

Iatiku

Newsletter of the Foundation for Endangered Languages: # 4
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Iatiku is the mother goddess of the Acoma tribe of New Mexico, who caused people to speak different languages so that it would not be so easy for them to quarrel.¹

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¹Sam Gill & Irene Sullivan, Dictionary of Native American Mythology, New York: OUP 1992: p. 5. Contra: Genesis XI, 1-9.

This story has an echo closer to home for the Foundation, as I discovered in reading the following etymological notes from Dennis King's highly recommended *Focal an Lae* (The Word of the Day in Irish) at <http://www.lincolnu.edu/~focal/>, s.v. *briathar*: Old Irish "briathar" (word) and Welsh "brwydr" (battle, conflict) both come from Indo-European *bhrei-trâ (quarrel), from the root *bhrêi- (to cut, break). The semantic transition from "quarrel" to "word" may seem extreme, but exactly the same thing has happened with Scottish Gaelic "bruidhinn", which is the ordinary word for "talk, speak". It comes from Old Irish "bruiden", which means "quarrel", and its cognate in Modern Irish, "bruíon", still means "quarrel".

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1. Guest Editorial

In the last Iatiku, I included a piece by Ron Crow, entitled "How to teach Irish in a Hedge School". Its author's reply, when I asked for permission to reproduce it, was so powerful in its own right, that I have decided (with his permission) to use it in this issue, in fact as a guest editorial -- perhaps slightly to the chagrin of the writer, who has not yet given us his full endorsement!

31 Aug. 96

Mr. Ostler,

Thank you for your note to me about including my message in your Iatiku newsletter for minority languages. Please go ahead. I would like a copy, as well. But please note that though I read your material which you sent me, I don't think I know enough about the group to endorse it fully.

I will take this opportunity, however, to write at length about my own take on the problem of minority languages. As a rule, of course, I think all 'minority' languages and cultures should be preserved. Their loss is OUR loss; we are the poorer by their extinction.

On the other hand, the minority cultures are not the poorer by their own extinction: they are dead. The Celtic languages, seen from the inside, therefore, are not particularly interested in larger issues. Their own survival takes up all their time, one might say. But I have no doubt that, had Ireland never been invaded, its Irish-speaking missionary priests would once again be spreading across Europe, and they would be very interested in preserving the endangered cultural sheep against the ravaging cultural wolves.

What are those wolves, exactly? To reflect on this question is to be better able to deal with those wolves. I would say that the larger, mainstream Anglo-American-Western-European culture is not called the 'consumer culture' for nothing. It is a cultural-spiritual void. In no way a strong and confident powerhouse of the expressions of humanity, it is not even an imperialistic enemy bent on conquest.

Rather, it is a mighty void that sucks *meaning* out of the people in it and other cultures it comes into contact with. It is a sort of human black hole with which we much deal or which will suck the humanity out of us.

President Clinton, for instance, the MTV president, is well known to be willing to say anything, do anything, to stay president, (a common condition among politicians). Instead of repudiating such a pathetic impostor, the American people look to return this charlatan (and others) to office. Why? Because the news media and much of the people themselves are the vacuous products of a powerful PR industry that can only 'feel' or emotionally react moment to moment rather than think, consider or reflect. They are the children and grandchildren of the Rock n Roll age, a music genre itself created purely as a PR gimmick to take advantage of the

disposable income in the pockets of western teenagers.

Culture is not a PR product, however; it is real. It is not a disjointed series of feelings manipulated by PR masters. Culture is a people's expression of themselves--the expression of their humanity, rooted in times past and existing in the present; it is a strong thing. It is as strong as the human spirit. And as scarred as the human spirit because it is *earned*. We earn our culture not by being 'sold' on it, but by participating in it. We add to it as it adds to us. Culture is like a marriage that produces ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies, not to mention healthy, vigorous children. It is for life.

(The mainstream consumer culture, on the other hand, is like living together: it is shallow, transitory, and contraceptive. Its members drift together and apart like so many sparkling ice cubes--until they melt away into nothing, leaving no trace.)

The Irish culture is Irish. The Irish people created and maintained it for centuries, indeed, since the 'dreamtime.' To speak Irish is to participate in it, as it participates in you. And it is an earned participation, not a feel-good PR product. It shapes your thoughts and feelings while you add yours to it. You sacrifice to learn it or to maintain it.

This culture survived centuries of monstrous brutality, conquest and efforts at extinction. Despite all that, it maintained a confidence, even a happiness, that a number of commentators remarked upon in the 18th century during what some took to be its nadir. It rebounded all the more incredibly in the early 19th century, especially under the one man upon whose shoulders lay the doom of the entire culture, Daniel O'Connell.

O'Connell not only lifted the people's hopes high, he poisoned their roots by denigrating the Irish-Gaelic culture that nourished their very identity. Why did he do that? The first in so many things, O'Connell was one of the first great PR mavens. His speeches in English in a largely Irish-speaking Ireland were not for Irish ears, but English newspapers. O'Connell's achievements were really public relation victories for English public and political opinion. They were not really political victories for Ireland. *That's* why he was so successful. *That's* why he failed so miserably. To achieve important but ultimately limited gains, he was willing to lace the cultural stuffing of the Irish people with a slow-acting poison.

Their spirit broke after the years 1845 to 1850, which saw the truly cyclopean disaster of the Great Starvation murder so many of the people themselves. When self-consciousness returned, they blamed their language and their culture for their plight. In other words, they blamed that which made them uniquely themselves because O'Connell had disparaged their language and culture as unnecessary drags and hindrances to their 'progress.'

And what type of progress? Unaffected by the newly-developing romantic-nationalism of the early 1800s, O'Connell wanted his people to participate more fully in an English-speaking world empire. Why? To gain spiritually? Culturally? No. To gain economically. He it was who could have first coined the term, "It's the economy, stupid!" To speak Irish in that context was a hindrance. The people understood his attitude. When calamity engulfed them, (and him too, really) they thought they knew where to put the blame.

Irish still survives, of course, but today its enemy is not a particular government or economic policy. The enemy is a culture that has emptied itself of meaning after years and years of public relations manipulation. As Paul Fussell said in his book *Wartime*, "...The more verbally confident poetry of the Great War emerged from a proud verbal culture, where language was trusted to convey and retain profound, permanent meaning, while the later world (World War II) is one so doubtful of language that the responsible (writers/artists) feel that only the fewest words, debased as they have been by advertising, publicity, politics, and the rhetoric of nationalism, should be hazarded." P135 A culture that uses images of love to sell diamonds, vacations, cars and soap empties the images it uses of meaning.

An example of this from a few years ago will suffice. I was watching a TV series on the Holocaust. In one scene, an SS leader visits an extermination camp and vomits because of the stench of the burning bodies. (It actually happened in real life.) After this highly dramatic scene, the station broke for an advertisement. It was the 'snoopy sniffer,' a little old lady in a ridiculous hat who visited her neighbor's kitchen, sniffed around at an odor in the air, and recommend some deodorant spray as a cure all for those nasty kitchen odors.

Television, commercialism, PR, had managed to reduce one of the greatest human tragedies of all time to utter banality. A culture that can do that is a nearly unstoppable. That is why it consumes other cultures. But it is an evolutionary dead end. It leaves nothing behind but plastic. It is a disposable culture. To fight to preserve the smaller cultures and languages may turn out to be the struggle to preserve the most precious things that make us human before we end up in the land fill of history..

Go n-éir an obair leat.

Ron Crow

2. Development of the Foundation

Committee Meetings

30th September 1996 at 10 Bears Hedge, Iffley, Oxford

Present: Christopher Moseley, Daniel Nettle (Treasurer), Nicholas Ostler (Chair), Mahendra Verma, Andrew Woodfield (Secretary).

1. Minutes of last meeting (4th July 1996) were approved. Minutes of AGM had been circulated to all members via the newsletter Iatiku 3. No objections had been received. These were duly approved and signed.

2. *Matters arising*

(i) *Financial matters*

DN reported that the name of the bank account had been changed to 'Foundation for Endangered Languages' but other details remained the same. Bank charges would soon arise if FEL did not become a charity. After achieving charitable status FEL should consider opening a facility for subscriptions paid by credit card. The current balance was #1061.91. So far #107 had been paid out in expenses.

AW asked DN to provide an interim balance sheet showing income and expenditure since the account was opened. This is to send to the Charity Commission.

DN handed out the latest list of members. The number stood at 62.

(ii) *Next steps for registering with Charity Commission*

AW had received the Declaration DEC1 signed by all the trustees. The minimum income requirement (£1,000 p.a.) had been met. Before the application could be submitted, he would need a description of the day-to-day activities of the organisation, a statement of how research projects will be selected and evaluated, and a copy of the accounts. At some stage the organisation would need to apply for tax relief. At this stage the day-to-day activities consisted mainly in administrative moves to establish FEL on a proper footing, publishing Iatiku, managing the web-site, correspondence and media appearances. CM's questionnaire (see below) will be submitted as evidence of the project selection process. DN will supply accounts for the financial year so far.

(iii) *Update on Brazil*

AW had received a document from FUNAI explaining the history of contacts since 1976 with isolated Indian groups in the Rio Omere area. The Canoe and Tupari groups discovered in 1995 were currently being studied by the linguist Nilson Gabas Junior under the auspices of FUNAI. Agreed: that AW contacts Nilson Gabas and supplies a short article on this for the next Iatiku.

3. *Search for new treasurer*

As DN will be leaving at the end of the year, a replacement must be found. AW proposed that a letter asking for nominations be sent to all members. In the same letter he hoped to be able to announce the place and date of the projected FEL conference in 1997, and would ask for suggestions about speakers and themes. This was agreed. NO proposed a supplementary plan. Since the number of suitable candidates is so limited the committee

should pick out one or two likely people and approach them personally. This was also agreed. MV offered to approach Karen Corrigan first. Meanwhile AW would sound out a colleague who knows Professor Glanville Price well.

It was agreed that the job of handling members subscriptions should be separated from that of Hon Treasurer which is primarily concerned with financial management. MV volunteered to be Membership Secretary. His offer was gratefully accepted.

4. *Publicity and Membership Recruitment*

MV noted that recruitment of new members often occurs at meetings and conferences. He had not been supplied with the flyers that he was expecting to take to a sociolinguistics symposium. He would have another opportunity to publicise FEL at the South Asia Language and Linguistics Association in Delhi next January. Agreed: a new flyer must be produced quickly. NO to take charge; suggestions to him for material to be included in a pamphlet. Also agreed: to let 3rd world members to pay the same subscription rate as students and unwaged.

5. *Hosting the first FEL Conference*

MV introduced a discussion of the scope and scale of the conference, urging that a venue be fixed quickly. It was felt that a weekend meeting aimed mainly for FEL members would be more feasible than a large international conference. AW expressed a preference for late June /early July. If a bigger event were held in 1998, planning would need to begin well in advance (and this item should be on the next agenda). MV offered to host the 1997 meeting at York University if suitable dates are available. MV promised to report by 12-13th October. In case York proves impossible, NO will inquire about Lancaster as second choice.

