bilingualism and multilingualism” (Thomason, 2015: 63) or a “coexistence without confrontation” of “languages seen as complementary” (Crystal, 2000: 80–81). In spite of this relative stability often consisting of a diglossic arrangement, today, languages vanish in unprecedented numbers for reasons that relate to drastic changes in the ecosystems in which they have been functioning for centuries due to fast changes in the global conditions and often owing to institutional neglect or even resentment of minoritized languages or planning of their deaths.³ Bradley and Bradley (2019: 32) examine different studies that calculate the rapid extinction rates of recent times. According to one of these studies, that by Harmon and Loh (2010), it is estimated that there has been a 20% decrease of the world’s languages in the last 35 years with the highest rates after 1988.

Unusual in speed and quantity is also the change that these languages undergo under the pressure of the increasing use of the dominant contact language(s). Although the research community is largely unified around the fact that language

diversity has drastically been reduced (Crystal, 2000: 68–70), there is a spectrum of interpretations of these changes and of strategies proposed for how to accommodate community wishes for language maintenance under the pressure of the change. Another point behind which the academic community is mostly unified is that the maintenance of linguistic diversity, and the practice of multilingualism as a norm, remain important goals towards a better future for humanity⁴ (Grenoble and Whaley, 1998: 161–234; Nettle and Romaine, 2000: 50–78, 190; Austin and Sallabank, 2011: 10–11; Grenoble, 2011: 28–29; He, 2021: 20).

However, the research community is less unified on how to interpret the changes that occur in this last phase: are those changes signs of linguistic decay of a system falling apart, or simply new strategies developed by speakers of a living language? And is there any space at all for linguists to give their opinions on how incoming language varieties are “better” than others, thus seemingly acting as judges of legitimacy? Most research provides evidence that this kind of change is menacing to language prospects.

It is not clear how linguistic maintenance and reclamation would be advanced by simply saying all is well on the language endangerment front – just speak the language as you like, and write it as you like as well – when we are faced with increasing evidence that the languages under discussion are not in fact being spoken and written. If what for many decades we have called “language attrition” is just a normal natural process of language change, and if any mixing, loss and structural simplification is acceptable, then in fact we are denying the existence of language endangerment. This does not help the communities and their languages in any way. The idea that a language that has lost its traditional lexical fund and structural features is not as good as the original one originates among the communities themselves. And when we as “specialists” claim to empower the communities by legitimizing any development of the endangered language through change, aren’t we in fact using our authority to decide how communities should evaluate *their* language? It is over-confidence on the part of us researchers to think that there will be an effect on linguistic endangerment if we change the terminology, and, instead of attrition, reduction and shrinkage, start using innovation, elaboration and strategic creativity. I also believe that it is a condescending, even patronizing attitude towards communities of speakers, to offer them “sweeter” metaphoric terms like “sleeping languages”, instead of “extinct”, “dying” or “moribund”.⁵

Finally, it is important to consider research claims that a language undergoing changes could give birth to typological developments that are not consistent with the retention of the original language. The research should also recognize the importance of the perceptions among the communities of speakers of what is a “good” and “bad” change, and their sense of whether the changed language is the same or different from what they consider “their” language. Issues of identity maintenance and those of language maintenance are to be seen in their complex relations. Furthermore, cases of endangered languages, despite the existence of some universal parallels, are intrinsically related to particular conditions and subjectivities at the local level, and therefore difficult to be generalized and applied to large scales. Caution in generalizing, and attention to the situation on the ground,

remain the best way forward, especially where revitalization efforts are being planned.

In the sections titled ‘Changes among endangered languages seen as a threat to the former language’ and ‘Changes within endangered languages seen as a normal or positive development’ I discuss the main positions on language change from both sides. Then, in the section titled ‘Endangered language change in action: shaken accusative definite singular marker of Arbëresh’, I present two contrastive situations of endangered language use, that of Arvanitika and Arbëresh, and analyze data about structural change and loss of the phenomenon of case oppositions in Arbëresh nouns among young speakers. Finally, I discuss some implications of structural change and variation for endangered languages and outline future research steps.

Changes among endangered languages seen as a threat to the former language

The process by which languages move from safe to extinct is formally and schematically outlined and traced with the use of scales that serve to measure the level of vitality/ endangerment of a certain language at a certain point in time, with the main ones being the UNESCO scale (Moseley, 2010) and the EGIDS (Lewis and Simons, 2010).⁶ But when it comes to planning the efforts to maintain or revitalize a language, there is an immediate need for studies that focus on the particular endangered language and that closely examine the changes that have occurred in its development. Crystal (2000) describes this process clearly in terms of action and interaction between and among languages. He identifies three main stages: the first stage being an “immense pressure . . . to speak the dominant language”, the second “emerging bilingualism” as speakers increase their competence in the dominant language while maintaining that of their native language and the third one that of a definite shift, in which the speakers fulfill their needs with the dominant language rather than their own (78–79). For Crystal in this last stage the dominant language “infiltrates everywhere” (78). He concludes that “Within a generation – sometimes even within a decade – a healthy bilingualism . . . can slip into a self-conscious semilingualism, and thence into a monolingualism which places that language one step nearer to extinction” (99).

For Crystal the third stage is usually too late to intervene to maintain the endangered language, therefore the chance for progress is if the intervention occurs in the phase of “emergent bilingualism”. But as explained previously this phase could be very brief, and the period of heavy infiltration of the dominant language and of semilingualism – to use Crystal’s terms – often takes over before anything can be done. This is the period in which the shifting-down language undergoes change, not only in its use and functions, but also in its grammatical system. The ways in which different linguists interpret the changes taking place at this stage are fundamental for the future of endangered languages, because that interpretation is the basis of ensuing actions that directly affect speakers and languages. A key issue here is to distinguish the universal change that all languages go through from the unusual change that the endangered languages undergo.

Most researchers recognize the unusual nature of such change, which shows in the terminology used to describe it. Bradley and Bradley (2019: 161) admit that such change is “extremely rapid” during the last process of shift, as the language is used by semi-speakers. O’Shannessy (2011: 94) characterizes these changes as “radical contact-induced changes” and maintains that they result in great differences within a language. Palosaari and Campbell (2011: 111–117), as they discuss phonetic, morphological and syntactic change within endangered languages, distinguish these changes from the normal ones, focusing on the “accelerated rate of change” in endangered languages, the “imperfect learning” parallel to them, and the occurrence of a rampant individual free variation during the obsolescing phase. They think that obsolescence phenomena of change have such a great impact on the structure of a language, that obsolescence has serious implications for language typology. Myers-Scotton (1998), the author who provides one of the main explanatory systems to account for structural changes in situation of language mixing – that of the “Matrix Language Frame Model” – explicitly excludes language attrition cases from the language contact phenomena under observation, that is those cases caused by the “lack of proficiency of the speakers” (297–298). She claims that languages can sustain structural incursions and still remain robust, but “certainly not to the speech of final fluent speakers” (289). Describing an even more extreme linguistic state of endangered languages, Thomason (2015: 65) talks about a third category of language death caused by language change:

Languages die when the speakers die or they are lost to the dominant language or languages. But there is another way: language death by complete replacement of its grammar or of large-scale lexicon borrowings from a dominant language. The borrowings are continuous until little or nothing is left from the original language. There is a point in this process when the heritage language has been absorbed by the dominant one.

Thomason brings examples from case studies in the field of linguistic endangerment, like that of Laha, an Austronesian language spoken in Indonesia, which has absorbed all of Ambonese Malay grammar, but has maintained its native lexicon. This adaptability in the Laha is praised as the cause of its survival. But Thomason adds: “this means that Laha itself, as a whole language passed down from generation to generation, is dead; . . . only its lexicon is now transmitted to younger generations”. Then she gives a different situation, that of Votic, a language of the Finnish branch of the Uralic family which has been infiltrated by a closely related language Ižora (or Ingrian): its words and grammar slowly but preponderantly made their way to Votic. The language of Vots is no longer Votic. Thomason confesses that these two cases refer to closely related languages, but she adds the case of the Ma’a language of Tanzania which, until the 1930s, had grammatical features of a non-Bantu language, and had inherited a non-Bantu vocabulary, but is now assimilated into the dominant Bantu-group with only a few traces of vocabulary left. “Ma’a is now essentially dead” concludes Thomason. “A language can vanish by turning into another language” (65).

In my experience based on extended fieldwork and observations in many communities of the endangered Arbëresh in Italy and Arvanitika in Greece, the massive and radical lexical and grammatical changes discussed by the aforementioned authors are not random, but systematic, and do not take place as “linguistic wars”. These changes happen every hour, every day as the language is used less and less, but still holds on. It is a change characterized by the formation, also mentioned, of different categories of speakers with regard to language knowledge and proficiency as a continuum from, usually, older speakers that might still be fully fluent, to the semi-speakers and semi-learners, to finally those who, because of lack of use, completely lost what they had acquired, or never learned the language. The changes of the original language, whether shaped as interference by the dominant language or as disintegration of the system itself, occur only when use of the shifting language shrinks significantly across functions, as does the frequency of use in each speaker’s repertoire. Bradley and Bradley (2019: 100–102) while making a case, when describing the loss of language skills among endangered language speakers, for the use of a more neutral terminology (less negative than the term “attrition” or “loss”), consider this “decrease in language ability in a formerly spoken language due to long-term non-use” as a process of “deacquisition”,⁷ hence language death is viewed as the mirror image of language acquisition rather than the more straightforwardly “regression”. And finally, Palosaari and Cambell (2011: 110) similarly explain that the lack of use brings change among endangered languages: “when a language gradually comes to have fewer and fewer speakers who use it in ever fewer domains until finally no one is able to speak it in any context”. According to them, this shift and structural changes can have important implications for the former language typology; even total extinction can result from the shift.

All the theoretical findings discussed earlier underline the abnormality in quantity and speed of language change among endangered language communities, and consider these changes as closely related to language loss, at least what is perceived as loss of the original language under discussion. O’Shannessy⁸ (2011: 95) though, brings cases from Native American languages (in contact with English) that do not demonstrate any changes in lexicon or structure, but where such change has occurred in the process of use, since these languages are severely endangered or even extinct. This is a situation that I too have observed in some Greek villages in which Arvanitika transmission has been completely interrupted, and language use in the community is non-existent, but one can still find old speakers that have maintained a structurally pristine language (Derhemi, 2022). These situations cannot fail to remind us of Dorian’s (1978: 606) famous assessment that the East Sutherland Gaelic was dying with its morphological boots on. There are different cases reported of languages that, for different reasons related to language typology or extra-linguistic situations, resist interference from the other languages, or at least resist for some time. However, most of the reported cases, as demonstrated in this chapter, show vigorous changes, not just in language use but in the language system as well.

As seen previously, contact-induced language change in stages of advanced endangerment is treated as evidence of loss, and not of a normal linguistic

development characteristic of every language. Although many linguists have found unusual linguistic variability, and not just unusual change, the claims about unsystematic variability have been challenged by Wolfram (2004: 780–781), whose conclusion I quote next:

Although a number of researchers seem to hold the view that variability in language death is different from that found in ordinary language change, there is little empirical evidence to support this contention. The profusion of variation may simply be a product of the extent and rapidity of language change. In a situation where change is simultaneously affecting many different structures within the system in a compressed time frame, there will be many more items undergoing variation, thus giving the appearance that change is chaotic and incongruent.

I have written about unsystematic variability in the phonetic, phonologic and morphologic levels of Arbëresh (Derhemi, 2002, 2006), but, as Wolfram maintains, we need more data from more cases to be able to generalize about what I believe to be a rampant variability in the phases of advanced language attrition. In an extensive account of the Arbëresh language (Derhemi, 2002), I underline the circular effect that the diminishing of language use and that of language change (as “attrition”) have on each other, thus creating a cycle in which they reinforce each other. Even if it were true that change in situations of endangerment was of the same nature as in unthreatened languages, this circular process that is as natural as change itself should not be denied, because quantity in this case means quality, hence eventual language loss.

Changes within endangered languages seen as a normal or positive development

In the second section I argued that most researchers seem to agree on the connections between change and attrition.⁹ But it is also evident that every change is a demonstration that the language is still functional (or “alive”), and each change has the potential to be transformed into a feature resistant to extinction, or into a coping mechanism that assures continuous use of the endangered language. This is the linguistic basis of a growing tendency among linguists to be more flexible towards the nature and role of change among endangered languages. But most of the authors that embrace change as a coping phenomenon, assume that those who do not are purists. This can be shown to be false in almost every case, since the same linguists that admit the decay of endangered languages are strong opponents of linguistic purism. Thomason (2001: 230), who maintains that language attrition (or decay) is the type of change to be “exclusively related to endangered languages”, is also one of the staunchest (2020) supporters of the existence of speakers’ deliberate changes that can result in “mixed languages”, which for her are possible real languages – an impossible claim for purists. The spectrum of positions that lie between those who think of “change as good” and “change as

bad” is much wider than just the two extremes, and is often nuanced and conditioned by the different situations in which endangered languages are found.

Crystal (2000: 116–117) argues that speakers of endangered languages must accept that change at all linguistic levels is going to occur and “alien” elements are going to infiltrate their language whether they like it or not. His idea is that this way, the endangered language might expand by assimilating new forms. Nonetheless, the community could still maintain the old and respected language of literature or of older speakers. But Crystal advises flexibility and inclusivity towards variation in order not to alienate younger speakers. He warns against purism if it is “condemnatory” as the worst scenario for language survival. Crystal does not explicitly mention which kind of changes he is referring to, but it seems very likely he has in mind lexical changes, although the statement could be true of other linguistic levels as well.

Tsunoda (2006: 116), after analyzing change in endangered languages at different structural levels, maintains that “most of the changes are in the nature of simplification or reduction”. Then he adds that such changes make the endangered languages similar in some regards to pidgins. But some languages may even maintain their morphological complexities or exhibit innovations. Nonetheless, he concludes (although without certainty), that their changes “seem normal”, “ordinary, just speeded up”. But if these changes make an endangered language resemble a pidgin, they cannot be “normal”. Furthermore, “speeded up” changes depend on the speed: they could be unnoticeable or could completely shake language stability and its main functions in the community. So the discourse of “normality” is, in the best scenario, still an incomplete analysis.

However, there is also another view, with less support from the field, that “complexification”, the opposite of simplification/reduction/decay, is what is going on in endangered languages (Olko and Sallabank, 2021: 63). Although they do not present data to support the claim that this process is widespread, both Sallabank (for over a decade) and Olko (more recently) maintain that decay and reduction are misconceptions that come from conservative and patronizing attitudes of researchers. For them reduction occurs not in the language systems, but in individual speakers’ proficiencies. This position is contradictory, because the massive reduction of single proficiencies will certainly result in the attrition of the whole language, since the language does not have a life apart from its speakers. However, there is a good reason underlying this position, which is clear in the rhetorical question Sallabank (2013: 132) asks: is it “better to retain at least part of a language in use (or to let it evolve), or to let it die ‘with its morphological boots on?’” A question formulated this way gives no choice but to say “let it evolve”, whatever “evolve” means. And this takes us back to the main questions: what kind of changes are those that typically occur among endangered languages, *normal* or *abnormal*? Does the excessive speed of change (even in one generation) affect the linguistic system differently from a slow change (occurring over many centuries)? And if “evolve” means becoming a language different from what the speakers recognize as a marker of their identity, then how does it help in preserving the endangered language?

Issues of “authenticity” and “correctness” have always been discussed in relation to change in endangered languages: what is real and what isn’t? What is right and what is wrong? Sallabank (2013: 125) sees the claim of authentic variety by the older generation as something that will pass with time, because every generation will eventually age as endangered languages change, and younger generations that are not owners of authenticity today will become so tomorrow as they get older. But if there is no intervention at a certain point in time (and the best time is now), a rampant change will occur, not in centuries, but very probably in a few decades. It is true that in communities where the endangered languages are still in use in one or more domains, structural changes will develop as the language is increasingly less used. It is true that the change and mixing among younger generations show that the language is not yet dead, but no intervention will speed up rather than delay language death. I do not see how this approach can help linguistic maintenance and diversity. The intentions behind it are positive, and its aspirations to empower the community and decolonize the research are commendable. But what can be achieved with them? In the end, by claiming that the changes (reduction and loss) that occur in the system while the intergenerational linguistic transmission rapidly deteriorates, are not signs of linguistic attrition, endangerment itself is denied. Considering any linguistic change in the system as positive will just speed up language death, because unusually rapid change lowers the expressive power of the endangered language and gives more space to the dominant language in everyday use. Raising the alarm about changes in language use among the speakers could be empowering as well, especially if the same attitude is shared by a majority of community members, including the younger ones who aspire to maintain the language as it was, not as it is.

Finally, I would like to discuss “mixed languages”, one of the possible results of language contact that Olko and Sallabank (2021: 63) see as a positive evolutive change that could help endangered language maintenance. “Radical contact-induced changes” have been examined by O’Shannessy (2011). She lists as such the pidgins, creoles and bilingual mixed languages, and views these products of “dramatic change” as “new languages” (84). She also sees the “source”¹⁰ language as possibly endangered as soon as such new forms are created. In other words, once these varieties are formed, the source language is even more endangered than it was before the qualitative change occurred. The author brings two cases, that of Light Warlpiri and of Gurindji-Kriol, which show that a mixed language can be born from the conventionalization of code-switching. For O’Shannessy the mixed bilingual language represents at least a “partial maintenance of the endangered language” (86). But this is the exact opposite of the argument the author made before: is the source language more endangered, or less, once the “mixed” language is born? The proposal that “a new way of speaking may be a threat to the traditional languages, but can also be seen as a form of language maintenance” (94) does not stand up to scientific scrutiny. However, the author accurately underlines the importance of the speakers’ perception of the language and the changes. In deciding whether two languages are different or not, speakers’ attitudes and perceptions are important, and for mixed languages the speakers’ attitudes bear weight as well. The way speakers of a language identify with it and

whether they do or not is important and should be recorded, but it cannot interfere with the study of linguistic typology or analysis of the linguistic structure. Thomason's reasoning in Section titled 'Changes among endangered languages seen as a threat to the former language' that the transformed variety, after rapid change and interference from dominant languages, might no longer be the endangered language, which in fact may have died in the process, should be emphasized, especially when the community (older or younger members equally) see the change as threatening the core of their language. It is not the linguists' place to decide that the changed language means the old language was maintained, if the communities with endangered languages generally have a strong sense and metalinguistic awareness¹¹ of the effect of change. Pushing the speakers towards total acceptance of the changes that occur in the last phases of endangerment is not only against the wishes of at least part of the community, but it could kill the last chance for constructive resistance to loss.

Endangered language change in action: shaken accusative definite singular marker of Arbëresh

Trudgill and Tzavaras (1977: 177–178), claim that Arvanitis, the Arvanitika speakers of Greece, attempt to hide the fact that they speak Albanian and try to deliberately lose the language. Of 200 children between the ages of 5 and 14 who were asked whether it was an advantage or a disadvantage to speak Arvanitika, only 13 said that it was an advantage. Note that the question was: is it better or worse that you can speak this language? Only 13 among them said that it was an advantage to speak Arvanitika. The Arvanitika speakers of the generation described by Trudgill and Tzavaras are in their 60s today. They are the last generation in Greece that still knows Arvanitika, because from that time on, inter-generational linguistic transmission has been interrupted. The other issue with Arvanitika is that they know the language, but they do not use it, even in communication with each other. Among Arvanitis I have found speakers with fully intact linguistic competence, frozen in time and perfectly maintained in their brain; I have also found a layer of semi-speakers who never were able to learn it well but still today speak it to some degree; and, finally, semi-speakers who probably were able to speak it better in the past, but lost it due to lack of use (Derhemi, 2022). The first category, with fully maintained competence, includes the oldest speakers, usually above 75 years old. All these categories retain Arvanitika as a mental ability that for various sociolinguistic reasons is “condemned” to stay locked in their brain, never used in the normal functions of a language, not used as a code of special solidarity or even as a conspiratorial code. I speculate that it is precisely the lack of use in the community in a situation of a large spectrum of competence – which appears to have characterized its use in the 70s – that has kept the language in this pristine state among the elderly, with admirable phonological features, and remarkable maintenance of a system of full oppositions in noun cases, pronoun forms and verbal conjugations. But alas: who could make use of this dying gem, besides a small group of documentary linguists and a few linguists

that might be interested in psycholinguistic phenomena and structural universals that appear in this phase of language life cycle? The languages perform functional values and enrich communities only when they are used, not in their museal or shop-façade displays.

In complete contrast with my description of Arvanitika, are the sociolinguistic dynamics of Arbëresh use and attitudes towards it in Piana degli Albanesi (Sicily). In a 2001 survey that I conducted with Arbëresh between 15 and 65 years old from Piana degli Albanesi, 90 out of 100 participants claimed that they felt proud of being Arbëresh and not just Italian, six did not answer the question and only four said they would have preferred to be just Italian instead of Italo-Albanian (as the Arbëresh prefer to be called in Italy). The results of a survey at the beginning of the school year 2001 organized by the Piana school district, show 98% of first-grade children and their parents declared themselves in favor of Arbëresh instruction in school¹². This high level of language loyalty remains very strong even today among most members of this community, including the very young. The Arbëresh demonstrate an unusually positive attitude towards the language and their ethnicity, compared to many communities of speakers of dying languages. In addition (and also as a consequence), in Piana degli Albanesi, unlike the Greek villages with an Arvanitika-speaking history, the Arbëresh language is still used today for communication among older speakers, and even by a portion of young speakers. However, the language functions and domains are declining rapidly, in strong correlation with the speed of language change, instability in some of the grammatical categories, and variation (Sasse, 1990; Derhemi, 2002, 2003, 2006).

Next I examine the language used by Arbëresh children between 10 and 13 years old in a partial transcript from a recent video.¹³ I focus on the use of accusative case among young speakers, and then extrapolate to the maintenance of the category of case in Arbëresh, and the perspectives of language change there, in relation to the two main directions I discussed in the two previous sections. The use of the definite accusative noun case with its clear suffix markers (-n in singular and -t in plural), has been very stable among the speakers of Arbëresh till the recent decade. What adds to its markedness is its sharp difference from Italian, which lost the category of case early in its history, and additionally, in contrast with the postposed definite suffixes of Arbëresh, has a preposed definite article. Below I list all the textual instances produced by the children in the natural speech fragment captured in this video that are relevant to the accusative case, giving grammatical annotation only for the noun-phrase occurrences. The children are obviously answering specific questions asked of them in Arbëresh by the filmmaker, but we can only infer the nature of the questions, since they are not included in the video. In some cases, one part of the question is repeated in the children's answers.

In the transcriptions that follow, the first line shows the numbered segment from the sentence uttered in the video, which contains the relevant noun phrases (underlined), and the language in which the noun phrase was produced (Arb. for Arbëresh, It. for Italian, and Sic. for Sicilian). The second line consists of only the relevant noun phrases translated into English – here I mark the subjects of the phrases (Subj.) – hence they take nominative and not

accusative case. For the rest of the noun phrases, which include direct objects, prepositional phrases of accompaniment or adverbial noun phrases – which all require accusative case in Arbëresh – I give the grammatical annotations of the presence of accusative case markers (Acc.) or their absence (øAcc.) where they are missing. The third line shows the (rough) translation into English of the whole phrase.

I start the analysis of the noun cases by considering each noun phrase (NP) in each sentence, describing their language and case-marking, and then conclude on language change. The singular definite accusative noun is the only form that unambiguously shows the accusative marker -n. The plural or indefinite nouns, on the other hand, share the same markers in nominative and accusative case. The accusative -n is also much more frequent than the other distinct case marker “sh”, used to mark the ablative plural case, which appears to have been lost among younger speakers since my fieldwork in early 2000. Therefore, the weight that the definite singular accusative marker bears in children’s speech to evaluate the distinct use of accusative case and the maintenance of the category of case among them, is higher than the markers of other cases.

1	Però (It.),	A) <u>le maestre (It.)</u>	na lejën (Ar.)	B) <u>i compiti (It.)</u>
		the teachers (Subj.)		the homework (øAcc.)
However,		the teachers	gave us	the homework.

In sentence 1 there are two NPs, A and B, in which the speaker switched to Italian. This is to be expected since the use of these particular NPs is typical for the school domain where the exclusive language is Italian.

In sentence 2 the noun “frutin” has the accusative singular marker -n, and it is governed by the very frequently used Arbëresh verb “buj” (to do/make).¹⁴

2	<i>e ndihja të bujë</i>	<u>FRUTIN (Arb.)</u>
		the fruit (Acc.)

I helped him to do the fruit (I helped him to work _ the fruit garden)

3	<i>të guidarënj</i>	A) <u>u tratture (Sic.)</u>	e	B) <u>la macchina (It.)</u>
		the tractor (øAcc.)		the car (øAcc.)
	to drive	the tractor	and	the car

The same speaker who uses the accusative marker in sentence 2, switches to Sicilian and Italian respectively in 3A and 3B, after the verb “guidarënj”, a borrowing from Italian that has been well-integrated into Arbëresh verbal morphology. An older speaker would have said “traturin”, marking the noun for the number, definiteness and case categories of Arbëresh.

4	<u>Le maestre (It.)</u>	na lijën	<u>një LIBËR (Arb.)</u>	<i>t’e zgjidhnjëm</i>
	The teachers (Subj.)		a book (Indef. Acc.)	[Acc. proclitic pronoun]
	The teachers	gave us	a book	to read

In sentence 4 the NP is not a definite noun, so it provides no evidence on the maintenance of the “-n” marker, but the accusative indefinite is used correctly by the speaker.

- 5 *më mancarti* A) la nonna (It.), B) i nonni (It.), C) i familiari (It.)
 the grandma (Subj) the grandparents (Subj) the relatives (Subj.)
 I missed the grandma, the grandparents, the relatives

In sentence 5 the speaker switches to Italian for all the NPs, which however are of nominative case given the Italian construction with “ethical dative”. Our interest in this sentence is not in the accusative case, but in the frequency of switching to Italian (with the Italian preposed articles) without the occurrence of any grammatical marking from Arbëresh, even for NPs that are of frequent use in the family domain, like “grandma” and “grandparents”.

- 6 *Na rrijëm atentu, vëmë* A) la mascherina (It.) e B) i guanti (It.)
 the mask (øAcc.) the gloves (øAcc.)
 We are cautious, we wear the mask and the gloves

In sentence 6 the same phenomenon occurs: the NPs are used in Italian together with the preposed articles, and not marked as Arbëresh grammar requires. An older more proficient speaker would have said “mascherin-ën” and “guant-et”, marking the nouns with the Arbëresh desinences of accusative singular and plural respectively. There are two instances of me im vurra used by two children.

- 7 *Zura një skaj të luaj* me im vurra (Arb.)
 with my brother (possessive Nom.) (øAcc.)
 I started (a little) to play with my brother.
- 8 *Luaja* A) me TIME motra (Arb.), impastargna B) la pizza (It.), bëja C) le torte (It.)
 with my sisters (Acc.) the pizza (øAcc.) the cakes (øAcc.)
 D) me MËMËN (Arb.)
 with mom (Def. Acc.)
 I played with my sisters, kneaded the pizza dough, made cakes with (my) mom.

The NP “*im vurra*” of sentence 7 consists of a possessive pronoun + noun, and the accusative markers are carried by the preposed pronoun, which should have been “*tim*” in accusative, but it appears as “*im*” which is nominative case. In fact, the speaker of the first NP of sentence 8 uses the accusative correctly in a very similar situation. But the same speaker then switches to Italian for the NPs B and C, without marking them as Arbëresh requires, failing to use the accusative marker. Then the last NP “*me mëmën*” is correctly marked with the singular definite accusative marker -n. In sentence 9 another adjective + noun NP is used, where the adjective carries the accusative marker, expected in Arbëresh in this position. The NPs “*time motra*” (my sisters Acc.) and “*njatrën ditë*” (another day) could very well be

appear systematically during speech. The uses of these two cases could also be instances of word-by-word mirroring of the noun cases used as part of the uttered question asked by the adult competent speaker who has used those case markers in his questions. But it is impossible to claim this with certainty, since his question is not included in the video we are analyzing. In 15, there is also another clue that supports my doubt mentioned earlier: the preposition “*gjatë*” (during) could not be produced by the young speaker; it is typically produced in such NPs by Arbëresh speakers who are familiar with the Albanian standard, and it is very probable therefore that this instance of the use by the young speaker in the video was a mechanical transfer from the NP of the question asked by the adult speaker who is familiar with the written Albanian standard.

In the sentences 1–13 there are 24 NPs that should show the accusative Arbëresh noun case (if the model were a typical competent adult speaker). From these, 12 are expressed in Italian NPs, so the expression of Arbëresh case is blocked in each one of them. One instance is singular indefinite, one is in plural, three instances show the case marker on the adjective that precedes the noun and not on the noun itself and are used by the children in a more mechanical way as if they were phraseological expressions. There are, therefore, only seven definite singular nouns left that should have the accusative suffix at their end: noun 2, 8D, 10A, 11A, 12A and 13 A and B. Among these seven, there are three identical NPs that mean “with mom”, and two other identical NPs that mean “with dad”. The last two nouns that should be accusative are NP 2 (the fruit) and NP 13 A (with the bike). So among the seven individual accusative singular definite noun cases, three/four instances, *frutin*, *mëmën* (twice) and *biçikletën* are the only ones (among the 24 NPs transcribed) that still maintain the -n marker, while the other two/three instances – *me tata* (twice), *me mëma* – (closely the same amount of nouns that show maintenance) demonstrate attrition of the accusative marker. What is even more interesting for the study of language change is that there are inconsistencies in the use of the accusative marker by the same speaker.

Based on this discussion of the singular definite accusative marker, one of the strongest markers of the category of case in Arbëresh, there is no doubt that the category of case in the Arbëresh of Piana is weakened, but still alive. In addition, there are many instances in which case markers are lexicalized and have lost their grammatical load, especially among the young speakers. In this chapter I will not explore more extreme Arbëresh cases that show complete or almost complete attrition of the case functional oppositions, like the old locative which is still alive among older people but has completely disappeared among speakers under 40, or that of indefinite ablative plural – “*rrpucë gra-sh*” (women’s shoes) which, if ever occurring among young speakers, is lexicalized. The reduction and simplification in these two noun cases have taken place over a long stretch of time, and they do not have the high frequency, systematicity, markedness and functional load that the definite singular accusative case (for both masculine and feminine) has, as marked by the unique suffix -n, not shared by other noun cases. The way the use of this marker is declining among the young is fast and unpredictable, and points to the eventual loss of a core morpheme of the category of case in Arbëresh.

Conclusive notes

In order to reach sound conclusions concerning the state of attrition across the category of Arbëresh case and the vitality of each functional and formal opposition in it, an extended and more focused study is needed, with a much larger set of data and a larger and more representative sample of speakers in this community and in other Arbëresh settlements. The video on which the analysis was based represents a limited set of speakers: the most fluent ones in their limited age group. Based on my fieldwork observations, I expect the shrinking of this grammatical category among the young speakers to be more advanced than shown in this study. But the analysis is relevant to the main issue discussed in this chapter, that of language change in situations of linguistic endangerment and the attitudes towards the acceptance or rejection of the changed “incoming language” (O’Shannessy, 2011: 83) by the local community vs. the academic community.

I would be reluctant to consider the changes in the reduction of the case system in Arbëresh an innovation or normal language evolution, given the characteristics described earlier – a morphosyntactic loss “without resulting complications to make up for this loss” (Tsunoda, 2005: 101). I would also be reluctant to urge the whole community of speakers to look positively at such changes that are more obvious among the younger speakers, and to embrace these changes. I do not think this is a way to save the language. On the contrary, I agree with older speakers that an Arbëresh where the accusative case is gone is close to being an Arbëresh without cases. And I understand why they do not want to recognize the Arbëresh with no accusative marker as Arbëresh; it is not because they are purists or conservative, and not just because of some mystical power that the accusative marker holds, but because it symbolizes a complex collection of changes that advance language decay on all levels – especially due to the fact that the accusative case can still be saved from loss. At least in the community of Piana, there is still a chance to stop this change by guided planned use of NPs in higher frequencies in different domains employing diverse methods.

As seen in the 15-sentence sample, one coping mechanism used by the young speakers to maintain fluency is that of borrowing complete NPs from Italian. Borrowings are common in every language, and they have been common in Arbëresh from Italian and Sicilian, the closest languages in contact. In borrowings like those shown here, the NP material is not grammatically integrated in Arbëresh. The Arbëresh case system is absent in these switched NPs, and here, unlike the treatment of borrowings by the older speakers, the young speakers do not add the Arbëresh accusative markers to the Italian borrowed roots. So, instead of “traturi-n”, “pizë-n” or “nonë-n”, the grammatical structure of Sicilian and Italian is maintained: “u tratturi”, “la pizza” and “la nonna”. The need of speakers for lexical items (borrowings of nouns appear to be the most accelerated) and the use of full phrases in Italian, makes the use of Arbëresh case markers less common, and this loss of both lexical and grammatical elements leads to further decay. As these loss processes advance in a vicious circle, attrition advances in the language as a whole. This is why I am skeptical – at least for Arbëresh – of the proposal

that “mixed languages” or “mixed codes” (O’Shannessy, 2011: 85–86) can be a solution towards prevention or reverse of language loss.

After the research shown here, there are three further questions that need answers in the future:

- 1) Should school be the center of planning for the maintenance of Arbëresh, or are there better ways?¹⁵ 2) Is the standardization of an endangered language useful or even necessary for its survival? 3) How would the polycentric and polynomic standards (Drapeau, 2021; Jaffe, 2021) work in the case of Arbëresh? Even when these questions are fully answered, something of which every researcher should remind herself is that, especially in the case of linguistic endangerment, the complexities and stakes are so high, that the best path would be extreme caution with generalizations, which, if premature, could harm the cause of linguistic maintenance.

Notes

- 1 However, Wolfram claims another category of “abrupt” language death today, which he calls “radical death”, referring to cases in which speakers do not die, but they all simply stop speaking their language to survive, and start using the other language. I think this category needs more empirical evidence to be justified.
- 2 I will not analyze here cases of language death that occur in a “monolingual environment” as reported by Wolfram (2004: 764), in which he refers to the death of dialects. For linguists dialects are languages, and if one considers them as such when they become extinct, it is not consistent to deny them being languages when they are alive. Hence, even the situation Wolfram is referring to, is not really monolingual but multilingual.
- 3 See Mezhoud in this volume.
- 4 See Mufwene (2010) for a more skeptical position on this issue.
- 5 See Tsunoda (2006) and Bradley and Bradley (2019) for a detailed account on the descriptive terms used in the literature about the different stages of language endangerment.
- 6 For an extensive list of the scales see Bradley and Bradley (2019: 14–29).
- 7 This, with implications for the duration of schooling needed for children with partial exposure to their endangered language. More on “deacquisition” in Tsunoda (2006: 114).
- 8 Based on Thomason (2008).
- 9 But not all linguists agree with my statement. See for example Tsunoda (2006: 114–115) who thinks that most linguists agree that change in endangered languages is just normal change.
- 10 The term “source language” refers to the original language, and in contrast to “incoming language” earlier in this study. Both terms are from O’Shannessy (83–84).
- 11 When I discuss language with speakers of the endangered Arbëresh and Arvanitika, I notice that there is a pre-linguist living in each of them. Their awareness of language is much higher than that of monolinguals, and especially of speakers of non-endangered languages.
- 12 A summary of the critical views about the role of schools in language revitalization, can be found in Sallabank (2011: 282).
- 13 www.youtube.com/watch?v=fg9-rDbOzWE.

The video is filmed by Mario Calivà in June 2020. He asks the children in Arbëresh questions on what they were doing during the quarantine days. The children first introduce themselves, and then answer briefly questions about their thoughts on COVID-19

and the activities they performed during the quarantine responding to the question “*what did you do . . .*”. This is a very suitable question for this study, because it triggers the use of accusative case, since the answers to this question logically require noun phrases with the function of the direct object, which in Arbëresh is expressed with accusative case. Children take turns answering, and each of them produces about four to five sentences in total. The whole video lasts two minutes and ten seconds. (This video was accessed last on May, 25 2022.)

14 For more on the role of frequency in language retention see Berg, 2010.

15 In the face of growing criticism towards making the school the central institution for language maintenance and reclamation (Mufwene, 2010; Austin and Sallabank, 2011), other potential sites that fulfil this purpose must be explored before the school is ruled out, in order not to completely abandon the language to fate.

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12

TRANSNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN THE ATLAS OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Christopher Moseley

Many lesser-used languages are spoken in the territory of more than one country, and have varying status in each of them. The status of some of them as languages is questioned – in some countries they are referred to as dialects, in some they are fully fledged languages.

Based on my experience as editor of the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, which is currently being subsumed into the future UNESCO World Atlas of Languages, I aim to demonstrate and discuss some of the more contentious issues of language status at present.

The third edition of the UNESCO atlas, the first one to be online, became active in 2009 but ceased to be maintained in 2017 on the UNESCO website; it has not accepted interactive comments from users since that time. The volume, or website, that is planned to replace it will cover all the world's languages, but endangered languages will be marked distinctively.

It is to be called the World Atlas of Languages. It will be an attempt to collate standardised sets of information about all the spoken and signed languages of the world. To collect this information, bodies of experts in every member state of UNESCO are being asked to respond to a detailed survey.

A team of linguists at the University of Graz, Austria, is collecting the results of the survey. The success of the project depends on the goodwill of the member states, which in turn is reliant on their governments' appreciation of the fact of language endangerment and on their responsibility toward their linguistic minorities. We who are compiling the volume cannot take that goodwill for granted, so inevitably there are going to be some difficulties in collecting the completest possible data. For example, some authorities might prefer to regard language varieties which linguists regard as separate languages, as mere 'dialects' and therefore unworthy of inclusion. For a second example, in many countries signed languages are not the subject of detailed study or differentiation.

Basic information on languages will encompass: Name, Type, Codes, Size, Location and Affiliation. The official and national status of each language will also be recorded.

Information on languages will not come from the results of the survey alone, for there has to be an independent database against which the survey results can be checked and verified. For this purpose the team in Graz has chosen *Glottolog*, in its latest iteration. As a means of encompassing as many language varieties as possible, entries will be classified on three possible levels: Macro (the top level as shown in *Glottolog*), Language and Variety (which can include 'dialects'). Lower-level typologies are also required to clarify types and relationships of languages. For signed languages, the data should include Deaf Community Sign Languages, Village Sign Languages and Pidgin Sign Languages (with Glottocodes). For spoken languages, it considers whether an entry is a language within a family, a language isolate, a pidgin, a creole, or a bilingual mixed language.

Not only languages with Glottocodes qualify for entry, however; data from the present *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* is also to be transposed into the new Atlas.

The Questionnaire distributed by the World Atlas of Languages (WAL) team to UNESCO member states' expert language agencies consists of 58 pages of questions; there are actually two questionnaires: one for spoken languages, one for signed. The sections of the questionnaire cover, firstly, the following aspects of language: status (whether community or official); genetic affiliation; availability of materials and descriptions; levels of graphitisation and standardisation; geographical distribution; size in terms of numbers of users, expressed in powers of ten; proportion of users within the total population, and within the reference community; age distribution and generational use; users' educational attainment and occupational qualifications; language competence, literacy and digital use; sociogeographic and socioeconomic scope; domains of use; use in administration; use in formal education; ethnocultural functions; use in public health care; use in cultural production; use in periodical publications and broadcasting; use in the digital sphere; use in the legal system.

Thus a complete matrix of language use, spoken and signed, is built up. The aim is for a coverage of language status and use that is more comprehensive and finely tuned than that of any of the other vade mecums of the world's languages, be it *Ethnologue*, *Glottolog*, *ELCat* or any other. And it also aims to build on the success of its UNESCO predecessor, the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, in gathering data about languages under threat.

Even so, lacunae may appear in the data. Not all the results of the survey are available yet (they are being processed through the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montreal), so it is too early to tell, but if the results are submitted on a nation-by-nation basis, the cases of cross-border languages, at all levels of vitality, may be statistically at variance. The survey instrument should be sensitive enough to show up any anomalies, and where anomalies exist, they might represent the true situation in view of varying national language policies in the countries concerned.

Data samples for cross-border languages

UNESCO has its own scale of endangerment. Those languages that are spoken across borders are only a minority of the endangered languages, so having a political border crossing a language area doesn't necessarily imply endangerment. But I do want to pay particular attention to those languages here, to see if they have any features in common. It should be possible to compare their status with that of diaspora languages, spoken outside the borders of their original home country.

These are some of the comparisons that can be made:

- Legal status (official language or not).
- Linguistic status (language/dialect).
- Domains of use (broadcast, printed, electronic media, use in law, education, religion, the creative arts).
- Orthographic differences.
- Literacy compared with literacy in the national or regional language.

It is worthwhile to compare the situation of cross-border languages in all continents where transnational languages occur. Some cross-border languages might be spoken in a multilingual nation on one side, but a nation with one dominant language on the other. Some degree of multilingualism is almost always found, however.

Does the geographical terrain of cross-border languages have features in common? Relatively inaccessible mountainous regions, for instance? Are the population movements across borders traceable in history? National borders are determined by several factors, and such natural boundaries as rivers are only one of them. In the partially ex-colonial continents of Africa and Latin America, indigenous languages are often bisected by boundaries. The boundaries were in many cases drawn up in distant European treaty-making halls.

Arbitrary and natural national borders

I would like to pause here to consider the actual implications of these apparently arbitrary demarcations by the colonial powers. National boundaries were demarcated by the colonial powers in two multilingual continents in particular: Africa and South America. In the case of Africa, where at present there are about 110 national borders, the process of demarcating fixed borders was formalised in the Berlin Conference of November 1884 to February 1885. This was the culmination of the so-called 'scramble for Africa'. The conference was legitimising a process that had already begun in the competition between several imperial powers – Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, France and Portugal being the chief among them – to acquire territory. The European concept of the nation-state had come to Africa. The arbitrariness of the demarcation is exemplified in these quotations from the imperial representatives themselves; on the subject of Nigeria, Africa's most populous and multilingual nation, on the occasion of signing the

Anglo-French Convention on the boundaries of Nigeria and Niger in 1906, Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, is quoted as saying:

We [the British and the French] have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's foot ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediments that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were.¹

And an unnamed British colonial officer is on record as describing the method used in demarcating borders, this time relating to Nigeria and Cameroon:

In those days, we just took a blue pencil and a ruler and we put it down at Old Calabar, and we drew the blue line to Yola. . . . I recollect thinking when I was sitting, having an audience with the Emir [of Adamawa], surrounded by his tribe, that it was a very good thing that he did not know, that I, with a blue pencil, had drawn a line through his territory.²

Colonial rivals were not concerned at all with the populations they were bisecting: not with ethnic affiliations, religious adherences, access to natural resources for indigenous populations, but rather with gaining an advantage in commerce, trade and possession of resources. Alliances with existing indigenous administrations – kingdoms and sultanates – were of secondary importance to these considerations. Demarcation of the Nigeria-Benin border paid scant regard to the existing Borgu kingdom; the British and Belgian division of East Africa into Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi (modern successor states Rwanda and Burundi) were primarily concerned with access to the source of the Nile.

Although the boundaries as demarcated by the colonial powers remain largely in force even today, that is not to say they have been accepted by various secessionist movements during the independence campaigns of the fifties and sixties of the last century. Yet the borders remain largely intact, even in these days of a different kind of colonial exploitation – economic, for Africa's mineral wealth.

Commenting on this remarkable fact – the stability and durability of modern Africa's national borders, Jeffrey Herbst remarks:

African borders have been remarkably stable over the last century. The borders that the colonialists established became, almost without exception, the borders of the newly independent African countries. Even the administrative boundaries within French North Africa and French West Africa, which were never meant to be international frontiers, became national boundaries between West African states when the French unions disintegrated in the early nineteen-sixties. Indeed, there has not been one significant boundary change in Africa since the dawn of the independence era in the late nineteen-fifties, and not one separatist movement has succeeded in establishing a new state.³

Two salient facts are evident from Africa's present borders: 1) Ethnic, much less linguistic, divisions were not important in the demarcation of national borders on the continent; 2) there are no homogenous states in present-day Africa whose political borders are consistent with ethnic or linguistic boundaries. However, the states of Rwanda, Burundi, Botswana and Lesotho were created – subsequent to the Belgian Congo conference, during the independence era – with some regard to ethnic and linguistic distinctions; and there have been separatist movements which aimed at ethnically based states which were temporarily successful, such as Katanga and Biafra, but were reabsorbed into existing nation-states. The two most recent national creations in Africa, Eritrea and South Sudan, are not ethnically or linguistically homogeneous.

The nation-states of Latin America, though fewer in number than those of Africa, were created with equal disregard for ethnic boundaries, though by different colonial processes than a single major conference. Writing in 1924, Raye R. Platt compared the process of demarcation of political boundaries over the past century between the existing states, through conventions, treaties, commissions and other legal instruments – with no participation at all by indigenous peoples. As in Africa, the concept of the nation-state was imported, but Latin America did, at the time of European conquest, have several indigenous empires. The contending European powers in Latin America were chiefly Spain and Portugal, but Britain, France and the Netherlands also staked their claims – and have left their linguistic traces until today. Waterways were important factors in demarcating borders between the independent states, as navigation was essential to trade and transport as well as surveying and triangulation. Thus many South American borders follow the courses of rivers – irrespective of the indigenous populations living on either bank of them.

Factors determining differences in cross-border languages

Whatever the origins of the present-day borders that separate parts of the same speech communities, whether made by humans or by nature, the language policies that operate on either side of a border can shape their destinies profoundly. For instance, it often comes about that the persecuted speakers of one language flee across the border into a country that is more accommodating to them. Or, alternatively, speakers of a language separated by a political border gradually lose the language through pressures that are not present on the other side: the same language can thus have different vitality status on either side of a border. The resulting situation is one of *asymmetry*. The most usual reason for the asymmetry described in the cases listed in this chapter, however, is simply demographic: larger speaker populations on one side of a border than the other (irrespective of the size of the ethnic group, which may have maintained its language on only one side).

The other factor to be considered as an 'axis' along which border-language vitality can be measured is its *uniqueness*. As used in this chapter, the term 'unique' means that the language in question is spoken nowhere else but in this border area. The implication is that there is no other present-day standard by which the

language can be judged. True demographic ‘symmetry’ is rare, but nearly every language selected for this study is ‘unique’ in the sense meant here. A language that is not ‘unique’ in this chapter is *dispersed* – there are other centres of its use, entirely within national borders.

It is quite hard to specify what is meant by ‘official’ status for a language – it is not the same as ‘national’ in a multilingual country. But a language may have regional official status, as some languages do in France, for example, which entitles it to use in education at some levels, and in local government, thus enhancing its viability.

If the same status is not granted to a language on both sides of a border, its situation is truly asymmetrical, so that its minority status in the country that supports it less further dwindles its chances of survival. A good example in Europe is Basque, which is recognised as an official language alongside Spanish in four of the seven provinces of the Basque Country (it has partial regional recognition in Navarre). In the three provinces of the French Basque Country, it has no recognition.

The examples discussed later are selected from countries all over the world that are situated on continental land masses where more or less arbitrary national borders exist. They are all to a greater or lesser extent regarded by UNESCO as endangered.

Cross-border languages can change status due to political circumstances. Kurdish, a minority language in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, has changed its overall status thanks to the recognition of Kurdish as an official language in Iraqi Kurdistan in the new constitution of Iraq, and it became an asymmetrical (but dispersed) cross-border language with the 15 October 2005 referendum. This strengthened the possibilities for survival and vigorous use of the language, as well as giving hope to neighbouring communities.

Languages that are used for trade and other aspects of wider communication, *linguae francae*, but are not indigenous to the border area, do not fall within the remit of this chapter.

Cross-border languages are often codified in different ways on each side of a border, with different orthographic norms. This complicates the standardisation of resources for education and literature and increases the cost of language planning for a given language, and is a factor in language endangerment.

The languages described here are merely a representative sample, but a big enough sample to be grouped into the following broad categories, which can also be measured along two axes, namely:

Symmetrical and unique: These are languages that are not recognised anywhere, on either side of their national borders – equally disadvantaged.

Symmetrical and multinational: These are languages that have prestige and institutional support elsewhere, and are typically not in danger.

Asymmetrical and unique: Languages that are spoken by unequal numbers on either side of a border, and have no other centres of use.

Asymmetrical and multinational: Languages spoken by unequal numbers on either side of a border but with centres of use elsewhere.

And within all these broad categories there are subcategories, such as those languages that are spoken in more than one discrete area along and beyond a border. Falling into the ‘asymmetrical and unique’ category are also languages such as Kurdish, which does in fact have a multinational presence, but is not the state language of any country, and widely varying status in the countries in which it is spoken (an official language in Iraq since 2005, but not so in Syria or Turkey).

Why categorise these borderland languages at all? From the point of view of language endangerment, it is a way of providing data that will objectively show to national governments (in the case of the UNESCO Atlas, member states of UNESCO) the inequalities of status suffered by some languages on either side of a border. But in order to quantify their situation, the previously mentioned parameters are not enough. It is possible from just these parameters to provide two basic axes of measurement on a chart, but to plot the actual position of languages on the chart, more factors are needed for comparison.

The UNESCO Language Vitality Index (UNESCO 2003) serves to provide the factors involved in language maintenance which, in combination, help to sustain a language. They are:

- Absolute number of speakers
- Intergenerational language transmission
- Community members’ attitudes towards their own language
- Shifts in domains of language use
- Governmental and institutional attitudes and policies
- Type and quality of documentation
- Response to new domains and media
- Availability of materials for language education and literacy
- Proportion of speakers within the total population

When the factors are measured into a cumulative total for each language, the language may, in theory, at least, be plotted on a graph. UNESCO (2003) established six degrees of endangerment that can be incorporated into this plotted graph, namely, in ascending order of endangerment:

- Safe
- Stable yet threatened
- Vulnerable
- Definitely endangered
- Severely endangered
- Critically endangered
- Extinct

Sample of endangered languages located on national borders

In sampling the border languages, I will here only take account of those languages that are in any degree of endangerment. Account must also be taken of whether the language has a written form; many of the factors listed earlier depend on this.

North America

Ojibwe: Written. Asymmetrical and unique (majority in Canada, minority in USA). Divided into dialects or emergent languages (at least six); no standard orthography for all. Used in digital media. Intergenerational transmission is declining (USA); average age of speakers is increasing. Active documentation, and materials are available. Adult education in the language (Canada), school education (both sides). Indigenous teachers ensure expansion of domains of use, however limited. Absolute number of speakers 43,000 (1996). UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Mohawk: Written. Asymmetrical and unique (majority in Canada, minority in USA). Spoken in six disparate communities. Used in digital media. Some monolingual speakers, and speaker numbers are not declining markedly. Immersion school teaching is available in both countries. Some expansion into new domains of use, including films. Tertiary education available. Absolute number of fluent speakers 3,850 (2008). UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Maliseet-Passamaquoddy: Maliseet is the Canadian term, Passamaquoddy the US term for the same tribe. Written. Asymmetrical and unique (majority in Canada, minority in USA). Spoken in several distinct communities. Intergenerational transmission is declining, but teaching programmes have been initiated. Online resources available. Absolute number of speakers 455 (2016). UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Blackfoot: Written, in a standard orthography. Asymmetrical and unique (majority in Canada, minority in USA). Spoken in three dialects on several reservations. Intergenerational transmission is declining, but there are still older monolinguals. Immersion schools are run on the reservations in both countries. Numerous revitalisation projects, but overall numbers declined in recent decades due to forcible removal of children to live in non-native communities, and residential schools (Canada). New media, such as radio, are used, a special institution exists to promote use of the language in computer technology and business. On the Canadian side there is active government support for the language. Absolute number of speakers 4,915 (2016). UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Okanagan: Written. Symmetrical and unique, with roughly equal numbers of speakers on reservations in Canada and the United States. Active revitalisation efforts in both countries; despite this, intergenerational transmission is severely depleted. Language learning materials exist, but teaching is on a small scale from a low demographic base. Absolute number of speakers may be about 800, but there are claims of 2,000 second-language speakers. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Oneida: Nominally written, though primarily an oral language. Asymmetrical and unique, preponderantly in Canada. Nowadays all the remaining speakers are bilingual, and the language is largely restricted to ritual functions. Absolute numbers of speakers: 55 in Canada (2016) and a handful in the US. The two reservation communities, one in each country, are widely separated. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Onondaga: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, preponderantly in Canada. The Onondaga reservation is in New York state; about a dozen of the population

of 1,600 Onondagas speak the language there; another 40 or so live in Canada (2007). The decline in speaker numbers may have been slowed or arrested by vigorous revitalisation programmes (at least in Canada) in recent years. Mainly ritual domains. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Upper Tanana (Athabaskan): Written. Effectively symmetrical and unique, with about 100 speakers in communities on either side of the Alaskan/Canadian (Yukon) border (2007). Upper Tanana and 19 other indigenous languages have official status in Alaska since 2014. Speaker populations are declining, however. Used in primary education, and there is some literacy in it, though the writing system has only existed since the nineteen-sixties. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Han: Written. Symmetrical and unique, with about 20 speakers on the Yukon (Canadian) side of the border, and a handful reported in Alaska. Revitalisation programmes are under way, mainly on the Canadian side. It has been a written language since the Bible translation in the 19th century. Educational materials are in use, and the language is taught to children and adults. There are online language learning resources. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Inupiaq: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, a chain of dialects with about 13,500 heritage users in Alaska and 24,000 in Canada. These figures represent the ethnic population, a high proportion of whom are speakers. After many generations of penalising native speakers for using the language, revitalisation programmes have begun, primary education in the language has been available in Alaska since 1972, and literacy rates are high. Dialect differences are quite marked, however, and mutual intelligibility is difficult. There are extensive printed and online language resources, covering a range of dialects. UNESCO: Not listed.

Tlingit: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, with about 1,360 speakers, 1,240 in Alaska and 120 in Canada (2016). Since 2014 an official language in Alaska. There are four major dialects. It is used in education, and university courses in it are available (University of Alaska). Literacy in it has been hampered by the multiplicity of writing systems imposed on it by researchers and missionaries; a writing system developed in the sixties has so far had limited use. It is used in restricted domains, and appears to be declining rapidly in Canada. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Diegueño/Kumeyaay: the collective names of a dialect cluster spoken in California, USA, and Baja California, Mexico. It can be further broken down into Ipai and Kumeyaay proper on the US side, and Tipai on the Mexican – more a political than a linguistic distinction. Written. Asymmetrical and unique, preponderantly in Mexico. Revitalisation on the US side has taken the form of language classes for the past 40 years, and dictionaries and grammars have been written. The dialects are part of the larger Yuman group, and Mexican speakers of the language, numbering 377 in the 2010 census, refer to their language as Cochimi. Speakers in the US number 40 to 50. Intergenerational transmission is depleted. UNESCO refers to it as Tipai and designates it as Severely endangered.

O'odham (Upper Piman): Written. Asymmetrical and unique, preponderantly in the USA (15,000 speakers in Arizona in 2007, including some monolinguals); there were 1,240 speakers in Mexico according to the 2020 census. There are two

major dialects, Akimel and Tohono; the language is well documented and there is literacy in both. The language is taught at the University of Arizona. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Kickapoo: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, preponderantly in Mexico (state of Coahuila) but with reservations in Kansas and Oklahoma in the USA, with small lands in Texas as well. In the separated locations the fate of the language has been somewhat different; for instance, different orthographies have been devised for the language on either side of the border. Of the 1,100 first-language speakers in 2007, 700 were in Mexico, 400 in Oklahoma, and a small number in Kansas. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Central America

Chuj: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, with 59,000 speakers in Guatemala (2019), 4,000 in Mexico (2020). Conservation and revitalisation efforts are conducted through groups such as the Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Jakalteq (Popti'): Written. Asymmetrical and unique; overwhelming majority of speakers in Guatemala; a few in Mexico: 33,000 and 500 respectively (2019). UNESCO: Vulnerable. Popti' is the name preferred by the Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala.

Mam: Written. Asymmetrical and unique; overwhelming majority of speakers in Guatemala: 600,000 in Guatemala, 10,000 in Mexico. Four major dialect divisions in Guatemala. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Tektiteko (Teko): Written. Asymmetrical and unique (but a close relative of Mam). About 3,100 speakers in Guatemala (2019) and 100 or so in Mexico. Grammar and dictionary exist, but educational and revitalisation efforts have begun only recently on a small scale. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Yucatec Maya: Written. Asymmetrical and unique. Preponderantly in Mexico (770,000 speakers, 2020) with 2,518 speakers in Belize (2010). Originally written in the Maya script. A well-established literary language with use in many domains: popular music, films, the Internet, video games and other media. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Garifuna: Not normally written. Symmetrical and international: spoken in Guatemala (20,000 speakers) and Belize (14,000) but its main heartland is in Honduras, with outposts in Nicaragua. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Ch'orti': Written, and associated with the development of the Maya script, but there is very little literacy. Asymmetrical and international, with about 30,000 speakers in Guatemala and an unknown small number in Honduras. Indigenous languages are discouraged in Honduras but supported in Guatemala. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Miskito: Written. Asymmetrical and unique: about 150,000 speakers in Nicaragua, 30,000 in Honduras. In a healthy state in Nicaragua, but threatened, with no support from the state, in Honduras. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Ngäbere (Guaymí): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with about 150,000 speakers in Panama and 5,000 in Costa Rica. The population is

marginalised in Panama, with few opportunities for education, so the intergenerational transmission tends to be oral. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Emberá: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with 40,000 speakers in Colombia and considerably fewer in Panama. Major division into North and South varieties, with considerable dialectal variation within these. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Kuna: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with about 70,000 speakers in Panama and 10,000 in Colombia. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

South America

Wayuu (Guajiro): Written. Asymmetrical and unique: 200,000 speakers in Venezuela, with 120,000 in Colombia. Intergenerational transmission is quite vigorous, and range of domains is wide, with even a dictionary of technology. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Yukpa: Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique: about 4,000 speakers either side of the Venezuela-Colombia border. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Kurripako: Not normally written. Considered by some linguists to be a dialect of Karu, with about 10,000 speakers, located at the intersection of the Venezuelan, Colombian and Brazilian borders. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Bari (Motilón): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique: some 3,540 speakers in Colombia, 1,520 in Venezuela (2007). Not integrated into Hispanic society in either country. Intergenerational transmission is fairly vigorous. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Tunebo (Uwa): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique; at least 1,800 speakers in Colombia but possibly extinct in Venezuela. Several distinct varieties of the language in Colombia. UNESCO: Vulnerable (Colombia).

Guahibo (Sikuani): Written. Asymmetrical and unique: 23,006 speakers in Colombia, 8,428 in Venezuela. Large numbers of monolinguals and intergenerational transmission is vigorous. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Cuiba: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique: 2,300 speakers in Colombia, 650 in Venezuela. High proportion of monolinguals and intergenerational transmission is vigorous. Not really assimilated into Hispanic society. Absolute population is declining, however. Considerable dialectal variation. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Puinave: Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique (possibly a language isolate); about 3,000 speakers spread between Colombia and Venezuela. Little researched and with no known literacy; intergenerational transmission is vigorous. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Piapoko: Unwritten. Possibly symmetrical and unique; the 6,400 speakers mentioned in 2007 were divided between Colombia and Venezuela. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Awa Pit (Cuaquier): Written. Asymmetrical and unique: 21,000 speakers in Colombia, 1,000 in Ecuador. Literacy is low, and intergenerational transmission, once strong, is weakening. On the Ecuadorian side there has been less acculturation in the past. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Cofán: Written. Asymmetrical and unique (a language isolate). It has 2,400 speakers on the Ecuador/Colombia border, at least 800 of whom are in Ecuador. In Ecuador it enjoys official status on its territory; in Colombia the speakers' (autonym A'ingae) way of life has been disrupted by missionaries, road-building, oil prospecting and guerrilla war. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Quechua (Kichwa): Written. Semi-symmetrical and dispersed. Many varieties spoken across borders in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, not all mutually intelligible. Estimated total number of speakers 8.5 to 10 million, but intergenerational transmission is breaking down or faltering in many areas. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Siona: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with about 550 speakers in total on the Ecuador/Colombian border. The closely related *Secoya* language has about 680 speakers on the Ecuador/Peru border. Both peoples' way of life has been severely disrupted by petroleum exploration and colonisation. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Huitoto (Witoto): Written. Asymmetrical and unique; spoken on the border of Peru (1,000 speakers) and Colombia (1,900). Migration from Colombia to Peru in the early 20th century was caused by a large rubber prospecting company. The language is used in school and church, and there is some literacy in it. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Yagua: Not normally written. Probably asymmetrical and unique, spoken in widely dispersed communities along the border of Peru and Colombia. In Peru about a third of the 6,000 speakers are monolingual. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Ticuna (Tikuna): Written. Asymmetrical and unique (a language isolate), straddling the borders of Colombia, Peru and Brazil. 60% of the 63,000 speakers (2021) live in Brazil. Used in education in Peru, in health campaigns in Brazil, and not officially at all in Colombia. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Bora: Written. Asymmetrical and unique: it has 2,328 speakers in Peru (2000) and about 500 in Colombia. An orthography was developed quite recently by SIL and there is incipient literacy. Primary education in the language is available in Peru. Several dialects have been identified. UNESCO: Vulnerable in Peru; the status could be more endangered in Colombia.

Warao: Written. Asymmetrical and unique (a language isolate), with 28,100 speakers in Venezuela, and about 4,000 in Guyana. There are significant dialect differences. It is well documented by scholars and has been taught at university level. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Akawaio: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, regarded by some as a dialect of Kapón(g), and with widely varying estimates of numbers of speakers: possibly 10,000 in Brazil, with fewer in Venezuela and fewer still in Guyana. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Pemon: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with varying estimates of numbers of speakers, with possibly as many as 30,000 speakers, mainly in Venezuela, fewer in Brazil and Guyana. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Arawak (Lokono): Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spread across four countries: Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana and French Guiana. Only 5% of the ethnic group still speaks it. Total number of speakers in all countries

2,500. Intergenerational transmission is severely depleted. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Kari'nya (Kariña): Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spread across five countries: Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil: total number of speakers 7,430 (2009). This language is sometimes known as Carib. Intergenerational transmission is declining generally. Speakers in the remotest locations, such as the forests of Guyana, are passing the language on; otherwise acculturation is proceeding apace. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Makushi (Macushi): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in Brazil (estimated 15,000 speakers) and Guyana and Venezuela (far fewer). The history of Macushi settlement is one of forced migration and struggles over land rights. Intergenerational transmission is patchy and unstable, most mostly positive. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Wapishana: Written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken on both sides of the Brazil/Guyana border by a total of 6,000 people. Taught in indigenous schools in Brazil, where it has local official status. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Wayana: Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken in Brazil, French Guiana and Suriname; total number of speakers is around 850. The Wayana of Brazil have lived and intermarried with the Aparai for many generations, which has contributed to the decline of the language to a moribund state; it is more actively used in the other countries, and in Suriname there is healthy intergenerational transmission. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Aparai (Apalai): Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken in Brazil and French Guiana. The Aparai have lived for generations with the Wayana, intermarried with them, and diluted intergenerational transmission. Total number of speakers around 415 (1998). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Palikur: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in Brazil (about 900 speakers) and French Guiana (about 500). French Guiana Creole is encroaching on its use, and intergenerational transmission is somewhat disrupted. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Wayampi: Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken in French Guiana and Brazil – possibly as many as 1,200 speakers in total. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Tirio (Trio): Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken in Surinam and Brazil – possibly as many as 2,100 speakers in total. The whole ethnic group, at least in Suriname, is believed to speak the language. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Patamona: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, most speakers (about 5,000) being in Guyana and smaller numbers in Venezuela and Brazil. They are a subgroup of the Kapón people. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Waiwai: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with 2,200 speakers in Brazil, and fewer in Guyana and Suriname. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Ninam (Yanam): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with possibly 400 speakers in Brazil and 100 in Venezuela. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Yanomami: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, but part of a dialect continuum stretching from Brazil to Venezuela. Monolingual speakers make up a high proportion, and contact with the outside world was made only in 1957 (in

Venezuela) and a couple of decades later (in Brazil) There are 11,700 speakers in Brazil and 15,000 in Venezuela (2007). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Nheengatu: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in Brazil and Venezuela by 19,000 people (Brazil) and a few hundred (Venezuela). Nheengatu is a creolised Tupi-Guarani language which was once the lingua franca of the whole Amazon region. In Venezuela it is also known as Yeral or Geral. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Tuyuca: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, with 593 members of the ethnic group in Brazil, 570 in Colombia (2001). The majority are thought to be speakers. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Cubeo: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, with approximately 6,300 speakers in total, over the border of Brazil and Colombia. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Wanano/Kotiria: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, with about 2,600 speakers, more in Colombia than Brazil. The people are highly exogamous and multilingual. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Tariana/Tariano: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: maybe 100 speakers in Brazil, probably extinct in Colombia. Reasons for the decline include exogamy with speakers of other languages, transfer to the Tucano language on a large scale, and lack of intergenerational transmission. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Tucano/Tukano: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken in Brazil (4,600 speakers in 2006) and Colombia (1,500, 2000). There are more speakers than the actual ethnic group, as it is taking over from Nheengatu as a regional lingua franca. Exogamy is practised, which leads to language shift and multilingualism. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Macuna: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken in Colombia on territory shared with other tribes, and in Brazil; the total speaker population in 2011 was estimated at 1,032. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Hup: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in the borderland of Colombia and Brazil. The total number of speakers in 2011 was put at 1,700; of these, 235 was the figure given for speakers in Colombia in 2007. They share territory with Tucano speakers, and use that language as a lingua franca. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Desano: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in the borderland of Colombia and Brazil. The total number of speakers in 2011 was put at 3,160; of these, 1,531 was the figure given for speakers in Brazil in 2001. They share territory with the Hup, and practise exogamy. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Matsés(-Mayoruna): Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, spoken in the borderland of Brazil (1,143 speakers, 2006) and Peru (1,314 speakers, 1998). Monolingual speakers prevail in both communities, as they do not have much contact with the wider society; in recent decades there has been further acculturation, however. *Mayoruna* is a Quechua term meaning 'river people'. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Yaminawa: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, but a dialect continuum across the borders of Bolivia, Peru and Brazil. The estimated total population of 2,729 (2011) excludes an estimated 400 speakers of an uncontacted dialect. Exploitation of their land by the rubber boom has led to considerable internal and cross-border

migration. Mostly monolingual. UNESCO: Vulnerable, severely endangered in Bolivia.

Asheninca: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, also known as Campa, but the term is derogatory. It straddles the border of Peru and Brazil. It is part of the continuum of language varieties that also include *Ashaninca*, and the total of speakers for all varieties in 2007 was 63,000 (35,000 Asheninca). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Amahuaca: Written. Symmetrical and unique: spoken on the border of Peru (328 speakers) and Brazil (220) (2000). Only the remotest communities still pass on the language. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Culina: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: on the border of Brazil and Peru, mostly in Brazil. Total number of speakers 3,900 (2006). Only passed on to younger speakers in the remotest communities. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Arara/Shawanaua: Unwritten. The Brazilian and Peruvian names respectively for the same language straddling their border. Expansion of the rubber industry has forced them to shift from their traditional land; however, they have recently won land rights in Brazil. The total ethnic group may number only 200 (1999). UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Cashinahua: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken in Brazil (400 speakers) and Peru (1,600). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Chiquitano: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, on the border of Brazil and Bolivia. Intergenerational transmission largely ceased with the previous generation; the language is declining in use. Total number of speakers estimated at 2,000 (2000). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Achuar-Shiwiar: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, with 3,500 speakers in Peru and 4,000 in Ecuador (2007). The people commonly also speak Shuar, Spanish and Quichua. The language has official status in Ecuador. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Záparo: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, with about 5 speakers in an area on the Peru–Ecuador border. The effects of the rubber boom, which led to the virtual slavery of the tribe, have killed off the culture and language almost completely. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Ese Ejja: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, with 518 speakers in Bolivia and 840 in Peru, which is the majority of the ethnic group. Intergenerational transmission is therefore continuing, even for such a small group. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Mapuche/Mapudungu: Written, though with disputed Roman orthographies. Asymmetrical and unique, with 144,000 speakers in Chile and 8,400 in Argentina (2013). Intergenerational transmission has atrophied and there is little or no government support for it in either country. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Wichí (Mataco): Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, a continuum of dialects (also regarded as languages), straddling the border of Argentina and Bolivia, the main varieties of which are *Noctén* (Bolivia), *Vejoz* (Argentina) and *Guisnay* (or *Weenhayek*) on the border. Their fortunes have varied, but none of them are used in schools or any public domain and they have no government support. The varieties are declining, except possibly Weenhayek, for which something of a revival is reported. In Argentina there may be 35,000 Wichí speakers, in Bolivia possibly 2,500. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Chorote Iyojwa'ja: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, straddling the borders of Argentina (about 1,500 speakers), Paraguay (where it is known as Manjui, 650) and Bolivia (possibly 8 remaining speakers, if not extinct). In Argentina, half the speakers are monolingual. In Paraguay the language is taught in schools. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Chiriguano: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, straddling the borders of Argentina (15,000 speakers), Bolivia (33,670) and Paraguay (304, in 2000). In Argentina it is known as Western Argentinian Guaraní, and it is a member of the Tupi-Guaraní family. UNESCO (which calls it Ava-Guaraní): Definitely endangered.

Toba-Qom: Not normally written. A continuum of language varieties straddling the borders of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina, all of them members of the Guaycuruan family. Toba is spoken by a small remnant in Bolivia, with more in Argentina (up to 60,000, definitely endangered) and Paraguay, Toba-Maskoy in Paraguay (1,280 speakers, severely endangered) and Toba-Qom in Paraguay (755 speakers, 2007) and Argentina (19,810, 2000).

Guarayu/Guarayo: A pejorative name. Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique. In 2000 there were 5,930 speakers in Bolivia, with a probably much smaller number in Paraguay. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Nivaclé/Chulupí: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in the border area of Argentina and Paraguay by a total of about 14,000 (2007). Until recent decades the people have resisted acculturation, even when living under missions, and were first contacted by Western anthropologists in 1908. Intergenerational transmission is more or less intact. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Mbyá Guaraní: Written, but with less status than Paraguayan Guaraní. Asymmetrical and semi-unique, across the borders of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. It is nowadays generally classified as a separate language from Paraguayan and other varieties of Guaraní. The speakers' present scattered location is partly a result of dispossession of their land in Paraguay. There are 6,000 speakers in Brazil, 3,000 in Argentina and 8,000 in Paraguay (2015). UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Ava Guaraní (Chiripá Guaraní, Ñandeva): Written, but with less status than the Paraguayan standard. Asymmetrical and semi-unique, across the borders of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. It is nowadays generally classified as a separate language from Paraguayan and other varieties of Guaraní. There are 4,900 speakers in Brazil, 7,000 in Paraguay and a remnant in Argentina. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Pai-Tavytera (Kaiowá Guaraní): Written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken across the border of Paraguay and Brazil. Shift to Paraguayan Guaraní is strong. There are 600 speakers in Paraguay (2007) and an unknown number in Brazil. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Africa

Benga: Written. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken by a total of 5,400 speakers (2011) in the border area of Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Bwisi: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: 1,230 speakers in Gabon, 3,020 in Congo-Brazzaville. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Cobiana/Kobiana/Buy/Guboy: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken on the border of Guinea Bissau and Senegal, but may have already disappeared in Senegal. *Ethnologue* cites 1,200 speakers in 2015, but Vanderaa, in *A Survey for Christian Reformed World Missions of Missions and Churches in West Africa* (1991) was already estimating 400. There appears to be a general shift to Mandyak. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Gyele (Babinga, Likoya): Written. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken by populations of pygmies on the border of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Speakers tend not to admit to outsiders that they use it. 4,250 speakers in Cameroon and 50 in Equatorial Guinea (2012). Home use only, not used in schools. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Hya: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken on the border of Cameroon and Nigeria with 940 and 2,000 speakers respectively (2002). It is used in all spoken domains, but declining. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Maslam: Written (script developed in 1997). Asymmetrical and semi-unique, one of the Kotoko language cluster, spoken on the border of Cameroon and Chad. *Ethnologue* cites a figure of 250 speakers in Cameroon and gives no separate figure for Chad; the *Encyclopedia* says ‘5,000 or fewer people in Cameroon, and a few hundred people in Chad’. Language shift is to Chadian Spoken Arabic, at least in Chad. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Somyev (Kila): Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique: spoken in one village each in Cameroon and Nigeria by a total of 15 speakers (2000); possibly already extinct on the Cameroon side. The speakers’ primary language is now Maberem (a variety of Mambila); their lingua franca is Fulfulde; the name *Kila* is the Fulfulde term for ‘blacksmith’. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Yasa: Written, since 2011, but with negligible literacy. Asymmetrical and unique: spoken in Cameroon (2,200 speakers) and Equatorial Guinea (1,000, 2015). Younger speakers are reportedly moving to towns and taking up other languages. Other speakers use it in all spoken domains. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Boguru: Unwritten. Symmetrical and unique, on both sides of the South Sudan–DRC border. Speakers in the Democratic Republic of Congo are refugees originating in South Sudan. Numbers of speakers on either side not known, but the ethnic population is about 500. Language shift appears to be to Zande. UNESCO: Critically endangered.