6. *Questionnaire for Grant Applicants*

CM circulated copies of his revised questionnaire (see previous minutes). Further amendments were suggested, including the addition of an undertaking to furnish FEL with publishable findings. The researcher must make findings public whenever the research is supported by a charity. This does not mean that all data must be published; confidential material remains confidential. AW to send CM the CC wording on the publication requirement. NO suggested that Clifton Robinson would know of a code of ethics for linguistic fieldworkers, as might the Tokyo Clearing House. CM to send AW a diskette of the final version by October 12th.

7. *AOB*

Marcelo Dascal had suggested that FEL support the Guatemalan movement for indigenous linguistic rights. AW to find out which addresses to contact.

A researcher going to Guyana in January to study two native languages has asked NO for advice. DN offered to put her in touch with researchers there.

Iatiku 4 copy deadline is the end of October, for issue in mid-November. (!!! - Ed.)

8. *Date of next meeting*

Saturday 7th December at 11.30 a.m. (before the General Meeting at 2p.m.), at Batheaston Villa, 172 Bailbrook Lane, Bath BA1 7AA.

AW 6/10/96

7th December 1996 at Batheaston Villa, Bath .

Present: Nicholas Ostler (Chair), Andrew Woodfield (Sec), Christopher Moseley, Mahendra Verma.

Apologies: Daniel Nettle

1. *Membership:*

There are currently 68 members. Since the AGM, eleven new members have joined, of whom seven are in the UK. More members are needed.

2. *Financial:*

At 1st December, the balance stood at #1080-15. #1243 had been received in subscriptions, and #162-85 had been spent on expenses. NO had not yet claimed any of the expenses due to him.

3. *Appointment of New Treasurer:*

Only one member (Oliver Dow) has volunteered for the post. Unfortunately, he was indisposed and hence was unable to attend the day's General Meeting. His letter was circulated. It was felt that his qualifications seemed appropriate, but that electing him to the post in his absence would be risky. He was not known personally to any of the Committee and had not attended any earlier meetings.

MV reported that he had talked with someone in York who might be persuaded to take on the job, although he was not a member. This person is Deputy Auditor of York City Council and thus may be presumed to have a good knowledge of accounting. It was decided that these facts should be conveyed to the General Meeting where a decision would be taken about how to proceed.

4. *Split of Duties -*

Membership Data-Base: DN continued to process new subscriptions during the Autumn, but this task will now be transferred to MV. MV to take over the computerised list of members names and addresses.

5. *Publicity:*

New ways of publicizing the Foundation were discussed. NO showed two issues of a UNESCO-funded magazine published by the European Centre for Traditional Culture based in Budapest. FEL should be mentioned in subsequent issues (NO to contact the editors). MV proposed to advertise FEL at the meeting of the S.Asian Linguists Association in New Delhi in January. AW will do the same at the International Development Ethics Conference in Madras (January 2-9).

A letter had been received from Sara Davies (BBC producer) saying that her proposal for a series had not been given the go-ahead.

CM suggested that Allan Wynne Jones might be asked to keep us informed of relevant EC projects and initiatives.

6. Charitable Status:

AW had no progress to report. Items that were still needed: a statement of the criteria that FEL would use to evaluate projects that it funded, a description of FEL's day-to-day activities, a duly drawn-up statement of accounts. In connection with the first, CM reported that he had asked Professor Tsunoda of the Tokyo Clearing House to send him its booklet on criteria for evaluating research and publishing findings. He had also asked SIL to send its Ethical Code pertaining to fieldworkers and missionaries. Replies are still awaited.

7. Ideas for the Logo:

NO showed sketches done for FEL by a local artist, Bronwyn Williams-Ellis. The Committee's opinion was generally very favourable. NO to present them for perusal at the General Meeting.

8. Grants:

NO reported that he had received a request for help from a Russian linguist/anthropologist who intended to do field work in W. Africa. This was the third such request, the others being the Livonian group that had contacted CM, and the Twahka community in Nicaragua (via Ken Hale of MIT). All were asking for sums below \$500. NO was strongly in favour of granting one or more of these requests as soon as possible, as the Foundation needed to act positively in furtherance of its objectives. It was agreed that CM should write to all three, asking them to fill in the questionnaire which he had recently drafted. CM will inform them that their proposals and responses to the questionnaires will be assessed at the next Executive Committee meeting, and he will give them a deadline date.

9. Fund Raising:

Two ways of raising money are by applying for grants and by holding fund-raising events such as jumble-sales. NO also raised the possibility of merchandising. AW thought that FEL's status as an unincorporated association would preclude it from trading.

10. Plans for 1997 and 1998 AGMs and Conferences were not discussed, for lack of time. The meeting was adjourned.

General Meeting

7th December 1996 at Batheaston Villa, Bath

Present: Nicholas Ostler (Chair), Andrew Woodfield (Sec), Christopher Moseley, Mahendra Verma, Willem Adelaar, Greville Corbett, Gary Morgan, Roger Blench, Darrell Posey (visitor)

Apologies: Daniel Nettle, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Frances Morphy, Anna Siewierska, Oliver Dow,

James Higginbotham, Russell Norton, Bob Robins, Clinton Robinson, Ian Roberts, David Crystal.

1. Minutes of AGM and Matters Arising:

The Chairman reviewed the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 4th July 1996. MV asked what progress had been made on the Publicity front. NO referred to the new flyer, copies of which were distributed. The flyer - photocopied as one double-sided sheet of A4 - is good for handing out at conferences. As soon as FEL has commissioned a logo, printed leaflets will be produced. This led to a suggestion that FEL might seek financial assistance for such purposes from bodies such as UNESCO. They have money available for translating, for example. RB said that the best way to approach UNESCO is to go in person and persuade an individual there whose interests chime in with your request.

2. Election of New Treasurer:

Secretary announced that one member had responded to the recent letter appealing for nominations. Oliver Dow had offered to stand. Unfortunately Mr Dow was indisposed and unable to attend the meeting. Because there was no one present who knew Mr Dow personally and could speak for him, it was felt that the eight members at the meeting could not declare him elected and that some emergency procedure ought to be devised.

At the Executive Committee meeting MV had mentioned another possible candidate, highly qualified in accountancy, who was in fact Deputy Auditor of York City Council. This man had not agreed to stand, however, and was not a member of FEL. In the background was Karen Corrigan, a member who was willing to be Hon. Treasurer starting from September 1997 but unwilling to step in immediately.

AW proposed that MV should take over as Acting Treasurer until the next AGM in July, when another election would be held, and that MV might take advantage of the willingness and expertise of the York Deputy Auditor when he prepared the Foundation's first annual financial report. MV said he would be prepared to do this on the understanding that it was a temporary stop-gap.

NO made an alternative proposal: that a postal ballot of members be held at the beginning of January, the candidate(s) being Oliver Dow and possibly others, such as the Deputy Auditor from York; that the result of this ballot be announced at the end of January; and that MV be the Acting Treasurer until a full-time Treasurer is elected.

RB proposed, and GC seconded, NO's proposal. There were 6 votes in favour, 1 against, and 1 abstention. The Chairman's proposal was therefore carried. Because the Secretary would be soon be going to India for 4 weeks, NO undertook to make the arrangements for balloting members and bringing the matter to a satisfactory resolution. MV was declared Acting Treasurer pro tem. Steps will be taken as soon as practicable to empower MV to co-sign the Foundation's cheques.

3. Exhibition Project:

AW suggested that FEL organize a display exhibit. He reported that David Crystal, upon seeing this item on the agenda, sent word that Roger Bowers (former Assistant Director General of the British Council) is putting together a Millennium Project for a language museum/archive. He is at the stage of collecting ideas and supporting statements. David Crystal has mentioned FEL to Mr. Bowers. If the project goes ahead, it could be a useful point of publicity for FEL (Roger Bowers may be contacted c/o The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN. email: Roger.Bowers@britcoun.org).

Several other ideas emerged from the discussion. Other projects connected to year 2000 could be latched on to. GM mentioned the Bristol 2000 project. The Deaf Studies Centre at Bristol University was seeking representation within it.

CM offered to ask the National Sound Archive what material they had available. RB mentioned some early recordings of endangered languages that he had deposited with the NSA. The Museum of Mankind was another source and possible venue. It would be necessary to ask institutions how far ahead they are booked.

It was agreed that NO would send members a questionnaire about their areas of expertise and relevant materials in their possession, with an eye to compiling a data-base of exhibitables. RB suggested that information about members could be placed on the web-page. This would be useful to media organizations, like the BBC, who needed to locate interviewees. NO expressed reservations about putting members personal data on the Internet. It was suggested that members could be asked first if they were willing to let their data appear there.

Organizations with similar aims might wish to pool their efforts with FEL. An item about exhibits should appear in the next Iatiku. GC thought that a small dry run exhibit could be mounted at the LAGB meetings, held twice a year.

4. Speakers for 1997 AGM/Conference:

Those present were urged to think of names of possible speakers to invite to York in July 1997.

5. Encouraging Fieldwork and Research:

NO reported that the Executive Committee, at its meeting earlier in the day, had decided to follow up three small grant applications. The applicants would be asked to fill in the questionnaire devised by CM in time to be assessed at the next Executive Committee meeting. RB inquired about the refereeing procedure to be adopted. Safeguards are needed to insure that money goes to worthwhile projects. The matter was left unresolved.

6. Membership Drive:

NO asked for suggestions of ways to get new members.

7. A.O.B.

The Logo designs by Bronwyn Williams-Ellis were admired and discussed. It was felt that they were a little too intricate, but that several had great potential. NO to pursue this further.

The meeting ended at 4.15 p.m. After a short break for tea, there were presentations by Greville Corbett and Darrell Posey. The speakers delivered shortened versions of their contributions to a recent symposium on biological, cultural and linguistic diversity, which had taken place at UC Berkeley.

Abstract of Greville Corbett's "Language endangerment: a linguist's perspective"

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Linguists are making increasingly detailed and sophisticated claims about the interrelations of linguistic constructions and of linguistic categories. Research of this type raises the question of the range of data required.

Although at first sight the availability (in principle) of over 6000 languages might appear wholly adequate, this is not straightforwardly the case. On the one hand, the same features may appear in different languages because they are genetically related; in fact, many languages form large families (Niger-Kordofanian has over 1000 members and Austronesian over 900), which drastically reduces the number of sources of data which are undeniably different. On the other hand, the areal spread of features means that even genetically unrelated languages may share features from a single source. These problems, made more acute by the rapid loss of languages, are only just beginning to be appreciated by those who should be most aware of them, namely linguists.

Examples are given of particularly interesting features which have been found in languages that happen to be endangered, to give some idea of the seriousness of their loss for linguists. Illustrations are taken from the categories of gender and number, and from the study of colour term systems.

It is concluded that while the paper considers first the interests of linguists, the importance of a deeper understanding of natural language for progress in other areas, theoretical and practical, is such as to make the concern about language endangerment one of wider significance.

Conclusion of Darrell Posey's "Biological and Cultural Diversity - the Inextricable Linked by Language and Politics"

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Indigenous peoples are critical to sustainability because their diverse, locally-adapted strategies for natural resource management are based upon ancient, intimate, and intricate knowledge of flora, fauna, soils, water cycles, climate, and micro-environmental variations. Their use and conservation of the environment are inextricably linked to their daily activities and survival, not only of present, but future, generations. Indeed, many presumed "natural landscapes" are, in fact, ecological systems moulded and maintained by indigenous management practices,

Indigenous peoples are not insignificant isolated groups that have little to do with the future of the Planet. On the contrary, there are over 250 million indigenous peoples, speaking 4,000 to 5,000 languages, and who are active stewards of some of the most biologically and ecologically rich regions of the world. As much as 19% of the earth's surface is still under indigenous control or management.