Komo: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in Sudan (10,000 speakers), South Sudan (unknown number) and Ethiopia (1,000). Used in all spoken domains, and education in the language began in Ethiopia in 2013, and primary school education in 2017. Several dialects are known. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Yulu: Unwritten. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in the Central African Republic (4,000 speakers), Democratic Republic of Congo (3,000), and South Sudan and Sudan (2,000 altogether, 2015). Language shift differs in each country: it is still vigorous in the CAR, but Sango and Gbaya are languages of wider

communication; in the DRC it is not indigenous; and in Sudan and South Sudan, Gbaya and Sudanese Arabic are used. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Europe

Alemannic: Written. Including Swiss German, and Alsatian dialects in France. Spoken in multiple varieties, crossing the borders of Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, France and Germany. The varieties have different degrees of vitality and mutual intelligibility, and the total population of Alemannic speakers is quoted by *Ethnologue* to be 5,724,2000. The *Encyclopedia* does not recognise these varieties as a single language, but UNESCO does, and rates it as Vulnerable.

Alpine Provençal: Not normally written. May be considered a single language with Provençal. Symmetrical and unique, with about 100,000 speakers in France, and the same number in Italy, where a Piedmontese dialect in Calabria is known as *Gardiol*. On both sides of the border the speakers are mostly elderly, and the shift to metropolitan French and Italian is strong. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Asturian-Leonese: Written. Asymmetrical and unique. Spoken in the border areas of Spain and Portugal – in the Spanish provinces of Asturias and León, and further into Portugal. Approximately 100,000 speakers in Spain and up to 15,000 in Portugal; used to some extent in the school system in Asturias. Despite being used in education, the media and public life in recent years, most of the speakers are elderly. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Basque: Written. Asymmetrical and unique (a language isolate). Spoken in the Basque Country of France and Spain. There are 72,000 speakers in France, 464,000 in Spain (2013). Used in education (some for instruction, some as a subject), and all aspects of public life. The language also has diaspora communities in other countries. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Francoprovençal: Not normally written. May be considered a single language with its Alpine counterpart. Symmetrical and dispersed, with a total of about 60,000 speakers in separate communities in France; formerly also spoken in Switzerland, with only a small remnant left there; in Italy there is an outlying dialect, *Faetar*, with about 700 speakers. Speakers are generally elderly. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Gascon/Aranese: Written. Asymmetrical and dispersed. Referred to as Gascon in France and Aranese in Catalonia. In Catalonia it is a statutory provincial language, and is used in local legislation, and there is a Centre of Linguistic Normalization to promote its use. In France, however, it is considered a variant of Occitan, despite the difficulty of communication with other variants. Occitan has 110,000 speakers in France (all varieties), while in Spain there were 3,810 speakers in the 1991 census. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Lombard: Written. Asymmetrical and unique. Spoken in Italy and across the border in the Swiss canton of Ticino, and other parts. In Italy the number of speakers is well over three million; in Switzerland, 303,000 (1995). Use of the language has diminished considerably. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

South Saami: Written. Symmetrical and dispersed, spoken by 300 speakers each in Norway and Sweden. Not spoken in border regions only. Few children

learn it. It is a statutory provincial language in Sweden. *North Saami* (Norway, Finland, Sweden) has many more speakers and is not restricted to border regions either. UNESCO: Severely endangered.

Venetan: Written. Asymmetrical and unique, extending across the borders of Veneto in northern Italy (3,800,000 speakers, 2002) into Slovenia and Croatia (50,000). Language shift is generally to Italian in all countries by the younger generations. UNESCO: Vulnerable.

Võro-Seto: Written. Spoken in Estonia and the Pechory country of Pskov region in Russia by a total of 60,000 people. Younger people in each country are shifting to the majority language. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

East and Southeast Asia

Kensiu: Not normally written. Symmetrical and unique, spoken by about 500 people each in Thailand and Malaysia, in four distinct dialects. Language shift is to Thai and Malay respectively. UNESCO: Seriously endangered.

Mru: Written, with its own recently developed alphabet. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken by an estimated 40,000 people in Bangladesh and an unknown number in Burma. In the Chittagong Hills of Bangladesh it is losing ground to Bengali. UNESCO: Seriously endangered.

Northern Asia and the Caucasus

Laz: Not normally written. Asymmetrical and unique, spoken in the border area of Georgia and Turkey by up to 2,000 and up to 30,000 speakers respectively. There is rapid shift to the national languages of those countries. UNESCO: Definitely endangered.

Conclusion

Because of the variable amount of detail to be extracted from the available sources relating to the endangered border languages listed in this chapter, it is not really possible to submit them to rigorous statistical analysis. If anything, this shows up the lacunae in scholarly knowledge of the state of languages under threat. However, the factors involved in their endangerment are enough to indicate why UNESCO placed each of them at particular points on the Vitality scale. What can be done, however, is to distinguish the factors that pertain to their border status from those factors that might be found with any endangered language that exists wholly within national boundaries, as in Table 12.1.

The interplay of the factors in Table 12.1 that goes to make up the conditions for endangerment is a delicate one. In the samples described, the immediate causes of endangerment are often obvious from the data, but in by no means all cases. Absolute numbers of speakers, for instance, bear almost no relation to the degree of a language's vitality. What is more important is the degree of *linguistic autonomy* in which a community lives – and in the case of border languages, that autonomy may be to different degrees on either side. There is also a subtle

TABLE 12.1 Border status factors in endangerment vs. general conditions for endangerment

<i>Factors Relating to Border Status</i>	<i>Other Factors Relating to Endangerment</i>
Asymmetrical/Symmetrical	Written (> public domains)/Unwritten (> private domains, spoken use)
Unique/Dispersed	Vernacular education/Majority language education
L2 is international/L2 is regional	Wide/Narrow range of public domains
More/Less institutional support on either side of border	Integration/Non-integration into majority population
Differences in legislation on language policy	Intergenerational transmission/Language shift
	Disputed or exploited land rights/Undisputed land rights
	Proximity to majority/Remoteness
	Transport and communication links/Absence of links
	Endogamy/Exogamy
	Legislation to protect lands (Reservations)/Absence of land protection
	Economic independence/Dependence

interplay between literacy and illiteracy in sustaining a language, which may differ markedly on either side of a border.

Of course, the world is also full of healthy border languages, peacefully coexisting in robust concord on either side, and this chapter has taken no account of those. I can also make no apology for the fact that the sample represents only certain parts of the world – those diverse and multilingual nations that have arbitrary or natural boundaries. From the point of view of the compiler of UNESCO linguistic data, however, it is as well to be mindful of the differences in status that exist in the world's threatened border languages.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in J.C. Anene (1970). *The International Boundaries of Nigeria, 1885–1960: the Framework of an Emergent African Nation*. London: Longman, p. 3.
- 2 Ibid.; further quoted in African Union Border Programme (2013). *Delimitation and Demarcation of Boundaries in Africa: General Issues and Case Studies*. Addis Ababa: African Union Border Programme.
- 3 Jeffrey Herbst (1989). “The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa.” *International Organization*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Autumn), pp. 675–676.

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13

HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING

Ethics in linguistic fieldwork, a provocation

Simon Musgrave and Nick Thieberger

Introduction

When we wrote this scenario in 2005, we wanted to draw attention to some significant ethical issues facing linguists. The combination of several factors in the preceding decade had raised new questions in this area as well as changing the parameters within which perennial questions could be viewed. First, the tradition of work which was developing in the wake of Himmelmann (1998) emphasised the importance of archiving data. Second, technological developments meant that audio and video data of high quality could be acquired more easily and more cheaply than previously. These developments also meant that archives would be digital, and a number of such archives were already in existence by 2005 (e.g. DOBES, PARADISEC, AILLA, ELAR).¹

We used the format of a game called a hypothetical, as devised by Geoffrey Robertson² in which a series of scenarios are put to a panel comprising people with the knowledge and background to be able to address the issues raised.

We aimed to highlight several issues against this backdrop, most of which flow from the question of who controls data in an archive. Issues around obtaining consent for making recordings were familiar to linguists in 2005, but how or whether the permissions obtained might apply to possible future use was less debated. Many of us were making more in-depth studies of small, or so-called 'endangered' languages in use in various contexts, but in the communities where these languages were spoken, the concept of a digital archive with potential online access might be hard to explain. This situation already raises difficult questions about 'informed consent', questions which also arise in relation to legacy data brought into the archive. We did (and still do) take the view that it is desirable that data collected before digital archiving was common practice should be digitised where possible. The scenario builds on this idea to raise the question of whether researchers with such data, or their literary executors, should see it as part of their obligation to the discipline to undertake such work. Considering these issues leads

again to the more basic questions about control of data and who can or should make decisions about how data can be used.

We saw these questions as being particularly difficult in relation to the kind of communities where many field linguists work. Such communities are often small, which means that individuals can be identified even when data is anonymised using practices suitable for larger participant groups. The identification can be on the basis of personal characteristics (voice, appearance), but can also be made on the basis of specific knowledge represented in the data. As with the issues already raised, these ones lead back to basic questions about who can access data and who can make decisions about access to data.

We raise one further issue in the scenario: what happens when restrictions on the dissemination of data come into conflict with the researcher's obligations to their discipline and to the pursuit of knowledge? The circumstances we set out may seem extreme, even far-fetched, but they were inspired by actual events in Australia which occurred about ten years before we wrote the scenario. A proposed bridge development was disputed by the traditional owners of the land involved, and a crucial part of the dispute concerned traditional knowledge which was restricted to fully initiated women. The way in which such claims were handled by the administrative and legal systems in Australia made us consider how such a conflict might play out in the world of linguistics.³

The scenario is a fictional background against which the panel can discuss the issues in character, and it should be made clear to the audience the characters do not reflect on the real-life panel members except in occasional asides, and that any resemblance to any person, living or dead, is inevitable.

The scenario

Our story is set in two very contrasting locations. One is the community of Yalijjaparingu or Yaliji for short in northern Australia, a place of astounding natural beauty and great linguistic interest. The community has speakers of several languages, but the two main ones are Liminal and Thimtal. Liminal is associated with the high country to the east and south of Yaliji and Thimtal is to the west and north, and includes the country on which Yaliji sits. The community has been in a slow decline for many years but recently a group of activists from younger generations has made some advances in renewing the community and protecting its traditional knowledge by arranging a lucrative deal with the pharmaceutical company S.F.T. Jugular. This deal centres on a plant growing in Thimtal country which has proven weight-reduction properties.

The second location is the Melbourne campus of the Brendan Nelson⁴ National University, a sad landscape of concrete architecture. This institution was formerly the Broadmeadows Teacher Training College, but it has made great strides in recent years. First it was an affiliated campus of LaTrobe University, then an independent TAFE⁵ college, and now finally it has joined the new national institution, Brendan Nelson National University, the flagship example of a public-private partnership in tertiary education. Enrolments are high, especially overseas students, and research output is also quite high. Of course, all staff are employed

on individual contracts, and a considerable portion of their salary comes via the performance-linked incentive payment (PLIP). Surprisingly, BNNU(Melb) (pronounced be-numb) has a flourishing linguistics department. Courses in cross-cultural communication and writing English for legal documents maintain good student numbers.

One of the leading lights of the department is Enid, a renowned theoretical syntactician. More than 20 years ago, Enid, then a young member of staff at the Broadmeadows Teacher Training College, did several seasons of fieldwork at Yaliji. Even then, her interests were mainly theoretical, and her work concentrated on question formation (wh-movement) in the Liminal language. She has published a series of important papers on this over the ensuing years, each one making important theoretical contributions although the same set of example sentences, 15 in all, is used in each of them. The highlight of her most up-to-date contribution is an analysis of a five-word utterance which has 17 functional heads in the tree, all motivated by economy principles. During her time in Yaliji, Enid made around 20 reel-to-reel audio tapes, then in her last field season she took a brand-new Sony Walkman Professional to the field. She was enthusiastic about this new technology, and the amount of material she recorded in that season was at least as much as in all previous trips together. And the kids of Yaliji shared Enid's enthusiasm for this new toy – they loved being able to listen to themselves, and she made several tapes of the kids with no intention of using them as data.

Then some years later, Enid had a brilliant undergraduate student, Josie. Fortunately, Josie's time at the campus coincided with the LaTrobe affiliation, and she was able to complete an honours degree. She was extremely interested in child language, and therefore Enid gave her some of the tapes of the Yaliji kids for her to work on as an honours project. Josie made a surprising discovery on those tapes: the kids were losing the segmental material of the case suffixes of the traditional language, but had innovated prosody associated with them. This meant that the children's speech now had a prosodic system of role marking. This discovery gained Josie a university medal for her honours thesis, a large part of which was subsequently published in the *Journal of Child Language*. She went to the US for postgraduate study, already a recognised figure in the field, and has now returned to Melbourne and to Enid's department. She still lectures on her great discovery to her first-year class, and plays sections of the tape in class to exemplify the system. This year, her class includes Anthea, an Aboriginal student, from Yaliji in fact, although Josie doesn't know this (so many students, how does one keep track of them all?).

Anthea is a very talented student, recipient of the Ken Hale Bursary from the Australian Linguistic Society, and she is keen to become a linguist in order to help maintain her people's knowledge. Anthea is not a fluent speaker of either of the languages from the community, but she thinks of herself as Thimtal: she was involved in negotiating the pharmaceutical deal, and she is also active in the group pursuing a Native Title claim for the Thimtal people. She is horrified initially just to hear her voice as a child played to a lecture theatre full of students, but she is even more horrified to hear herself speaking Liminal. After the class, she confronts Josie:

PROMPT:

Anthea to Josie: What right do you have to play this tape?

(The tape was made when Enid and the children were playing around with the Walkman, and no rights or permissions were negotiated)

Where did it come from? (We know it came from Enid, who had minimal rights in it anyway, but did that include the right to pass it on to someone else?)

Doesn't it belong to my people? Give it back to me!

What back-up copies exist? Is it archived? What about transcriptions?

The unfortunate controversy around Josie's tape casts a shadow over Enid's last years at BNNU(M) and she decides to take early retirement – she has a superannuation package from the good old days, and her needs are simple anyway: lentils, cat-food, and a personal subscription to *Linguistic Inquiry* cover most of her desires. The dean does some juggling and decides that he can afford to appoint a professor in the department. BNNU(M) are fortunate to be able to secure Andrew for the job, an internationally renowned expert in quantification. He has always been intrigued by a footnote in one of Enid's articles which suggests that the Liminal words which she glosses as quantifiers might equally validly be treated as evaluative, and on that interpretation, the language would have no quantifiers. Wishing to continue a tradition in the department, Andrew applies for funding from the Australian Research Council (under their most recent initiative [supply inane name]) and is successful, after a first attempt failed due to using the wrong font size in a sentence in the application (a radical new metric for measuring research excellence).

A major new research project is underway, with Andrew as CI, Josie as a partner, and with Freda as a very promising postgrad. Freda's role is particularly important, because Andrew knows from Enid's work that there are secret language varieties restricted by gender. As soon as he knows that the funding is secure, Andrew makes overtures to Enid about accessing her data. But there are problems: Enid is still shocked by the outcry about the kids' tape, and is very nervous about the status of any agreements she negotiated with the community.

PROMPT: Enid, did you have any form of agreement with the people you recorded about what you could do with the tapes and their content?

Assume there is nothing in writing and some of the speakers are dead.

Additionally, it becomes clear that Enid is rather disorganised – she doesn't know where the material is, the tapes are covered in mould due to poor storage and the few notes she made in Wordstar on her early CPM computer system were kept on five-inch floppy disks that are now illegible. The only hard copies of her notes were kept in a storeroom on campus and were obliterated in the great tea-trolley disaster of 1985 (an event of mythic importance to the old hands on campus – the younger staff ask in mystified tones “What is a tea-trolley?”). And Enid repeatedly says in mystified tones: “There should be more tapes”.

PROMPT: Enid, do you feel any obligation to share your tapes with other researchers? Aren't they your work? There is nothing in your professional society's ethics statement about this that could guide you.

How should she be bound by personal agreements with speakers, especially those who have died?

Andrew is offering to organise and pay for proper archiving of the tapes. Should Enid feel obliged to accept this? (Speaker numbers have dropped drastically over the last 20 years).

At last, Andrew, Josie and Freda travel to Yaliji and begin work. They meet Henry, who is working on the linguistic aspects of the Native Title claim which is being prepared for the Thimtal people, and they agree to collaborate. The research team are somewhat disheartened and saddened to find that only a handful of fluent speakers remain, and they devote a considerable amount of energy to documentation activities, in addition to their main focus on quantification. But everyone finds plenty of interesting material: Josie has excellent data on the development of new varieties amongst the young people, Freda finds that the old women are very happy to share their secret language with her, because Enid was never very interested in it after she found that questions were formed in the same way in all varieties. Andrew's mood is improving rapidly also, as his data very quickly show that Enid was correct in her speculative footnote: the apparent quantifiers really are evaluative and he has a wonderful lack of success when he attempts to elicit quantifiers in all the contexts which he can think of. By the end of the three-month field trip, he has already finished the first draft of a paper for *Language*, setting out the basics of his astonishing findings, and he is confident that BNNU(M) will not be the pinnacle of his career.

PROMPT to Freda: Freda comes to Andrew and tells him that quantifiers do exist in the women's secret language register. Andrew demands data, but Freda tells him that she cannot show it to him, all the crucial examples are from material which only women can know about.

How should Andrew behave? Should he accept Freda's assertion, or can he maintain his interpretation of the data?

How should Freda behave? How far should she, a lowly postgrad, go in trying to prevent Andrew, a renowned professor, from publishing what she knows to be false claims?

What possibilities might there be for eliciting less sensitive data? Or for negotiating some easing of restrictions from the women?

Some years have passed since the initial field trip. Meanwhile, the Native Title claim is about to go to court. Amongst Andrew's publications (PLIP time again, and it looks like a trip to Paris this year) are some on the history of Liminal and Thimtal showing the relationship between them, based on the regular sound correspondence that is apparent in the language names. Liminal is clearly more representative of the proto-language. Andrew's work is well accepted in the linguistic community. Henry, in developing his Native Title linguistic report, has

used Andrew's analysis, but has added to it an analysis using linguistic stratigraphy. He has been able to show that the differentiation between the two languages occurred before the arrival of European animals, as these names are the same in both languages. He has also traced the introduction of a particular religious cult associated with a particular local artefact and argued that this clearly antedates European contact and shows continuity.

The linguist for the State has criticised Henry's analysis, by appealing to 'synopated equilibrium', a populist theory whereby language change can only occur if there has been a dramatic impact on speakers of the language (the State plans to call the proponent of this theory as an expert witness). The State maintains that this dramatic event was the coming of Europeans and the consequent migration of the current occupants to Thimtal and Liminal country. Therefore any changes must have occurred after contact and the current Yaliji residents have no right to claim that land. The State is also using Josie's analysis of the change in children's speech to suggest loss of the traditional language and therefore a break in continuity.

Henry, in the course of writing the report, has been asked by the lawyers for the claimants to locate all material ever recorded or written about the two languages of the claim region. Is there something about Enid's material that shouldn't be exposed to the public gaze and which will cause Henry some problems if he adds it to the list of recorded material?

As Enid never listed her primary material anywhere it is not possible for it to be located. She believes that these are her recordings and she should keep them in case she ever wants to do anything more with them.

Anthea and Freda decide to go and visit Enid together to ask for the tapes so they can deposit them in the Scientific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Archiving (SCIATICA). Enid gets grumpy at their presumptuousness.

PROMPT: Is it Enid's current research that shows that Andrew's work has all been male-centred and therefore has missed out on crucial site-related information only available to women traditional owners?

One of the many publications which have resulted included a transcription of a narrative by one of the Thimtal elders recounting his links to his country. This appeared in a journal of international repute but restricted readership, *Herbivorous Linguistics*, and has passed largely unnoticed. However, Anthea is still a student at BNNU(M), a very successful one who is about to enter her honours year. She reads the paper as she does background research for her thesis, and is amazed to see that the narrative reveals the location where the medicinal plant grows, a plant whose properties are still being investigated by S.F.T. Jugular. After discussing the matter with other community leaders they make an official complaint to the BNNU(M) research ethics committee. Andrew is asked to account to the committee for his behaviour, and he produces a signed consent form from the owner of the narrative – who has since died.

The Yaliji community protest that the speaker did not have personal rights to the knowledge – it belonged to the whole community, and that applies even more now that he is dead.

PROMPT: Anthea, you respect Andrew’s research but think he should have been more careful in publishing secret information.

Andrew’s defence appeals to the epoch in which he did this work when the issues being discussed here were not considered. Further, he asserts that the speaker wanted this story published to show the extent of his own knowledge of traditional plant uses.

**Could Andrew have foreseen the uses to which his research would be put?
Is it the nature of long-term storage of information that at some time it will be used for purposes not foreseen by the speakers or the recorders?
Is it a sufficient defence for Andrew to say that he had signed permission from an individual speaker?**

S.F.T. Jugular’s lawyers threaten Andrew with legal action for breach of commercial confidence – are they a legitimate party to this dispute? There is additional pressure here because the research into the plant’s properties is being carried out in the labs of BNNU(Q) in Brisbane and the arrangement is a substantial income source for the university.

The community tell Andrew that they have lost faith in him and that he must return all the material which he has. What should he do? All the original recordings have now been archived at SCIATICA – can material be withdrawn from there? And the languages are no longer being spoken – the material which Andrew has collected is the only documentation of two languages which is securely archived (Enid’s tapes are still somewhere in the cats’ den) – what is his responsibility to that material?

The ARC hear of the problem, and warn Andrew that no further money will be disbursed until the issue is resolved. And he knows that if publication of his findings from Yaliji is blocked, he will struggle to generate other grant income (not to mention PLIP) over the coming years.

How can he resolve this quandary?

We move on a few more years, and Australian linguistics suffers a terrible loss. One day, Enid’s neighbour notices that the cats are looking very hungry and that the latest issue of LI has been sitting in the mailbox for almost a week (unthinkable!). He calls the police, who break into the house and find that Enid has been dead for several days. BNNU(M) holds a well-attended memorial and a respectful obituary will appear in AJL. But there is no will! Enid was never a worldly person, and her assets are few, but someone has to take responsibility for tidying up the loose ends. In the end, her great-niece steps forward and agrees to empty the house, knowing that she will receive some share of the proceeds via her mother,

Enid's only close relative. It's a terrible job (those cats), but near the end of her labours, she finds a cardboard box full of cassettes. Mixed in with a Bay City Rollers' greatest hits, three disco compilations and the soundtrack of the Charles and Diana wedding are 12 previously unknown cassettes from Yaliji. Great-niece 1) throws out the lot, or 2) contacts Andrew and asks what to do. Andrew knows that the question must be referred to the Yaliji community, but his relationship with them has completely broken down – he has never been able to obtain permission to publish his quantification data, and he languishes at BNNU(M), an embittered man. So he asks Josie and Freda (now a postdoctoral fellow) to make the journey and to try to obtain permission at least for the tapes to be sent to SCIATICA. When Josie and Freda reach Yaliji, they find that there are no full speakers of either language left, and although the community council are ever more powerful and active (on the back of Jugular's money), it is not clear that anyone can claim a position as owner or guardian of traditional knowledge.

PROMPT: Anthea, who should they negotiate with, the community council, surviving members of speakers families (the cassette labels at least identify some speakers), the best surviving speakers?

How should they respond when people say “We had an agreement with Enid, we trusted her, but it doesn't apply anymore”?

The council has been successful negotiating with Jugular, now they demand money for rights to the tapes. What should Josie and Freda's response be to that?

Some of the tapes have women's secret language on them – but that register is now no longer spoken, and as far as Freda can tell, the knowledge that went with it also vanished (she even sees a boy child wearing a t-shirt with a secret woman's symbol on it). If this material is archived, what access restrictions should be placed on it?

How should Enid and Josie respond if the community say “You can have the tapes, but under no circumstances let Andrew have access ever”?

Possible conclusions

Ideal outcome

All of Enid's tapes were found by Freda, then cleaned and properly archived by SCIATICA. Yaliji requested a copy for their local language centre which was run by a bipartisan committee representing both language groups. Anthea has enthused the community to the extent that there is a strong language programme in both languages, based mainly on a group of old people who are relearning stories and songs from the tapes.

Likely outcome

Enid's tapes are lost, except for the few that Josie deposited at SCIATICA.

The Native Title case has caused huge division in the Yaliji community and S.F.T. Jugular has profited from the division to pay off one small family group.

Despite the efforts of the younger activists, there are no royalties from the pharmaceutical contract for the Yaliji community.

Andrew has been appointed to the ARC and spends most of his time writing poisoned reviews of his colleagues' funding applications. He is working on a vitriolic book that will signal his departure from linguistics. He has already established a practice as a shamanistic healer that will take him into his twilight years.

Josie reached an agreement with Anthea about how Josie could use the tapes and they both ended up being good friends. Josie is involved with the Yaliji language centre and assists with materials for reintroducing the language.

Anthea has left Yaliji for a prestigious American university with the offer of a PhD scholarship (with Josie's support) to write an ethnography of linguists in Aboriginal communities.

Henry's linguistic report for the Native Title case turned up other previously unknown recordings and notes on Thimtal and Liminal. Because the ALS amended their guidelines in 2006 to recommend that data be safely archived he was able to convince the legal team that this new material be deposited at SCI-ATICA rather than being lost in the legal process.

Freda wrote a fine PhD thesis but was more excited by the types of ethical decisions required of the work she was doing and has become a professional ethicist.

Performed by Jeanie Bell, Barb Kelly, David Nash, Rachel Nordlinger, Ruth Singer, and Michael Walsh as an entertainment after two long days of papers at the Australian Linguistic Society conference, Thursday 29th September, 2005. 5.45 pm. The script has since been adapted for a broader audience.

Scenario written by Simon Musgrave and Nick Thieberger and the presentation was presided over by John Henderson (who added his own flourishes).

Afterword

The questions which concerned us in 2005 are still of concern in 2021 but there are now several very visible forums for debate and various proposals for resolving problems.⁶ A general concern for improving access to data across all disciplines has led to the FAIR principles for data sharing. But these principles do “not fully engage with Indigenous Peoples rights and interests” because they ignore power differentials and historical contexts.⁷ Specific principles for Indigenous Data Governance have therefore been developed under the acronym CARE: Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics. These principles were developed by the Global Indigenous Data Alliance; other organisations, such as Local Contexts, have developed licensing and labelling for traditional knowledge⁸ and software tools to assist in managing the representations and dissemination of such knowledge (Christen, Merrill and Wynne 2017).

Another important change is that in 2021, ethical issues around archiving, and indeed around working with Indigenous data more generally, must be addressed in relation to the question of whether archiving (or research) is itself a colonial practice (Thieberger 2020; Thieberger and Musgrave 2007). Consideration of what is archived and who has control of archived material can only take place

if we take account of “the biases coded into seemingly neutral standards and curatorial practices” (Christen, Merrill and Wynne 2017). Although some taking this perspective have seen archiving language data as a fundamentally flawed endeavour (Perley 2012), others have suggested that language documentation and archiving controlled by communities can be important in moving beyond colonial constructions of knowledge (Agyekum 2018). Reflection of this kind can only lead to better answers to the questions.

We learned of the sad death of our colleague and friend, Barb Kelly, as this chapter went to press. Barb was a panelist in the hypothetical performance in 2005 and we offer this chapter in her memory.

Notes

- 1 DOBES: https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/islandora/object/tla%3A1839_00_0000_0000_0001_305B_C, PARADISEC: www.paradisec.org.au, AILLA: <https://ailla.utexas.org/>, ELAR: www.elararchive.org/.
- 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Robertson.
- 3 Wikipedia gives a good summary of the matter: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindmarsh_Island_bridge_controversy.
- 4 Insert here the name of the current Minister for higher education.
- 5 Technical and Further Education.
- 6 A partial exception is explaining an online archive to research participants. The extent to which digital technologies, especially the mobile phone, have been adopted in all parts of the world mean that such explanations have become simpler.
- 7 www.gida-global.org/care.
- 8 <https://localcontexts.org/>.

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SECTION III

Empirical studies

Towards sustainable language
maintenance and use



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14

SUSTAINABLE PATHWAYS FOR A FLEDGLING LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

The case of Kaurna of the Adelaide
Plains, South Australia

Rob Amery

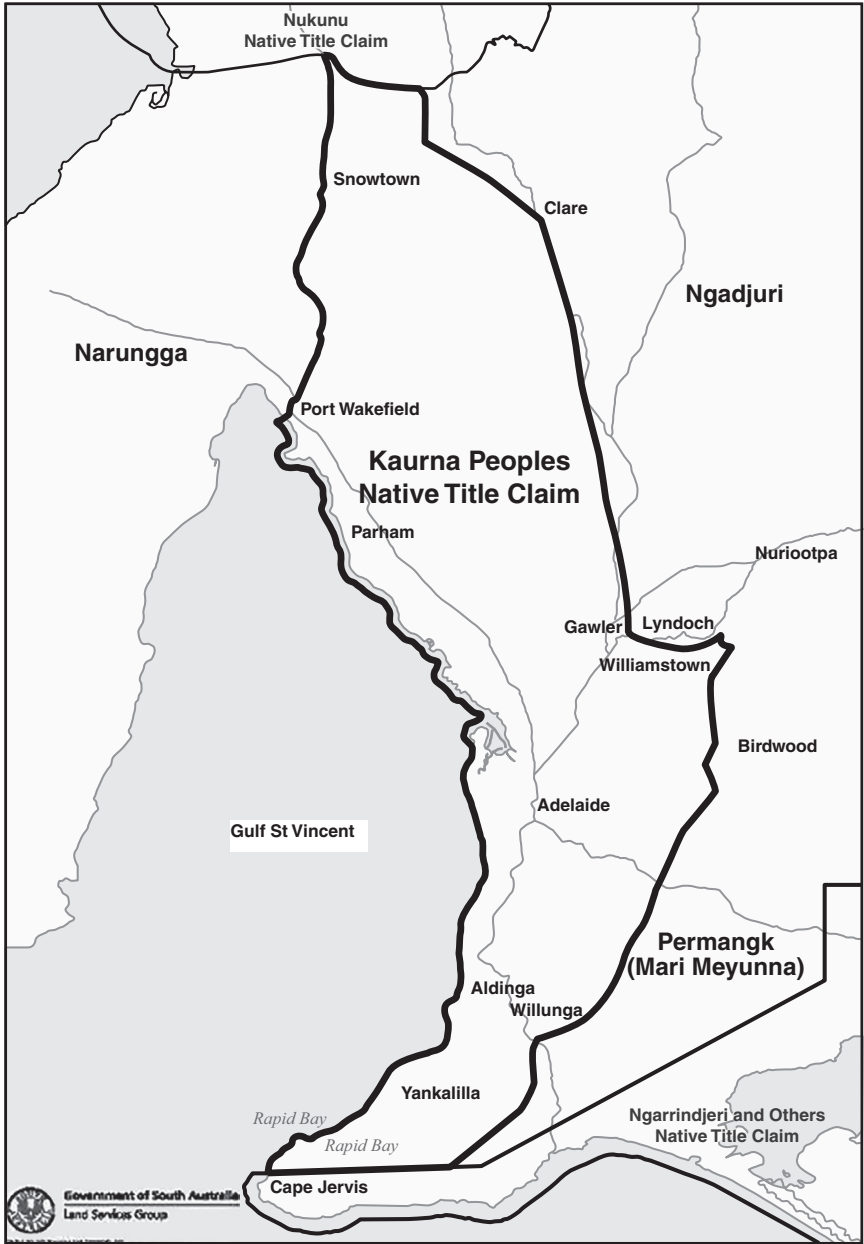
14.1 Introduction

The Adelaide Plains on the eastern side of Gulf St Vincent in South Australia are the lands of the people now known as the Kaurna. Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, is located in the heart of Kaurna country. The colony of South Australia was established in 1836 following earlier activity by sealers and whalers in preceding decades beginning perhaps as early as 1800. The Kaurna were heavily impacted by kidnapping of women, introduced diseases and the loss of their lands. They bore the brunt of colonisation in South Australia.

The Kaurna people perhaps numbered around 700 people at the time of colonisation, but men heavily outnumbered women and there were very few children represented within the population profile. Already heavily impacted by smallpox which spread from the eastern states via the river systems and Aboriginal trading networks, the population plummeted further with additional introduced diseases including influenza and typhoid. William Cawthorne, who knew the Kaurna people well, claimed that only a handful of survivors remained in the early 1860s (Cawthorne, 1865 in Hemming, 1990: 132). When Teichelmann sent his Kaurna dictionary manuscript to George Grey, then in Cape Town, South Africa, he wrote in the cover note, “Also, I do not entirely approve of the orthography of the native language as we have spelt it, but it is useless now to alter any thing in it after the Tribe has ceased to be” (Teichelmann, 1857).

From the mid-19th century, the remaining Adelaide Plains people were relocated and dispersed to the lands of neighbouring language groups. Many of their descendants have since returned to Adelaide, the ancestral lands of their forebears. See Amery (2016b) for further details.

Those who actively identify as a Kaurna person today number in the hundreds and is increasing as more and more people establish a connection to the Adelaide Plains people through historical and genealogical research. All Kaurna people also have European ancestry and most are also descendants of neighbouring



MAP 14.1 Kurna Territory (Kurna Native Title Claim area).

Source: Courtesy of Land Services Group, Government of South Australia.

language groups, principally Narungga to the immediate west and Ngarrindjeri to the east. Kurna people today trace their Kurna ancestry back to just eight apical ancestors (Amery, 2016b: 514).

14.2 Reclaiming and restoring the Kurna language

The call to restore the Kurna language as a spoken language came in the mid-1980s. On the one hand, Kurna Elder Georgina Yambo Williams approached the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) at Batchelor in the Northern Territory to hold a course in Kurna linguistics. SAL were not in a position to accede to Georgina's request as a course for one person was not a viable option. At around the same time, Alitya Wallara Rigney, then Principal of Kurna Plains School (the only urban Aboriginal school in South Australia), approached David Tassel in the Aboriginal Education Unit of the South Australian Education Department to establish Kurna language teaching programs in schools. Neither of these requests were fulfilled at that time, but the desire was there.

Just a few years later funding was obtained from the Commonwealth Government National Aboriginal Languages Program (NALP) and a songwriter's workshop was held in early 1990 where songs were written in the three local Aboriginal languages: Ngarrindjeri, Narungga and Kurna. Just seven of the 33 songs written included the Kurna language, but significantly, this was the first time that novel Kurna sentences were constructed since the language went to sleep more than half a century earlier. The songbook and accompanying cassette tape was well-received within the community and schools. Subsequent Kurna language workshops were held over the next few years and interest in the language grew. Alitya Wallara Rigney introduced Kurna as the school's Language Other Than English (LOTE) program at Kurna Plains School in 1992 and in 1994 the Kurna language was introduced at the nearby Elizabeth City High School and Elizabeth West Adult Campus.

Early work was based entirely on Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840), henceforth T&S. In 1990, Jane Simpson made Teichelmann (1857), henceforth TMs available to supplement T&S. These sources were Kurna to English with no English findex. In order to write the Kurna songs in 1990 we had to look manually through the entire wordlist of 2,000 terms to locate the words we wanted. Later, when searchable electronic wordlists were made available the task became much easier.

In 1995 Amery commenced his PhD through archival and action research, continuing to work with these school programs and with the community. Amery pursued primary and secondary Kurna sources through archival research. Source material was located, collated and analysed. Many of the sources had already been located by Jane Simpson, then at Sydney University. Kurna words were compared with those of neighbouring closely related languages including Nukunu, Narungga, Ngadjuri, Barngarla and Adnyamathanha. In particular, linguist Luise Hercus had made recordings of hundreds of words from the neighbouring Nukunu language as they were remembered by several elderly people in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Hercus, 1992).

14.3 Re-introducing the Kurna language

When the first Kurna language workshops were convened in the early 1990s, scarcely a word was remembered by members of the Kurna community. The few Aboriginal words that were known could usually be traced back to Ngarrindjeri or Narungga, or even to Wirangu on the far west coast of South Australia. Some Kurna words were in fact known. But these were usually words such as *mara* ‘hand’ or *mudlha* ‘nose’ that were shared with Narungga and were identified by Kurna people at that time as Narungga words. The word *kapi* ‘cigarette’ has clearly identifiable Kurna origins,¹ yet was identified as a Ngarrindjeri word by Kurna people in the 1990s. It must’ve been borrowed into Ngarrindjeri from Kurna in the early sealing and whaling era.

In the 1990s, schools were the main focus for re-introducing the Kurna language. Nowadays the public arena has emerged as the primary location for the use of Kurna language.

14.4 Kurna language education

With more than 80% of South Australia’s population living in Kurna country the demand for teachers of Kurna is intense. A great many schools across Adelaide and its hinterland are looking for teachers of Kurna. Few Kurna people are trained teachers, and those that are, do not have sufficient knowledge of the language to mount a successful Kurna language program.

The need for training and professional development of teachers of Aboriginal languages has long been identified, yet even less professional development is now provided by the South Australian Department for Education than was offered in the 1990s. This issue is discussed in more depth in Section 14.8.3.

For a decade now, the Department for Education has entered into partnership agreements with Aboriginal organisations to enhance language and culture programs in schools. In the Kurna case funding was initially directed to KWP and transferred to KWK since 2014. In the latest round of funding in 2022, \$33,333 was awarded to KWK. Under the terms of the agreement, KWK will develop an overall strategic work-plan with goals and milestones, refine and trial Kurna content elaborations for the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages, deliver training programs and professional learning activities, continue production of Kurna language resources (hard copy, digital and online) and, importantly for the first time, provide support, including professional development to schools. The Department lists 21 schools offering Kurna language programs in 2022 (<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-language-schools-offering-program>). Many of these programs are in urgent need of support. The quality of some programs is questionable and some listed programs may not actually be delivered for want of a teacher.

14.5 Kurna language in the public domain

Kurna now serves as an emblematic language. Speeches of welcome in the Kurna language are now commonplace at major events such as the Festival of

Adelaide, Womadelaide world music festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival and so on. Few people in the audience will understand the speech, but the medium is the message.

Since the naming of Warriappendi Alternative School in 1980, Kurna naming activity has mushroomed. Kurna people are adopting Kurna names for themselves, and are frequently naming their children and pets with Kurna names. Kurna names are also in demand from the wider community to name institutions, programs, projects, buildings, rooms, playgrounds, parks, ovals, walking trails, streets and localities. Even the city tram and the Adelaide City Council free solar bus bear Kurna names Kardi Munaintya ‘emu dreaming’ and Tindo ‘sun’. The occasional business has adopted a Kurna name. Demand for Kurna names and translations is increasing as local governments and other organisations are developing Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs).

Kurna language has also been incorporated into public artworks, some of which are situated in prominent locations in the heart of the city. The first such use of the Kurna language was in the Yerrakartarta installation outside the Hyatt Hotel in 1995.

14.6 Kurna language in the home and in the community

By contrast to use within the public domain, use of Kurna within the home and community is limited. Whereas the home is one of the last domains of use for a receding language, it is one of the hardest domains in which to re-introduce a language. Jack Kanya Buckskin is one who has gone a long way in introducing the Kurna language to his children who are reportedly at least semi-native speakers of the language. There are some concepts that they only know in Kurna, others that they only know in English and others that they know in both languages (personal communication Jack Kanya Buckskin). If I talk to Jack’s eldest daughter in Kurna, she certainly understands what I say, though she will reply in English (personal experience, Jan 2017; Jan 2021). In some households, it is the children coming home from school who are teaching the parents a few words of Kurna.

In order to try to increase the use of Kurna in the home and in the community, the KWP project holds occasional Kurna language immersion activities based around manufacture of artefacts, traditional dance workshops, card games and so on. Whilst these language immersion weekends have been good in terms of building community and friendships and in terms of teaching people how to make clubs, possum skin footballs, *kardiwapa* (an emu feather shuttlecock) and so on, they have not yet been a resounding success in terms of increasing the amount of spoken Kurna language.

14.7 Language planning considerations

The Kurna language movement grew in a somewhat ad hoc manner. Whilst “linguistic wellbeing” was specifically mentioned in the Kurna Aboriginal Community and Heritage Association (KACHA) constitution formed in the mid-1980s (see Amery, 2016a: 10), Amery never received an invite or response to

several letters he had written to KACHA in the early 1990s. During the course of researching and writing a PhD whilst concurrently working with Kaurna language programs in schools, Amery received many requests for Kaurna names and translations, both from members of the Kaurna community, but also from wider society. Amery often provided the information, but advised that the requestor should consult with Kaurna Elders. He was never sure if they did. In 2002, together with Kaurna Elders Dr Alitya Wallara Rigney and Dr Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien, he formed Kaurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP) which met monthly to provide oversight of and direction for the Kaurna language movement. Requests for Kaurna names, translations and information were added to the agenda, discussed at the monthly meeting and followed up afterwards with the sending of the relevant section of the minutes and a sound file to the requestor. The requestor was invited to attend to discuss their request face-to-face. In 2013 Kaurna Warra Karrpanthi (KWK), a sister organisation to KWP was formed as an incorporated Aboriginal organisation. KWK now deals with the requests, whilst KWP, based at the University of Adelaide, focusses more on research and resource production. The volume of requests for names and translations has placed a considerable and unrelenting workload on the Kaurna language movement.

14.7.1 *Codification of the Kaurna language*

In 2010, at the insistence of Jack Kanya Buckskin, KWP adopted a phonemically inspired spelling system. Up until that time Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) spellings had been used and the spelling of words taken from other sources such as Wyatt (1879), Williams (1840), Gaimard (1833) and so on were adapted to adhere to T&S conventions. T&S spelling was reasonable, but there were a number of obvious shortcomings. It did not clearly distinguish between interdental, alveolar and retroflex consonants; it did not adequately distinguish between the three phonemic rhotics, between long and short vowels or between the velar nasal /ŋ/ and the velar nasal + stop sequence /ŋk/. T&S often unnecessarily wrote double consonants. They also wrote both voiced and unvoiced stops when there is no phonemic voicing distinction and they over-represented the vowels using the letters a, e, i, o and u when there are only three phonemic vowel qualities /a/, /i/ and /u/. The adoption of revised spelling has been well-received by new learners of Kaurna and certainly makes the teaching of Kaurna much more straightforward. Once the system has been internalised, the teacher knows exactly how any word should be pronounced, at least according to the phonemic forms adopted by KWP that appear in the Kaurna dictionary, learner's guide and all resources produced and revised since 2010. Adelaide City Council has embraced the revised spelling system and undertook to use it in all website postings and to adopt revised spelling whenever a sign needed to be replaced.

However, not everyone has accepted the spelling reform. Many Kaurna people continue to use old spelling in their names, which KWP/KWK accepts. Some flatly refuse to embrace the revised spelling, claiming that it has changed the language. According to Karl Telfer in 2014, changing the spellings used by T&S means "you're cutting away the original and replacing it with something that

isn't authentic. It doesn't sound right and it doesn't connect to the land itself' (in Chaudry, 2015: 38). Karl has been the curator of many public art installations, murals and signage that incorporate Kurna text. He prefers to use words from William Williams (1840) and their original spelling. But the Williams (1840) wordlist is brief, so Karl is forced to turn to T&S and TMs whereupon he uses their original spellings. This sometimes results in a text with mixed spellings. Karl believes that Williams (1840) is a more authentic source:

The way he [Williams] wrote down the language was the way it sounded phonetically. I think Teichman <sic> and Sherman <sic> tried to do the same but a lot of things were missed. William Williams wasn't here as a missionary to bring the people into a different religious way of thinking, to colonise and Christianise and homogenise the people. Teichman <sic> and Sherman <sic> – they were just here to use our language against us. Mr Williams who recorded that other list, he was walking over Country and talking to people – I'm your friend, you're my friend, how do we understand each other you know?

(Karl Telfer, 2014 in Chaudry, 2015: 38)

Objectively, the Williams (1840) wordlist is far inferior to T&S. The wordlist is short and few senses of words are recorded. The definitions are sometimes wrong. The initial velar nasal is often omitted, or else it is spelt with h. The letter u is inconsistent and used for both /u/ and /a/. The sentence examples exhibit Pidgin Kurna features and so on.

Others are constructing words by wrongly applying word-forming processes or that are simply nonsense (Amery, 2013). Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) have been releasing posters and a calendar since 2009 with nonsense forms supposedly meaning Recognition, Respecting, Righting, Reforming, Reciprocating, Responsibility, Reparations, Looking, Learning, Lore, Life, Legacy, Loyalty, Language, Literature, Legitimacy, Leadership and Liberation.

14.7.2 Kurna language resources

A good suite of Kurna language resources has been produced including the essential alphabet book, learner's guide (Amery & Simpson, 2013, 2021), phrasebook (Gale et al., 2021), wordlist and dictionary as well as songbooks (Schultz et al., 1999), funeral protocols book (Amery & Rigney, 2006, 2020), playing cards, postcards and greeting cards. Since 2012 innovative online resources have also been produced to supplement the print-based resources and engage the younger generations. Foremost amongst these is the Pirltawardli Puppet Show (Figure 14.1) where 21 short episodes ranging from one to four minutes long appear on a dedicated playlist. Jack Kanya Buckskin has used the Tarnta (male red kangaroo puppet) to interview Aboriginal identities around Adelaide from a range of occupations for his Friends of Pirltawardli series. In these interviews, Jack is able to introduce Kurna expressions, the terms for various occupations and so on in an engaging and informative manner. A series of eight Kurna language lessons



FIGURE 14.1 Pirtawardli Puppet Show postcard.

Source: Courtesy of KWP Team, University of Adelaide.

with Jack Kanya Buckskin have also been produced plus some Kurna conversations. As at 30 June 2021, a total of 87 videos have been produced by KWP. The Kurna for Kids YouTube channel currently has 432 subscribers. KWP video clips have been screened on National Indigenous Television (NITV), Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) and Indigitube thus giving them a wider circulation beyond Adelaide and beyond Kurna country. ICTV, for instance, serves remote Aboriginal communities throughout Australia and features more than 100 video clips in and about the Kurna language. The majority of these video clips were produced by the KWP Team. A detailed discussion of the Kurna language resources is found in Amery et al. (2022).

Despite the arguably impressive array of Kurna language resources that have been developed for a reawakening language, it is still a challenge to provide meaningful reading material for learners of Kurna. The National Library of Australia worked together with KWK to produce a Kurna children's book *Ngana ngai? (Who am I?)* which includes wonderful illustrations of Australian animals and birds with a short text in Kurna and English about each (Figure 14.2).

The KWP Team produced a short video clip² for the National Library of Kira Yaltu Bain reading *Ngana ngai?* to her niece. This is a good start, but much, much more of this kind of material needs to be produced. The KWP Team is planning to produce a children's book or perhaps a series of books featuring the Pirtawardli puppet characters which already have a profile and are familiar to many children who are likely to make use of the Kurna resources.



FIGURE 14.2 Sample page from *Ngana ngai?* children's book.

Source: Courtesy of National Library of Australia and Kaurra Warra Karrpanthi.

14.7.3 Future projects

Kaurra language worker Taylor Tipu Power-Smith has put forward the idea of producing a Kaurra Teacher's Kit comprising the published language resources (learner's guide, dictionary and so on) together with flash cards, posters, ideas and resources for language games and classroom activities so that the teacher has at her/his fingertips the resources they need. This kit will be produced in the very near future.

Katrina Karlapina Power is working through KWP with the Women's and Children's Hospital on an initiative to bestow a Kaurra birth-order name on every child, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that is born at the hospital. The mother might be presented with a possum-skin ankle bracelet, or some other vegan-friendly alternative, that is etched with the name. This is a generous gift by Kaurra people that the individual can accept or reject as the case may be, but has the potential of greatly increasing awareness of Kaurra language and culture amongst both present and future generations. The beauty of birth-order names is that they are a given once we have some information about the existence of siblings, thus there is no need to ponder over the choice of the name. Kaurra has distinct names for the first up to the ninth born and distinguished further for male and female (see Amery & Simpson, 2013: 15–16).

Katrina is also working through KWP with funeral directors to give an acknowledgement of Kaurra country at the beginning of every funeral ceremony held on Kaurra country. Furthermore, we are providing them with a copy of *Kaurra Palti Wanga* (Amery & Rigney, 2006/2020), the Kaurra funeral protocol resource booklet and CD so that they can discuss options with Kaurra families for inclusion of Kaurra liturgy and Kaurra hymns.

14.8 Towards a Sustainable Kurna language movement

Some 30 years on since those initial efforts to write Kurna songs, the Kurna language movement still faces many challenges. Some aspects have become easier. For instance, advances in technology have made quality resource production a much easier task and we now have a good set of basic Kurna language resources.

A number of Kurna people now have considerable knowledge of the Kurna language including phonology, lexicon and grammar. Jack Kanya Buckskin has developed a reasonably high level of fluency and spontaneity and, as discussed earlier, his children are emerging as semi-native speakers of Kurna.

On the other hand, factional differences and jealousies within the Kurna community have grown. Some reject the leadership of KWP/KWK in language matters and prefer to pursue their own version of the language. The South Australian Department for Education has become much more difficult to work with and little progress has been made in that direction.

The demand for Kurna Welcome to Country speeches, for Kurna dance and cultural performances, for Kurna translations, for teachers of Kurna language, for involvement in cultural programs in schools, for the establishment of Kurna language programs and so on has placed a heavy burden on Kurna language activists, who at times feel totally overwhelmed.

14.8.1 Generational change

The Kurna language movement has sadly lost some of its strongest advocates. Ngarrpadla (Auntie) Josie Agius, co-convener of the Ngarrindjeri, Narrunga and Kurna Songs project passed away in 2015 (*New Daily*, Dec. 31 2015). It was Ngarrpadla Josie who insisted on including the writing of Kurna songs in this project. Less than two years later, Ngarrpadla Dr Alitya Wallara Rigney, co-founder of KWP, passed away on 13th May 2017. Ngarrpadla Alitya hosted the early Kurna language workshops at Kurna Plains School and introduced Kurna as the school's language program in 1992 against departmental advice at the time. She was an ardent supporter and advocate for the language. Kevin Duigan, a non-Aboriginal teacher at Kurna Plains School who coordinated the school choir, wrote several Kurna songs and performed many others, passed in 2014 whilst Cherie Warrara Watkins, teacher of Kurna language at Kurna Plains School and Freemont-Elizabeth High School passed in November 2019. Kauwanu Stevie Gadlabarti Goldsmith also died suddenly in July 2017. Gadlabarti had just turned 60 and was really enjoying life and the work he was doing with the KWP Team at the University of Adelaide. Gadlabarti was skilled both in front of and behind the camera and was a wonderful role model for the younger members of the team. Gadlabarti's death hit the other members of the KWP Team hard as, unlike the others, his death from a sudden heart attack was so unexpected. His departure left a massive gap, both in terms of the work he was doing with the KWP Team, but also emotionally. It was very difficult for others to pick up the pieces after Gadlabarti's passing.

Kauwanu Lewis O'Brien is now in his 90s and whilst still very active for his age, he has withdrawn from running the affairs of KWP/KWK and makes far fewer public appearances than he used to. Others have also effectively withdrawn from the Kaurna language movement and have moved on to other things. Some have moved interstate to live, study and work. At the end of 2022, Amery will retire from his position at the University of Adelaide where he teaches a course in Kaurna linguistics and is currently exploring options to ensure that the course continues after his departure.

The challenge has been to recruit younger members of the community to fill the gaps and to grow the Kaurna language movement. The movement has had some success in recruiting some wonderful younger Kaurna language workers and teachers of Kaurna language (see Amery & Buckskin, 2012). But many, many more are needed.

14.8.2 Need for leadership and direction

KWK was formed to enable Kaurna people to have more control and oversight over the Kaurna language movement and the decisions made (see Amery & Buckskin, 2013). All directors of KWK are Kaurna people. Whilst several non-Indigenous people attend meetings, they do so only in an advisory capacity. If a vote is taken, only Kaurna people may vote. Since its formation in 2013, KWK has had five chairpersons. KWK has struggled to find its feet. The loss of key personalities as discussed earlier has not helped. Attending to the paperwork and administration has been a constant challenge. To date the activity of KWK has been largely reactive rather than proactive and many requests have not been dealt with in a timely fashion. Some members of KWK have expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration at recent performance of the organisation and its leadership. Some feel that KWK has been doing little more than trying to survive and that the time has come to move forward.

In many respects, the Kaurna language movement is a victim of its own success. Interest in and demand for the Kaurna language has grown remarkably and it is exceedingly difficult to meet that demand. All involved with KWK lead busy lives. Most have other work or study commitments and their effort within KWK is voluntary. When family, sports and social commitments are added in, KWK can seem like yet another burden. Many of the requests and tasks that KWK is presented with are exceedingly difficult to address and people often feel that they do not have sufficient knowledge to fulfil the request or even to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion.

14.8.3 Training and mentoring

Capacity building is key to building a sustainable language movement and collaboration has been a constant since the outset. Cherie Warrara Watkins and Nelson Varcoe, the first teachers of the Kaurna language at Elizabeth City High School and Elizabeth West Adult Campus worked in a team alongside a trained teacher and a linguist. They also participated in periodic workshops with other teachers

of Aboriginal languages where they had the opportunity to share their experiences and their teaching methods, strategies and resources and discuss the challenges they faced. These professional development workshops were highly motivating. Unfortunately, professional development opportunities within the Department for Education ceased many years ago. With the introduction of the Kurna linguistics course at the University of Adelaide in 1997, some teachers were supported to attend in the late 1990s. Kurna language workers were mentored and trained on the job. When Jack Kanya Buckskin taught Kurna to adults with the School of Languages, at first he co-taught the course with Amery in 2006. In subsequent years he was mentored by Karmen Petric, an experienced language teacher and Deputy Principal of the School of Languages. Similarly Taylor Power-Smith was mentored by Alicia Alfaro, the Spanish teacher, when she taught Kurna at Gilles Street Primary School. Such mentor-mentee relationships are essential.

Acutely aware of the gap in training opportunities for teachers of Aboriginal languages, Mary-Anne Gale sought Commonwealth government funding to develop TAFE training courses. In 2012–13 a Certificate III course ‘Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Kurna)’ was offered in one-week intensive blocks over five mid-term, mid-year and end-of-year breaks (Figure 14.3). Ten Kurna people completed the Certificate III in 2013 whilst several others had undertaken part of the course. Several went on to study the Certificate IV course ‘Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language (Kurna)’ and two Kurna students, Jack Kanya Buckskin and Taylor Tipu Power-Smith, completed all course requirements.



FIGURE 14.3 Kurna Certificate III participants, 2012.

Source: Courtesy of Paul Finlay, KWP Team, University of Adelaide.

Jack Kanya Buckskin himself went on to offer the Certificate III course through Tauondi College where another four completed over the next few years. In 2020 a new day-time Certificate III class and an evening Certificate III class were offered at Tauondi College. Despite the COVID-19 lockdown lasting several months, 12 students graduated and a number of others completed some units. Several of these graduates are already working in schools and two were supported by their schools to undertake the training.

A number of the Certificate III graduates went on to complete a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment enabling them to teach certificate level courses. Several plan to offer a new Certificate II course in the near future. A new Certificate II course is offered at Aldinga Payinthe College and Tauondi College in 2022, whilst the Wednesday evening class at Tauondi College has continued for those who have completed their Certificate III and others who wish to consolidate their Kurna language skills.

Training and professional development is absolutely key to building a sustainable language movement. What is needed is the establishment of a clear career path where the training is recognised and made a precondition of employment as a teacher of Kurna and is rewarded by an increase in remuneration. Unfortunately, the Department for Education is yet to recognise the Certificate III and IV but this will hopefully be addressed in due course.

14.8.4 *The teaching of Kurna*

A major dilemma for the Kurna language movement revolves around the question of who should be allowed to teach the language. Should non-Indigenous people be allowed to teach Kurna? Should non-Kurna people be allowed to teach Kurna, and if so, under what conditions? The consensus amongst those in the Kurna language movement is that in an ideal world, the Kurna language should be taught by Kurna people. But the Kurna community is small, and despite the training and mentoring efforts discussed earlier, there are very few Kurna people in a position to teach Kurna. Not all of the 26 Certificate III graduates are Kurna people, others have since died or retired, many are working full-time in other occupations and others may not wish to be teachers. Under these circumstances, some see it essential for the future of the Kurna language, that the teaching of Kurna not be restricted to Kurna people. During the Certificate IV course offered in 2013, the idea was put forward that a Kurna Teachers Registration Board be established whereby prospective teachers of Kurna could be assessed as to their suitability. This would give the Kurna language movement a measure of control so that they could be assured that the teacher had sufficient knowledge of the language, was aware of the resources available, was in touch with and responsive to the Kurna language community and understood their position as an interim measure. Those non-Kurna people who teach Kurna should be trying to work themselves out of a job and make every effort to support and empower Kurna people to teach their own language (personal communication Taylor Power-Smith, July 2021). The Kurna Teachers Registration Board has not yet

been formally instituted for want of resources, but the idea is gaining strong traction with KWK.

The teaching of Kaurna by non-Kaurna people is a vexed issue. On the one hand, if the teaching of Kaurna is tightly restricted to Kaurna people only, then the teaching of Kaurna will be stifled. A hard line on this issue calls into question my own role as a non-Indigenous linguist in teaching Kaurna linguistics at university and teaching the Kaurna Certificate III at Tauondi College and the roles of a number of other non-Indigenous and non-Kaurna people within the movement. Those Kaurna people with the strongest Kaurna language skills are not currently teaching Kaurna language courses, though they are engaged in developing Kaurna language resources, running one-off Kaurna language awareness raising sessions, delivering Kaurna welcome to country speeches and Kaurna dance performance and so on.

On the other hand, if the teaching of Kaurna were opened up and non-Kaurna, especially non-Indigenous people, were encouraged to teach the language, then the language could quickly lose any connection to the community. This would defeat the purpose for the existence of the Kaurna language. Even now there are instances being brought to my attention of teachers with little knowledge of the language who are introducing dreadful mispronunciations of common Kaurna words despite the availability of good models on YouTube. The way this question of who teaches Kaurna plays out will have huge bearing on the future of the teaching and learning of the Kaurna language and ultimately its use and vitality within the Kaurna community and the wider community.

14.9 Conclusion

The Kaurna language is certainly a much more vibrant language than it was 30 or so years ago. There is a much greater awareness of the existence of the language and the language is certainly much more visible in signage and public artworks. Welcome to country or acknowledgement of country speeches in Kaurna are becoming accepted protocol at public events both large and small and Kaurna cultural performance is now a feature of many large events. There is now strong interest within schools to mount and deliver Kaurna language programs, though the demand for teachers of Kaurna cannot be met. A good set of basic Kaurna language resources has been developed.

Despite the impressive advances for a language that just a few decades ago was regarded as extinct and irretrievable, Kaurna is still highly vulnerable. The Kaurna language movement depends on a small number of individuals and struggles to meet the demands placed upon it. Over the past few years, several key individuals have passed on or retired and have been difficult to replace. The Kaurna language movement is in need of strong leadership and a clear vision for the future.

There are, however, several reasons to be optimistic. Several young Kaurna language workers are gaining a good knowledge of the Kaurna language, are gaining a wide range of skills and are developing a strong commitment to the future. Their children are involved and engaged. Even though the Kaurna community is small, every now and then someone new emerges with talent and potential for development. In time I believe that the leadership will come.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 T&S (1840: 9): “*Kappi*, s. tobacco. This word is derived from the foregoing [i.e. *kappendi* ‘to vomit’], probably on account of the effect which smoking at first produced upon the natives.”
- 2 www.facebook.com/National.Library.of.Australia/videos/ngana-ngai-who-am-i/402574050592903/.

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JEWISH DIASPORA LANGUAGES COMPETING WITH REVITALIZED ISRAELI HEBREW

*Bernard Spolsky**

Jewish and Israeli linguistic repertoires

“The big fish eat the small” is the well-known title of the Bruegel print that illustrates a basic principle of language shift,¹ but the proverb refers to power rather than size. This helps to account not just for the endangerment of small indigenous languages, but for the weakness of immigrant languages in the face of established dominant varieties. It helps explain also the fate of Jewish Diaspora languages when their speakers returned to Ottoman Palestine where Modern Israeli Hebrew was being revived before it became the hegemonic language of the independent state after 1948.

In the late nineteenth century, Jews moving to Palestine modified their linguistic repertoires. To start, for many there was a different co-territorial language, Arabic, but the Classical variety was associated with Islam and vernacular had low status. Hebrew, which in the Diaspora had been a sacred and literary language, became the dominant language of the growing Jewish community, replacing Yiddish and other immigrant varieties. The process began in schools in agricultural settlements and then in towns (Fellman, 1973; Harshav, 1993; Spolsky, 2007). Under pressure of vernacularization and revitalization, the language, spoken by children and used for daily life, was modernized. By 1948, Israeli Hebrew was the hegemonic language, and was added to the repertoires of the new immigrants. This brought the Diaspora varieties into contact with Modern Israeli Hebrew, either threatening them or producing a new Israeli variety.²

Modern Israeli Hebrew is different from Biblical, Rabbinic or Medieval Hebrew. But as Fellman (1985) and Reshef (2019) argue, the remarkable thing about Hebrew is not its revival but its continuity. Once it became the official language of the new State, it was used by both Jewish and non-Jewish residents. It thus became the dominant member of the Israeli linguistic repertoire with which immigrant varieties had to compete.

The fate of Jewish languages in Israel varied. Rajiman, Semyonov and Geffenn (2015) found different levels of Hebrew proficiency in different communities: speakers of Spanish and French attain higher levels than speakers of English. Some languages like Russian, Amharic and Malayalam are helped by high numbers and concentrated residential patterns. Another important factor is status; global languages like English and French are more likely to be maintained than more restricted languages like Neo-Aramaic and Bukharian.

Regrettably, there has not been enough study of the Jewish varieties, and in the absence of a census of language use since 1983, many details are estimates. What accounts for the loss or continued use of a variety by adult immigrants? Is it still part of their dominant language constellation, and in which domains? To what extent is it passed to the next generation? And when the children grow up, does it remain part of their active repertoire?

Ladino, Judezmo, Judeo-Spanish

The earliest Jews who returned to Palestine were Sephardim, whose dominant language constellation (Lo Bianco & Aronin, 2020) included Ladino, Arabic and Hebrew. In the late nineteenth century, Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews arrived from East Europe. The three varieties, Yiddish, Ladino and Judeo-Arabic continue to be used in contemporary Israel, but in different ways.

Ladino, a language with many names (some linguists prefer Judezmo, speakers prefer Spanish³), is now supported by a National Authority for Ladino Culture in Israel. There are few remaining speakers, mostly immigrants from Turkey (Kirschen, 2015: 22). Tracy K. Harris (2011) found few proficient Ladino speakers under the age of 60.

Diaspora Ladino developed two major versions. Judezmo, the Eastern variety, was developed in the Balkans and Turkey, and like Yiddish, produced an important literature in the late nineteenth century (Bunis, 2017, 2018). Speakers were lost as the result of assimilation, the Holocaust which destroyed the Jewish communities in Greece and the Balkans, and emigration. Many survivors immigrated to Israel, where they added Hebrew and where their children shifted to it (Bunis, 2018: 189). There are still elderly speakers, but few now can speak it well enough to pass it on to their grandchildren (Tracy K. Harris, 1994).

For a while, the community supported two Judeo-Spanish weekly newspapers published in Tel Aviv. There was a Judeo-Spanish radio program until 2017, helping the integration of the immigrants. As speakers grew older and their descendants shifted to Hebrew, there were no longer enough listeners or readers to justify continuation. Bunis (2018: 190) reports that there remain several thousand speakers mostly over the age of 69 living in Israel, Turkey, the Balkans, USA and France, but no new generations. In spite of this, there are post-vernacular activities: research and teaching in universities and community centers, publication of materials and encouragement of performances.

Haketia is the North African variety, developed in Spanish Morocco but being replaced by Spanish before Jews were expelled in the 1950s. A few thousand speakers moved to Israel (Bürki, 2010, 2016), but there is a remnant in Morocco

(Elbaz, 2015). Pinto-Abecasis (2017: 451) reported that “it ceased being a living language at the beginning of the 20th century.” Pinto-Abecasis (2017) sees post-vernacular activities as part of a “hesitant” effort to maintain the cultural values of Northern Moroccan Jewish Diaspora communities.

Yiddish

The 1983 Israeli census⁴ revealed a dramatic fall from 284,000 speakers of Yiddish in 1972 to less than 190,000 in 1983. But Isaacs (1998) noted the difference between the living use of Yiddish by observant Jews (Katz, 2004, 2011) and its diminishing use as a secular variety. The 1983 census showed greater use among the oldest. Isaacs suggested that these figures misrepresented the Haredim, many not included in the census and did not count the growing number of Haredi children.⁵ Earlier, Poll (1980) reported a conflict among observant Jews about the use of Yiddish and of Modern Israeli Hebrew, the latter considered by some a profanation. Isaacs (1999) continued Poll’s study and found that attitudes varied, with some Hasidic groups more committed than others to Yiddish. Many Haredim in Israel continue to speak Yiddish and pass it on to their children, either at home or by sending them to schools which teach in Yiddish (Assouline, 2012). Location and density of settlement is an important factor in maintenance: Yiddish is most common in Haredi neighborhoods. Assouline (2018) agrees that by the beginning of the twenty-first century, Haredi Yiddish was diminishing. As in the Diaspora, its speakers also use the co-territorial language, Modern Israeli Hebrew, and sometimes maintain other Diaspora languages. For literary and ritual use, their preference is *Leshon Koydesh*, religious written Hebrew. In the Haredi community, Yiddish is mainly a spoken language; religious texts are in *Leshon Koydesh* and other writing is in Hebrew.

In addition, there remain two groups of non-Haredi Yiddish speakers: elderly Jews from Diaspora communities who grew up in Yiddish-speaking communities and secular heritage activists. Supporting the efforts of this latter group, Fishman and Fishman (1974, 1978) drew attention to a government effort to block Yiddish newspapers by cutting paper supplies. However, Rojanski (2020: 3) argues that Yiddish continued to develop in Israel as “an integral part of the country’s culture.” Many speakers of Yiddish continued to use the language in private, to read Yiddish newspapers, and attended Yiddish theatre. Active efforts of Israeli Hebraists to replace it did not succeed, and its status is now recognized by the establishment of a government-supported Authority.

Judeo-Arabic

A fourth major language brought to Israel by immigrants was Judeo-Arabic. Jews in Arabia had been speaking Arabic before the rise of Islam; Jews in the Middle East and North Africa were slower than others to shift from Aramaic to Arabic and some in isolated areas never did. Written Judeo-Arabic in the eighth or ninth century, using Hebrew script, produced an important religious literature (Blau, 1965). Jewish varieties of Arabic were brought to Palestine before the state, and a

second major wave arrived after the establishment of Israel and the expulsion of Jews from Arab lands.

As Blanc (1964) and others have shown, Jewish varieties of spoken Arabic developed with regional differences: *Ethnologue* (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2019) recognizes five major varieties spoken in Israel: Iraqi (94,000 adults), Moroccan (53,000 adults), Tripolitanian (38,000 adults), Tunisian (10,000 older adults) and Yemenite (36,000). Most Israeli speakers are bilingual in Hebrew; those from North Africa also know French, and some Moroccans know Judeo-Berber.

Hary (2003: 63) summed up the situation of Judeo-Arabic: “The ethnolect today is endangered, close to being extinct.” The expulsion of Jews of Arab lands was the main reason for the shift, although many in North Africa were already shifting to French (Aslanov, 2016), Spanish or Italian. Some immigrated to France and elsewhere, but most of the Jews from Muslim countries came to Israel, where there was strong political and social pressure to drop the language of the enemy. The political situation militated against active maintenance of Arabic after 1948. As Mendel (2014) showed, there was little support in the educational establishment and the general Jewish population for Arabic. The teaching of Arabic was backed only by the defense and intelligence communities, aiming to build a useful elite of Jewish Arabic speakers.

The chance of establishing a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual Israel, as suggested in official language policy, was lost, and in spite of attempts to establish bilingual schools, political and social attitudes discouraged the continuation of Judeo-Arabic. As Mizrahi Jews overcame their earlier lower status, English rather than Arabic became important to them (Selinger, 2013). Their lower status also affected the Israeli reaction to Arabic. Mizrachim were less educated than the Ashkenazim who built the pre-state community (Smootha, 1993), and most were able to obtain only unskilled employment; their assimilation to the culture and language of the earlier Western immigrants was an important goal of the educational system. “Mizrahi Jews espoused a Judeo-Arab language and culture, which in most cases was non-European and non-secular, and did not know modern Hebrew” (Smootha, 2008: 6). Their Judeo-Arabic and accented Hebrew were stigmatized, and shifting to Ashkenazi Hebrew was an important step in their rising status. Their culture was different from Ashkenazi: extrovert behavior, warmth, self-adornment, a guttural Hebrew accent, “Mizrahi music,” ethnic foods, folk religion, hypersensitivity to personal honor, selective observance of religion, right-wing political views, and a hatred of Arabs (Smootha, 2008: 11). There have been some efforts at maintaining the culture, some theatrical and musical performances, but Judeo-Arabic, once a major language of Jewish culture and religion, and the spoken language of a large immigration of Diaspora Jews, is now fading fast.

Jewish Berber

North African Jews also brought with them Judeo-Berber. Both Elmedlaoui and Azaryahu (2014) and Chetrit (2017) report use in Israel of a Jewish variety of Berber, usually as a second language, by immigrants from Morocco. Chetrit (2018) interviewed elderly immigrants about their knowledge of Judeo-Berber;

he concluded that it is a dying language. Because few of the immigrants were monolingual in Judeo-Berber, there were only a few old women still speaking it in Israel in the 1960s.⁶

Jewish Neo-Aramaic

Jewish varieties of Aramaic were part of the Jewish linguistic repertoire from the Babylonian exile. The earliest was a fifth century BCE variety used at Elephantine (Porten, 1968); others include a Biblical variety in the book of Ezra, texts during the Second Temple period, legal documents and letters in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Sokoloff, 2003), the Targumim,⁷ Palestinian documents in late antiquity and the middle ages (Sokoloff, 2002a), Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmud (Sokoloff, 2002b) and a number of medieval texts. These were all preserved in written texts, which continue to be studied in yeshivot.

Judeo-Aramaic continued in use: Jews were speaking it in isolated parts of Kurdistan from the twelfth century CE into the twentieth century. Most of the speakers of the Neo-Aramaic dialects immigrated to Israel in the 1950s, and some still have elderly speakers (Fassberg, 2017). Khan (2018) sums up the present state of the language in Israel: all are now “on an inexorable trajectory of extinction as living vernaculars,” with the smaller varieties gone and the larger dwindling (2018: 13).

There were written versions of Jewish Neo-Aramaic, developed in the seventeenth century and using Hebrew script. There is a good deal of religious material, and some oral folk literature (Sabar, 1982). Showing post-vernacular enthusiasm, there are some theatre performances but audiences are diminishing with the loss of proficient speakers (Khan, 2018: 30). Thus, the modern versions of the oldest Jewish variety, Jewish Neo-Aramaic, are disappearing as its speakers shift to the Modern Israeli Hebrew that surrounds them.