Indigenous peoples are on the firing line for all of humanity. Their concerns are the same as all of us who fear loss of local autonomy, community control, distant decision-making, disregard for local priorities or needs, erosion of traditional knowledge, increasing commoditisation of common resources, and loss of biological and cultural diversity. These are problems that confront communities in every corner of the Earth.

Indigenous peoples have holistic views that link environmental sustainability directly with individual health and community well-being. They remind us that it is not just the diversity of life that provides the cornerstone for sustainability--but also the knowledge of that diversity enshrined in the laws, sciences, religions, rituals, and ceremonies of human societies. In other words, there is an inextricable link between environmental and cultural diversity. When the diversity of knowledge about flora, fauna and micro-climatic conditions is lost, then essentially the richness of biodiversity is degraded because the processes that have evolved to conserve and utilise those resources are lost.

It is language that links cultural knowledge to environmental practice. Without language, Indigenous concepts of nature, perceptions of environment, and categories of conservation and management would be lost. Traditional knowledge may indeed linger even after a native language is lost, but the richness and diversity of that knowledge cannot survive even one generation of language loss.

Traditional knowledge is critical to development of alternative strategies for sustainability. When granted autonomy, Indigenous peoples are accomplished environmental managers. This is fact, not anecdote. Successful use of traditional knowledge and effective *in situ* conservation depends upon a **shift in power** from distant centres to Indigenous peoples and their local communities. This process and state of empowerment is known as **self-**

determination, which is the unifying demand of all Indigenous peoples. Without the right to determine their own futures, make their own decisions, and control their own land, territories, and resources, environmental conservation will remain only rhetoric.

This fundamental shift in power requires international legal structures and political will. Environmental groups, developmental agencies, foundations, banks, professional organisations, NGOs, and governments should not wait for legal structures, but become pro-active in leading the fundamental shift by ensuring that their organisations, structures, and funding supports self-determination.

This applies to linguists as well. It is no longer enough to study disappearing languages so as to "preserve" them for future linguistic studies. Indigenous peoples find such academic pursuits perverse, pernicious, and self-indulgent. Indigenous peoples have begun amoratorium movement to prevent further such parasitic studies.

It is also no longer possible for linguists to claim political naiveté in dealing with human rights and international political debates on cultural, language, and biodiversity. Human rights and ethical concerns have now been thoroughly integrated into industry, politics, and most scientific disciplines, leaving by and large linguistics behind and marginalized. This is indeed unfortunate, because linguistics and linguists hold exactly the missing pieces that are needed to effectively defend indigenous and traditional peoples: the inextricable link between biological and cultural diversity --- language.

3. Appeals and News from Endangered Communities

Developments in a Kuna community in Alto Bayano (eastern Panamá)

Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 15:20:19 +0200 (MET DST)
From: Marta Lucia de Gerdes
<degerdes@sam.math.ethz.ch>

Dear Colleagues:

I'd like to bring to your attention a situation that has not been covered by international media regarding the Kuna people of Panamá. On August 6th members of a Kuna community in Alto Bayano (eastern Panamá), clashed with units from the National Guard. Several people were injured, and Kuna leaders were arrested on charges of attempted murder. The core of the conflict was the sale of Reservation land by non-Kuna, and alleged government participation in the expansion of non-indigenous farms in the Reservation of Madungandi.

On August 12th, Nobel Peace Prize Rigoberta Menchu arrived in Panamá to be condecorated by national authorities. Local indigenous leaders

boycotted official events as a sign of protest and requested a separate meeting with Menchu. They boycott--and how it was portrayed by some local media--lead to further misunderstanding of the problem by the national society. The Governor of the Province of Panamá finally intervened to settle the immediate conflict, but tensions continue to run high.

The events of Mandungandi are only part of the list of serious issues threatening the autonomy and viability of the Kuna people. There are high risk conflicts such as the potential exploitation of mines in the Reservation of Kuna Yala (Comarca de San Blas), and the intensification of tourism in the Kuna homeland. There is also the thorny problem of obtaining protection from the national authorities against the constant threat of marauders and drug traffickers, while holding back a possible militarization of the region.

In order to make it into the next century as a distinct people, the Kuna may need immediate and widespread support. The Kuna themselves are aware of what lies ahead, and among other things, they have repeatedly requested the support of the higher education of their young people in areas of study such as Law, Engineering, Medicine, language studies, etc. It is important that the public opinion becomes aware of the situation of the Kuna, and of the fact that the breakdown of this community would result in the tragic loss of ancestral knowledge and a unique way of life.

M. de Gerdes, Ph.D.
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CH 8051 - Zürich
SWITZERLAND

To the editor's request for more information on how outsiders might help, Marta replied (6 September):

Thanks for your concern about the Kuna situation. At the moment I am waiting for a reply from them as to what they expect in terms of concrete immediate support. There is always the long term goal of helping with the education of young Kuna, and if that sounds appealing to you let me know. I do have a sad update: Timoteo Gómez, a speaker and traditional medicine specialist of the Madugandi Reservation was shot and killed on August 25, presumably by non-Kuna hunters and landholders who were allowed illegal entrance into the reservation by local government employees. Gómez was alone and unarmed when he was killed. The early death of Gómez represents a loss for the cultural patrimony of the Kuna people -- traditional medicine specialists are holders of a rich verbal art tradition which, along with their botanical expertise, are the basis of their healing powers.

... Marta

Attacks on Indians in Rondonia, Brazil

NEWS FROM BRAZIL supplied by SEJUP (Servico Brasileiro de Justica e Paz). Number 247, October 03, 1996. If you wish to contact them or receive NEWS FROM BRAZIL free of charge by e-mail send a message to sejup@ax.apc.org

According to a report from the Indigenous Work Center (CTI) and the Socio-environmental Institute (Instituto Socioambiental) rancher Hercules Gouveia Dalafini owner of the Modelo ranch in the municipality of Chupinguaia, in the south of the State of Rondonia expelled un-contacted Indians from the area. The Indians had a village within the ranch area. According to the report, the Indians were attacked by gunmen and their village was subsequently destroyed. The rancher is also accused of making difficult the entry of FUNAI (the government indigenous agency) functionaries on to the ranch and of completely destroying the forest area where the village is said to have been located as well destroying crops which the Indians had planted.

Aggression on the part of ranchers and lumber merchants against Indians has been frequent for over 10 years in this region of Rondonia especially in the municipalities of Corumbiara and Chupinguaia. There are strong indications that a massacre of un-contacted Indians took place in Chupinguaia. FUNAI functionaries estimated that the massacred group could have contained up to 25 members - no official inquiry was ever carried out. Initial contacts with a group of 7 Tupari Indians provided information which indicated that 10 Indians of this group had been killed in a gun-attack. This violence against the Indians on the part of the ranchers is to ensure that documentation to their lands will not be contested; by law deeds are not given for areas where Indian groups are found.

Coalition for Amazonian Peoples and their Environment
1511 K St. NW, suite 627, Washington DC 20005
tel: (202) 637-9718 fax: (202) 637-9719
amazoncoal@igc.apc.org

Andrew Woodfield comments on behalf of FEL:

The Two Groups of Indians Contacted in Rondonia in 1995

In Iatiku 2 we reprinted the appeal made by Nilson Gabas Jr. on behalf of the two isolated groups discovered in 1995 in the Igarapi Omeri region of Corumbiara in Rondonia, Brazil. One group of four individuals speaks Kanoe (a language spoken by only a handful of others, hardly studied), the other group of seven people speaks a Tupari language which has not yet been definitively classified. Nilson Gabas Jr. is a graduate student in linguistics who was appointed by FUNAI to carry out linguistic research in the area. (FUNAI is the Brazilian Government's Indian Affairs Bureau.)

The discovery of these groups is of prime interest to FEL. Here is a situation where two highly endangered languages, one of which has never previously been known about, need to be documented. FEL aims to give practical and moral support to the people who are trying to do this. In the future, FEL will directly sponsor linguistic fieldwork in situations of this type.

According to information provided by FUNAI, the area has a history of confrontations. Since 1976, peripatetic groups of uncontacted Indians have occasionally entered tracts of land that ranchers claim to own. Such groups are vulnerable to attacks by ranch-owners and their hired gunmen. On October 4th 1995, the Federal Public Ministry was empowered by the courts to send FUNAI employees to control access to the area where the two newly discovered groups were living. In the same month FUNAI appointed an anthropologist (Virginia Marcos Valadco) to carry out 'ethnic recognition of the groups, and it designated Nilson Gabas Jr. to return to the area to conduct linguistic studies. In a letter to FEL dated 10th June 1996, FUNAI encouraged us to 'motivate linguists to study these languages, as soon as the Indians are definitively placed in a defined territory'.

Despite FUNAI's good intentions, there must inevitably be worries about whether the protection currently being offered is adequate, given that FUNAI staff have in the past been threatened and ordered off land that they were supposed to be guarding. A disturbing report was received recently (see below) of a violent incident in this very area. We have not been able to discover whether either of the two putatively 'protected' groups was involved. If the Indians in question belong to a distinct group, it is possible that their language is yet another previously unknown language. Either way, the fact that such incidents continue to occur can only provoke outrage.

FEL will continue to press the authorities for precise information about the current whereabouts and welfare of the Kanoe and Tupari Indians, and we hope to provide reports on the progress of the anthropological and linguistic investigations. Clearly, such investigations can hardly get started until basic preconditions are met. The Indians, and the researchers and functionaries, must have their survival and safety guaranteed. Responsibility for this surely lies with the Brazilian Government.

Members may wish to make their own contacts with agencies involved. Here is a selection of relevant email addresses:

Nilson Gabas Jr, currently at UC Santa Barbara (gabas@humanitas.ucsb.edu), will move to Museu Goeldi in Belem in December (gabas@marajo.secom.ufpa.br). Servico Brasileiro de Justica e Paz runs a news service (details above). Indianist Missionary Council (CIMI) (cimi@ax.apc.org). Amazon Coalition (amazoncoal@igc.org)

Amazon Rancher Carries Out "Ethnic Cleansing" of Indians to Get Land in Rondonia

A few days later, Nelson Gabas sent this further report:

Genocide in the Amazon

10/10/95

Film-maker Vincent Carelli, of the Indigenist Work Center (CTI) in Sao Paulo and Marcelo Santos of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) documented today that a rancher in Xupinaguaia county in Rondonia state in the Brazilian Amazon bulldozed the remains of a village of uncontacted Indians, to erase evidence of the Indians' presence. Before and after aerial photographs of the village site reveal the destruction. The cattle rancher had already clearcut the forest in the area. This is the most recent piece of evidence in a pattern of killings, terrorism, forced removal and destruction of the traces of uncontacted Indians over the last decade in Rondonia that the NGO and Santos, a government Indian agent, have brought to light. Indians in Brazil in theory are guaranteed rights to the land they traditionally occupy by the Constitution, and the government is obligated to protect them. This pattern of genocide of uncontacted Indians in Rondonia has yet to be investigated by the police and has gone entirely unpunished by the courts.

In mid-September, FUNAI agents in Rondonia delivered a report to Federal Prosecutor Francisco Marinho, in Porto Velho, Rondonia documenting the expulsion by gunfire of uncontacted Indians from their village. Witnesses attest that the rancher Hercules Golviea Dalafini, of the Modelo ranch in Xupinaguaia county ordered his men to open fire on the surviving members of an uncontacted Indian group to drive them off of land that he claims.

On September 13, a National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) team discovered a clearcut in the forest on the site of an indigenous garden, where a bulldozer had attempted to extinguish the traces of a wrecked Indian house, and holes dug by the Indians around it. The remains of a garden of corn and papaya were still clear at the site, as were 14 holes and signs of an older house.

Various reports confirm that in January of 1996 the rancher hired a contractor to clearcut the area in month of January. The contractor entered the village shooting, pulled down and burned the longhouse, and destroyed the garden of corn and squash. On this occasion, three Indians, with long hair and without clothing, fled and were pursued through the forests on the ranch. Later, a bulldozer opened an access road for the deforestation and attempted to cover up the vestiges of the village. That the deforestation was done in January, the height of the rainy season, indicates that the rancher's intent was to destroy evidence of the Indians' presence, since deforestation for cattle pasture or agriculture is done in the dry season.

This type of action by cattle ranchers against isolated Indians in Corumbiara and Xupinaguaia counties has been repeated over the last ten years. In 1984, loggers' trucks were shot with arrows by Indians in vicinity of the Igarape Umere (Umere Creek). In 1985, Marcelo Santos reported evidence of a possible massacre of Indians on Mr. Junqueira Vilela's Yvupita ranch. He found the same scenario as last September: houses and gardens destroyed, a bulldozer to finish the job, and bullet shells.

No judicial inquiry was ever opened to establish what had happened. In April 1986, FUNAI interdicted a 60 thousand hectare area for nine months, during which time the cattle ranchers continued clearcutting freely, interfering with FUNAI's attempts to contact the Indians. On confirming that the Indians were not at the moment on the Yvupita ranch, FUNAI suspended the interdiction of the area, turning it over to the ranches.

Indigenist Marcelo Santos, meanwhile, continued his investigations, visiting the region repeatedly, and collecting references to the Indians from local workers. Starting in 1994, as head of the FUNAI department for Isolated Indians in Rondonia, Santos put the search on a more systematic basis.

On September 3, 1995, FUNAI finally located the first two Canoe Indians on the Umere Creek, on the boundaries of Antenor Duarte's Sao Sebastiao ranch, and Alceu Feldman's Olga ranch.

The Federal Court in Porto Velho, at the request of the attorney general's office, had already guaranteed a safe conduct on the ranches for the FUNAI team, to allow the search to go forward, and then issued several court orders interdicting a 50 thousand hectare area in order to protect these Indians. By the end of October, contact was consolidated with the Canoe, and another 7 Indians of the Tupari language family. The judicial interdiction was subsequently ratified by FUNAI.

In May 1996, filmmaker Vincent Carelli, who has documented case since 1986, collected from the Tupari a statement that confirms the occurrence of an armed attack against these Indians ten years ago, in which about ten were killed. The members of both groups show visible signs of psychological disturbance from the violence they have suffered. Anthropological reports attest that the Canoe have been driven away at least twice from the left bank of the Umere Creek (on Mr. Almir Lando's ranch).

The vestiges discovered last week on the Modelo and Bagatolli ranches suggest that the group in question is a third group, with different characteristics from the others: they dig deep holes in the middle of their longhouses and mark the trees around their villages.

The discovery of the first two groups in 1995, and the interdiction of parts of some the ranches in the area appear to have moved rancher Dalfini to a desperate attempt to wipe out the vestiges of indigenous presence on his ranch. The three Indians who lived in the area have fled into forest. The FUNAI team sighted one man last month, while he was collecting wild honey.

The World Bank has financed development projects in the region over the last decade that include indigeneous protection components. The most recent of these, Planaflo, finances the FUNAI contact teams. World Bank involvement, and the government's contractual obligations to carry out Indian protection, have been insufficient to prevent the extermination of the the Indians of the Umere Creek. In September of 1995, days before

Santos made the first contact with the survivors, a UNDP consultant to the Bank project vigorously attempted to convince the new President of FUNAI to cancel the isolated Indians subcomponent of the project, arguing that there were no more uncontacted Indians in the state.

Frightened and famished, these small isolated indigenous groups have been submitted over the last decade to a process of ethnic cleansing by the cattle ranchers. The pattern of terroristic explosions, evidence of killings, and destruction of the Indians' homes and means of subsistence, coupled with complete judicial impunity for the perpetrators, indicates that the genocide of these Indians is commonplace and accepted in the region.

PLEASE WRITE, FAX OR EMAIL

Ilmo. Sr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro da Justica, Esplanada dos Ministerios Bl. T, Brasilia DF 70064-900 Brasil

fax 55-61-2242448 email: njobim@ax.apc.org

Request that the Minister ensure a thorough police investigation of the events and that the responsible parties be held judicially accountable for their actions. Also request that the Minister instruct FUNAI to fully protect the land of the Indians of Igarape Umere immediately.

Please Write:

Ilmo. Dr. Julier Sebastiao da Silva Av. Presidente Dutra 2203 Justica Federal Centro 78.900-970 Porto Velho, Rondonia Brasil

Request that in light of the urgent situation, the judge approve the judicial interdiction of the territory of the Indians of Igarape Umere, and that he open an investigation and ensure its conclusion.

For further information contact:

Stephan Schwartzman	Vincent
Carelli	
Environmental Defense Fund	Indigenous
Work Center (CTI)	
Tel. +1-202-387-3500	+55 11 813 3450
Fax +1-202-234-6049	+55 11 813 0747
steves@edf.org	

Another disturbing report from Rondonia

And on 9 November, Hein van der Voort sent the following complementary information to the [Endangered_languages_1](#) list.

Dear subscribers to the Endangered Languages List,

Herewith I would like to support Mr. Nilson Gabas' call of 5 November for support to the un- and recently contacted Indians of Rondonia.

I myself am a descriptive linguist from Holland conducting fieldwork among the Koaia, or Kwaza, speakers in an Indigenous reserve in the South of Rondonia, Brazil, more or less in between the Omere and the Chupinguaia Indians. My promotor is Prof. Adelaar of Leiden University. I am visiting researcher of the Museu Goeldi in Belem, Brazil. I was in the field for a period of around one year, and

hope to return there in 1997 again, to do final checks and to complete my data. (I have been a subscriber to the list for some time already, and apologize for not having introduced myself before)

The Koaia language seems to be a genetically isolated language. In the case of the south of Rondonia this means that it has been spoken there for over 7000 years at least, just like other Rondonian 'isolates' like Kanoe and Aikana. It appears that their traditional cultures used to be very similar. The Indians in S.Rondonia shared in fact a cultural complex, across linguistic boundaries, including the Tupari family languages.

Rondonia is one of the linguistically most diverse areas of south America, and is considered as one of the starting points of important south American migration routes and subsequent populations.

Of many of the S. Rondonian languages and cultures, practically nothing is known, described or documented. Meanwhile, since the first contacts in the early 1940s (Levi-Strauss was there in the late 1930s) these Indian nations have been decimated and acculturated and the majority of the remaining Indians now lives in reserves (In Rondonia live less than 5000 Indians). We are really only so lucky to still have some speakers of the languages, and some old people who remember how they used to live before contact. Regretfully, there has been practically no substantial scientific research, and today even within the reserves there is great risk everything will disappear before documentation.

With my Koaia consultant I visited the Indians of Omere in May 1996. We tried to establish whether the languages were related in any way to Koaia or Aikana. My consultant was absolutely fascinated by the Omere Indians. Even though he is relatively acculturated himself (note the fact that many acculturated and evangelized Indians in our reserve think that 'primitive naked Indians' should become modern), he studied all the traditional things the Omere Indians wore, their arrows, their plantation, their shamanism, and he was impressed. Here he saw, and recognized, for the first time with his own eyes, the way of life of his own ancestors, which he only knew from stories told by his old parents. (and which was by the missionaries and most other westerners usually treated and spoken of only with contempt.)

Had Antenor Duarte and his colleague farmers succeeded in their mission to discreetly kill these Indians, the Indians in my reserve would never have had the chance to encounter and witness a living example of their beautiful past anymore. And science would never had a chance to document anything of that bygone cultural complex at all.

The characteristics of the uncontacted Indians around Xupinguaia are very remarkable in this context: they seem to diverge considerably from the cultural complex.

The concerned FUNAI department does a very good job in protecting the Omere Indians. And there are many sensible people in Rondonia and in Brazil.

The biggest problem is formed by the ruthless cattle ranchers. Their only aim is to increase their personal wealth and they are politically very powerful, especially in Rondonia. Remember that 50% of Brazil is in the hands of 1% of the total population. The Omere Indians are still in great danger despite the fact that a judge managed to declare the Omere region as a (provisionally and temporarily) prohibited area. How much more threatened, then, are the uncontacted and unidentified Indians? (those of the Xupinguaia region representing just one case among several others).

Note that the government of Rondonia wants to be internationally respected, and has visited Europe to talk to presidents and other politicians, trying to raise subsidies for the 'modern development' of Rondonia (I recall that governor Valdir Raupp was received in Germany and Italia in early 1996). The same government systematically bows to the ranchers and timber companies, by whom it can be actually considered to be owned.

Therefore the ongoing violence against the sparse defenseless remnants of the aboriginal Rondonian peoples must be internationally criticized. Hein

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Violence in Chiapas, Mexico

Steven Abbott <sabbott@abacus.bates.edu> wrote to the list <nahuat-1@server.umt.edu> on 11 November 1996:

Subject: AP: Police Killed Three People in Chiapas Protests, Peasant Leader Says (fwd)

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SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (Nov 9, 1996 5:06 p.m. EST) -- Police shot and killed three peasant protesters Saturday during a clash over corn prices in the southeastern state of Chiapas, a peasant leader said.

Peasant leader Juan Carlos Aguilar said police opened fire on the protesters as helicopters whirled overhead and dropped tear gas canisters during the predawn clash at Laja Tendida, near Venustiano Carranza.

At least one other man was hospitalized with serious injuries in the city of Comitán, Aguilar said. He said federal army troops were also involved in the clash.

Chiapas state government spokesman Fermin Rodriguez could not immediately confirm the report

of the deaths. He said state police had planned to break up roadblocks by peasant protesters throughout the state, but said army troops did not take part.

Peasants throughout the state have been protesting for several days in the capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez and other regions, demanding a doubling in the base price for corn to roughly \$315 a ton.

Farmers say the government-guaranteed price of about \$160 a ton is not enough to cover the producers' costs.

Aguilar said the three men were from Venustiano Carranza, about 30 miles south of here.

Nearly 200 police and federal troops continued to guard the area Saturday afternoon, inspecting the vehicles for weapons. Burned debris littered the area.

Venustiano Carranza, a region populated by Tzeltal Indians, has a long history of violent peasant protests over land and farm-related issues.