Jewish and Israeli French

Judeo-French first appeared in Northern France, where Jews wrote mainly in Hebrew and used Old French as a vernacular and in a major body of literature written in Hebrew letters from the eleventh century to the expulsion of 1306 (Kiwitt & Dörr, 2017). A later variety named *Franbreu* (Ben-Rafael, 2001; Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2018) was brought to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s by immigrants from North Africa, the Balkans, Turkey and Egypt and is used now by more than a quarter of a million Israelis. Aslanov (2020) believes that *Franbreu* is waning and “cannot be considered a full-fledged Jewish language.” But Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2018) see it as vigorous, with a third wave from France who continue to speak it to their children.

There have been a number of surveys of *Franbreu*, reported in Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2013). Codeswitching is common as is borrowing of Hebrew terms in areas such as immigration, work, army, health and religion. *Franbreu* is also found in texting and emails. They conclude (2018: 546) that the variety “is not warranted a promising future with the families of Francophone immigrants,” but it is safeguarded by continued immigration from France.

Jewish and Israeli English

Yeshivish or Jewish English is a Diaspora variety brought to Israel by observant Jews since 1968. Labelled *Yeshivish* by Weiser (1995), Benor (2012) has shown how young Jews in the USA modify their English by adding lexicon from Yiddish and Hebrew as they become more observant. In Israel, it is most likely to be heard among observant Jewish immigrants from USA and England, especially during religious teaching. There are significant communities in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Volk, 2014). Some scholars are reluctant to recognize this or other similar religiolects⁸ as Jewish languages. English-speaking immigrants and their children sometimes use Jewish English, but commonly speak Israeli English (Kahan-Strawczynski, Levi, & Konstantinov, 2010). A variety of English, the principal foreign language taught in schools and valuable as a scientific, commercial and tourist language, is also used by many Israelis.

Jewish and Israeli Russian

Verschik (2017, 2018) describes Jewish Russian, concentrating on Yiddish and post-Yiddish ethnolects, a term she adopts from Jacobs (2005). Both Russian (often Jewish Russian) and Modern Israeli Hebrew form part of the linguistic repertoire of former Soviet immigrants, using a variety that Remennick (2003) labels *Hebrush*. Perelmutter (2018) points out that the large immigration wave from the former Soviet Union is committed to Russian as an identity marker and has established Russian language institutions such as afternoon schools, newspapers and theatres. Although speakers refer to their language as Russian, it is, she argues, not Modern Standard Russian but a Hebraized Israeli variety. Even younger speakers show bilingual identity (Golan-Cook & Olshtain, 2011). Perelmutter (2018) suggests that Israeli Russian is based on Jewish rather than on standard Russian; there are features from Yiddish and other Soviet languages. Although some speakers have a low opinion of the variety, only professionals (writers and teachers) are likely to use standardized forms.⁹ Schwartz (2008) noted the importance of family language policy in maintaining proficiency in Russian. There are many studies, like those by Kopeliovich (2009) investigating the way in which former Soviet families try to maintain Russian use by their children, setting up programs like those reported by Kopeliovich (2013). But there is little government support: Olshtain and Kotik (2000) reported that in 2000, under 250 students were enrolled in Russian classes.

Hebraized Amharic

Hebraized Amharic is a quite different case. Ethiopian Beta Israel, recognized as Jews in the nineteenth century, immigrated to Israel in large numbers in the 1990s; there are currently estimated to be about 137,000 living here. Their integration has been far from easy (Teferra, 2018). Learning Hebrew is difficult, so some consider themselves without a language. The children were pressured to shift to Hebrew. Many still speak Amharic, but some use Tigrinya, and like other immigrants, their

linguistic repertoire adds Modern Israel Hebrew to pre-immigration repertoire (Teferra, 2017, 2018).

The Amharic spoken by Beta Israel in Ethiopia had only minor lexical differences from the common language (Teferra, 2017: 9), so that the Israeli variety appears to be a Diaspora gentile language that has been modified through contact with Modern Israeli Hebrew.¹⁰ Those born here (about 40%) or who came before they were 20 years old prefer to speak Hebrew and their Amharic is heavily accented; those who immigrated at the age of 20 or over speak an Israeli Amharic. The number of speakers is unknown (Teferra, 2018: 500). Speaking Hebrew is valued by the community. Amharic is taught in 40 schools as a Bagrut subject, especially since 1994 when children with primary education began to arrive, but not used as a language of instruction.

There are also a number of speakers of Tigrinya among the Beta Israel immigrants and among 30,000 or so non-Jewish asylum seekers from Eritrea. The Eritreans are not recognized as asylum seekers but considered “infiltrators” and in state of “non-deportation” in spite of Supreme Court decisions (Ziegler, 2015). The community has established a Community School, with five teachers and about a hundred pupils to teach Tigrinya, English, science and mathematics; it also teaches Hebrew to adults (Eliyahu-Levi, 2021).

Israeli Amharic is exceptional then in that there is little Jewish influence before immigration. Discrimination and isolation are likely to contribute to maintenance.

Judeo-Georgian

Jews lived in Georgia from the second century BCE; they shifted to the local language but continued to pray in Hebrew. Jewish Georgian appears in tenth-century CE translations, but language continued to be spoken. Before and during the Second World War, Jews moved to the cities, where they listened to radio and read newspapers, and attended state schools; the variety was more standardized. The earlier regional forms have not been well studied (Enoch, 2017).

Many Georgian Jews immigrated to Israel in the 1980s. The 1983 Israeli census recorded 20,000 *Gruzinim*, speakers of Georgian over the age of 15, for 40% of whom it was a second language; this was doubled by immigration in the 1990s, and there are now estimated to be about 60,000 Jewish Georgians in Israel. They preferred residential concentration (Curtis & Chertoff, 1973: 85). Being religiously observant, they also have their own synagogues. There is no teaching of Georgian to children in Israel, who pick up a few words from their parents to use with their grandparents.¹¹

Jewish Greek

Although Judeo-Greek was one of the earliest Jewish varieties, by modern times speakers were shifting to Judezmo. After Greek independence, the status of the language was raised and Romaniote Jews used Judeo-Greek (Krivoruchko, 2015: 198). During the second half of the nineteenth century, Jews received secular education, shifted from Hebrew to Greek, and added French in Alliance schools.

Most of the remaining Romaniote speakers were killed by the Nazis (Krivoruchko, 2015: 199). The Romaniote synagogue in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem no longer exists. Krivoruchko (2015) notes that “The area where Judeo-Greek is now spoken is limited almost exclusively to Greece.”

Jewish Hungarian

There may be as many as 22,000 speakers of Hungarian in Israel. Most Jews in Hungary and region, originally Yiddish speakers, had shifted to Hungarian before migration (Rosenhouse, 2016). Rosenhouse (2018) found attrition among immigrants in their Hungarian. Rosen (2014) noted that Hungarian Hebrew with its accent and calques used to be a laughing stock among native Hebrew speakers, but is seen by the second generation of Israeli Hungarian writers who write in Hebrew as a language that preserves the world of their parents. Eisikovits (1995) reported that the sample she studied maintain Hungarian after 30 years in Israel and would like their children to know it.

Judeo-Iranian varieties: Judeo-Persian

Borjian (2017) describes Jewish varieties developed in Persia. Judeo-Persian has a long history of literary texts dating from the eighth century BCE (Paper, 1978). There is, Shapira (2019) argues, no common spoken variety. One variety brought to Israel was Judeo-Shirazi (Gindin, 2012). As a general rule, Iranian immigrants have been shifting to Hebrew; there was intergenerational transmission only when parents were old, and most immigrants who came when they were young did not maintain or transmit their heritage language (Tannenbaum & Peleg, 2019).

Borjian (2017) says that Bukharan Jews used various Tajik dialects, marked by fewer Hebraisms and more borrowings from Russian. Under Soviet language management, there was an autonomous written variety in Hebrew script; official recognition ended in the late 1930s. There are about 150,000 Bukharan Jews in Israel. Some publishing continued in the variety, and it is spoken by the older generation; younger people are shifting to Hebrew and English.

Of the 200,000 Mountain Jews in the Caucasus, some immigrated to Israel and the US from the 1970s. Juhuri is not mutually intelligible with other Iranian languages (Borjian, 2017). It was a Jewish vernacular alongside the Hebrew used as a sacred language and the official Russian which later became the main second language (Shalem, 2019). Between 50,000 and 85,000 Mountain Jews migrated to Israel. The Mountain Jews spoke a number of languages:

All Jewish ethnic groups of this region have spoken, and some still speak, various Iranian languages, most often those close to Farsi or to Persian. These include the dialects of the Jidi, the Jewish – Tajik language of the Bukharan Jews, and the Tat languages of the Mountain Jews.

(Chlenov, 2009: 33)

But, Chlenov adds, the children in Israel no longer speak these languages. Some cultural activity continued in Israel. Although it is still heard at weddings and funerals, the loss of the language continues (Bram, 2008). Shalem (2019: 317) reports that apart from Azerbaijan where there are still children speaking it, the state of the language is severely endangered.

Some more varieties

Judeo-Italian: The Jewish varieties spoken in Italy based on the dialects included Judeo-Roman and Judeo-Venetian (Rubin, 2016), but most are extinct; Judeo-Roman is still spoken by a few elderly people.

Krymchak: Most speakers of Krymchak, a Crimean variety spoken by Ashkenazi Jews, were killed by the Nazis, but a few hundred immigrated to Israel after 1990 (Jankowski, 2017). Only older people speak the language, and not well; younger people are indifferent to its loss (Polinsky, 1991). Jankowski says the language is extinct.

Jewish Malayalam: Spoken by Jews from Kerala, known as Cochin Jews, the variety was brought to Israel by the migration of 2500 Jews to Israel in 1954 (Abraham, 1995; Gamliel, 2013). Older people retain the language, used in their communities in traditional rites. Kerala Jews were settled in five villages; this made possible maintenance in homes and public gatherings, but Gamliel (2017: 358) reports that Israeli Malayalam is heavily influenced by Hebrew. Post-vernacular activities include singing and social groups.

Jewish Swedish: The Jewish population of Sweden is about 15,000 (DellaPerola, 2020). Many Jewish immigrants to Sweden were from Eastern Europe, with Yiddish as their heritage language: Jewish Swedish developed therefore under influence of Yiddish, but starting in the 1930s, as a result of teaching in Jewish schools, it started to borrow lexical items from Israeli Hebrew which now is rivaling Yiddish as a language of Jewish identification (Lebenswerd, 2017: 620).

Jewish Latin-American Spanish: The term is proposed by Dean-Olmsted and Skura (2017), who complain that the language of nearly 400,000 Jews living in Latin America has been ignored. This includes 40,000 in Mexico and 180,000 in Argentina. Jews started to arrive in Latin America in the late nineteenth century. These immigrants, originally speakers of Yiddish, Judezmo or Judeo-Arabic, shifted to a Jewish variety of Spanish after a period of hybridization. The new variety had local Spanish characteristics and borrowings from heritage Jewish languages. Many Latin American Jews in Israel learned Hebrew before immigration. Stavans and Ashkenazi (2020) report that immigrants maintain Spanish as the language for family and social use, at the same time learning Hebrew fast. Family pressure means that the third generation maintains the language, but without support from the educational system, their proficiency is diminishing. By 2006, there were over 100,000 Jews who had immigrated to Israel from Latin America, but as the process was gradual, their language has not been widely studied (Roniger & Babis, 2008). Spector (1997) notes that former Argentine Jews show their divided identity by speaking fluent Hebrew with a strong Spanish accent.

Jewish Brazilian: The Jewish immigrants to Brazil were largely of Eastern European origin, so that even the Zionists in the 1940s held that Yiddish was the heritage language. There has been immigration to Israel, reaching about 12,000 by 2010. While there appear to be no published studies, one may safely assume the development of an Israeli Portuguese among them and their children.

Summing up

Jewish language varieties developed in contact with co-territorial languages in the Diaspora. When their speakers immigrated to Israel, the co-territorial language was Modern Israeli Hebrew. Older immigrants continued to use immigrant Jewish Diaspora varieties at home and with friends, and some Haredi groups and secular activists have made efforts to preserve what they see as a heritage language. But “heritage” implies acceptance of an earlier culture and tradition, so that the association with Diaspora is in conflict with the Zionist ideology of the new State. This added an ideological dimension to the normal economic and environmental pressure of Hebrew and encouraged a major decline in the attraction and the use of the returning Jewish varieties.

What has occurred in Israel is the Hebraization of all languages, whether immigrant or indigenous, Jewish or not, repeating the process that led to the formation of Diaspora Jewish varieties; all except Yiddish and Palestinian Arabic show rapid loss. Only continual immigration (true of English, French and Latin-American Spanish) and self- or socially imposed isolation (true of Amharic and Haredi Yiddish) is likely to guarantee continuance. Other than that, a continued sense of identity has led to post-vernacular activity, so that Israel remains a multilingual society.

Just as Diaspora leads to a change in linguistic repertoire, so the return from Diaspora has effects. Jews returning after two millennia revernacularized and revitalized a language that had been preserved as a religious and literary variety; later arrivals met a situation where the dominant language was a regenerated form of a heritage variety. As the new immigrants assimilated, they and their children shifted to the more powerful hegemonic Israeli Hebrew, but in some cases, depending on settlement patterns and pragmatic or symbolic value, there has been some preservation and Hebraization of the Diaspora language, producing new Israeli varieties.

Just like other minority languages, indigenous or immigrant, Jewish Diaspora languages were endangered on the return to the traditional home, and while there has remained from post-vernacular activity, very few appear likely to survive.

Notes

* Bernard Spolsky (1932–2022), Professor Emeritus in the Department of English Literature and Linguistics at Bar-Ilan University and Life Member of the Linguistic Society of America, a very good friend of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, one of the most prolific sociolinguists working in language policy, educational linguistics, language assessment, Jewish languages, and linguistic landscapes, honored us with one of his last works for this volume.

1 I use it for the cover of my book (Spolsky, 2021).

2 The development of these Israeli varieties was not dissimilar to the Hebraization of Palestinian Arabic (Amara, 2018; Klar, Mar'i, Halabi, Basheer, & Basheer, 2020; Suleiman, 2020). The Israeli varieties need to be distinguished from the Diaspora Jewish varieties. In the Diaspora, there was Jewish Russian, influenced by the Yiddish of pre-1917

Russia (Estraiikh, 2008) and, on the other hand, there is now an Israeli Russian developed among post-Soviet immigrants to Israel (Fialkova, 2005; Naidich, 2004; Perelmutter, 2018). Similarly, there is the Jewish English of Diaspora religious Jews (Benor, 2012), and the Israeli English of English-speaking immigrants, their children and a high proportion of Israelis attracted to the global language (Cooper, 1985; Shohamy, 2014; Spolsky, 2001). Other examples are Israeli Amharic (Teferra, 2017, 2018), and Jewish and Israeli varieties of French and Spanish.

- 3 A recent US survey found only 32 speakers claiming Ladino while about 200,000 claimed Hebrew or Yiddish; presumably, the many Ladino speakers (estimated to be over 60,000) reported their language as Spanish.
- 4 There have been no language questions in the Israeli census since 1983!
- 5 The Haredi population of Israel is reported to be 1,125,000 – 12% of Israel’s population (Malach & Cahaner, 2019).
- 6 Personal communication from Yosef Chetrit, 24 May 2020.
- 7 Bible translations and commentaries in Aramaic.
- 8 A term favored by Hary (2009: 12). Others prefer “ethnolect.”
- 9 Kopeliovich (2009) notes that parents often criticize children for using forms that they use themselves.
- 10 The variety is not listed as Jewish on the Jewish languages website. Teferra (2018) refers to it as Hebraized Amharic, which makes it similar to Israeli French and Israeli English.
- 11 Personal communication from Professor Reuven Enoch, 28 May 2020.

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16

MAKING 2,180 PAGES MORE USEFUL

The Diyari dictionary of Rev. J. G. Reuther

Peter K. Austin

16.1 Introduction¹

The Diyari language,² spoken in northern South Australia, is relatively unusual among Australian Aboriginal languages in having an extensive range of written sources dating from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century (Austin 2021, Chapter 6; Stockigt 2017, Chapter 8). Many of these were compiled by missionaries at Bethesda Mission at Killalpaninna (on Cooper Creek, east of Lake Eyre), which the Lutheran church operated from 1866 to 1915 (Proeve and Proeve 1952; Stevens 1994). At the mission, Diyari was the language of daily use, and was employed by the missionaries in their church services, school, farm work, and everyday activities. Literacy was taught to Diyari speakers, some of whose writings survive to the present (Austin 1986, 2014; Ferguson 1987; Gale 1997). Today, there are a few fluent speakers, and many others who have some knowledge of the language (Austin 2014).

Outstanding among the missionary sources is a 14-volume manuscript written in German by the Rev. J. G. Reuther (see Section 16.2). Four volumes of this, amounting to 1,238 manuscript pages, comprise a Diyari-to-German dictionary, containing 4,183 numbered entries and many thousands of sub-entries and example sentences (see Section 16.3).³ There is a high level of interest in the dictionary from the descendants of the people Reuther studied with, especially members of the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation (DAC); however in its current form the dictionary, and its 1981 translation into English by Philipp Scherer (see later), presents many challenges for use (see Section 16.3). This chapter reports on current research by David Nathan and myself to increase the utility of the dictionary and to provide access to its contents in various ways, as well as linking it to other sources, such as the Diyari-English reference dictionary and multimedia resource that I am developing. This resource attempts to bring together all available materials from published and unpublished sources,

including my fieldwork carried out in 1974–1977, and collaboration with the DAC from 2013 until the present.⁴

16.2 J. G. Reuther and his dictionary

Rev. Johann Georg Reuther (1861–1914) was a German-speaking Lutheran missionary who was in charge of Bethesda mission at Lake Killalpaninna for 18 years (1888 to 1906).⁵ In addition to his missionary work and running the farm and pastoral property, Reuther carried out ethnographic research on Diyari language and culture, partly in the face of opposition from the Lutheran synod, who insisted that he should concentrate on Christian missionary activities.⁶ Reuther amassed a substantial collection of physical objects that he obtained from the Diyari and neighbouring groups who resided at Killalpaninna through a series of exchanges and commissions (Figure 16.1). This included the controversial ‘toa’ objects that are discussed in Jones and Sutton (1986), and Jones (2007, 2011, 2012).

Reuther compiled a 2,600-page, 14-volume handwritten manuscript of Diari (Diyari) language and culture, of which four volumes comprise a Diyari-German dictionary (Figure 16.2 is a sample showing the handwriting and style of the documents). The manuscript was purchased by the South Australian Museum (SAM) for £75 in 1915 (nine years after Reuther had left the mission in 1906, and after he died by drowning in a horse and cart accident in 1914). It is catalogued as item AA266.

Various attempts were made to translate parts of the Reuther manuscript into English from the 1930s to 1960s, but the dictionary volumes remained largely untouched.



FIGURE 16.1 Picture of Reuther and his wife Pauline in his study at Bethesda.

Source: Lutheran Archives, P027/41/05316.

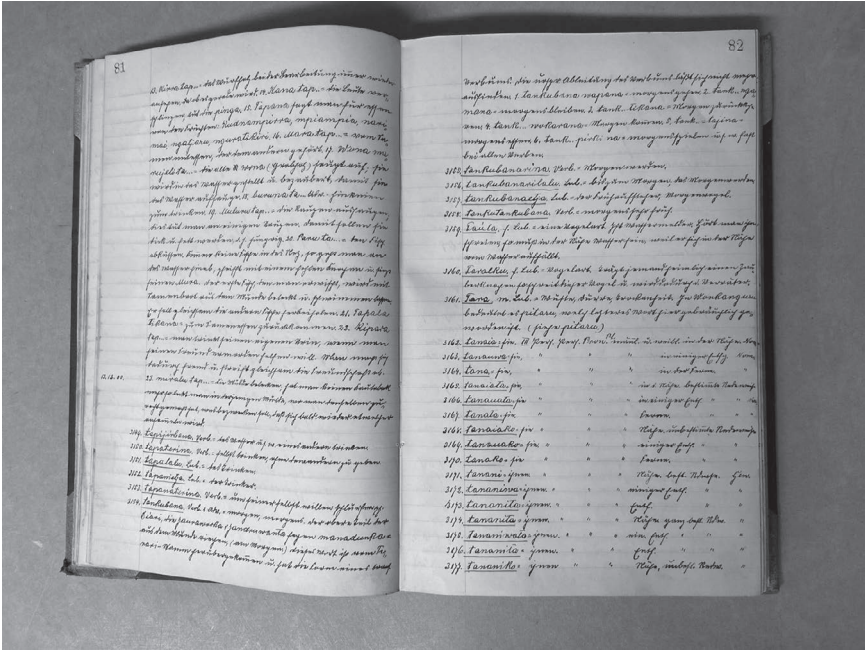


FIGURE 16.2 Sample of Reuther’s manuscript.

Source: Photo © 2021 Philip Jones, used with permission.

In 1974, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS, now Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, AIATSIS) provided funding for Pastor Philipp Scherer, the first archivist of the Lutheran Church of Australia, to translate the whole of Reuther’s manuscript into English. When the AIAS funding ran out, Scherer completed the work unfunded. Luise Hercus, together with her mother Theodora Schwarzschild, and in consultation with Gavan Breen and myself, translated Reuther’s Diyari grammar (Volume V of the manuscript) and his grammatical notes on Wangkangurru and Yandruwantha. Figure 16.3 is a sample (page 1885) from Scherer’s 1974 translation of the dictionary, showing part of Reuther’s volume IV page 80 (compare Figure 16.2).

As Ganter (2019) notes:

Once Scherer’s opus of translation was completed, negotiations between AIAS and SAM stalled as the Museum asserted its legal ownership of the original manuscript, and the publication of the translation was suppressed as nobody felt in a position to fund a publication.

In 1981 a microfiche of the whole manuscript was published by AIAS (see Figure 16.4) – we refer to this as the ‘Reuther-Scherer dictionary’ in what follows.

3148.

IV,80	tapana\$ (v) = 'to drink'
	1) <u>ngapa tapana</u> = 'to drink water'
	2) <u>paua tapana</u> = 'to slurp [or sip] seed-pulp'
	3) <u>muntja tapana</u> = 'to suck on a patient', i.e. to suck out the rubbish ² at the seat [or source] of the trouble. The <u>kunki</u> does this.
	4) <u>mitali ngapa tapana</u> = 'for the ground to absorb the water'
	5) <u>gildi tapana</u> = 'to drink the fat'
	6) <u>ngama tapana</u> = 'to suck [at] the breast'
	7) <u>paja kapi tapana</u> = 'to suck out birds' eggs'
	8) <u>durintji tapana</u> = 'to suck the marrow out of a bone'

\fn1. Reuther: "wenn bei jemanden zum einen das andere kommt," – whatever that may mean.

\fn2. Reuther: "Unrat." P.A.S.

FIGURE 16.3 Scherer's translation of Reuther's dictionary, page 1885.

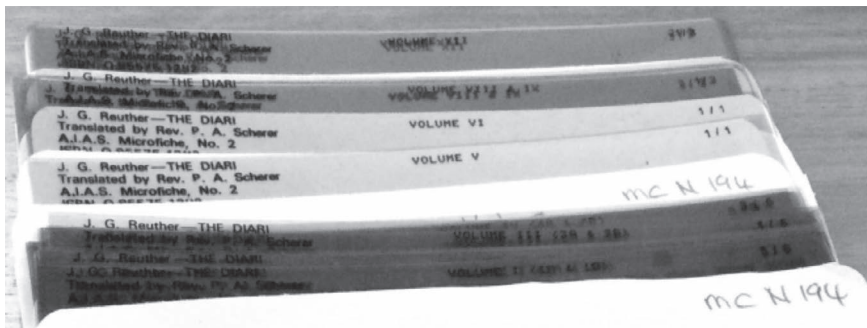


FIGURE 16.4 AIAS microfiche publication of Scherer's translation.

Source: Photo © 2021 David Nash.

The microfiche is difficult to use, not only because specialist equipment is needed to read the document, but also because it appears as white text on a black background (as in Figure 16.5).

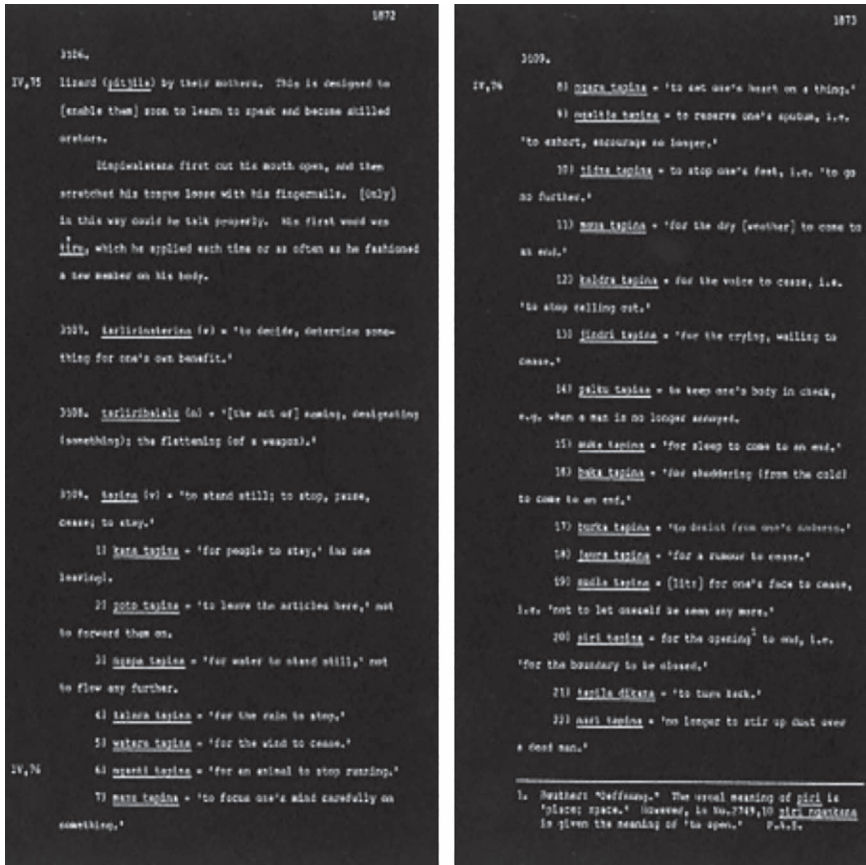


FIGURE 16.5 Sample pages of dictionary on microfiche.

Source: Photo © 2021 David Nash.

16.3 Significance and challenges with the dictionary

In the following sections we discuss the structure and significance of the Reuther-Scherer dictionary, and some difficulties with its form and content. We then outline developments in digitisation of the work and subsequent research on the digital files.

16.3.1 Significance

Reuther's dictionary contains 4,179 numbered entries, with over 16,000 sub-entries, mostly compounds or phrases that exemplify particular meanings or uses of the entry word (see Figures 16.2, 16.3 for examples). There are over 1,700 notes that provide additional information about entries, such as relationships to Diyari mythology or ethnographic information about traditional practices,

as in the instance of *muntja tapana* ‘to suck on a patient’ seen in Figure 16.3. It is a remarkable record of material culture, ceremony, trade, mythology, and associations between them and the landscape. Much of this mythological and traditional knowledge is not available in materials arising from subsequent research because it was lost following the closure of the mission and the disruption of the Diyari community and its transmission of culture. In addition, the dictionary is an extremely valuable source for idioms or other ways of speaking which reflect Diyari cosmology or categorisation. An example of this is the many idioms based on body-part terms which appear scattered throughout the examples in the dictionary.

In the translation, there are 1,692 footnotes added by Scherer, mostly comments on unusual German expressions employed by Reuther, but also some notes on the content; unfortunately, due to his lack of knowledge of Diyari, a number of these footnotes are misunderstandings or misinterpretations of Reuther’s material.

16.3.2 Challenges

Hercus (2017: 118) notes:

It is difficult to comprehend how Reuther achieved this work. He had no typewriter, as they were only just coming into usage; no filing cards, just sheets of paper; no encouragement apart from the work of Flierl [his fellow missionary – PKA] and the collaboration with his co-worker Carl Strehlow; and there was hostility from the synod to contend with.

Reuther did not work alone, however, since, as Philip Jones (personal communication 2021–08–09) points out: “Reuther certainly had a ‘research assistant’ – his wife, Pauline, nee Stolz (daughter of a key individual in the Lutheran hierarchy, which protected Reuther against the sort of critique levelled at his rival, Otto Siebert)”. There was also collaborative work on translation of the Diyari New Testament with Strehlow 1892–1895 (Kenny 2013).

The existing version of the dictionary is organised alphabetically and has no corrections, so it is possible it is a clean copy of working notes; however none of these seem to have survived.

It seems clear that Reuther had little lexicographic training or knowledge. Structurally, the Reuther-Scherer dictionary is rather poorly organised and consequently difficult to use. According to Stockigt (2017: 332), in 1937 Norman Tindale visited at his home in Germany Otto Siebert, who had been appointed from March 1894 to 1902 as ‘Busch Missioner’, with responsibility for ministering to the Aboriginal camps around Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna. Siebert “described Reuther as ‘lame at languages’” (Tindale 1937). Ganter (2019) adds that Siebert also commented that Reuther’s “work was confused and disjointed”. There is evidence to support this suggestion:

- 1 The dictionary shows a degree of repetition, probably because Reuther wrote entries without checking earlier exemplification, or having simply forgotten what he wrote previously. Thus, alongside Volume IV entry 3148. *tapana* (v) = ‘to drink’ which has 23 examples (see Figure 16.3, Figure 16.6), we also find in Volume I entry 229. *dapana* (v.t.) = ‘to drink; to suck, to suck up; to kiss; to chew; to eat (of grounded seed); to belch or burp; to wet or moisten; to pour, swallow’ with 31 examples, only 12 of which overlap with the examples in entry 3148 (and even then the translations or additional explications and cultural notes with the overlapping examples do not always exactly coincide).⁷
- 2 There are multiword examples of the use of particular forms included under one entry which do not appear (nor are they cross-referenced) under the headword for another form in the example, for example, *dantjumana tapana* = ‘to drink sparingly’ appears in example 64 under 209. *dantjumana* = ‘carefully’, but not under 3184. *tapana* = ‘to drink’. Occasionally, some senses of polysemous lemmas are only seen in examples found elsewhere and not included with the lemma itself.
- 3 The numbered sub-entries exemplifying uses of an entry are often randomly presented and are not ordered in terms of semantic sense relationships or selectional restrictions, especially for polysemous items such as *thapa-* (see Section 16.4). Sub-entry combinations with literal interpretations are mixed together with those that are idiomatic, for example, *ngapa dapana* = ‘to drink water’ (cf. *ngapa* ‘water’) is followed immediately by *kana dapana* = [lit:] ‘to drink a person’, that is, in the event of sickness to suck it out of a person’s body (cf. *kana* ‘human being’). Some idioms are clearly tagged by including [lit:] with the literal translation, but others are not, for example, *kirra dapana* = ‘to kiss a kirra boomerang’ – which means as much as ‘to spit on one’s hands’.
- 4 Many of the numbered entries are derived forms of roots, and in standard lexicographic practice they would probably be represented as sub-entries of the root lemma, for example, 3149. *tapijirbana* ‘to drink water (etc.) belonging to someone else’ which can be analysed as *thapa-iyirpa-rna* ‘drink-benefactive-participle’, derived from the root *thapa-* ‘to drink’.

In terms of the form of entries in the dictionary, the orthography used by Reuther (and other missionaries and writers) generally under-differentiates consonants and over-differentiates vowels. The missionary orthography uses five vowel symbols <a, i, u, e, o>; however Diyari has just three phonemic vowels (*a, i, u*), each of which has a range of allophones (see Austin 2021, Chapter 2); Reuther’s <e> is typically *a* in the neighbourhood of laminal consonants, while his <o> can be either *a* or *u*, depending on context. For consonants, he has a voicing contrast (e.g. <d> in *dapana* versus <t> in *tapana*, cited earlier, or versus <p>, and <g> versus <k>, e.g. *gildi* ‘fat’ in Figure 16.3 vs. *kana* ‘person’); however voicing is only distinctive word-medially for apico-domal stops (*rt* versus *rd*). Diyari

distinguishes lamino-dental, apico-alveolar, and apico-domal points of articulation for stops, nasals and laterals; however Reuther uses <t> or <d> for all of *th*, *t*, *rt*, *rd*, and <n> for *nh*, *n*, and *rn*,⁸ along with <l> for *lh*, *l*, and *rl* (thus his *tapana* is *thaparna*). There is also a three-way rhotic contrast between apical flap *r*, trill *rr*, and post-alveolar glide *ɾ*, all of which merge as orthographic <r> (or occasionally <rr>) in the missionary spelling.

There are also grammatical issues with the entries: for part of speech Reuther clearly distinguishes transitive and intransitive verbs (fundamental for case-marking of arguments), but over-differentiates adjectives from substantives (nouns), for which there is no language-internal evidence (Austin 2021). He also marks ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ gender for nouns, influenced by his own native German and by other missionaries’ analyses (Stockigt 2017); however in Diyari gender is only expressed in third-person singular pronouns entirely on a semantic basis of the referent as feminine versus non-feminine (Austin 2021, Section 3.3.2). Nominal roots do not express gender as such. Reuther also does not distinguish the word classes of adverb, particle, and interjection.

For all these reasons, the dictionary is not easy for users to access and understand, especially those who are attempting to learn the language. In the following sections we discuss how the work can be made more useful by digitalising it and adding an explicit representation of structural content and typographic information.

16.4 Digitisation and value adding

The Reuther-Scherer dictionary contains very interesting and valuable information about lexical semantics, collocations, idiomatic expressions, mythological knowledge, and ethnographic knowledge and practices, much of which is lacking in more recent research on Diyari. However, as we have seen, it remains difficult to use in its current form because of issues with the orthography, grammatical information, and scattered and inconsistent nature of the content. It is also very difficult to search in both its paper version (which only exists in the AIATSIS library) and the microfiche publication.

In 1989 David Nash and Jane Simpson, working at AIATSIS on the *National Lexicography Project*, scanned the 2,180 pages of Volumes I to IV of the Scherer typescript using a Kurzweil *Discover 7320 Model 30* scanner and optical character reader. Over 25 sessions between 1st March 1989 and 24th April 1989 they created 44 plain text files. Figure 16.6 shows a sample scan of page 1885.

The accuracy of character recognition is estimated by Nash to have ranged from about 87% to about 96%. Simpson proof-read the scanned files and corrected obvious errors; however many character mis-readings in the Diyari remained (e.g.] or J for *j*, nq for *ng*, ~ for uninterpreted characters), along with random representations of white space. Underlining in the original text came out as # . . . \$ surrounding the underlined characters, though occasionally with incorrect scope. Some = signs preceding glosses appear as -\$, as in *nqapa tapana -\$* in Figure 16.6. The resulting files added to the value of the Reuther-Scherer dictionary, but were still short of optimal.

3148. #tapana\$ (v) = `to drink.'
- 1) #nqapa tapana -\$ `to drink water.'
 - 2) #paua tapana\$ = `to slurp [or sip] seed-pulp.'
 - 3) #muntja tapana\$ = `to suck on a patient,' i.e. to suck out the rubbish² at the seat [or source] of the trouble. The #kunki\$ does this,
 - 4) #mitali ngapa tapana\$ = `for the ground to absorb the water.'
 - 5) #gildi tapana -\$ `to drink the fat.'
 - 6) #nqama tapana\$ = `to suck [at] the breast.'
 - 7) #pa]a kapi tapana\$ = `to suck out birds' eggs.'
 - 8) #durint]i tapana\$ = `to suck the marrow out of a bone,
1. Reuther: "wenn bei jemanden zum einen das andere kommt,"
- whatever that may mean,
 2. Reuther: "Unrat." P.A.Z.

FIGURE 16.6 Sample scanned OCR output of Reuther-Scherer (1981).

In 1991 I was given a copy of the proof-read scanned text files and partially edited them using Microsoft Word (utilising its ability to search and replace on formatting), attempting to:

- 1 Correct character mis-readings, based on identifying obvious errors together with my knowledge of Diyari.
- 2 Replace spaces before indented material with a single <tab> character.
- 3 Remove blank space at the bottom of pages.
- 4 Encode Scherer's page numbers in { . . } and Reuther's volume and page numbers in < . . >.
- 5 Add \fn. before all footnotes.

This resulted in edited files with entries as in Figure 16.7.

While the resulting files were now more consistent and easier to search, they remained poorly structured and difficult to use, especially for Diyari people and language learners. A better representation was needed, so in 2014–2015 with funding support from the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, David Nathan processed the Word files that I had created in order to produce an XML-marked-up rendition of the document, with tags encoding information content. This enabled David to further clean up the files to remove inconsistencies (e.g. the part of speech 'transitive verb' was variously encoded as vt, vt., v.t, v.t.); some of this could be done by ordered sequences of search and replace using regular expressions, but it also

```

{p1884}<IV,80>
3143. #tankatankana$ (v) = 'to add repeatedly'

3144. #tankakalalu$ (n) = '[the act of] adding repeatedly'

3145. #tankanietja$ (n) = 'someone on whom one thing is heaped upon another'

3146. #tankaterina$ (v) = 'to add oneself'

3147. #tankanaterina$ (v) = 'to add, append something for one's own sake'

3148. #tapana$ (v) = 'to drink'
    1) #ngapa tapana$ = 'to drink water'
    2) #paua tapana$ = 'to slurp [or sip] seed-pulp'
    3) #muntja tapana$ = 'to suck on a patient', i.e. to suck out the rubbish2 at the seat [or
source] of the trouble. The #kunki$ does this,
    4) #mitali ngapa tapana$ = 'for the ground to absorb the water'
    5) #gildi tapana$ = 'to drink the fat'
    6) #ngama tapana$ = 'to suck [at] the breast'
    7) #paja kapi tapana$ = 'to suck out birds' eggs'
    8) #durintji tapana$ = 'to suck the marrow out of a bone,

\fn1. Reuther: "wenn bei jemanden zum einen das andere kommt," - whatever that may mean,
\fn2. Reuther: "Unrat." P.A.S.

{p1885}<IV,80>
    9) #kumari tapana$ = 'to drink blood; to suck at a wound'
    When he is first being made a man, the #wiljaru$ opens his mouth widely and drinks
the blood [offered to him],

```

FIGURE 16.7 Edited Word file.

involved many thousands of manual edits to distinguish structural units for which there were some (but incomplete) cues in the content or the existing flagging or markup. Using typographical flags introduced in the scanning (see earlier), such as # . . . \$ to indicate the beginning and end of Diyari language text, (. . .) to indicate part-of-speech, and ' . . .' to identify glosses, David parsed the Word files to insert XML tags such as identification of the entries, lemmas (entry form plus part of speech), glosses, numbered sub-entries, and Diyari material within glosses or notes, along with page reference locations to the Scherer and Reuther originals. An example of the resulting well-formed XML is given in Figure 16.8, derived from the excerpts shown previously.

David also wrote a DTD (document type definition) which specifies the structure of the resulting XML, and describes and governs the syntax of the tagged categories. As Nathan (2016) notes:

migrating the lexical data to XML format result[s] in a resource from which various outputs can be derived, such as databases, websites, teaching and learning materials, interactive multimedia apps, archivable materials, and a solid basis for any further data work. XML is an ISO standard; it is guaranteed archive-quality; it enables both automated and manual diagnosis and manipulation of data; from it a range of derivative products can be made; while at the same time it is viewable in any text editor or browser and is human-readable.


```

<lemma><di>tapana</di> <pos val="v" /></lemma> <gloss>to drink</gloss>
<tabp><tabnum num="1" /> <di>ngapa tapana</di> <gloss>to drink water</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="2" /> <di>paua tapana</di> <gloss>to slurp [or sip] seed-
pulp</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="3" /> <di>munlja tapana</di> <gloss>to suck on a patient, i.e. to suck
out the rubbish at the seat [or source] of the trouble. The <di>kunki</di> does
this</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="4" /> <di>mitali ngapa tapana</di> <gloss>for the ground to absorb
the water</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="5" /> <di>gildi tapana</di> <gloss>to drink the fat</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="6" /> <di>ngama tapana</di> <gloss>to suck [at] the
breast</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="7" /> <di>paja kapi tapana</di> <gloss>to suck out birds&quot;
eggs</gloss></tabp>
<tabp><tabnum num="8" /> <di>durintji tapana</di> <gloss>to suck the marrow out of a
bone.</gloss></tabp>
<fn num="1">Reuther: &quot;wenn bei jemanden zum einen das andere kommt,&quot; -
whatever that may mean,</fn>
<fn num="2">Reuther: &quot;Unrat.&quot; P.A.S.</fn>
<location><page num="p1885" /> <reuther vol="TV" page="3" /></location>
<tabp><tabnum num="9" /> <di>kumari tapana</di> <gloss>to drink blood; to suck at a
wound</gloss></tabp>

```

FIGURE 16.8 XML representation.

It is possible to derive various kinds of documents that display the tagged information in different ways. Once suitably marked up, the XML document can be linked to using an Extensible Stylesheet Language for Transformations (XSLT) document to select and restructure structural elements, and a Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) document to define the display characteristics when viewed in an XML processor or web browser. For example, an edition can be created showing lemmas and glosses only (a simple vocabulary list), or using different layouts, type faces, and colours to display the data for viewing or proofing. Figure 16.9 is a sample for the tapana entries discussed previously (generated by Nathan in 2016).

An XML-based approach has been adopted by several researchers working on Aboriginal language materials in Australia. Jansz (1998) is an analysis of the Warlpiri dictionary developed by Ken Hale and others (Laughren and Nash 1983), which Jansz and Manning encoded in XML (see also Jansz et al. 2001). They also developed software called *Kirrkirr* that graphically displays sense relationships within the dictionary. Corris et al. (2004) explore the utility of *Kirrkirr* for Warlpiri speakers. Henderson (2008) discusses how he encoded the 1930s fieldnotes of Gerhard Laves in XML; these were rather unstructured, unlike the semi-structured Reuther-Scherer dictionary. Thieberger (2016) uses XML representations to encode vocabulary lists collected in the early 20th century by Daisy Bates, with rather simpler content (just form-meaning pairs) compared to the richness of the entries we are dealing with for Diyari. Musgrave and Thieberger (2012) describe the significance of an XML-based approach in their work on Heath's dictionary of

3148
tapana v
<i>to drink</i>
[1] ugapa tapana <i>to drink water</i>
[2] paa tapana <i>to slurp [or sip] seed-pulp</i>
[3] muntja tapana <i>to suck on a patient, i.e. to suck out the rubbish at the seat [or source] of the trouble. The kunki does this</i>
[4] mitali ugapa tapana <i>for the ground to absorb the water</i>
[5] gilidi tapana <i>to drink the fat</i>
[6] ngama tapana <i>to suck [at] the breast</i>
[7] paja kapi tapana <i>to suck out birds' eggs</i>
[8] durintji tapana <i>to suck the marrow out of a bone.</i>
[fin 1] Reuther: "wenn bei jemandem zum einen das andere kommt." - whatever that may mean.
[fin 2] Reuther: "Unrat." P.A.S.
[9] kumari tapana <i>to drink blood; to suck at a wound</i>
When he is first being made a man, the wiljaru opens his mouth widely and drinks the blood [offered to him].
[10] kumari tapana <i>to drink blood, i.e. to drink the blood that has been washed off a spear, wherewith a man has been killed. The young men have to do this, in order to become fearless</i>
[11] danju tapana <i>to drink danju, a variety of fruit. In this instance one does not [use the term] 'eat'.</i>
[12] paljangan tapana <i>to chew [see fin [1]] a variety of [tree] gum</i>
[13] kirra tapana <i>to inspect a boomerang time and again [during the making, to see if it is straight].</i>
[14] kana tapana <i>to devour the people. The -a does this.</i>
[15] tapana is used for eating of the following fruits: kudnampirra, mpiampia, narimai, ngaliaru and nguratikiri
[16] mara tapana <i>to join in the eating of seed which belongs to someone else</i>
[17] wona marujell tapana <i>for an old wona digging stick to absorb the water. This is placed in the water and enchanted, so that it may absorb the water</i>
[fin 1] Reuther: "schmullen." P.A.S.

FIGURE 16.9 Information structure display of the Reuther-Scherer dictionary.

Nunggubuyu (Heath 1982) – we discuss in Section 16.5 why their method is not directly extensible to the Reuther-Scherer dictionary.

16.5 Further value adding and future prospects

Work on the XML files created by David Nathan continues as part of a research project funded by a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship for 2021–2023. This has involved adding further value by enriching the structure and adding additional tags:

- 1 Most of the material tagged as `<tabp> . . . </tabp>` can be analysed as two different types of data:⁹
 - Sub-entries within an entry – all the relevant tags have been re-encoded to `<subentry> . . . </subentry>` using the fact that the `<tabp>` for sub-entries are numbered within each `<entry>` block.
 - Contextual notes of various types, for example, ethnographic or mythological background, etymologies, comparative remarks – there are 1,732 of these and they have to be manually tagged for their note type, for example, `<note type="ethno"> . . . </note>`.
- 2 The `<gloss> . . . </gloss>` data strings sometimes contain subtypes of information, usually indicated by certain characters, optionally preceded by punctuation such as e.g. (for examples) or i.e. (for free translations of examples). I have identified material which comprises example sentences and assigned `<eg> . . . </eg>` tags to them, and then within these added `<literal_gloss> . . . </literal_gloss>` for literal glosses and `<free_gloss> . . . </free_gloss>` for free translations of examples. Thus, the Reuther-Scherer entry:

2) #kalku durpana\$ = ‘to twist or twirl reeds,’ e.g. #kalku jerra durpanau billi dakala\$ = reeds there twist bag to weave, i.e. ‘twist the reeds in order to weave a string-bag.’

becomes:

```
<subentry>
  <subentrynum num="2"/>
  <di>kalku durpana</di>
  <gloss>to twist or twirl reeds</gloss>
  <ex>
    <di>kalku jerra durpanau billi dakala</di>
    <literal_gloss>reeds there twist bag to weave</literal_gloss>
    <free_gloss>twist the reeds in order to weave a string-bag</free_gloss>
  </ex>
</subentry>
```

Unfortunately, this is difficult to do algorithmically and may require all 16,028 instances to be manually checked.

- 3 Some lexical entry glosses have semantic specifications, but these are non-uniformly represented (sometimes in brackets, sometimes as i.e., sometimes as ‘of...’) – we have added <semspec>...</semspec> for this information within the relevant <gloss>...</gloss> tags (due to inconsistencies in the source file these have to be assigned manually, where applicable). An example is:

80. #dunkana\$ (v.) = ‘to come out, to go out (of a wurley, or through a hole, etc.), used of humans and animals; to come forth, to emerge (from a distance or from a place of hiding); to rise; to come forth (from seed)’

which becomes:

```
<entry lbl="80">
  <lemma>
    <di>dunkana</di>
    <pos val="v"/>
  </lemma>
  <gloss>to come out, to go out
    <semspec>of a wurley, or through a hole, etc.</semspec>
    <semspec>used of humans and animals</semspec>
  </gloss>
  <gloss>to come forth, to emerge
    <semspec>from a distance or from a place of hiding</semspec>
  </gloss>
  <gloss>to rise, to come forth
    <semspec>from seed</semspec>
  </gloss>
</entry>
```

As noted, the entries, sub-entries, and examples in Reuther's original dictionary and Scherer's translation are somewhat randomly presented, and occasionally repeated or scattered throughout the text. For this reason, while an XML-based representation helps to improve the structure of the text, the originally poor lexicographic structure means that well-organised outputs, especially for language learners, cannot be derived directly from the Reuther-Scherer document itself (cf. Musgrave and Thieberger 2012 for Heath's Nunggubuyu dictionary). Rather, what is needed is a kind of standoff index of the document that reorganises the information in the original, while also giving the modern spellings and analysis of the Diyari materials, drawing on subsequent research. An example mock-up of an entry in a learner's reference dictionary that does this for *thapa-rna* (Reuther's *dapana* and *tapana*) is given in Figure 16.10.

This kind of index provides a useful reorganisation of the Reuther-Scherer materials for the Diyari community to employ in language revitalisation and learning, and indeed forms the basis for a language learning post on the Diyari language blog.¹⁰ One of our goals during the current project is to create various kinds of well-structured digital materials for learners that link to the Reuther-Scherer dictionary.

16.6 Conclusions

The 2,180 page Reuther-Scherer dictionary of the Diyari language is one of the most detailed attestations of an Australian Aboriginal language, and has great potential as a resource for both learning about the language and culture, as well as serving as a source for further anthropological and linguistic research. However, it suffers from a number of structural and representational deficiencies that make it difficult to use, inconsistent, and rather poorly presented. Our approach of adding XML markup to the digitised version of the dictionary means that it can become a much more useful and accessible information source. Pedagogical material can link to the XML file, and vice versa, and other types of documents can also be generated from it, ranging from simple word lists to more complex multimedia products. Marking up with XML in the ways described here involves enrichment of the original document's intended semantics by adding consistency, explicitness, and machine readability and processability. We do this by a combination of pattern-led algorithmic insertion and manual editing and insertion, on the basis of our knowledge and interpretations as linguists. This involves drawing on all other existing sources on the language and culture (such as documentation and recordings made by Austin and Hercus in the 1970s), as well as work with current native speakers and community members. The resulting enriched file can then be used as a platform for further development of various sorts of materials for different purposes and audiences.

The challenge ahead, of course, is to do the kind of work illustrated here in detail for one particular entry (*thapa-rna*) for the remaining thousands of entries, sub-entries, examples, and notes in the Reuther-Scherer dictionary. However, when completed, the dictionary and associated materials will be one of the richest information sources on an Australian Aboriginal language.

thaparna vtr [R229, 3148]

(a) 'to drink'

ngapa thaparna 'to drink water' [R229-ex1, R3148-ex1]

kumarrri thaparna 'to drink blood', *Ethn.* When he is first being made a man, the *wihyarru* opens his mouth widely and drinks the blood offered to him by his initiators. This also used to refer to drinking the blood that has been washed off a spear that a man has been killed with; young men are required to do this, in order to become fearless. Reuther also has the meaning 'to suck a wound' [R3148-ex 9]

kipaya thaparna 'to drink urine', *Ethn.* men drink their own urine in order to end a friendship when planning to kill a friend [R3148-ex22]

puarurna thaparna 'to kneel down to drink' [R3148-ex18]

thapaltha thikarna 'to come back to drink' [R3148-ex21]

(b) 'to suck'

ngama thaparna 'to suck the breast' [R3148-ex6]

paya kapi thaparna 'to suck out bird's eggs' [R3148-ex7]

thurintyi thaparna 'to suck marrow out of a bone' [R3148-ex8]

muntya thaparna 'to suck a wound', *Ethn.* the *kunki* sucks puss and matter from a wound [R3148-ex3]

mularu thaparna 'to suck on caterpillars', *Ethn.* this is done so they become big and fat [R3148-ex19]

(c) 'to eat, slurp up, or chew on soft or semi-liquid food or fruit'

pawa thaparna 'to slurp up ground seed' [R229-ex6, R3148-ex2]

kilthi thaparna 'to eat fat or stew' [R229-ex4, R3124-ex 5]

danyu thaparna 'to eat *danyu* fruit'. *Note.* for soft fruit *thaparna* 'drink' rather than *thayirna* 'eat' is used. Other fruits are *kudnampira*, *mpiampia*, *nharimayi*, *ngaliyaru*, and *ngurathikiri* [R3124-ex11]

palyangari thaparna 'to chew on the gum of the *palyangari* tree' [R229-ex9, R3148-ex 12]

karna thaparna 'to eat people', *Ethn.* the members of a *pinya* revenge expedition eat the raw liver of their victim. [R229-ex2, R3148-ex14]

(d) 'to lick'

miralu thaparna 'to lick a coolamon', *Ethn.* when a man has no tobacco, he licks the dish that he last prepared tobacco in to ensure that some may soon become available. [R-ex 23]

(e) 'to kiss, touch with the mouth'

marna thaparna 'to kiss on the mouth'

parru thaparna 'to kiss a fish', *Ethn.* If no fish land in the net, a man goes down into the water, whistles into a hollow bone, and sings his *miwa* song. The first fish to be caught is then kissed while the man has bread (made of seed) in his mouth, and allowed to swim again. This is expected to entice other fish to enter the net. [R3148-ex20]

kira thaparna 'to kiss a boomerang', *Ethn.* this is done before throwing to ensure that the boomerang hits its target. It is also done repeatedly when a boomerang is being made to see if it is straight. [R229-ex25, R3148-ex13]

FIGURE 16.10 Structured pedagogical dictionary entry for *thapa-rna*.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful for assistance and feedback in compiling this chapter from Jane Simpson and David Nash. Philip Jones provided careful commentary on an earlier draft that identified a number of factual and historical errors. My work on Diyari since 2013 has been carried out in collaboration with Greg Wilson and members of the Dieri Aboriginal

- Corporation. The research reported here is the result of collaboration over many years with David Nathan and is currently partially funded by a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship (2021–2023). I dedicate this chapter to the memory of the late Luise Anna Hercus, who introduced me to Diyari and provided much valuable assistance with my work on the language from 1974 to 2018.
- 2 There are several spellings of the language name that appear in this chapter. Reuther used “Diari”, current descendants prefer “Dieri”, while I spell as Diyari, in accordance with the analysis presented in Austin (2021).
 - 3 The early entries in Volume I contain some comparative materials on neighbouring languages, mostly cognates and a few example sentences. It may be that Reuther had planned to extend this to later volumes but stopped for some reason.
 - 4 See <https://dieriyawarra.wordpress.com/about/> (accessed 2021–04–15).
 - 5 For more details of Reuther’s biography and the history of the mission see <http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/biography/reuther-johann-georg-rev-1861-1914#sdendnote6anc> (accessed 2021–08–10).
 - 6 Reuther’s language work, such as the 1897 translation of the New Testament with Carl Strehlow, was applauded, but he lost the support of the Synod after his enthusiasm took an ethnographic turn from around 1900.
 - 7 Diyari does not distinguish voiceless [t̥] from voiced [d] so these should be a single item; for problems with the missionary spelling system for Diyari see later.
 - 8 Stockigt (2017) shows how the grammatical analysis of the missionaries is undermined by their failure to distinguish between the various nasals.
 - 9 David Nathan (personal communication, 2021–08–15) points out that this was just an ‘empty tag’ to capture and preserve indenting in the document it was derived from. In this case, layout on the page in the Reuther-Scherer dictionary is underspecified in terms of the document semantics, which are expected to be ‘filled in’ by the reader. It needs to be explicitly spelled out in the XML representation.
 - 10 <https://dieriyawarra.wordpress.com/2021/03/18/karayaya-yawarra-word-of-the-week-thaparna/> (accessed 2021–05–15).

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17

A NOTE ON AN AUSTRALIAN HOMOPHONE LOANSHIFT

David Nash

17.1 Introduction

Elderly speakers of the Yir Yoront language, living in the Kowanyama aged care residence in north Australia (western Cape York Peninsula), began to call the institution's bingo game by a local word *kur-marrvm* 'dog-wild'.

kur-marrvm, with *kur* < *kurta* regularly in this position. It is pronounced *kurl-marrvm* by some. My consultant . . . treated it as sort of a joke, a pun. . . . I first heard it in I think the 1990s.

(*Pers. comm.*, B. Alpher, 8 March 2021)

The impetus was that a salient English equivalent of the word is *dingo*, and that word has sufficient sound similarity with *bingo*. Indeed it is the English word most similar to *bingo*: of the other English disyllables pronounced with [ˈɪŋɡo] the only one likely to be used at Kowanyama is *lingo*, and less likely are *gringo*, *jingo*, and *stingo*. And for Yir Yoront speakers the dingo is familiar culturally and ecologically. As will be seen, this *bingo* ~ *dingo* instance is unique in that it involves near-homophony but not full homophony: Yir Yoront, like English, distinguishes bilabial and alveolar stops, and speakers could readily pronounce *bingo* with an initial bilabial.

This note considers where the *bingo* ~ *dingo* ≈ *kur-marrvm* process fits in the typology of neologisms influenced by a second language. In Section 17.2 I gather the few other examples I am aware of, and propose that they form a type we can call LOAN HOMOPHONES. Then I analyse them from two points of view: how they originated, and how they are understood in the relevant speech community. Finally I compare them to the better known types, of loan translation, and pun.

Key to symbols in Figures:

- ∨ suggests by collocation
- ≈ synonymy, translates as
- ⇒ implies
- ↘ side effect
- ~ similar pronunciation

17.2 Instances of LOAN HOMOPHONE LOANSHIFT

This section presents the few further examples of Australian loan homophony that I have become aware of, with an analysis of their etymology. I have not ascertained whether word play was involved in these instances. In all three examples, the homophony involved arose from the loan phonology processes applied to English fricatives *s* and *f*. Also relevant is that in the relevant Australian languages words do not begin with a consonant cluster. Hence the initial *s* of an English word like *spear* or *school* is often ignored in borrowing.

17.2.1 *spear* ~ *beer*

Consider Wardaman *wiyan garnin* ‘beer’ (where the qualifier *wiyan* ‘water’ serves to disambiguate the recent polysemy of *garnin* ‘spear’) (Merlan 1994:587). The originating process is diagrammed in Figure 17.1; this is a representation of the etymology.

The diagram shows how an English word in translation gains an extra sense, that of a similar sounding English. This is illustrated by the example of the Wardaman word for ‘spear’ gaining the sense ‘beer.’

A similar repurposing of a ‘spear’ word has been recorded in Gurindji and Jaru. The McNairs’ (1988) Gurindji vocabulary has an entry:

milarrang 1. spear type; 2. beer

The second sense had dropped from usage by the time of the 2013 published Gurindji dictionary (Meakins et al. 2013) which has just the ‘spear’ sense for *milarrang* (and indeed has no entry for ‘beer’ (or ‘alcohol’) in the finder list).

Jaru *ginimiliny* ‘spear’ was similarly extended ‘because beer in English sounds like spear and the similar word was translated directly’ (Kimberley Language Resource Centre 1992).

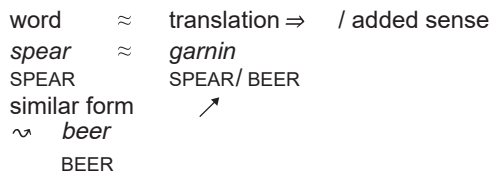


FIGURE 17.1 Homophone loanshift components.

This example may also involve the semantic commonality of both spear and beer being manufactured items, and that some danger is associated with their use.

17.2.2 *cold ~ school*

The Gurindji dictionary has an entry:

makurru 1. cold, anything cold such as air-conditioning or cold weather.
2. school, though this word isn't used often anymore. The words 'school' and 'cool' sound the same which is why 'makurru' is used to refer to schools.
(Meakins et al. 2013)

A vocabulary of a neighbouring Jaru has this similar example:

malirri 'school' . . . meaning extended in this way because *school* in Kriol sounds like *cool* and the word for 'cool' in Jaru is *malirri*.
(Kimberley Language Resource Centre 1992)

No semantic commonality seems to be involved in this example.

17.2.3 *blue ~ flu*

There is an interesting polysemy recorded in this entry in the Gurindji dictionary:

wajirrk 1. praying mantis or stick insect . . . 2. helicopter. 3. potentially fatal flu such as the Swine Flu. . . . The term *wajirrk* was used in the Jinparrak days.

(Meakins et al. 2013:379)

The explanation for this apparently needs to bring in the neighbouring language Warlpiri, which was known to older speakers of Gurindji. In Warlpiri *wajirrk* 'green grass, green growth' is the equivalent in meaning of Gurindji:

wurrkal green, lush vegetation, anything green such as pus or wet season.
(Meakins et al. 2013:427)

While the Gurindji dictionary does not record a word for 'blue,' Warlpiri *wajirrk-ajirrk* 'green' widens to include 'blue,' as do equivalent words in many languages which do not lexically distinguish the two hues. Phonetically, older speakers assimilated the English fricative *f* as a bilabial stop. So the process is as diagrammed in Figure 17.2, similar to Figure 17.1.

17.2.4 *Personal names*

I am aware of a few instances where a person's English name was the basis for a playful nickname, in a way parallel with the LOANSHIFTS discussed.

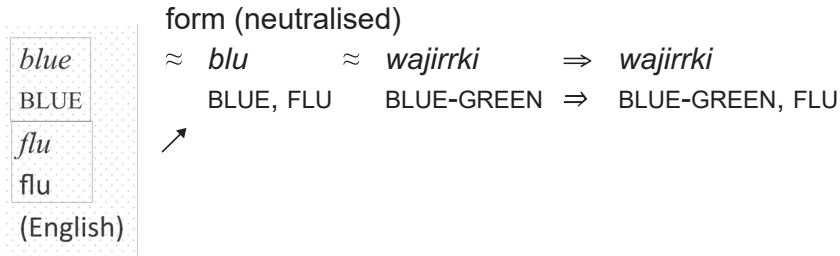


FIGURE 17.2 *blue* ~ *flu* borrowed as homophone.

Mr Kapikapi. A popular young schoolteacher had the surname McCarthy, and schoolchildren began to affectionately call him Mr Kapikapi, using the local word *kapikapi* ‘calf, young cow,’ obviously because of the near-homophony of *Carthy*, *calf* and *kapi*. Note that in Kriol *kapikapi* is used for singular and plural, and *kapi* is not used. Possible perceived semantic commonality is that of a young creature, of outside origin, now part of local Aboriginal experience.

Mangarri. Brett was the first name of a schoolteacher at a Warlpiri community. Schoolchildren began to call him Mangarri, a Warlpiri word for ‘bread’; based on the near-homophony of *Brett* and *bread* (Baarda 2021:40). Warlpiri stops do not contrast in voicing, but the children’s command of English was probably sufficient that they realised the two words were distinct (if not, then this is a loan translation, see Section 17.6.1). Even so, the relatively unfamiliar name *Brett* was sufficiently similar to the common word *bread* that its translation *mangarri* was readily suggested. Similarly,

some of Wendy [Baarda]’s pupils at Yuendumu school called her ‘Mrs Jara’ and thought this was very funny. Took us a while to figure that one out. *Jara* means fat and includes butter. Baarda sounds like butter.

(Baarda 2021:40)

17.3 Cross-language HOMOPHONE LOANSHIFT

There appears to be a variant type, known only from two instances, where the phonetic similarity is not within (Aboriginal) English but is cross-linguistic. It draws on an accidental near-homophony between an English word and an existing word of the vernacular with an unrelated meaning. In both instances of this variant type, the necessary conditions were met for a cross-linguistic pun: ‘To pun is to treat homonyms as synonyms’ as Redfern (1984:17) famously put it. Moreover, these instances seem to lack any semantic commonality between the paired words: homophony is maintained.

17.3.1 *sugar* ~ *juga* ~ *kurturtu*

In Bilinarra and Gurindji, the loan *juga* is homophonous with the kinterm *juga* ‘child of a woman,’ which according to Meakins (2013) and Meakins

et al. (2013) has led to analogical extension of other terms for ‘child of a woman’ to ‘sugar’.

(Hoogmartens and Verstraete 2021)

See Figure 17.3. The kinterm *juga* is recognised as Bilinarra by Gurindji, while it forms part of two Gurindji trirelational kinterms *jukamarnany* and *jukangaliny*. The other ‘sugar’ words are the near-synonymous kinship terms *gurdurdu* (Bilinarra) (Meakins 2013), and *kurturtu* and *ngalayi* (Gurindji) (Meakins et al. 2013).

Once *sugar* was borrowed from English as *juga* alongside the existing kinterm *juga*, there was a LOANSHIFT when Bilinarra or Gurindji speakers added the imported sense to synonyms of the original sense.

17.3.2 *money* ~ *man* ≈ *wukəl*

There is a curious homonymy recorded in this pair of entries in the Wik Mungkan dictionary (Kilham et al. 2011):

*wukal*₁ *n.* money. Syn: *kul*’.
*wukal*₂ *n.* Usage: avoidance. neck. Syn: *man*.

In other words, in Wik Mungkan the ordinary word meaning ‘neck’ is *man*, and its equivalent in the polite register is *wukal* which also means ‘money.’

In the late 1970s, living in Aurukun and learning Wik Mungkan, I learned that the term for money is *wukəl*. Only later, probably in the mid 1980s, did I realise that *wukəl* is also the avoidance term for *man*, meaning neck.

(*Pers. comm.*, David Martin, 19 May 2022)

The anthropologist David Martin intuited that the concept introduced along with the English word *money* was added to the Wik Mungkan word *man* ‘neck’ because of their phonetic similarity. This became apparent when as speakers avoided saying *man* they substituted its polite synonym *wukəl*.

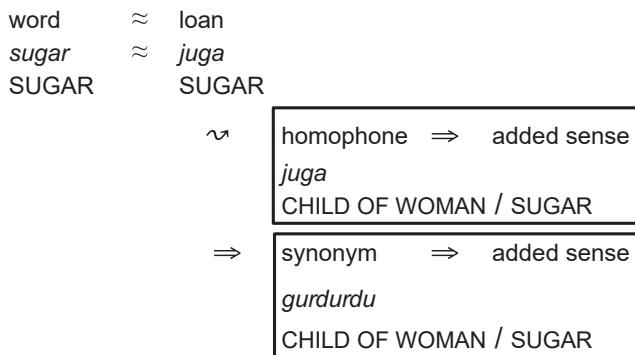


FIGURE 17.3 Variant homophone loanshift components.

Similarly, the dictionary of the neighbouring language Wik Ngathan (Sutton 1994) has:

woekel (also recorded as *wukul*?) ‘neck’

woekel ‘money’ Etym: Possibly from phonetic resemblance of the English word *money* (/mani/) to *man* ‘neck’, or the physical resemblance of coins to neck vertebrae.

Once *money* was recognised from English as *mani* alongside the existing body part term *man*, there was a LOANSHIFT when Wik speakers added the imported sense to a synonym of the original sense, parallel to the situation diagrammed in Figure 17.3.

17.4 Processes

An instance partially similar to the type under discussion has been noticed in Eynu: ‘a register used for communication with insiders by small groups of people, called Abdal by the Uyghur, who live in the south-western part of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China and whose everyday language is Uyghur’ (Koch 2014:422).

Copying usually implies replacement, but this is not always the case. What I argue here is that Eynu is an example of the latter. In this connection I would like to refer to an interesting phenomenon in Eynu. The origin of the Eynu word *iitiis* ‘fire, grass’ is clearly the Persian noun *iitas* ‘fire’. But the meaning ‘grass’ is puzzling. Where did it come from? Naturally enough, the phonological form *iitiis*, originating from the Persian word *iitas*, is selectively copied to the Uyghur word *ot* ‘fire’. But there is the other word with the same phonological form in Uyghur, *ot* ‘grass’. It is thus plausible that the homonymous relation between the words *ot* ‘fire’ and *ot* ‘grass’ may have enabled the phonological form *iitiis* to be linked even with the word *ot* ‘grass’.

(Hayasi 2012:391)

This insider code draws on Persian words, but here has maintained an homophony of the primary language Uyghur. A difference from the Australian instances is that ‘grass’ is not an introduced concept; and also we are not told whether there is a perceived semantic commonality between ‘fire’ and ‘grass.’

Sometimes the loan homophony process does seem to involve some semantic matching. Bloomfield (1933:450) (as noted by Aikio 2007:40) recognised that, in ‘the assimilation of foreign words,’

a further adaptation, in the sense of popular etymology, may render the form structurally or lexically more intelligible, as in . . . *asparagus* > *sparrow-grass* . . .

Zuckermann (2020) dubbed the adaptation ‘folk-etymological nativisation.’ The subject of this note is also a kind of nativisation, whereby an existing word’s

added sense is based on the two senses being signified by near-homophones in a second language; a ‘fake-etymological nativisation.’ The distinction is that folk etymology (also termed popular etymology), reflects an etymology generally believed by speakers, whereas a ‘fake etymology’ is either taken as accidental, or sometimes as a kind of word play and not seriously believed.

As we have observed, loan homophony is not a straightforward borrowing. Zuckermann (2020:97) claimed,

Traditional classifications of borrowing such as Haugen (1950) ignore PSM and categorize borrowing into either substitution or importation.

(Zuckermann 2020:97)

This does Haugen (1950) a disservice as he did allow for a combination of substitution and importation, as he saw these processes as operating at the phonetic, morphemic, or semantic levels, as also recognised by Appel and Muysken (2005:164–165). At the same time Haugen did not explicitly recognise the type that Zuckermann (2020) has identified as phonosemantic matching (PSM):

PSM does not fall within Haugen’s main types of borrowing – substitution and importation – since PSM is a special case of simultaneous substitution and importation. . . .

Multisourced neologization such as PSM is an ideal means of lexical enrichment in Language Planning, for example in Israeli and Republican Turkish. The reasons are that it camouflages foreign influence, recycles obsolete terms, and facilitates initial learning.

(Zuckermann 2020:100)

Similarly we can discern substitution and importation as both involved in the unusual LOANSHIFTS in the subject of this chapter.

17.4.1 Origin: encoding

When a speaker or speakers originated this kind of LOANSHIFT, there was presumably a train of thought corresponding to the sequence in Figure 17.1.

17.4.2 In use: decoding

On the other hand, when another speaker first encounters this kind of LOANSHIFT, they are faced with a novel usage of a word already known to them in another sense but that sense does not fit the context. Perhaps they accept the additional sense, effectively learning a homophonous word. Or perhaps the pair of English equivalents of the two senses occurs to them and they notice that the two English equivalents are near-homophones. If they apprehend the two English equivalents as homophonous then they may accept the extra sense: this situation falls under the accepted definition of a LOAN TRANSLATION. Alternatively, they may distinguish the two English words and nevertheless adopt the neologism. It is the latter

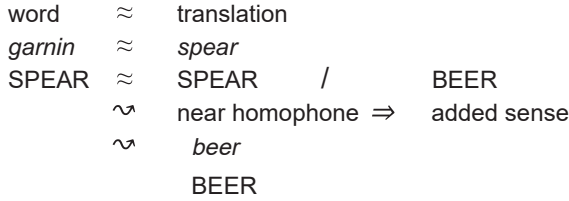


FIGURE 17.4 Homophone LOANSHIFT components.

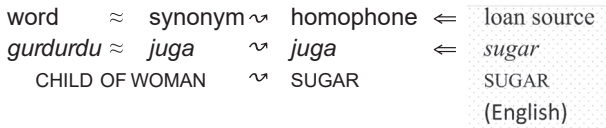


FIGURE 17.5 Variant homophone LOANSHIFT components.

situation which is apparently rare and undescribed in the literature on language contact.

Figure 17.4 diagrams how a Wardaman speaker can understand how *garnin* ‘spear’ also can denote ‘beer.’

Figure 17.5 diagrams how a Gurindji speaker can understand how the kinterm *gurdurdu* also can denote ‘sugar.’

17.4.3 Context

All the known instances of this kind of LOANSHIFT have in common these attributes:

- There was a concept newly introduced to a community requiring lexicalisation in their language: it is an addition to the vocabulary.
- At the time of the introduction there was some but incomplete bilingualism in the community language and English.
- A sense is added to an existing word whose primary sense is the translation equivalent of an English word which is a near-homophone of the English word bearing the newly introduced sense; and, the loan phonology assimilates the two English forms to be identical (that is, it results in full homophony).
 - Or, in the variant type, a sense is added to an existing word whose primary sense is a synonym of a word which happens to be near-homophone of the English word bearing the newly introduced sense.
- The existing word is common or culturally salient, and gains more currency when used for the added sense; at the same time the community members who do not know the local language would be oblivious to the word when it is used in reference to the newly introduced concept and so it has an ‘insider’ appeal.

- The added sense usually faded from use after some years, perhaps because its humorous or ‘insider’ appeal waned, perhaps because English or Kriol became better and more widely known in the community and thus the pair of English words are no longer perceived as homophones.

The somewhat cryptic repurposing of an existing word to denote a newly encountered concept fits with the themes of persistence and resistance which have been noted in the survival of fourth world Indigenous people in Australia (Keeffe 1988).

17.5 Similar semiosis

It is generally accepted that each of the alternate sign languages in Aboriginal Australia effectively encode the spoken language of the relevant language community. One of the bases for representation of a spoken word is its phonological form. Kendon (2013[1988]:194–201) discusses instances where it is an introduced concept that is an added sense of a previously existing handsign:

For example, in Warlpiri *jija* ‘shoulder’ is signed by tapping the ipsilateral shoulder with the middle finger . . . and the same sign is used for *jija* ‘medical sister.’ This is a homophone with *jija* ‘shoulder’ that results from an assimilation of the English word ‘sister’ to a Warlpiri pronunciation.