The following text is a translation by Susana Saravia (Anibarro), Certified Legal and Court Interpreter by the State of Washington, USA, registered with the Office of the Administration of the Courts for the State of Washington, USA. Translation for: Nuevo Amanecer Press.

LFD-CHIA-124/96
México, DF, November 9, 1996.

The Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights, affiliated with the International Federation of Human Rights, organization with consultative status before the United Nations (resolution 1296) and affiliated with the World Organization against Torture (OMCT/SOS), expresses its concern and protests for the violent aggression by members of the Mexican army and public security of the state of Chiapas, against marchers belonging to the Peasant Organization Emiliano Zapata (OCEZ).

According to denunciations by the Peasant Organization Emiliano Zapata, after they had a protest journey since November 6, demanding a just price for corn. And not having received a response from the authorities, they decided to protest once again on the morning of November 9, with the participation of several of the communities of the state of Chiapas.

But when they were in the community of Laja Tendida in the municipality of Venustiano Carranza, they were violently evicted, by a joint operative of the police and members of the Mexican army, with the support of helicopters, tear gas, and firing weapons, causing deaths amongst the protesters. The dead are: JOSE LUIS RAMIREZ MAGADALENO of the community Plan de los Angeles, JOSE TAMAYO GOMEZ, of the community Miguel Hidalgo, JOSE ANGEL RAMIREZ COELLO, of Laja Tendida and others who have not been identified yet. An undetermined

number of people were hurt by bullet wounds and hundreds have been arrested.

In the same way, they denounce that this community is surrounded by the army and they continue to be attacked.

We request that the national and international organizations, send protests to Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon, President of the Mexican United States, to fax: (525) 2 77 23 76. Asking for an investigation and punishment to those responsible of the deaths of these people and for the appropriate sanctions to be applied according to the law, and that the right to free speech and organization be respected in these peasant communities. For the respect of the rights and due process of those detained, for medical attention to the wounded and reparation of damage to those who have that right.

Sincerely

Adrina Ramirez Lopez - President
Ismael Lopez Garces - Vice President

Please send copies of your actions to:

LIMEDDHH-FIDH. Av. Azcapotzalco, 275,
Col. Claveria, 02090, Mexico, DF
fax: (52 5) 3 991336 e-mail:
limesdh@laneta.apc.org

4. Allied Societies and Activities

Creation of The Endangered Language Fund, Inc.

This is a new, non-profit U.S. corporation dedicated to:

- * The scientific study of endangered languages
- * Support of native community attempts to maintain an endangered language's viability
- * Dissemination of the results of those efforts both to the native communities and the scholarly world

The Board of Directors consists of:

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Languages have died off throughout history, but never have we faced the massive extinction that is

threatening the world right now. As language professionals, we are faced with a stark reality: Much of what we study will not be available to future generations. The cultural heritage of many peoples is crumbling while we look on. Are we willing to shoulder the blame for having stood by a done nothing? The tide is too large to turn back completely, but the Endangered Language Fund is designed to do what we can.

The Fund will support communities that are trying to teach dying languages to a new generation. Many languages have skipped a generation, and extraordinary methods are needed for the language to have any hope. Other languages would be helped immensely by even traditional aids such as grammars and dictionaries. Modern language teaching, including interactive programs, video instruction, and practice tapes can also be of service. Even languages that cannot be revived can be recorded to the extent possible, preserving language in a way not available to previous generations. These and other projects will be supported through the awarding of grants to individuals and language communities. A detailed Request for Proposals will appear this winter. The number of awards that we can make will be directly dependent on the amount of money we raise.

There are four levels of support:

Member: \$50
 Supporting Member: \$100
 Sustaining Member: \$500 and up
 Friend of the Fund: Any amount

Members will receive our newsletter. Supporting members also receive a discount on one language book (we are negotiating with several publishers on this). Sustaining members will also receive a copy of the language artifact (text, video, tape, etc.) of their choice from the year's efforts.

*****FOR THE FIRST YEAR ONLY, we will induct all Sustaining Members into the FOUNDERS' CLUB. Inclusion in this club will provide a permanent record of devotion to the cause of endangered languages. Members will receive a plaque acknowledging their crucial support in this effort.**

The Endangered Language Fund has applied for U. S. Federal tax-exempt status. While we cannot guarantee that we will receive it, we are quite sure that we will. Any donation made before the award will be retroactively eligible for deduction from U.S. Federal income taxes once the exemption is granted. **ONE THING THAT WILL HELP US RECEIVE THIS STATUS IS AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE FROM THE LINGUISTICS COMMUNITY. PLEASE BE A PART OF THAT RESPONSE.**

JOIN THE ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND TODAY!

Checks, in U.S. funds, can be made out to The Endangered Language Fund. Mastercard and Visa are also accepted; include card type, card number, expiration date, and signature.

Send to:

The Endangered Language Fund
 Department of Linguistics
 Yale University
 New Haven, CT 06520 U.S.A.

Please pass on this announcement to your colleagues who are not on the list.

"Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments". U California, Berkeley on October 25-27, 1996

Report by the organizer, Luisa Maffi (U California, Berkeley), originally written in the Anthropology Newsletter (Feb. 97 issue)

On October 25-27, 1996, an international group of scholars, professionals, and activists came together at U California, Berkeley for the working conference "Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments". This event was the first joint meeting of experts from an array of disciplines in the social, behavioral, and biological sciences ranging from linguistics to anthropology, ethnobiology, cultural geography, economics, cognitive psychology, biology, and ecology, along with natural resource conservationists, cultural advocates, and representatives of indigenous peoples. The meeting was called to explore the complex connections between cultural and biological diversity, the interrelated causes and consequences of loss of both forms of diversity, and the role of indigenous and minority languages and of traditional knowledge in biocultural diversity maintenance and the promotion of sustainable human-environment relationships. Participants also discussed plans for integrated research, training, and action in this domain.

Diversity Loss on Earth

In their respective fields, these various communities of researchers and activists have been calling attention to the dramatic effects of rapidly occurring global processes of socioeconomic and ecological change on the very objects of their concerns: human cultural and linguistic groups and their traditional knowledge; biological species; and the world's environments. An ever-growing body of literature on endangered languages, vanishing cultures, biodiversity loss, and ecosystems at risk is accumulating, attesting to the perceived gravity and urgency of such issues. Underlying these concerns is a common interest in the future of humanity and of life on earth. However, communication all across these fields of endeavor has been slow in developing. The conference was conceived to begin to fill this gap.

Links Between Biological and Cultural Diversity

Conference participants first established theoretical common ground by considering notions of biological diversity and diversification, on the one hand, and linguistic and cultural diversity and diversification, on the other, and outlining analogies and discrepancies between these different manifestations of the diversity of life. They heard reports about the comparable magnitude and pace of

the current extinction crises affecting biological species and human languages, and examined evidence of remarkable overlaps between global mappings of the world's areas of biological megadiversity and areas of high linguistic diversity. The possible factors accounting for these correlations were discussed in light of issues of human-environment coevolution and in terms of various ways that have been proposed by ethnobiologists and human ecologists in which cultural diversity might enhance biodiversity or vice versa. In this perspective, the need to address the foreseeable consequences of massive disruption of such long-standing interactions was stressed, and the converse correlation between low-diversity cultural systems and low biodiversity was noted.

The notion of **endemism** emerged as of particular relevance in talking about both biological and linguistic diversity, from the point of view of the especially threatened status of species or languages endemic to a single region--or even worse, a single country, making them extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of national sociopolitical and economic processes. Linking the two forms of endemism, a notion of "ethnobiological endemism" was proposed, underscoring the local nature of traditional environmental knowledge and its comparable vulnerability by those same processes. Also centrally relevant to the conference's perspective was evidence concerning indigenous and local peoples' knowledge not only about natural kinds, but also about ecological relations. The need to systematically and comparatively study this ecological knowledge and how it correlates with reasoning about and action vis-a-vis the environment (as in the extraction and use of natural resources) was affirmed.

In describing the structural and functional deterioration that characterizes processes of language loss, linguists pointed to the various levels at which such processes can and do affect the maintenance of traditional environmental knowledge--from loss of biosystematic lexicon to loss of traditional stories and other forms and contexts of communication. The role of various factors of cultural change and acculturation, such as schooling and migration, were explored. Cognitive psychologists provided new evidence about processes of folkbiological knowledge devolution in societies that have moved away from direct contact with nature, although such processes were shown to be less straightforward than earlier studies had suggested.

Numerous case studies were presented on issues of language and knowledge loss and the interactions between cultural and biological diversity, spanning Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas, and covering both indigenous and other local groups, such as migrants, and exemplifying a variety of linguistic stocks and of modes of subsistence, from hunting and gathering to agriculture. Several presentations also illustrated patterns of cultural and linguistic resistance and knowledge persistence, as well as efforts to revitalize languages and cultures that had gone extinct, with a special focus on maintaining or recovering and

newly applying knowledge about traditional resource management practices. Finally, a set of presentations was devoted to both grassroots and international initiatives aimed at biocultural conservation, as well as to issues of indigenous land rights and traditional resource rights, that were seen as inextricably linked to the viability of local communities and their languages and cultures. New economic models, based on a coevolutionary social and ecological framework, were proposed as the context in which humanity at the end of the millennium could strive to achieve sustainability and maintain biological and cultural diversity.

Future Directions

While participants agreed in recognizing the interconnectedness of biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity, a shared need was felt for better, more fine-grained ways to define and identify diversity, especially linguistic and cultural diversity. As measured in broad outline, as is traditionally done in the mapping of the languages and culture areas of the world, the two forms of diversity do not yield a good fit, although linguistic diversity is often used as a proxy for cultural diversity. Contradictory results are thus arrived at when biological diversity is cross-mapped onto one or the other. The consensus was that a much higher level of resolution, at the level of individual communities, or even subsections of communities, is required to identify cultural variation relevant to the study of biocultural diversity correlations, i.e., variation reflecting specific local adaptations; and that comparable detailed work needs to be done on linguistic variation. The crucial importance of working in close contact with other colleagues in interdisciplinary teams was stressed, as was the need for interdisciplinary teaching and training. Issues of funding for interdisciplinary research, as well as for applied work aimed at returning the results of research to local communities and at fostering grassroots biocultural conservation efforts, were also discussed. A "white paper", containing conference participants' recommendations at these various levels, is in preparation, as are one or more publications based on the conference, and an informational/educational video (in collaboration with documentary filmmaker Steve Bartz). An extensive set of background readings, prepared by the conference organizer, is also available upon request.

[The conference was organized by Luisa Maffi (Institute of Cognitive Studies, U California, Berkeley), and funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the UNESCO/WWF-I/Kew Gardens "People and Plants Initiative", and UC Berkeley's Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, Office of the Deans of Letters and Sciences, and Institute of Cognitive Studies. It was sponsored by the NGO "Terralingua: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity", and co-sponsored and hosted by UC Berkeley's Department of Integrative Biology and University and Jepson Herbaria.