...

In Warumungu we find that the sign for *murtika* ‘motor car’ has the same handshape as the sign for *mutinka* ‘dilly bag’ and that the sign for *juppa* ‘just – sentence particle’ is also used for *jupujupu* ‘soup, stew.’ Also in Warumungu, in the sign for *tawun* ‘town’ an extended middle finger is lowered rapidly . . . evidently because ‘town’ is homophonous with the English word ‘down.’

(Kendon 2013[1988]:195)

Given that in an alternate sign language each handsign evokes an associated spoken word (or words), the origin and use of the additional sense appear to be much as described earlier. Kendon (2013[1988]:197, 435) goes on to note that ‘a rather high proportion of the examples of phonetic representation in the NCD [North Central Desert] sign languages includes names and English words’ – as also is true of the spoken language examples gathered in Sections 17.2 and 17.3.

Figure 17.6 diagrams how a Warlpiri speaker can understand how the handsign indicating SHOULDER also can denote NURSE. Note the parallel with Figure 17.4.

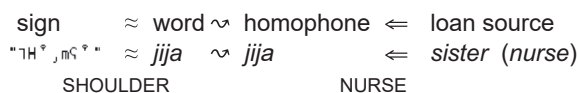


FIGURE 17.6 Warlpiri sign language SHOULDER ~ NURSE.

Source: After Kendon (1988).

'no name' ⇒ name ∼ (near) homophone
kumunjayi ≈ Fred ∼ bread

FIGURE 17.7 Example: *kumunjayi* substituting for *bread*.

Another possible example may be found in the handsign younger Gurindji use to mean SISTER-KAPUKU, by touching the nose with the index and middle finger together (Green et al. 2017; Algy and Meakins 2017). Green et al. (2022:150) observe that this kin sign is not attested in other Australian Indigenous sign languages, and is quite different from synonymous signs: sister signs are usually to the thigh or shoulder (Green et al. 2018). They suggest that one possible explanation for the unusual place of articulation could be the phonological similarity between the words *jitja* 'sister' in Kriol (Lee et al. 2014) and *jitji* 'nose' in Gurindji (Meakins et al. 2013). This example is somewhat different in that SISTER is not an introduced concept (only the colexified senses 'nurse' or 'nun'), and the Gurindji sign NURSE is like the Warlpiri NURSE sign already described.

Another instance is apparent in Warlmanpa alternate sign language, where the 'curved B' handshape is used in just two handsigns: NGARLU 'beehive with honey, sugar' and in JUKUJUKU 'chicken, fowl' (Australian English *chook*), based on the phonetic similarity of *jukujuku* with English *sugar*.

These indirect phonological representations found in Australian alternate sign languages differ in another respect from the loan homonyms in that there appears to be no accompanying wordplay or 'insider' appeal.

Worth a brief mention here is another kind of indirect phonological representation in the spoken languages of the same region. There is a special word (*kumunjayi* in Warlpiri) available to be said instead of a personal name proscribed because the bearer is recently deceased. This usage has been extended to replace any (near) homophonous word (Nash and Simpson 1981). On hearing *kumunjayi* used, the listener draws on their knowledge of the language and of the context to infer the intended word. Figure 17.7 diagrams a situation where a person named *Fred* has recently died, so the name can't be spoken, nor similar sounding words such as *bread*; the replacement *kumunjayi* is understood in this context.

The diagram uses some of the relations symbolised in Figures 17.1–6 that are involved in the avoidance of the name Fred and also cause avoidance of the similar sounding English word bread, and both in Warlpiri are replaced by the special substitute word *kumunjayi*.

17.6 Other nativisations

17.6.1 LOANSHIFT *calque* or *loan translation*

A LOANSHIFT calque or loan translation is when a meaning, simple or complex, is imported, but there is no substitution of form. (A LOANSHIFT compound is a CALQUE; otherwise, when a single stem is involved, the term LOAN TRANSLATION has been applied.)

A slightly more complex version is when the imported meaning was inferred by folk etymology. An example is provided by the Menomini of Wisconsin:

Having neither the types [l, r] nor a voiced [z], they interpreted the name of the town *Phlox* (Wisconsin) as *frogs* and translated it as [uma:hkawkow-meni:ka:n] ‘frog-town’.

(*Bloomfield 1933:458*)

Generally a calque is not word play, and is adopted as a serious term to denote the new concept, and is usually the only term.

However, there is an apparently playful loan translation involved in Kugu Nganhcara *mayi kumpu* ‘beer.’ Here *mayi* is the vegetable food generic, and *kumpu* ‘urine’ – cf. Australian English *piss*; ‘beer’ is also, more literally, *mayi ngaka* (vegetable water) (Smith and Johnson 2000:446). I have not considered this example as a borrowed homophony because English *piss* is polysemous rather than involving homophony.

17.7 Similar wordplay

Compare the way a pun, or rhyming slang, works from the hearer or decoder’s point of view, in Figure 17.8. There are elements of these apparent in the processes described in this chapter.

17.7.1 Pun (including bilingual pun)

A pun is a kind of wordplay involving identity or similarity of form, and then some humorous incongruity in the meanings of the paired forms. While Giorgadze (2014) provides a detailed typology of puns, including distinguishing homonyms, homophones, polysemous words, Figure 17.8 would appear to encompass what is in common among the subtypes.

17.7.2 Rhyming slang

Rhyming slang is another kind of wordplay involving similar forms, with only a quite abstract semantic component between the incongruously paired forms. The similarity of form always rhymes. Rhyming slang may well be confined just to some varieties of English.

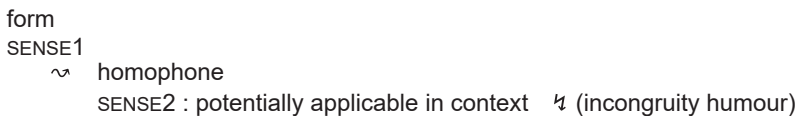


FIGURE 17.8 Pun.

spoken form	~	completed form	~	rhyming form	⇒	sense
<i>Noah</i>	~	<i>Noah's ark</i>	~	<i>shark</i>		SHARK

FIGURE 17.9 Rhyming slang.

The example diagrammed in Figure 17.9 involves the rhyming forms *ark* (or *sark*) and *shark*. The semantics involve association of *Noah's ark* with animals and the ocean, which applies also to *shark*. The diagram uses some of the relations symbolised in Figures 17.1–6 to analyse rhyming slang. A catchphrase (possibly in abbreviated form) evokes a rhyming word and thus its sense.

17.8 Conclusion

The subject of this note is an unusual phenomenon noted in a few Australian languages, whereby an introduced concept is lexicalised by the addition of a second sense to an existing word, based on perceived homophony of its translation equivalent in the donor language. The result is a somewhat cryptic repurposing of a prior word to additionally denote a newly encountered concept. It would be surprising if the phenomenon were not to be found further afield, at least in comparable diglossic endangered language situations.

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to associate this study with Nick Ostler: since 1975 we have shared diverse linguistic inquiries, and much else. I am grateful to Barry Alpher for drawing to my attention the phenomenon discussed here (the Yir Yoront and Menomini examples), to David Martin for the Wik example, to Harold Koch for pointing me to Hayasi (2012), and to Jennifer Green for alerting me to the parallels in alternate sign languages.

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18

SINDHI HINDUS, A DIASPORIC COMMUNITY

Reasons for shift and revitalisation strategies

Maya Khemlani David

18.1 Introduction. Language shift among the Sindhi Hindu global community

Studies of the Sindhi community in India some 30 years after partition found that the community had already shifted away from habitual use of the Sindhi language in India (Daswani and Parchani, 1978, see also Daswani, 1989).¹ In fact, as early as 1963, Khubchandani in his doctorate thesis for the University of Pennsylvania discussed the acculturation of Indian Sindhi to Hindi. More recent studies in different parts of the world of the Sindhi community show a trend to language shift. The Sindhis in Metro Manila, Philippines, in a study by Dewan in 1997 had also shifted from Sindhi as their dominant language. David, in her studies of the Sindhis in Malaysia (2001a), Singapore (2000), and London (2001b) also noted signs of shift. A comparative study of the Sindhi and Punjabi communities in Hong Kong by Detramani and Lock (2003) also shows a shift but that the shift among the Sindhis was more extensive and rapid as compared to the Hong Kong Punjabi community. In Jakarta, Indonesia too, there has been a shift (Thapan, 2002). Many of these studies focussed on documenting the shift but a recent study by Iyengar in 2013 focussed on perceptions of young Sindhis in the city of Pune, India on the value and usefulness of the Sindhi language. Such an emphasis on the perceptions and attitudes of community members towards their heritage language provides vital knowledge that may help language activists focus on appropriate ways to encourage community members to use their language. As far back as 2003 Garret et al. had stated that attitudes to a language provide a major motivation to either support or reject a language.

The data for this study comes from a number of sources which include Aggarwal's edited book (2020) on reflections of Sindhi identity which is based on the memories of Sindhis and also provides their attitudes to the heritage language; a number of online platforms (described later in the chapter) which describe the many websites initiated by language activists; online interviews with Asha Chand

and Pitamber (Peter) Dhalwani, two language activists; and discussions of language using WhatsApp Messenger with members of the community regarding their views of the use of the language and future of the Sindhi language. Social media was useful in collecting data as physical interviews were not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

18.1.1 *Attitude to the Sindhi language and reasons for shift*

The effects on language attitude, use and non-use (based on the memoirs of Sindhis in different parts of the world and published in 2020) will be described. *Sindhi Tapestry: Reflections on the Sindhi Identity: An Anthology* edited by Saaz Aggarwal is written by Sindhis of different backgrounds and socio-economic status, in different professions, living in different countries. Some of these memoirs are personal reflections while others are systematic academic studies. The memoirs in this about 430-page volume have been read and reread to determine reasons for language shift and then analysed under the following themes: A REALIZATION OF life as a refugee; Attitude of generation 1; Assimilation by generation 1.

In this section of the chapter, the voices of the Sindhis, mainly second generation now, living in different countries are heard.

Ritesh Uttamchandani (2020: 136–138):

(My parents) neither spoke to me about Partition or life in Sindh and, my dad was in fact not very kicked about me learning Sindhi for obvious reasons I now realise . . . my parents didn't speak much about their experience of Partition because they were keen on a new beginning. They were looking for that transition from refugee to citizen . . . the past has to be dumped to some measure for a fresh start and some cultural collateral damage is bound to happen at such junctures.

(138)

Subash Bijlani provides a similar argument and says 'in the case of Hindu Sindhi migrants, it was a bargain that had to be struck to sacrifice their ethnic identity and language in exchange for a new identity as part of their "new country" of settlement' (Bijlani, 2020: 96). 'In the absence of a state of their own, families adopted the language of the places where they settled and emphasised "link" languages'. There was assimilation by generation 1 for job prospects in India: 'My father attended classes to learn Hindi as all Central Government employees were required to possess . . . Sindhi was beginning to fade from our lives' (Bijlani, 2020: 100).

Another writer, Kusum Chopra (2020: 262) says, 'instead of imposing our customs and identity on others we merge into local cultures . . . and negotiate space for assimilation before ascending power ladders'.

English . . . which Sindhi parents consider indispensable to education – usually at the cost of speaking Sindhi at home . . . their efforts to merge had been at a huge sacrifice: in encouraging their young to adapt to the local languages and languages which would give them an edge they had lost their own.

(Chopra, 2020: 264)

Anju Makhija (2020: 330), speaking of her parents, explains this shift away from Sindhi ‘due to the jolt of Partition many of us lost our language. My parents were busy settling down and keen to give us a convent education. In the process they did not concentrate on teaching us Sindhi’.

Explaining the shift from a different perspective, Uttara Shahani (2020: 410) says, ‘My family wore their Sindhi identity lightly. This was partly due to the negative prejudices Sindhis in India faced after Partition’. An architect, Namrata Asudani (2020: 333) explains this further:

They came to a new land where they were not entirely welcome, where they had to struggle against the biases of language, the stigma of being called refugees . . . to make a future for their families. I do understand now why I was never taught to speak Sindhi as a child, why amalgamation was more important than identity.

18.1.1.1 *Taunts. Hiding their identity*

As refugees in India, many of the young were taunted by their schoolmates and felt a need to defuse this by not disclosing their ethnic identity. Dharmendra Tolani (2020: 11) remembers a teacher scolding a classmate who sat next to him at lunch: ‘you should be ashamed of yourself eating with a Sindhi though you are a . . . !’ and says he was informed Sindhis are well-known beggars, Sindhis are thieves too, and if you see a snake and a Sindhi together, kill the Sindhi first (Tolani, 2020: 12). Other writers reflect the same view and Atul Khatri, a comedian, says ‘when I was a kid people sometimes made fun of us “Chindy Sindh”’ (cited in Aggarwal, 2020: 54). Nina Sabnani (2020: 83), an artist, said, ‘I was teased for my surname, for my language and clothes’, and on page 85, ‘for long I had hidden my Sindhi identity out of fear and mortification’ (Sindhi surnames generally end with the suffix ‘ani’).

Nandita Bhavnani (2020: 35–36) sums the results of all this by stating, ‘I have always been an outsider, having to speak another language in the hope of being viewed in a favourable light’ and that Sindhi in India is ‘a secret language coded against an uncomprehending society. It lives in privacy, not out there in public’.

18.1.1.2 *Generation 2 and boarding schools*

Moving to another country, many went to government schools where local Indian languages were used. Some however were sent to boarding schools, and Shivdasani (2020: 110) says that due to this, ‘English became our language of communication and choice’, and further states,

however, being a boarding school in a very new India, the common language spoken was English. We heard and understood Sindhi at home but never had a chance to actually speak it fluently since English became our language of communication and of choice.

18.1.1.3 *Global citizens and attitude to language*

The Sindhis became global citizens moving from country to country and their attitude to their heritage language shifted drastically, with some saying, ‘can’t read or write Sindhi? No problem. I am living the life of a global, entrepreneurial, hospitable and family oriented Sindhi’ (Sakhrani, 2020: 108). This is reiterated by another writer, Kishore Mandhyan (2020: 384), who quotes his mother,

What difference does it make whether my children are fluent in Sindhi, Gujarati, French or Japanese? They must grow up not to be lords of a minor locality or corner, they must grow up to be princes of the world.

‘Sindhis have made the world their home’ (Mandhyan, 2020: 383). Yet another writer makes a fairly similar argument. Raaj Lalchandani (2020: 390), speaking of the achievements of the Sindhis globally says, ‘we may not know our language perfectly yet we speak many foreign languages fluently. We don’t have a homeland, and yet the world belongs to us’.

Other elements take the place of a language which is lost, and speaking of her children and grandchildren, Shivdasani (2020: 114) says, ‘Our children, married to Americans, do not speak or understand Sindhi but are aware of their heritage through their closeness to the rest of our family’. Similarly, Nikhil Bhojwani (2020: 163) argues that values are important, stating ‘ultimately though whether we use Sindhi or other languages . . . it is the values they impart that reflect our culture’. This is again reiterated by another writer. ‘Our heritage is the values we were given’. As earlier mentioned, Shivdasani (2020) explains these values as closeness to family.

Vimmi Sadarangani (2020: 296) goes further and argues ‘even if one is ignorant of the Sindhi language and heritage, a person born into a Sindhi family will always have a Sindhi identity’. Another writer, Gittanjali C. Kalro (2020: 300), categorically states, ‘it is our business ethic, passed on from generation to generation that lends to our identity’.

18.2 **Social media and online platforms**

Today there are several Sindhi language activists who, due to COVID-19, have had the time and opportunity to create a number of online platforms to facilitate and encourage discourse taking place in Sindhi across the diaspora (see Appendix for list of online platforms discussed). The extensive work of these activists and the many strategies used to encourage community members to use the ethnic language will be discussed. An initial attempt to evaluate the success of these strategies, based on some feedback received from community members, will also be discussed.

During this time a popular means of encouraging the diasporic Sindhi community to use their language and to make them feel that they are united and have a rich culture and identity is the use of electronic media. Such platforms have increased tremendously in recent months and some of them are shown daily

through Facebook. There are different websites where telefilms, TV shows, magazines, folk music, and literature are used or shown to restore the image of the language.

18.2.1 Recent and older platforms

During this COVID era, language activists have begun to use platforms like Sindhi Anmol Ratan (precious Sindhis) to try to bind the global Sindhi community together and to encourage the use of Sindhi by focussing on interviews with prosperous and successful Sindhi men and women of various age groups in different parts of the world. Some interviews and discussions are with Sindhi priests. In this platform there are five to six permanent leading members from different cities of India like Pune, Mumbai, and one from Chile. They also often host guests from Spain, the USA, and different parts of the world, encouraging them to talk about their life journeys. In this way young Sindhis learn of the obstacles and opportunities on the roads taken by the generation who had to flee from Sind with just the clothes on their backs, how they thrived in new environments, and what their value system was and is. In these interviews they discuss the solid value systems of the Sindhis like filial loyalty and generosity and their rich and ancient culture and traditions which have made them resilient and successful. Younger successful members of the community who are helping Sindhis in their locality in one way or another are also interviewed to project the success and kindred relationship of the community. The hidden unstated motive is – ‘be proud to be a Sindhi and to be a Sindhi speak Sindhi so that fellow Sindhis recognise you as members of the community and although we are globally scattered, we are one’ (online interview with Pitamber (Peter) Dhalwani on 12 May 2021).

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, one more direct platform to encourage the use of Sindhi was set up by Asha Chand. This was www.learnsindhi.com. This is a website created to teach the Sindhi language from basic to advanced levels. This website has online lectures as well as a complete CD course which contains the material from basic sounds and letters to an advanced level. The site uses the Arabic-Sindhi and Roman scripts to teach Sindhi. Asha Chand introduces the sites for teaching and learning the Sindhi language starting from basic sounds and letters to the advanced level – sentence structure. She teaches Sindhi through web resources and conducts seminars, workshops, and conferences to revitalise the Sindhi language among Sindhis so that they can preserve their language, literature, and culture.

She also requests Sindhi mothers in a videoclip to speak Sindhi in their homes. In her introduction to the online site, she urges Sindhi parents to learn and use Sindhi in their homes and in their daily lives. Asha Chand also provides weekly a couple of proverbs providing their meaning and examples in sentences. Such proverbs for example include (translated) ‘Like scold your daughter so that your daughter in law will get the message’ (signifying diplomacy). More recently, she has produced Sindhi drama programmes to depict value systems and translations of sentences from English to Sindhi enacted by a young protagonist. AMAN Ji

ASHA has 36,624 members spread over 103 countries (online interview with Asha Chand on 10 May 2021).

Yet another website is www.Sindhisinghat.com. The literal meaning of the phrase ‘Sindhi Sanghat’ is ‘Sindhi friendship’, ‘Sindhi brotherhood’, and ‘Sindhi people’. This website produces many things related to the Sindhi language, literature, and culture and has various modes and sub-means to encourage the community to use the language. For instance, Sindhi families are informed of an annual competition to promote the Sindhi Language by focussing on young children and indirectly their parents. Children were asked to prepare one nursery rhyme and participate in an annual International Nursery Rhymes competition which offers attractive prizes like tablets. Parents are involved as they must help the children to memorise a poem and shoot the videos. The organisers promised that a video of all the children would be on www.youtube.com/sindhisinghatkids and that the mothers would be given credit.

One of the methods used by Sindhi Sangat to revitalise Sindhi is the ‘Read & write’ sections in the site. This section is further classified into Sindhi articles, English articles, learn Sindhi, stories, folk literature and music in Sindhi and English, Sindhi reflection, Sindhi books and short stories. These are attempts targeted at children and intermediate and advanced level learners to learn the Sindhi language. Please note that some of these stories are also in English. It appears that the knowledge of the rich Sindhi culture must be transmitted even if it is in English. Sindhi Sangat also produces Sindhi telefilms, Sindhi music, folk music, and Sindhi poetry, to promote use of the Sindhi language. Sometimes this page produces some comedy clips in Sindhi to interest Sindhis to learn the language.

Another website is www.Sindhisaathi.com. The word ‘saathi’ means ‘a friend’, ‘a comrade’, ‘a companion’, and ‘a brother’. The Sindhi Saathi website brings a platform for Sindhis wherever they live to join, to gather, and to unite on one platform so that they can preserve their language, literature, and culture. On Sindhi Saathi, a few entries like ‘Wish you a Happy New Year’ and a Sindhi video contest for youngsters are written in English and in Sindhi in an Arabic script. The use of English is used as well as the wider audience appear to be English proficient.

Yet another website is www.sindhigulab.com, which is an early Sindhi internet magazine, having started in 2001 in the service of Sindhyat. This web magazine is classified into five different sections of Sindhi language, literature, and culture, namely, Sindhi sahitya, Sindhi info, Sindhi media, and the religion of the Sindhi Hindus. These sections are further classified into sub-sections giving information about various aspects of the Sindhi language. It is a complete Arabic-Sindhi web magazine. It is India’s first magazine publishing monthly in Sindhi; but some articles are also published in English.

Then there is Sindhiwood, a channel on the Facebook platform presenting comedies in Sindhi while *Inside the Sindhi Kitchen* shows how Sindhi food is made. A recent innovation is Telefilms via Facebook every Monday – #sindhitelefilm. In addition, there are many YouTube programmes with Sindhi songs and dances and stories.

18.3 Analysis of data

From these first-hand accounts and platforms we learn that speech communities shift to other languages for a number of reasons. There are political, educational, and socio-economic motivations for language shift. In short, both internal and external factors within a speech community can cause language shift. Language attitude plays a vital role for the maintenance and shift of any language. The attitude and use or non-use of a heritage language can be determined by many factors, including if the community is a minority community living in a multilingual setting, if the community does not see any social capital in its heritage language, if the language policy in the country they are living in requires the medium of instruction in schools to be in their national language. These and other factors cause intragenerational or intergenerational language shift. The former is a shift within the same generation and the latter involves a shift between one generation and the other.

When there is no intergenerational transmission of the ethnic or heritage language, there will be language loss. If parents do not use the ethnic language in the home domain with their children, there will be language shift. If a language can be lost in some functions and some domains there is a possibility of salvaging it or reviving it. However, before rushing into activities to revitalise a language it is vital to determine reasons for the shift, extent of the shift, and only then carefully think of and activate appropriate strategies to revitalise the language.

In short, what is being recommended is a psycho-social dimension to the study of language shift and language use. We must determine the reason and state of the shift. If the shift has already taken place in the first generation of migrants and if the second generation learn another language in school and hear yet another language in the home domain, there has occurred not only intergenerational shift but intragenerational shift. Intragenerational shift is where the language within a generation is no longer used, and intergenerational is where the ethnic language is not transmitted from one generation to another. The language activist must be aware of this situation then think of appropriate strategies to revitalise the language.

If the shift has started in the home domain, activists must be able to change the negative attitude of the speech community to its own language. The focus could be on parents and parental agency. Parents can be encouraged to be language activists in the home domain and influence their children's language choices. Parents have a vital role in prestige planning of a minority language and can influence the language ideology within the family domain (see Nandi, 2018) who discusses how the linguistic practices of parents influence their children's language learning. However, there must be a shift in the parents' mindset and they must be encouraged to both learn and use the language. There is no lack of books or dictionaries in the Sindhi language. There is no need to document the language. What needs to be done is to encourage members of the community to learn and use the language especially in the home domain and with their children. But to do that community members

must be given cogent and convincing reasons as to why they should use their language.

Asha Chand (2021) is motivating young children by organising song, dance, and poetry and story competitions and providing gift tokens. Using social media, she is encouraging mothers to use the language in the home domain with their children. However, encouraging people to move away from established language habits does not mean this will result in immediate change. Change will only come slowly. Chand is also encouraging principals in schools in certain parts of India to have Sindhi as a subject in the formative years of a child's education. However, if these minority language students hear Hindi and other regional languages both in the home and outside the home domains, then the Sindhi language merely becomes a class-learned language. Other activists through their respective webinars want to capture the interest of younger community members by presenting them with successful businesspeople, actors, singers, film producers, comedians who all speaking in Sindhi hope to encourage receptive knowledge of the language. Language activists are doing their best to revitalise the use of Sindhi among Sindhi Hindus. The work of the activists must start with the community and attract the community to the use of the language by providing compelling reasons why the heritage language should be used.

An effective way to encourage language use, used by these language activists through these websites, is to make Sindhis proud of their culture, their rich heritage of customs, traditions, and values, including that of being charitable, generous, and helpful to members of the community. Their culture of course includes language, songs, dances, and a rich religious tradition.

Some of the language activists also appear to have reduced their expectations as to what degree of proficiency is targeted. There appears to be a lowering of expectations for the language restoration programme. Some members of the community who are trying to encourage members of the speech community to use the language have argued that perhaps using/speaking the language is more important than focussing on written literacy as the Sindhi script can be written in both Devanagari or the Persio-Arabic script or even the Roman script. Consequently, community leaders are being realistic and dropping their expectations of a return to the written language. Other activists appear to be content with a receptive knowledge of the mother tongue. In short, language activists may have to lower their expectations of how much and what type of restoration of the mother tongue they are content with.

18.4 Feedback from members of the community

Some early feedback provided by community members in different parts of the world suggest that the language activists face an uphill task, as language shift appears to have taken place with the first generation as noted in the documented memoirs. A twice-migrated Sindhi grandmother in her seventies now living in America says, 'I spoke to my father, and mother-in-law, husband all in English', suggesting that the use of English is and has become habitual with her.

A 60-year-old mother with adult children in England explained,

in my opinion most Sindhis in the world talk in English. I don't think the new generation will have any roots to Sind. I did not talk to my kids in Sindhi. We grew up speaking English at home and that's the way it's been.

She added,

what Sindhi culture do I follow? It's all Westernized. So loss of language might lead to loss of culture but on the other hand even with language skills we don't really have a sense of cultural belonging. It's a Westernized world now. We have to learn to move forward with the times.

A young mother in her forties in Malaysia says,

the Sindhi language is no longer widely used in homes today because of the absence of elders at home. This is due to the nuclear family set up. And English is the common speaking medium in schools & home. Further there are a growing number of mixed marriages.

An eighty-year-old Sindhi man from Vancouver explains,

take the example of India first. Younger generations are now fluent in other languages of India. Good example is Hindi speaking belt of India where all young generations are speaking Hindi language fluently and in many cases English too. They are not fluent in Sindhi. Local cultures have much influenced on them.

Speaking of her children studying in British universities, a mother says,

I can already sense that we are losing the roots. I myself hardly speak Sindhi. My elder daughter can speak but not so good. She will speak only if someone doesn't understand English. My younger daughter is 18 she does not speak or understand Sindhi. I don't think there is any sense of culture. They know what's going on in my life, how I pray or fast. My daughter just laughs and say mum we won't follow all this. I know they won't continue the rituals as they don't believe in it. I can see the language dying not only in my family but extended family too. I see children speaking English. English has taken over the lead in most of our lives.

A 60-year-old Singaporean Sindhi grandmother explains.

Speaking Sindhi should start from infancy. I made a mistake with my children though who can't speak it at all – my loss, their loss, community's loss. The youth must hold gatherings – fun gatherings to inculcate the use of the language but pity they are in a world of their own with work stress and chas-

ing their dreams, programmed on Netflix and Amazon prime are their stress busters . . . Sindhi will not progress.

Such initial feedback, mainly from members of the second generation living in different parts of the world, with the exclusion of Sindhis in India, appears to be unanimous in the dismal view of the future of the Sindhi language. My next study will focus on the views of Sindhis in different parts of India, where according to the Indian Census 2011 (<https://censusindia.gov.in/>) data on language and mother tongue, Sindhi is stated to be the mother tongue of 27.7 million people living in India.

18.5 Conclusion

In short, Sindhis in a global community with no homeland see social capital in other languages in their new settings rather than Sindhi. A more viable approach to encouraging them to use their language in the home domain and in ethnic encounters is to use persuasive discourse strategies to persuade members of the speech community to see value in using their language whilst maintaining their multilingual repertoire. Members of the speech community, wherever they are, must be made to understand that multilingualism does not require a complete shift away from the mother tongue.

Members of a speech community have different reasons why they have moved away from habitual use or even knowledge of their heritage language. Language activists must also be aware of this. It is hoped that activists determine attitude to the heritage language, reasons for shift and extent of a shift and work together with community members and provide them with logical and even emotional reasons for use of their mother tongue, especially in the home domain.

Some of the Sindhi activists appear to be focussing on instilling pride in being a Sindhi and creating community solidarity and others appear to be focussing on knowledge of the written script by providing apps for the written script and by providing competitions for children with attractive prizes. But what is vital prior to activating strategies to revitalise the language is to understand when and why a language shift takes place and the attitude to the heritage language. However, based on the feedback provided by members of the community it appears that the language activists have an uphill task as shift has occurred even with the first-generation Sindhis. Retaining a language is much easier than trying to get people to learn what will be an altogether fairly new language. The ultimate motivation is going to be a desire to be and remain a member of a very successful global community, rich in tradition and culture and committed to helping each other.

Appendix: Online platforms

Sindhi Anmol Ratan

<https://m.facebook.com/SuhinaSindhiPuneOfficial/videos/44072556241049>

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/amansindhi/>

www.sindhisingat.com/

www.sindhisaathi.org/
www.sindhigulab.com/
<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCRsHJp9MyrNWG8vrEvDRXTQ>
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Sindhi-language_films

Interviews

Asha Chand. Online interview, 10 May 2021.
P. Dhalwani Pitamber. Online interview, 12 May 2021.

Note

1 I am grateful to Saaz Aggarwal who provided me permission to use data from her book.

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19

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY ENDANGERED

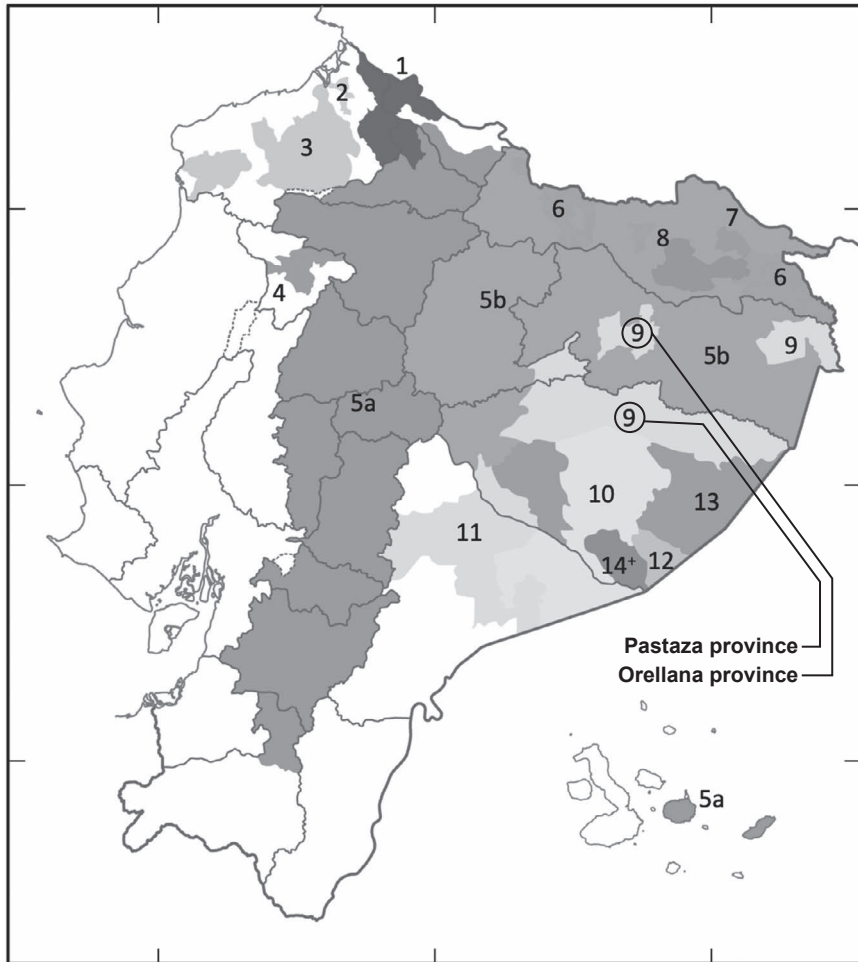
The Waotededo language and the effects of intense contact

Marleen Haboud and Fernando Ortega

19.1 Introduction

The Amazonian region is extended along Bolivia (11%), Peru (13%), Colombia (6%), Venezuela (1%), Brazil (67%) and Ecuador (2%). Forty-eight percent of the Ecuadorian territory corresponds to the Amazonian region; this is 130,832 km². The fact is that regions with a rich ecosystem also seem to be rich in linguistic and cultural diversity. Amazonia is a natural and human treasure. There are around thirty million people living in the Amazonian region of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana and Suriname. According to Sichra (2009: 75, 102), there are 316 indigenous peoples living in the Amazonian regions with about 1,400,000 people, and 297 languages (49 linguistic families). Unfortunately, several studies preview that if the destruction of Amazonia continues at the same pace most of this region will be destroyed in about 40 years.¹ This is a fact in Ecuadorian Amazonia. Ecuador is one of the smallest countries of South America (272,045 sq. km.), known by its ecological, cultural and linguistic diversity where there are 14 indigenous nationalities.² As for the languages, in addition to Spanish, 13 indigenous languages are spoken, although they are all vulnerable and some are highly endangered. Four languages are in the coastal region: Awapit, Cha'palaa, Sia-Pedee and Tsa'fiki; Kichwa in the Sierra (Highlands), Achuar, A'I, Baikoka, Paikoka, Shiwiar, Shuar, Waotededo, Sapara and Kichwa in the Amazon basin. Kichwa is also spoken in the Galapagos Islands due to migratory movements of Kichwa speakers from Central Highlands (Map 19.1).³

Framed within the close relationship between language, the geolocalization and sociohistorical context of the speakers, this specific chapter focuses on the Waotededo language ('true language') spoken by the Waorani people ('true people') in the provinces of Pastaza and Orellana in the Amazonian region. Even though this is a synchronic study, sociohistorical characteristics are taken into account to have a better understanding of language maintenance, revival, displacement, shift or death.



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Awapit | 7 Baikoka |
| 2 Sia Pedee | 8 Paikoka |
| 3 Cha'palaa | 9 Waotededo |
| 4 Tsa'fiki | 10 Achuar chicham |
| 5a Kichwa Sierra | 11 Shuar chicham |
| 5b Kichwa Amazonia | 12 Shiwiar chicham |
| 6 A'ingae | 13 Zápara |
| | 14+ Andwa |

LENGUAS INDÍGENAS EN EL ECUADOR			
Proyecto Oralidad y Modernidad - Geolingüística Ecuador			
<i>Oralidad y Modernidad</i>			
Auspicios			
Proyecto Gestado Municipalidad de Babahoyo		Revisado por: Olga H. Mayorga Marleen Héroud	
Elaborado por: Fernando Pavón			
Datum: WGS84	Escala Fuente: 1: 250.000	Fecha: Quito, Agosto 2010	Fuentes: SENPLADES Sistema Nacional de Información CODENRE

MAP 19.1 Indigenous nationalities of Ecuador sites of this study.

Source: Haboud (2010–2016, <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/geolingüistica/>).

This chapter is organized as follows. The first section after the introduction offers a short description of the Waorani people and their language, the second pinpoints some of the concepts and principles used throughout the chapter, the third one describes the methodological procedures followed by the study. Section

19.5 refers to the vitality, dynamics and challenges of the Waotededo language in several socio-communicative contexts, taking into account the speakers' linguistic mother tongue, their preferred language and actual use. The chapter closes with reflections about the difficulty of measuring language shift, but also presents several revitalization efforts developed by the speakers. Finally, it proposes to rethink, not only about the theory of language endangerment, but about the researchers' responsibility vis-à-vis the speakers and their communities.