Participants were: Scott Atran, William Balee, Herman Batibo, Benjamin Blount, Stephen Brush, Ignacio Chapela, Greville Corbett, Alejandro de Avila, Margaret Florey, David Harmon, Jane Hill, Leanne Hinton, Eugene Hunn, Dominique Irvine, Willett Kempton, Manuel Lizarralde, Ian Saem Majnep, L. Frank Manriquez, Gary Martin, Douglas Medin, Katharine Milton, Brent Mishler, Felipe Molina, Denny Moore, Gary Nabhan, James Nations, Johanna Nichols, Richard Norgaard, Christine Padoch, Andrew Pawley, Mark Poffenberger, Darrell Posey, Eric Smith, D. Michael Warren, Stanford Zent. The participant's affiliations, biographical sketches, and conference abstracts, as well as other information about the conference, can be found at the following two WWW sites:

http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/Endangered_Lang_Conf/Endangered_Lang.html

<http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html>

For additional information, please contact Dr. Luisa Maffi, Institute of Cognitive Studies, 608 Barrows Hall, U California, Berkeley, CA 94720; phone: (510) 643-1728; fax: (510) 6435688; e-mail: maffi@cogsci.berkeley.edu]

Action Items from LSA Endangered Language Meeting, Chicago, 4 Jan. 97 (Summary by the Organizer, Tony Woodbury)

The following is a summary of major action items proposed or discussed at the open meeting of the Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation (CELP) held at the LSA meeting in Chicago on 01-04-97. For a fuller description of the meeting, see "Notes on the 01-04-97 Meeting of the LSA's Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation," which I am circulating concurrently with this.

Because no quorum of the actual committee was present at the LSA meeting, the items below technically are proposals to the committee.

It was the sense of the meeting that these items could and should be carried out by ad hoc task forces of one or more interested LSA members, whether or not they happen to be among the twelve people serving as appointed CELP members at this moment. Anyone interested in forming, or being involved in, a task force on any of these issues (or any other issue) should contact me (acw@mail.utexas.edu).

1. Development of a Plan for Honoring the Linguistic Contributions of Native Speakers of Endangered Languages.

The Executive Committee of the LSA has requested that the CELP propose a plan for honoring endangered language (EL) speakers who have contributed to linguistics, for example, by carrying out language preservation work in their communities, or by serving as long term

consultants for documentation projects. Some specific suggestions have been given (detailed in the meeting report). A concrete written proposal must be submitted to the LSA by May for consideration by the Executive Committee.

2. Endangered Language Scholarship at the LSA Annual Meeting.

For the last three years there have been regular (and in some cases also special) sessions on EL research. It is important for LSA members to submit abstracts checking off the "Field Reports/Endangered Languages" box on the Abstract Submittal form. Those wishing to be involved further can:

* Make themselves available as FR/EL abstract referees for the Program Committee (let me know and I'll forward your name).

* Put together a colloquium or symposium for the 1998 (New York) LSA. Possible topics include:

- o Language pedagogy in community settings
- o Language shift/language ideology
- o Field methods (Cf. Johanna Nichols' 1996 Chechen symposium)
- o Showcase of newly discovered "exotic" phenomena

It should be noted that in 1998, the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas will be meeting together with the LSA. This suggests certain possibilities for collaboration. (For more on SSILA, see their web page at <http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/SSILA/>.)

3. Database on Endangered Languages.

Akira Yamamoto (akira@kuhub.cc.ukans.edu) has conducted a survey of EL's, including numbers of remaining speakers and contact names of linguists. Those wishing to assist or to provide data should contact Akira.

4. The Use of Linguistic Information in Community Settings.

Bill Poser (poser@unbc.edu) has suggested that information and experience be assembled on how linguistic information of various kinds could be mobilized in community language preservation efforts. This includes the development of pedagogical materials from scientific grammars, dictionaries, and text collections, as well as the effective dissemination of scientific results on such topics as multilingualism (e.g., Knowing more than one language won't stunt a child's intellectual growth). This project may take a variety of forms, e.g., a clearing house, a web page, or just the preparation of a survey of relevant research which could be published in an appropriate scholarly periodical.

5. Development of a CELP Web Page.

Needed here (at minimum) is an editor and a person with appropriate web page building skills. The page could be a part of the LSA's new web page, or linked to it. It could give information on endangerment, as well as provide names and

contact info on people who could speak knowledgeably to the press.

6. Disciplinary "Agitation".

The issue is how well the discipline and its institutional practices support documentary linguistics and language preservation activities. The plan for a new "Field Reports" section in Language is the latest welcome development on this front. Visibility at LSA annual meetings (item 2 above) must continue. But at the same time we need studies on such topics as:

* Field Methods teaching in linguistics departments (already raised by Paul Newman in his exemplary 1992 article, 'Fieldwork and field methods in linguistics' (California Linguistic Notes 23(2):1-8)).

* Survey career trajectories of students doing field work dissertations. What kinds of jobs both inside and outside of academic linguistics do they find? How do their prospects compare with those of students with analytic specialties (phonology, syntax, historical, socio, etc.)?

* Departmental receptivity to field work dissertations. Are grammars acceptable as dissertations? Dictionaries? Collections of texts?

Final Comment

Please regard this list as part of an ongoing effort by the CELP to gather ideas and stimulate activity. I'll be happy to disseminate responses or additions to this list.

Tony Woodbury (acw@mail.utexas.edu)
Chair, LSA Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation

5. Field Work Reports

Language Death in Central Nigeria, by Roger Blench

A talk given at SOAS, December 5th, 1996

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Nigeria is linguistically the most complex country in Africa, and one of the most complex in the world. A recent book and map (Crozier and Blench 1992) has improved our knowledge of the geography of its languages but also reveals that much remains to be done. Confusion about the status and nomenclature of many languages remains rife and the inaccessibility of many minority languages is an obstacle to research.

Although Nigeria has a large and varied university infrastructure and a number of departments of linguistics, there is little tradition of field linguistics and a low value is attached to descriptive and lexicographic work. Studies of

syntax from various modern theoretical perspectives are the common output of these departments.

Language death has certainly taken place in this century. Evidence from the wordlists of Gowers taken in 1907 suggests the disappearance of a number of small languages around Bauchi. Recent work by Michael Broá on the Butu-Ningi group near Ningi town has witnessed the death of languages still spoken in the 1970s. I have personally documented the speech of some residual Bassa-speaking groups recorded by Rowlands (1962). It is also true, however, that the death of many languages is announced prematurely, before a careful investigation has taken place. Many groups mentioned in Temple (1922), for example, have proved to be still in existence as the experience of Russell Schuh (1978) shows.

It seems likely that language death has always been taking place. There is a great deal of evidence from linguistic geography that major expansions of languages have caused turmoil in the Middle Belt, and led to the disappearance of many languages through assimilation. Gur-Adamawa languages and Kainji languages are now fragmented among the surrounding Chadic languages. Hausa, Kanuri and Tiv can be cited as highly visible expansions probably of quite recent date.

The question is then; is language death accelerating in the present situation, or is it simply part of a normal process? Unfortunately, there appears to be no easy answer to this as we cannot census vanished languages. But it seems likely that the growth of the nation state and the promotion of specific languages has had a powerful impact. Against this, however, there are two arguments;

- a) demographic growth has increased the likelihood of small languages surviving.
- b) oppression and neglect creates a situation where language maintenance becomes a tool of resistance.

The United States and Australia are the two nation states where minority languages are disappearing at greatest speed. These countries previously had oppressive and violent policies, whereas today they are relatively beneficent. However, due to cultural assimilation, Amerindian and Aboriginal languages are disappearing faster than before.

The situation of minority languages in Central Nigeria can be briefly summarised as follows;

- a) there are approximately 250 distinct languages spoken in the Middle Belt
- b) of these, at least 100 have under 200 speakers
- c) 95 of these remain completely undescribed
- d) there is no government policy towards these languages at all
- e) the remainder range between 200 and ca. one million
- f) the fate of these languages depends largely on the future political history of Nigeria

The major factors tending to cause language disappearance are;

- a) assimilation to larger more powerful groups nearby
- b) assimilation to smaller but culturally dominant groups
- c) assimilation to English
- d) demographic crises caused by labour migration/urbanism

Factors responsible for language maintenance are;

- a) absence of adjacent culturally dominant groups
- b) endogamous marriage practices
- c) maintenance of traditional religion/cultural pride
- d) existence of an orthography
- e) government oppression and neglect
- f) remoteness
- g) access to media
- h) demography

Islam has had an ambivalent impact on language maintenance. In more recent times, with the expansion of Hausa, there has been a strong relationship between conversion to Islam and adoption of the Hausa language. However, earlier conversion to Islam, such as among the Songhay, Wandala, Kanembu and Afade [Kotoko] seemed to have carried less cultural baggage. These people seemed to have converted the peoples on their immediate boundaries without necessarily causing cultural assimilation. The Lopa and Laru, fishing people of Lake Kainji represent an intriguing example of this; despite their small numbers and fluency in Hausa, language maintenance is extremely good.

Many languages are likely to survive in a heavily pidginised form. Old vocabulary and more elaborate syntax are giving way to forms of languages with numerous loanwords and grammar influenced by Hausa and English. This process is not new and may be part of language evolution, as the example of Tarok shows. Despite retaining complex noun morphology, the Tarok verbal system shows extreme convergence with the nearby Angas, a Chadic language which is genetically unrelated.

The future situation of these languages is hard to second-guess, because much depends on the political evolution of Nigeria. The present evidence is that as a nation-state it is becoming increasingly unstable and that the infrastructure is breaking down in more remote areas. This, of course, has the paradoxical effect of promoting language maintenance since the impact of media, and of powerful adjacent groups such as the Hausa are lessened. At the same time, the experience of neglect has acted to strengthen many nascent community development associations.

Nonetheless, other processes are likely to go to term. A number of ethnolinguistic communities with only a small number of speakers are likely to disappear soon. Descriptive studies on these languages are unlikely to be conducted before they disappear. Urban populations are likely to form

consolidated blocks and large masses of population will speak either English or the urban lingua franca.

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[A complete version of this paper with further examples and evidence will be presented at the Round Table on Threatened African Languages as part of the IInd World Congress of African Languages in Leipzig in 1997.]

Armenians In Austria, by Jasmine Dum-Tragut Institut für Sprachwissenschaft Graz/Austria

Background

The history of Armenians in Austria dates back to the time of Vienna's liberation from the Turkish siege at the end of the 17th century, when several Armenian merchants found a new market in the Habsburg empire. In 1775 Maria Theresia gave the official permission to the Armenian-Catholic Mekhitarian-congregation to settle in the Habsburg empire, and the very active, well organized Armenians of the Osman province of Suczawa (Bukowina, today a part of the Ukraine) were annexed by the Austrian empire.

In the beginning 19th century the Austrian Armenians enjoyed officially recognized status as autonomous religious community. The Mekhitarian congregation, having come to Vienna in 1810, contributed to the spread of Armenian culture in central Europe through its printing, its library and its college for Armenian boys. The Armenian community in Vienna grew constantly, so that already in 1896 the first efforts were made to found an Armenian-Apostolic community.

Only in December 1912 did these efforts succeed in establishing a small chapel in Vienna's first district. The First World War and its aftermath transformed the Austrian Armenian community: the area of the Bukowina Armenians was lost during the war, but a wave of immigrants came to Austria as a result of the Armenian Genocide in 1916.