19.2 The Waorani people and the Waotededo language

The Waorani were nomadic people who used to move from one settlement to another along the 30,000 square kilometers of their ancestral territory in the Amazonian region of Ecuador. Their contact with the Western society in the early 1950s reduced their territory to approximately 6,100 square kilometers, forcing most of the Waorani to live in permanent settlements (waorani.com). It was not until the 1990s that the Waorani received legal recognition of their land. During recent history, there have been four major periods of close contact between the Waorani and outsiders intervening in their territory:

- 1 The rubber boom in the late 1800s/early 1900s.
- 2 Early oil exploration in the 1940s.
- 3 Missionary work starting in the 1950s.
- 4 The oil boom starting in the 1970s.

According to the last national census (INEC 2010) 2,416 people self-identified as Waorani. Currently, they are located along the provinces of Pastaza (1,184), Orellana (908) and Napo (112). In the province of Orellana, they are located in the Yasuní National Park, which is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world and home of two uncontacted indigenous groups, the Tagaeri and the Taromenane, who are also part of the Waorani.⁴ In Pastaza, the Waorani are in two counties, Arajuno and Pastaza, as well as in Pastaza's capital, Puyo. A smaller Waorani group lives in the Napo province. At present there are 36 communities in the three provinces. This chapter focuses on the communities located in Pastaza and Orellana (See Map 19.1).

Because of the Waorani fierce resistance to accept outsiders, and due to several confrontations with missionary groups and oil companies, the Waorani have been known as *Auca* (from Kichwa 'savage', 'wild', 'enemy'). Correspondingly, the Waorani people call foreigners *Kowodi* ('depredators'). The Waorani main economic sources are still hunting and gathering; however, many of the younger people look for jobs in urbanized towns or in some of the transnational companies.

Regarding the language, Waotededo (also known as Wao-Terero, Wao-Tiuro, Waodani, Huaorani, Sabela, Wao Tededö, Waodäni, Waodäni Tededö) is still an unclassified language spoken by around 1,716 people (INEC 2010). It is an agglutinative language with predominant SOV word order distinguishing nasal and oral vowels. Waotededo has a (C)V syllable structure with frequent vowel clusters. It is said to have three dialects: Tiwakuna (Tiguacuna), Tiwi (Tuei) and Shiripuno.⁵

After having stayed in various Waorani communities in 2015, it seemed that the majority of the people were speaking Waotededo, although the younger members of the communities were bilingual (Waotededo-Spanish). Nevertheless, the unbalanced contact with the Western world (i.e., oil and wood transnational companies, missionary groups, Spanish schooling, interethnic marriages, continuous rural-urban travels) threatened not only their language on behalf of Spanish, but also their culture and ecosystem.⁶ During recent visits (2019) we could already witness the fast shift to Spanish due to massive migration to urban settlements like *Nuevo Amanecer*, a Waorani neighborhood in Pastaza's capital city, Puyo.

19.3 Working with language endangerment: concepts and principles to keep in mind

Several studies have underlined the relationship between cultural, linguistic and biological diversity showing that places with a higher number of different species also have a larger number of languages (Harmon and Muffy 2002; Cámara and Bascompte (2021)). It is the field of language ecology, the one studying the present and past relationships and interactions between speakers, the environment and their language(s) and culture(s).

Language, as we well know, is not isolated from other social, cultural and ecological factors but interacts with them. Such factors include those traditionally considered to be within the realm of linguistics, such as the presence and use of other languages, as well as those that are not, such as economics, politics and the physical or natural environment.⁷ This is especially important in the case of the Waorani, many of whom live in the Yasuní National Park. Historically, the Waorani have maintained an intimate relationship between the forest, their language and their culture. In their traditional worldview, it is said that there is no distinction between the physical and spiritual worlds, spirits are present throughout the world, and the rainforest remains the essential basis of their physical and cultural survival, their home. Losing their language is not only losing one of the most important means of communication, but ancestral knowledge, concepts and values that may never be recovered.

A language is in danger when the number of speakers declines and there is a permanent and sustained reduction of speakers who adopt a different language at the expense of their own. This can be caused by a series of overlapping factors which can range from natural catastrophes, epidemics, violent events such as wars and genocide, forced assimilation to (inter)national trends, or political, economic, cultural and linguistic subordination to powerful groups. Consequently, to determine the vitality of a language is not an easy task; it demands a long-term analysis of first-hand qualitative and quantitative data showing the multiplicity of factors involved in language change. Still, results are never straightforward, not only because of the dynamism languages and cultures have, but also because each speaker and each community own unique characteristics. In this sense, this study does not aim to determine the speakers' linguistic competence within a scale of 'good speaker', 'weak speaker' or 'poor speaker', etc., but to provide first-hand

information about the use of language(s) within specific socio-communicative contexts.

19.4 Methodological procedures

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study developed with Waorani communities in two amazonic provinces, Pastaza and Orellana. Having informed the Waorani communities and corresponding local authorities about the purposes of the project, and having received their oral informed consent, fieldwork was carried out with a team of Waotededo speakers (local team, from now on) nominated by the community and formed by three or four bilingual speakers. We carried out a series of training sessions *in situ*, which included the use of software, databases, virtual platforms and GPS. Pilot testing was developed to determine the validity of the research instruments.⁸

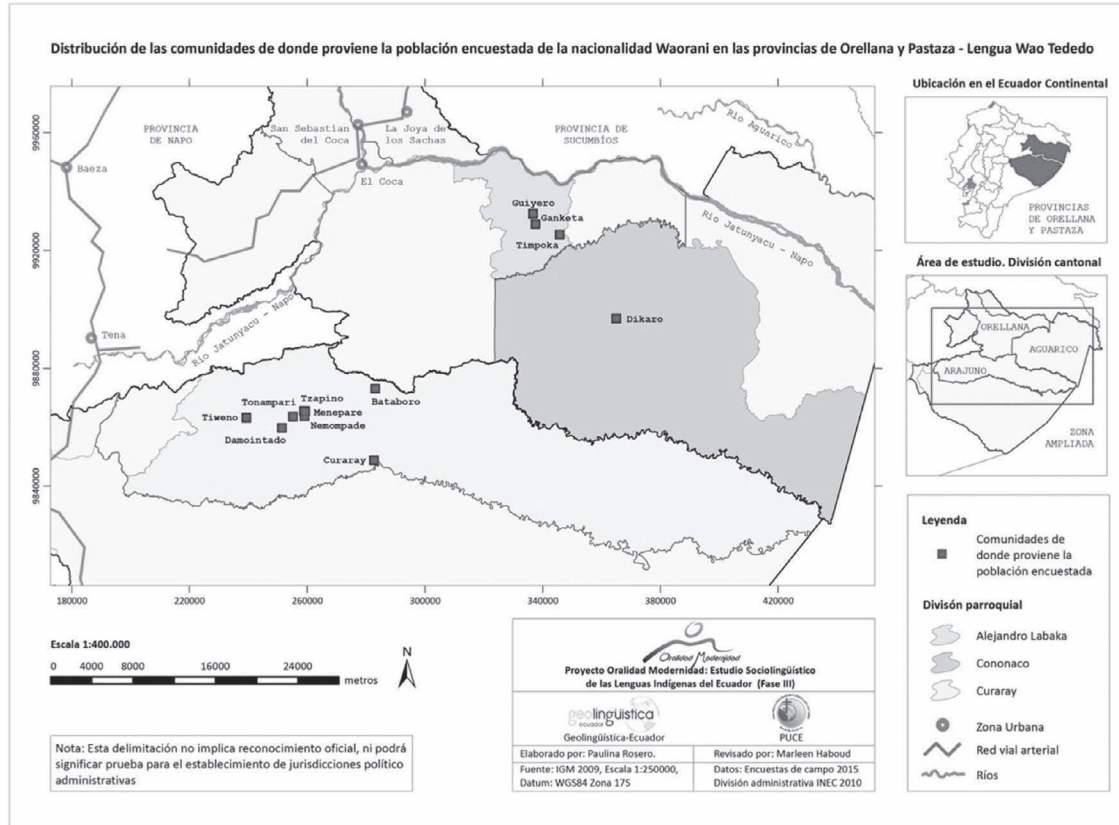
The project as a whole, the proposed methodology and expected results were openly discussed with the community and the local team. By definition, this project was flexible enough to work with the speakers so that they could become full participants in the research processes from the start.

Data were gathered thanks to participant and nonparticipant observation, free conversations with members of the communities, life stories, georeferenced sociolinguistic interviews and art workshops.⁹ We interviewed 125 Waorani families living in 16 different communities, 59% were men and 40.8% women between 16 and 80 years of age.¹⁰ Map 19.2 shows the georeferenced distribution of the interviewees.

To measure linguistic vitality, UNESCO's guidelines on Language Vitality Endangerment (LVE)¹¹ has been used, although we are aware that scales are only flexible guides that can be adjusted and refined to each particular case. LVE identifies the following nine factors to determine the vitality of a language: 1) Intergenerational language transmission, 2) Absolute number of speakers with regard to the speech community, 3) Proportion of speakers within the total population, 4) Shifts in domains of language use, 5) Response to new domains and media, 6) Availability of materials for language education and literacy, 7) Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies including official status and use, 8) Community members' attitudes toward their own language, and, 9) Amount and quality of documentation. In this chapter, we only refer to factors 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

As shown in Table 19.1, which only illustrates factor 1 (intergenerational transmission), each scale is assessed with values: '5' is assigned to the optimal situation and '0', to the severest one. In practice, we will see how difficult is to assign exact mathematical values to each possible situation, and so, it becomes necessary to describe language use in more detail.

The section describes the vitality of the Waotededo language in the Amazonian region. Eventually, recent findings about language use in urban areas (Puyo city) will also be mentioned.



MAP 19.2 Sample distribution in Waorani Territory.

Source: Haboud (2015, <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/waotededo/>).

TABLE 19.1 UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment framework

<i>Degree of Endangerment</i>	<i>Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission</i>
5. Safe	Language is spoken by all generations
4. Vulnerable	Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
3. Definitely endangered	Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in their home
2. Severely endangered	Language is spoken by older generations, the parents may understand, children do not speak it
1. Critically endangered	The youngest speakers are grandparents and older. They speak the language infrequently
0. Extinct	There are no speakers left

Source: After UNESCO (2012).

19.5 The vitality of the Waotededo language

This section describes the vitality of the Waotededo language taking into account its recent, but intense relationship with the Western society, the Spanish language and other indigenous languages, specially, Kichwa. We describe the actual use of the language in several communicative contexts giving special attention to inter-generational transmission, shifts in domains of language use, response to new domains and media, availability of materials for language education and literacy, and the speakers' linguistic attitudes, expectations and language empowerment.

19.5.1 *Linguistic knowledge, language use and linguistic preference*

The information related to this section is based on the following questions: What is your mother/native language? Do you speak any other language? When speaking, which language do you feel more comfortable with? Which language do you prefer to speak at home? Which language do you usually use to write? Which language is easier for you when you talk to your father, mother, son(s), daughter(s), spouse/partner, brother(s), sister(s), Waorani friends, local authorities, work, when you go to the city/town, to the hospital, to church (religious service), community meetings, traditional ceremonies, sports, talking over the phone, sending cell phone messages or Internet messages?

According to the interviewees, 84.8% (121) recognized themselves as native speakers of Waotededo, while 10.4% said they were balanced bilinguals (Waotededo and Spanish). Only 1.6% said to be native speakers of Waotededo and Kichwa, and a similar percentage (1.6%) were native Kichwa speakers. This is due to extensive influence of Kichwa in the region.

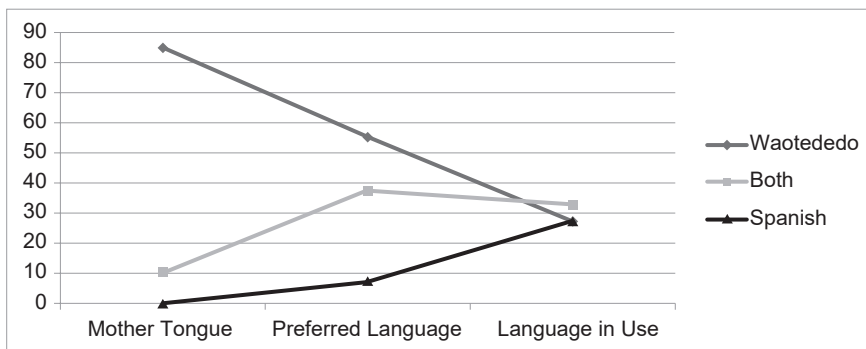
Regarding language use, we find that 27.2% only use Waotededo; while 60% use Waotededo and Spanish, and 2.4% are multilingual. Although the percentage displayed for Waotededo seems low, we need to take into account that bilingual

and multilingual speakers also use Waotededo; this means that 89.6% of the interviewees use (or are able to) the ancestral language. Be aware that proficiency tests were not carried out among the interviewees; so, the given answers reflect the speakers' self-linguistic evaluation. Nevertheless, and because the interviewers always started their conversations speaking Waotededo, it was easy to determine if the interviewees were able to (or willing to) use the native language, or if they preferred to speak Spanish. Six people (4.8%) mentioned they usually speak Kichwa with other Kichwa speakers who live nearby. As expected, the language the bilingual group chooses to communicate mostly depends on who is surrounding them and the discussed topic (Hymes 1974). Therefore, when some of the Spanish speaking researchers were present, they spoke Spanish; for example, during our visits to Dicaro (Orellana province), some of the families told us about the last movie they had watched on DirecTV recently inaugurated in their community.¹² In other communities, some speakers described, in Spanish, their experiences when visiting Quito or when driving a new car.

As for the speakers' linguistic preference, 55.2% said they prefer to speak Waotededo for their daily communication, 37.6% prefer to use both languages (Waotededo-Spanish) and 7.2% only Spanish. If we compare the variables knowledge, preference and use, we notice there is an important increase of bilingualism at the expense of Waotededo (Graph 19.1.)

The aforementioned section suggests that most of the interviewees were native Waotededo speakers and that they preferred to either communicate in their native language or in both languages, if necessary (Waotededo and Spanish); in practice, the increase of bilingualism is evident throughout the Northern Waorani communities (Orellana province), while Spanish outweighs in the Southern region (Pastaza province).

In 2019, during our last visit to Toñampari and the communities located in urban Puyo (Pastaza), we witnessed the use of Spanish had expanded among the Waorani population, especially among speakers under 40. It was interesting, though, to see that a soccer festival celebrated in Puyo during our visit was mostly



GRAPH 19.1 Mother Tongue, Language(s) in Use, Language Preference.

Source: Haboud (2015) (for this study).

a bilingual event. This, as well as the positive linguist attitudes most of the speakers expressed towards Waotededo, give us hope that the speakers might maintain both languages in daily communication.

19.5.2 Languages used in socio-communicative contexts

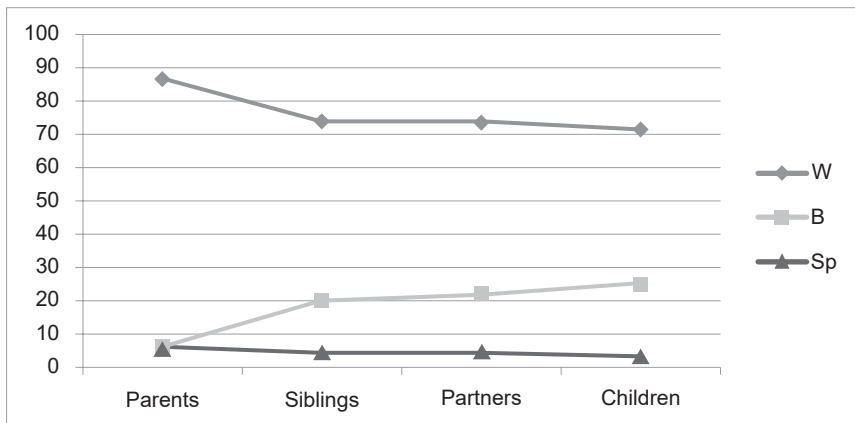
This section discusses the use of language within different socio-communicative contexts. As we will see, language use is continuously being (re)shaped by a series of personal or group-living experiences.

19.5.2.1 Languages used at the household

Regarding communication with closer family member (parents, siblings, partners and children), Waotededo is the language more often used, although we find meaningful differences when comparing generational groups.

As shown in Graph 19.2, 86.4% of the interviewees usually use Waotededo to communicate with their parents, 73.6% use it with their spouse, 73.4% with their siblings and 71.4% with their children. These figures seem quite encouraging regarding language maintenance; however, when we compare the use of Waotededo between the interviewees' parents and their children, there is a loss of 15%. In contrast, when comparing generational groups, bilingualism increases four to five times (5.7% to 25%).

There are no doubts about the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism worldwide. Having the ability to use two or more languages improves communication, generates positive attitudes towards understanding diversity and promotes respect towards otherness; however, we need to keep in mind that minoritized bilingualism – where one of the languages is prestigious and the other one is subordinated – usually leads towards language shift and loss on behalf of the powerful language, Spanish in this case.



GRAPH 19.2 Languages used with close family members.

Source: Haboud (2015) (for this study).

19.5.2.2 Languages used beyond the household context

- *Traditional ceremonies.* During traditional ceremonies, such as weddings or ceremonies related to hunting, 88% of interviewees said they speak Waotededo, only 5.6% use both languages and 4% Spanish. On the one hand, this underlines the important role of traditional community activities in preserving language; on the other, it shows the importance language has in transmitting culture and maintaining a series of practices related to the maintenance and revalorization of the ecosystem. These practices are not new, but they seemed to be reinforced by younger language activists aiming to favor their intangible patrimony as well as cultural and ecological diversity.
- *Community meetings.* The data show that 59.4% mentioned they mostly use Waotededo, 26.4% both languages, and 12% only Spanish. The use of one language or the other depends on the people attending the meetings or the discussed topics. When there are foreigners, those members of the community who are able to speak Spanish will do so; similarly, if the discussed topic is related to the Western world, the speakers alternate languages. This has turned into a common practice in indigenous communities, due to the frequent visits of tourists, researchers, professors or students from Ecuador or abroad (Haboud 1998; Whitten 2003).
- *Sports.* Waotededo men are quite involved in soccer and volleyball. Regarding soccer there is a Waorani pre-professional team whose players mainly live in Puyo. In the opinion of the interviewees, during such activities, 47.2% said that the Waorani players and the audience use both languages, 27.2% opted for Waotededo only and 12% for Spanish. A similar percentage (12%) said they were not involved in sports. The aforementioned percentages are similar to our personal observations during soccer games which took place in Puyo, in 2019.
- *Work* was interpreted by many of the interviewees as a paid activity usually performed outside of the community, while the activities that take place in their communities, such as housekeeping, harvesting, fishing or hunting are not considered as work. Thirty-five percent said they use both languages, 24.8% mentioned Waotededo and 15.2% Spanish. Nineteen percent said they did not work. In this communicative context, the increase of bilingualism and Spanish is not a surprise, given that work is related to activities performed in oil companies, tourism or formal education.
- *Urban centers.* Urban cities are closely related to Spanish and the Western world. Indeed, 45.6% said they only use Spanish, 37.6%, both languages and 12.8% confirmed they exclusively use Waotededo. These speakers are older and know little Spanish.
- *Health centers.* The use of Spanish increases when the Waorani visit health centers. Up to 60% said they use Spanish, while only 8.8% confirmed they (could) use Waotededo when visiting the doctor. The Orellana communities located near the oil companies in the Yasuní Reserve are usually assisted by the Company's doctors who are Spanish speakers. The Waorani who live in Pastaza tend to go to health centers in Puyo or to hospitals in Quito.¹³

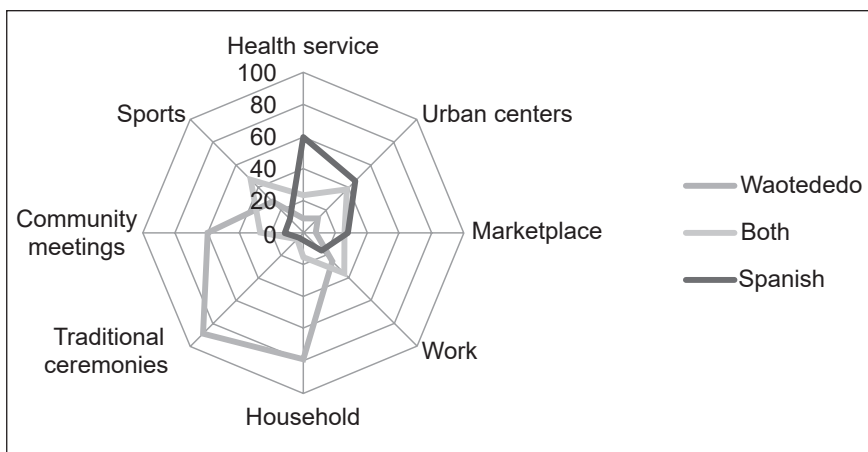
- *Marketplace.* The concept of Market is rather recent among the Waorani, as well as the concepts of commerce, payment, selling or buying especially for those living in more remote communities. The two places frequented by Yasuní communities are Pompeya, near the Yasuní communities, or Coca, the main urban city in the region. Waorani people from Pastaza go to Puyo or the cities nearby. In both cases, going to the market means experiencing somewhat urban areas, interacting with mestizo and indigenous people from different ethnic groups, and so, using Spanish or other languages like Kichua. Only 38% of the interviewees go the market. Out of those, 46.6% use Spanish, 41.3% both languages and 12% only Waotededo.

A summary of the aforementioned described domains is displayed in Graph 19.3. Waotededo is the dominant language during traditional ceremonies (88%) and in the household (80%). Metaphorically, these spaces become the nest of the ancestral language, while health centers and urban locations create new communicative instances where Spanish prevails. Activities developed in urban centers, working places and sports are accomplished in the two languages. At first site, languages seem to be compartmentalized; however, after a closer look, we see how bilingualism emerges from the core of communicative interactions as a strategy to deal with the new contexts filled by Spanish, which also permeates the contexts traditionally dominated by Waotededo.

We now move further to see how the Waotededo language behaves within domains such as media and new technology.

19.5.2.3 Languages and new means of communication

During the last six years, cellular phones have become more popular in Waorani settlements, especially among those communities located near the oil companies;



GRAPH 19.3 Languages used in socio-communicative contexts.

Source: Haboud (2015) (for this study).

however, not all the Waorani communities have easy access to cell phones or Internet. For instance, in the largest Waorani community, Toñampari, the cellular signal was (and is) still limited to some areas. None of the communities have conventional phones, so cell phones meant an overwhelming change regarding communication. At least 77.6% of all the participants have used a cell phone. Out of these, 59.8% use both languages, 21.6% use Spanish and 18.5% Waotededo. We would have expected to have a higher use of Waotededo; however, the people they communicate with are usually Spanish speakers. Some of the communities also have satellite radios used for emergency transmissions.

When it comes to Internet, 51.4% of the interviewees had access to Internet, either because they were related to the Toñampari school which had Internet service, or because they used to go to urban centers like Puyo. Among the Internet users, 63.5% said they usually write in Spanish, 28.7% in both languages and only 7.9% in Waotededo.

When chatting, using Facebook chats or skype, similar percentages were found. Only 44% of the participants used chats, mainly in Spanish (54.5%), or both languages (36.6%). Only 9% used to chat in Waotededo. Although Facebook was already quite popular among the Waorani youth during our visits to the communities, only 24.8% had access to it. They usually used Spanish (61.3%) or both languages (35.9%), and only 3.2% used Waotededo (Figure 19.1.)

At present, the Waorani people have access to TV and radio stations. These, however, only broadcast in Spanish. This means that, except for the older members of the family and traditional ceremonies where Waotededo is used, all the other socio-communicative spaces surrounding the communities use Spanish. Additionally, several NGOs, as well as increased tourism, have augmented the use of English.

As the outside world has stepped into the Waorani territory, the communities have shown several contradictory responses. On the one hand, people are

Waoranifm	Cbox
susy: hola amigo com o estas un saludito para tu amiga	2 Oct 16. 16:35
gabriel: un saludo para susy q le quiero mucho en el dorado	2 Oct 16. 16:32
gaby: espero mi saludo gracias	2 Oct 16. 16:13
gaby: un saludito para gaby en el barrio el dorado escuchando a full sintonia y un saludo para amado dj q esta hay quiero escucharlo eejejeje	2 Oct 16. 16:13
Ganqui Enomenga: como bamos	25 Sep 16, 15:01
Ganqui Enomenga: listo	25 Sep 16, 15:01
jorge gaba: hola...	25 Sep 16, 14:59
jorge gaba: pon tore pete vea men	25 Sep 16, 14:54

FIGURE 19.1 Online written messages.

Source: Taken from Radio Waorani *Apeninka* Facebook (September 11 2016).¹⁴

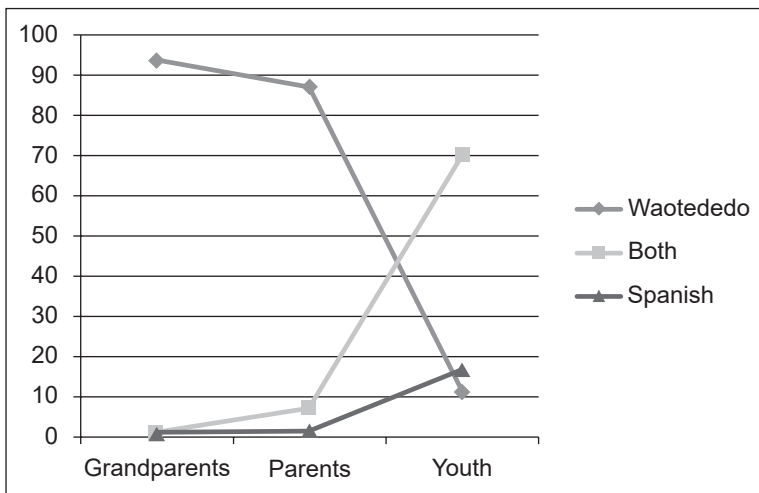
receptive of such dynamism; on the other, it has generated several community and personal conflicts regarding, for instance, their Waorani identity. In this sense, it was very interesting to talk with one of well-known Waorani warriors, who had fought many times to defend their family, community and territory. He expressed that after many years of conflict, “Now it is time to live peacefully”, and that he would like his children to become multilingual so that they would be able to better defend their territory, their culture and their ancestral ethnic values. (IM. Interv. 6). Intercultural practices, interlinguism and respect to diversity is what he is aiming for. As for now, what is rather perceived has to do with language and culture shift.

19.6 Language used across generations

This section describes intergenerational transmission and the displacement trends towards language displacement and shift.

When the interviewees were asked about the language(s) used by their grandparents, their parents, themselves and the youngsters, it becomes evident there are important changes across generations. Indeed, while 93.6% of the interviewees’ grandparents and 87.2% of their parents only used Waotededo, 70.4% of the younger generations use both Waotededo and Spanish. According to the interviewees, this has notoriously increased due to the influence of formal schooling, new media, new technology, tourism, etc., to the point that in some contexts the abrupt reduction of the Waotededo language can be conceived of as a sudden cliff (Graph 19.4).

It is important to mention language shift differs between the two analyzed provinces. While in the Pastaza bilingualism seems to have been a sustained



GRAPH 19.4 Languages used by grandparents, parents and youngsters.

Source: Haboud (2015) (for this study).¹⁵

continuous process which started with the early contact of the Waorani communities with missionaries who arrived in the '50s; in the Orellana communities, rapid changes towards bilingualism and Spanishization are witnessed. As a reminder, the Orellana territory is also 'home' of several oil companies, and currently, it is also the world's target of researchers, tourism, NGOs and curious visitors willing to find pristine communities.¹⁶

19.7 Rethinking the situation of the Waotededo language

As already mentioned, determining language vitality cannot rely on one factor alone. This is evident when we confront our extensive data with the UNESCO factors. Some instances favor language maintenance, while others don't. For instance, the international and national policies, the speakers' attitudes and expectations, and the emergence of new language activists are favorable to Waotededo; however, the low number of speakers, the continuous local conflicts, the speaker's contradictions between linguistic preferences and language used, and the numerous menaces surrounding the Waorani people, their language, culture and territory do not favor language maintenance, but displacement. Additionally, formal education has not arrived at strengthening Waoranization, but Spanishization. Out of the 102 interviewees exposed to formal schooling, 62.7% attended a bilingual school and 37.3% Spanish schools. In practice, both groups mainly learned in Spanish as most professors do not speak Waotededo, and even those who do (i.e., elementary school instructors) tend to teach and play in Spanish as observed during this game about body parts motivated by one of the bilingual professors:

Cuando un Waorani baila,
baila, baila, baila
codito, codito,
cadera, cadera.

It is not strange then, that graduation in the Toñampari school emulates Western city schools or that writing and reading be mainly done in Spanish. Indeed, 30.4% of the interviewees who attended a bilingual school said they only know how to write in Spanish, and 55.8% are able to write in both languages. They attested they rarely write in Waotededo, and teaching materials in Waotededo are scarce. In recent years, three Waorani people who received their BA in Bilingual Intercultural Education wrote their thesis in Waotededo as a way of reinforcing their language and culture.¹⁷

Few materials, such as children's stories and cartoons have been developed by projects like *Oralidad Modernidad*.¹⁸ The Waorani Directorate of Bilingual Education wrote a bilingual dictionary that was distributed in their schools. Some linguists have developed theoretical analysis of grammatical aspects of the language. These, unfortunately, have not helped to improve local schools, neither daily communication. In spite of this, it would be naïve to only blame the school system or academia for language displacement.¹⁹

Given all the unfavorable social conditions faced by the Waorani, and the impact of violent and abrupt changes, it is evident that Waotededo is being displaced much faster than many of the other indigenous languages in Ecuador. In a way, the effects of 50 years of Waorani intense contact with the Western world can be equated to 500 years of colonization over Highland Kichwa.

19.8 Non-final thoughts: why maintenance? Why reinforcement?

Language preservation has to do with human social justice and the cultural and natural world; maintaining diversity is an asset for linguistic science, cultural heritage, environmental preservation and identity preservation. Are there any healthy practices pursuing linguistic, cultural and environmental preservation among the Waorani?

At the macro level, Ecuadorians seem to have a diverse country. Ecuador's most recent Constitution (2008) states respect for all languages and cultures, as well as the right indigenous peoples have to communicate in their language(s). The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (translated to Waotededo in 2007; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Ecuador Field Office) also states the right to promote indigenous languages (Art 13, section 1). Unfortunately, this continues to only be in the letter of the law and has not been properly enforced.²⁰ Consequently, the Waorani – as most of the minoritized people in the world – face a series of inequalities and mistreatment at the expense of the national economy and (inter)national agreements. The Waorani location within the Yasuní Park has made them visible to the world, but also vulnerable, generating a series of internal and external conflicts, and confusion, which deeply affect the communities and their way of living.

As for formal education, and in spite of the positive educational policies, it is necessary to bring into appropriate practices which take into account the overall ecology of the language and the culture, so that education can turn into a 'nest' from where new speakers are born (Xavier Albo, in personal communication). To do so, policies and practices need to drastically change; on the one hand, the macro level needs to keep in mind that to address language displacement means addressing the ecology surrounding the language; on the other, it is necessary to learn to listen to many of the hidden forgotten voices that still have the knowledge. Only then, it might be possible to generate 'inside-out' policies and practices that emerge from the speakers and return to their communities, while impacting on the higher levels of the mainstream society (Haboud 2010–2016).

At the micro and meso levels, several efforts emerging from the Waorani communities must be mentioned. The Waorani Women's Association has developed several activities such as the production of organic chocolate and handcrafts to improve their economic conditions while preserving the ecosystem (www.amwae.org; Vanessa Daza Castillo 2020).

Language activism is also flourishing among younger people who try to (re) learn and transmit their language and history. Currently, some young members of Waorani communities are involved in creating music in their language, and

aiming to document some of the chants ancestrally used by the Waorani people. Nevertheless, it is important not to transform projects into a mere folklorization of their knowledge and arts; a risk increased by tourism.

A FINAL COROLLARY: DOCUMENTATION AND (SOCIO)LINGUISTIC RESPONSIBILITY

Documentation projects try to describe endangered languages as thoroughly as possible; however, it's necessary to always keep in mind that our goal as documentalists must not be 'archivism' ('archiving to convert weak languages into static museological pieces'), but to develop, in cooperation with the speakers, meaningful practices that truly support the revival and reinforcement of their language. Such approach demands true commitment on both parties (communities and speakers, and documentalists) as well as ethical practices in every stage of documentation projects. It is vital to not only (re)analyze concepts and theories underlying (socio)linguistic research, but its philosophy, methodology and the role of all the participants. The main purpose should be to move beyond results towards long-term productive goals (Haboud 2019; Haboud and Ortega 2020).

Some of the most important learned lessons throughout our longstanding research activities have been related to the methodological procedures. Although our methodology seems to be standard regarding its structural design, it is flexible in terms of content and the specific processes applied to each case. It is adjustable to fulfill basic criteria such as global applicability and local pertinence so that it can be appropriately used within different social and cultural contexts. This has been possible thanks to our decolonizing methodology which encourages co-participation and relies on multiple voices and multiple answers to challenge language endangerment holistically; because the global problem of language loss is composed by multiple layers and façades which require local appropriate situated responses.

Notes

- 1 UNESCO (2012).
- 2 The indigenous peoples of Ecuador are officially recognized as *Nacionalidades* (Nationalities). In this chapter, we use the terms 'peoples' and 'nationalities' as interchangeable.
- 3 Unless there is a specific reference, all the maps, figures and graphs included in this study have been designed by Marleen Haboud for the *Oralidad Modernidad* Project.
- 4 For specific maps, voices and images of the Waorani people in their territory, see: waoraniterritory (www.google.com.ec/search?q=waorani+mapas&biw=1272&bih=643&tbm=isch&imgil=v1c6-boE_hPAuM%3A%3BYuovpLiL2eYtiM%3Bhttp%3A%2F%2Fnacionalidadwaorani.blogspot.com%2Fp%2fterritorio-waorani.html).
- 5 http://www.waorani.com/dictionary_WAO2.html.
- 6 For more information about the Waorani social organization and risks, see Lu (2010); Rival (2016, 2015, 2002); High (2006, 2015).
- 7 See Austin and Sallabank (2011); Grenoble (2011), among others.
- 8 See Haboud and Ortega (2020); and Haboud (2021) for a detailed description of methodological procedures.
- 9 For details about the instruments used in this research, see www.oralidadmodernidad.org or contact oralidadmodernidad@gmail.com. Also, see Haboud and Ortega (2015)

- (http://www.academia.edu/12005359/Reflexiones_sobre_prácticas_interculturales_e_interlingües).
- 10 The information about age may not be precise, especially about the older people.
 - 11 LVE_unesco (<https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf>).
 - 12 The Dicaro community currently has Direct TV signal. Some of the TV sets are outdoors, so that friends and family can get together to watch programs broadcasted in either Spanish or English.
 - 13 The *VozAndes* hospital located in Quito, created by Evangelical missionaries, usually assists indigenous people coming from the Amazonian region.
 - 14 Since the beginning of COVID-19, this radio stopped broadcasting.
 - 15 For geolocalized maps summarizing language displacement and shift in the two provinces of the study, see Haboud (2017, <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/cartografia-waorani/>) and Mapas interactivos. Representación cartográfica de la transmisión intergeneracional de las lenguas: <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/geolingüística/>.
 - 16 Some of the oil drilling companies surrounding the Waorani by the time of the study were: PETROECUADOR, Vitage, Repsol-YPF, KerrMacGee. Forrecoitoildrillingintheregion, seeecuatorareasprotegidas (<http://areasprotegidas.ambiente.gob.ec/es/documentos>), accionecologica (www.accionecologica.org/yasunioidrilling) (www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/04/ecuador-drills-for-oil-on-edge-of-pristine-rainforest-in-yasuni).
 - 17 See Gaba and Huamoni (2014); Yeti (2012) (www.expreso.ec/actualidad/indigenas-combaten-el-fin-de-lenguas-ancestra-EAGR_2331271).
 - 18 See <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/asi-dicen-mis-abuelos/> and <https://oralidadmodernidad.org/aprendamos-en-tu-lengua-y-en-mi-lengua/>.
 - 19 See High who states: “Waotededo is among the endangered languages because of the introduction of formal educational programs in western lowlands of Ecuador” (www.flascoandes.edu).
 - 20 See Haboud et al. (2016); COICA/Ford Foundation. 2016: Guardians of the Forest (www.facebook.com/FordFoundation/videos/1350054861705214/).

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