After the appointment of the first Armenian pastor in Vienna in the 1920s, the number of Armenians in Austria continued to grow, also boosted by refugees from the Iranian revolution and migrant workers from Turkey. In 1968 the Armenian-Apostolic Church of Vienna was consecrated, giving a new impetus to the ever growing Armenian community in Austria.

The approximately 2,500 Armenians living in Austria belong officially to a confessional and not to a linguistic minority (according to an official paper from December 1972), a fact which makes them differ from other Austrian minorities such as the Slovenes, the Croats or also the Roma. About 90% of the Armenians live in Vienna, the rest in other bigger Austrian towns. Central is the Armenian-Apostolic community with its various organizations and its Saturday Armenian-School named Hovhannes Shiraz.

Besides these various contributing populations, there is nowadays a steadily increasing number of migrants from the Republic of Armenia.

Languages of Austrian Armenians

The Armenian linguistic community is rather heterogeneous.

In both general or out-group and in-group communication Armenians might be mono-, bi- or multilingual.

The languages to consider are the following:

- The majority language Austrian German
- Minority languages
 - a) varieties of Armenian
 - b) other immigrant languages (Arabic, Turkish, Persian etc.)

The linguistic situation as well as the various frequencies and domains of usage are related to generations of Austrian-Armenians, with the majority language, German, tending to be added to the immigrants' previous languages.

Immigrants have to acquire German because of the social and economic demands of their new environment, so that their "bilingualism" tends to increase over time. But being bilingual does not imply that all bilinguals have the same competence. On the contrary - differing competence in the concerned languages reflects the individual's membership of and affinity with the majority and minority communities. Loyalty to the ethnic language is in contrast to the wish to become an accepted and full member of the majority. The differences in the individual competences as well as the effects on the self-categorization of Armenians are due to strong social pressure.

Individual bilingualism of Armenians must be distinguished from **group-specific ethnic bilingualism**. Bilingualism is in fact one of the features of Armenian diasporan ethnicity. The country of origin determines not only the non-verbal behaviour and the society's rules but also the relative importance of Armenian language in the in-group. This attitude is brought to Austria together with the language of the country of origin and is confronted with the new majority's language German, and its social norms. In this multilingual setting the language with the lowest social value, vitality and functionality will be forgotten or lost later on.

The linguistic settings of Austrian Armenians

The linguistic settings of the immigrants' generation

Armenian Monolingualism

The proportion of monolingual speakers of Armenian is very low. (Cf Tragut 1994). This monolingualism is the initial state, when immigrants coming to Austria are only competent in Armenian and have yet to acquire any German. Armenian has all possible functions of the language first learned (or mother tongue) and is further on used as a basilectal, informal variety and in in-group communication - as long as it is not replaced by German.

The other case of Armenian monolingualism should be deemed an exceptional one - if the children of immigrants are intentionally raised in Armenian. Later on they will be forced to learn the majority's language.

Monolingualism in the language of the country of origin

Those immigrants coming from a third country and speaking the (majority's) language of this country have no or very restricted Armenian knowledge. The "imported language" is not the ethnic language. This monolingualism follows the same rules as the Armenian monolingualism - it is to be considered the initial linguistic state of Austrian Armenianness.

Bilingualism Armenian/language of country of origin

This kind of bilingualism is a general characteristic of the Armenian Diaspora. The Armenians immigrating to Austria from other traditional Armenian diasporan countries are individuals having acquired their ethnic and the majority's language to a rather "real" bilingual extent, i.e. they have good competences in both languages according to domains and linguistic settings.

These Armenians use Armenian as means of in-group-communication in their Armenian linguistic community and as hearth-and-home variety, the other language might be used for basilectal functions as well as for mesolectal functions in non-Armenian and non-Austrian but country of origin-in-group settings. This kind of bilingualism is also subject to language shift after emigration - only in a few cases can this bilingualism be maintained in the Austrian majority.

The linguistic setting of the following generations

German monolingualism

German monolingualism of Austrian Armenians is the consequence of acculturation and assimilation to the Austrian majority. It is obviously due to the duration of stay in Austria - the more generations an Armenian family has, the stronger is the German influence on all linguistic functions and situations.

German monolingualism can be found in the youngest generation. After having restricted the usage of Armenian as means of communication in family and in-group domains Armenian has lost its social and functional value. The fact of "familiar impoverishment" of the Armenian language causes a strong language shift because of the decision of one generation not to transmit the ethnic language as first language to the following generation. German-speaking Armenians are mostly descendants of

1. families, where the parents or grandparents themselves had a restricted or only passive Armenian competence and oriented their linguistic behaviour by the majority's social norms
2. mixed marriages where German is the common means of family communication.
3. families absolutely assimilated to the Austrian majority.

German monolingualism is characteristic for the individual or familiar Armenian language death - or for the language loss for those Austrian-Armenians not attaching any social importance to their ethnic language.

Bilingualism: German-Armenian

The following generations have been raised in a German-speaking majority. Armenian might have been maintained as family language, religious variety and of the language of in-group activities. German can be a family language at the same time, but it is certainly the language of the second and third socialisation. The individual bilingualism and the competences depend on the order of language acquisition, i.e. if speaking of compound (both German and Armenian are acquired at the same time) or co-ordinate (one language is acquired after having learnt the other) bilingualism. It is important to state if this bilingualism can be described according to the competences (Hutnik 1991):

- Equilingualism (competence in both languages is the good)
- Semilingualism (competence in both languages is bad)
- the ethnic language (= Armenian) is dominating (Bilingualism with ethnic language dominance)
- the majority's language is dominating (Bilingualism with majority language dominance)

All four kinds of bilingualism can be found in the Austrian Armenian linguistic community, equilingualism and dominance of majority's language are the most widespread ones..

Even if Armenian is the less functional and active language it may be the more prestigious and more emotional one.

Bilingualism: German/Language of the country of origin

In some Armenian families in Austria the younger generation is confronted with the situation where Armenian never was a really family language and was never transmitted as functional linguistic variety to the younger members of the family. The language of the country of origin has taken the basilectal function (that Armenian should have) and

is mostly the more emotional language or the language first acquired. German enjoys a wide range of functions and is the prestige variety.

Multilingualism

This is a very common linguistic situation in Austria. Above all those Armenians belonging to the Austrian-Armenian upper class and with higher educational level try to maintain their family languages. These immigrants have settled in Austria being conscious of their existing bilinguality and transmitted both languages as well as the new language - German - to their descendants in order to open the door to multiculturality and ethnic consciousness for their children.

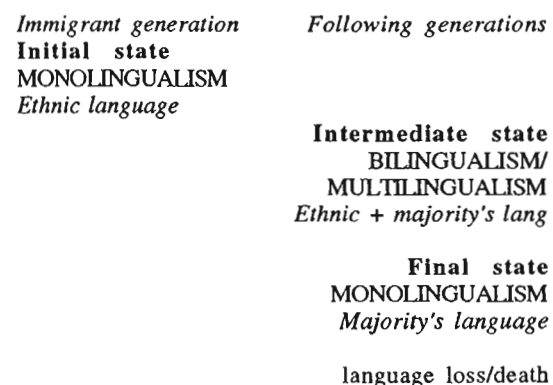
These multilingual Armenians use their languages according to their social and emotional domains, and in all cases, one of the three languages has been acquired later than the others.

Multilingualism is also only an intermediate phase of Austrian-Armenianness - the next generation will lose one of the languages (the one without functional vitality) and German will gain in importance in all linguistic settings.

After having shortly described the possible linguistic situation of Austrian Armenians I would like to focus on the interrelation of these situations.

Monolingualism seems to be either the initial or the final state of a minority. Ethnic monolingualism might be considered the initial state of the immigrant generation when first confronted with the majority. On learning the majority's language the immigrant slowly shifts his linguistic behaviour and replaces former domains of his ethnic language by the new languages. Social requirements cause him to transmit the out-group language also to his children, so that the following generation may be regarded as bilingual. With progressive assimilation and adoption of social and linguistic behaviour of the out-group the second generation may decide to deny its ethnic origin and language and will slowly give up their ethnic variety. The third generation may be raised only in the majority's language and will represent the final state - non-ethnic monolingualism.

Hence bilingualism as well as multilingualism may be intermediate states between monolingualisms.



The theoretical shift depends on other factors as the possibilities of using the ethnic language, the existence of in-group organizations and activities and the efforts to maintain the language. Minority schools and language courses may help to counteract against a gradual language loss, but also confessional organisations and the ethnic church itself may act as strong language preservers.

The so-called bottom-to-top-death (Sasse 1990) is a very common shift among Austrian Armenians. Armenian is slowly losing its importance in basilectal and in-group-contexts. On the other hand strong efforts are made to maintain Armenian language by language courses and the Saturday school. In this fight the Armenian Church is playing a very important role.

The Armenian language is even more endangered in those situations, where Armenian is only restricted to family talk. Lacking opportunities for use, the ethnic language will lose its vitality and attractiveness for coming generations. This is a very serious problem for Armenians in Austria: but only in Vienna is the struggle against language loss being maintained, elsewhere Armenians are too isolated to maintain their language. The situation is further complicated by the differing varieties of Armenian spoken in Austria, and by differences in the in-group, so that sub-ethnic groups are formed depending on social group, educational level and not at least - competence in Armenian.

Since a large number of modern *Avstriyahay* (Austrian Armenians) have no active knowledge of their ethnic language, the percentage of those fighting for language maintenance and against the equilibrium final state - German monolingualism - is comparatively low.

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6. Overheard on the Web

Ulterior Motives for Indigenous Language Broadcasts in Mexico? - Ricardo J. Salvador

On Fri, 4 Oct 1996, Ricardo J. Salvador wrote to the nahuatl-l listserv:

Jennifer Lynn Johnson
<jljohnso@midway.uchicago.edu> wrote:
>FYI: "La Voz de la Montana" radio station funded by the INI and located in the town of Tlapa, Guerrero broadcasts announcements, news, and cultural programming daily in Nahuatl, Mixtec,

Tlapanec as well as Spanish. My strong impression is that this operation serves a very practical (as opposed to esoteric) purpose, namely, to provide access to information to the many monolingual peasants scattered in isolated villages around "La Montaña" region.

Thanks Jennifer. This is good news, but also interesting that you should provide this as an example. INI, a government agency, has long played a controversial role, even in the judgment of their own personnel, with respect to Mexico's "native" policies. The crux of the controversy is whether the agency ought to foment a native identity, and all this implies, or whether its role is to create conditions and the means for natives to be assimilated into mainstream mestizo culture. In general, INI's actual policies have fallen in line with the latter view.

This is not an entirely unjustified view, and it is premised on the observation that the days when there was a special meaning attached to being native are long gone, and that today all that it means to be native is that you are poor, immiserated and isolated from mainstream society and do not "enjoy" the same access to public services and the material culture that the government is ostensibly seeking to provide for all Mexican citizens through its economic development policies. Therefore, to the extent you utilize native languages and send agents (they are called "promoters") to work with and educate folks in their aboriginal villages, you do so with a view to acculturate and assimilate natives to be full-fledged Mexicans. Therefore, INI bilingual education campaigns, native-language broadcasts, and their publication of native-language primers may not be entirely what you suppose them to be if you believe they reflect support for a resurgence, or legitimation, of indigenous identity or an autonomous culture, or cultures, within Mexico. These are all just pragmatic efforts to reach audiences that are targeted for transformation in such a way that you eliminate potential barriers. I'm not necessarily claiming this is an evil plot, as in fact many INI promoters (I have relatives among them), genuinely believe they are doing what is socially and ethically the best for a much maligned and excluded population. Much the same tactic was used by the Catholic missionaries in the post-conquest period. A number of these folks learned Nahuatl, and the other native languages, but (albeit with important exceptions), they did so to christianize and radically alter native beliefs and culture, not because they admired the native languages, belief systems or culture. (This is abundantly clear when you read the editorializing in their writings.)

As you know, the state of Guerrero is currently the hotbed of a genuine guerrilla uprising. A number of factors have led to this, but the most immediate "flashpoint" was a massacre a few years ago of demonstrating peasants, which was clearly ordered by the state's own governor (he is undergoing impeachment proceedings, something unheard of in Mexican politics). As opposed to the Zapatista uprising, which has had worldwide visibility and

carries a great deal of moral "authority," but is poorly funded and virtually unarmed, the Guerrero initiative is militarily more sinister from the viewpoint of the government. Since launching their campaign in late August, this group has showed effective organization (they have struck with precision, killing military personnel at several garrisons and impounding ordnance), and have carefully orchestrated with media and popular movements in a way that shows that this is a well-planned, well-financed initiative, and, to the government's dismay, it enjoys a great deal of popular support.

As a result, most of rural southern Mexico, I do not exaggerate, has become an armed camp, with high scale mobilization of military personnel and a serious curtailment of individual freedom in indigenous and mestizo rural communities, which are regarded as the sources of both the guerrilla fighters as well as their material subsistence. I'll bet if we could see the transcripts of those INI-sponsored Nahuatl broadcasts in Guerrero these days, they are peppered with "friendly" injunctions to be good little law-abiding Indians, and to resist temptation to support or join the rebels, and such are issued in Nahuatl not because INI, or the state or federal governments want to promote Nahuatl, and the associated cultural aura, but because this is the most effective way to reach and propagandize that sector of the rural population.

I hold it is more than mere coincidence that in each state of Indian Mexico, generally the southern half, there are currently serious armed uprisings in place these NAFTA days. I was impressed this summer to hear a number of radio broadcasts from Oaxaca and Chiapas whose editorial content was clearly independent of government lines, but knowing the history of the country and the mentality of its ruling class, I also thought it ominous.

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National American Indian Heritage Month, 1996, by the President of the USA
- a Proclamation, October 30, 1996

Throughout our history, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against the odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence. Tribal America has brought to this great country certain values and ideas that have become ingrained in the American spirit: the knowledge that humans can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment; the understanding that people from very different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and traditions can come together to build a great country; and the

awareness that diversity can be a source of strength rather than division.

As we celebrate American Indian Heritage Month this year, we take note of the injustices that have been suffered by American Indian people. Even today, few enjoy the full bounty of America's prosperity. But even as we look to the past, we must also look to the future. Along with other Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives will face new challenges in the coming century. We can ill afford to leave any of our people behind. Tribal America must figure as prominently in our future as it has in our past.

Let us rededicate ourselves to the principle that all Americans have the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. For Indian tribes and tribal members, this means that the authority of tribal governments must be accorded the respect and support to which they are entitled under the law. It means that American Indian children and youth must be provided a solid education and the opportunity to go on to college. It means that more must be done to stimulate tribal economies, create jobs, and increase economic opportunities.

Our bridge to the 21st century will rest upon the foundation we build today. We must teach our children about our past -- both the good and the bad -- so that they may learn from our successes and mistakes. We must provide our children with the knowledge and skills to permit them to surpass our own achievements and create a stronger, more united American community. We must provide them greater opportunity. It was the Iroquois who taught that in every deliberation we should consider the impact of our decisions on the next 7 generations.

In recognition of the important contributions of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples to our country and in light of the special legal relationship between the tribes and the Government of the United States, and obligations pursuant thereto, we celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1996 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I urge all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

On Supporting Threatened Languages, by Trond Trosterud

The bottom line is that only the speakers themselves can save their language. But as linguists, there are a lot of things we can and should do. The following points are collected on the basis of personal experience, focusing on topics at least I haven't seen that often in the discussion.

Exact information on the state-of-the-art

A bilingual society can change into a monolingual assimilated one very fast, without fluent speakers realising what is going on until it is too late. Thus, in unclear and critical cases, age pyramids should be set up that show the fluency of (each speaker of) each age group. Panu Hallamaa, Helsinki, has done some nice work on both Aleut and Skolt Saami, and he also discusses general methodological questions involved.

Active utilising of intervening majority language borders

Languages always die via a bilingual stage (except genocide cases). With all speakers fluent in the same majority language, "there is no use in speaking the minority language". Contact across majority language borders should thus be encouraged. In cases where the minority language spoken on the other side of the majority language border is a different, but related language, both passive (speak own lg - understand other lg) and active bilingualism (speak-understand both) should be encouraged. A "useless" minority language can be turned into an important device for international communication if it is used as a basis for learning a related language in a neighbouring country. Minority language speakers may end up as much-needed interpreters, and multilingualism within the ethnic macrogroup will also strengthen own ethnic identity. Thus, both active and passive bilingualism should be taught.

The right to positive identification with own ethnic identity

School education in and on one's mother tongue is more and more seen as a part of linguistic human rights. In addition to that, I will emphasise the right to learn the language of one's ethnic group, also when it is no longer the mother tongue for the pupil. This is of central importance for the self-identification of the pupil.

Dictionary FROM the majority language

Every minority language should have a dictionary from the majority to the minority language, a dictionary giving the speakers back words in exchange for all the words that are stolen as a part of assimilatory language policy. Such dictionaries will provide a (common) vocabulary for phenomena outside the domestic and traditional sphere, and they will function as guidelines when borrowing new concept from the majority language. Today, minority language dictionaries are all too often made by linguists in order to understand collected text material, thus, they are FROM the minority language, they contain only words found in the text collections (hence no

neologisms), and they are typically not written in any official orthography.

Not only small languages are threatened

For us, as linguists, the "worst case", is when the last speakers (of a lg without close relatives) dies. But large-scale language shift can as well start on million sized languages (the Mordvinian languages of Russia are a bad example), and happen more or less simultaneously (and fast). Shifting the perspective to the speaker, it is sad to loose the lg of the community, even though it is spoken by a Diaspora group some hundred kilometres away.

Internet and the number of graphemes in the character set standards

Internet and interactive Text-TV will soon become widespread. Radio has proven useful for minorities, it is cheap and does not require literacy. Internet poses some additional problems, that must be addressed by us linguists at once, especially since we are the ones to blame in the first place: Often, we were the ones that invented good, phonemic or syllabic writing systems, utilising a large number of graphemes not contained in the A-Z English (or in the A-JA Russian) alphabet. I prefer the Czech solution (one-phoneme graphemes) to the Hungarian and English one (digraphs) myself, but having invented these graphemes we must now make them available on the net. To do this we need code table standards and information on how to use them.

Cf. <http://www.norut.no/barsek/ip/char.html> > Work on the Sámi languages , especially <http://www.norut.no/barsek/ip/funny.html> > Funny characters on the net. What information technology can (and cannot) do to support minority languages , by Trond Trosterud.

To be specific: We must make sure that every grapheme of every written language of the world (including tone and length diacritics if in use) is found in the 32-bits ISO/IEC 10646-1 standard. There are holes there, and we are the ones that should fill them. Today, 3/4 of the space in part 1 of 10646 (16-bits Basic Multilingual Plane (BMP), or the first 65536 character positions) are being filled by Korean and Chinese characters. After having had their basic (some tenths of thousands of characters) in BMP, the Chinese should be satisfied, and given a whole plane of their own (Koreans should have used only the basic components of Hangul, but the accident already happened..). What is left of the BMP should then be reserved AT LEAST for phoneme- and syllabic-based symbols of all the worlds written languages. Raising the number of Cyrillic positions from the current 256 to e.g. 512 would make no difference whatsoever to the space consideration of Chinese, but it will solve ALL problems for the Cyrillic-based scripts (today, not even the stress-marks of Russian are included, which will come as a great surprise to text book providers). Also, minority languages should have local 8-bits standards while waiting for 10646-1 to be implemented. In the Saami community, it has been (and still is) hazardous to transfer electronically (by exchanging

discs, sending e-mail.), thus making all publication and communication slower and more expensive. When minority languages are claimed to be «difficult» to read or write (even though we as linguists know that their orthography are incredibly much better than the ones of e.g. English or Norwegian), it is due to the fact that their languages are never seen in print. This is one of the most important ways of making them visible.

Minority language road signs

Road signs and public other public sign in the minority language is a very important measure, as seen by the strong reactions of the majority population against them wherever they are introduced. Sometimes minority group members that have lost their language are among the strongest opponents to introducing minority language signs, perhaps because they in a way feel betrayed by the country administration to whom they gave their language loyalty. Making minority languages visible is the most important effect of these signs, but they also teach how to write local place names, and they show the official name of public institutions in the minority language.

Heritage

As a result of the work of philologists and comparativists, huge bodies of fairy tales, mythological texts, legends on the creation of the world, etc., are compiled and published, often with a parallel translation. These text should be translated from the phonetic transcription they probably are written in, and into the official orthography that hopefully exists for the language today, and then published. Simultaneously, the syntacticians among us get searchable, machine readable corpora to work with. Thus, such work can be financed by university grants. The publications will tell about traditions before the cultural suppression set in, and it give the peoples in question back their own cultural heritage. Linguists visited the peoples and got their stories, now is the time to give them back.

Passive bilingualism in families

Many parents that otherwise are motivated to pass their language to the next generation will eventually give up speaking their mother tongue to their children when the children (always/often/more and more) answer them in the majority language. But why should they? As long as both participants in the conversation understand each other, they can talk like that for the rest of their life. The child will learn the majority language anyway, and by knowing the minority language well passively, it later on will have a chance to activate it.

I recently heard about a case like this, where the child in question mixed the two lgs (as they of course do), but got teased and hit in kindergarten, and with no support from the staff there. These problems (not relevant for bilinguals with high-status 2nd lg) should be anticipated and addressed in advance.

Anecdote

Attending a meeting of Sámi and Norwegian officials, one of the Sámi participants was asked: Do you need an interpreter? No, she answered, I don't. But I will give my talk in Sámi, so it might be that you will need one.

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7. Places to Go, on the Web and in the World

ACLU briefing on English-Only Language Policy

Date: Mon, 02 Sep 1996

Since at times there has been extensive discussion on the list about language policy in various parts of the world, I thought I would let people know that there is an American Civil Liberties Union Briefing Paper on the subject of English Only legislation in the US at the following site:

<http://www.aclu.org/library/pbp6.html>

If there is someone on the list who is unable to access this website, but would like to read the briefing paper, contact me directly and I will send it to you as a (long) email message.

Karen Stanley
kstanley@charlotte.infi.net
Karen_Stanley@cpcc.cc.nc.us
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Universal Declarations of Rights, Multilingually

Date: Fri, 17 Jan 1997

... I have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Linguistic rights, available in a number of languages at:

<http://www.indigo.ie/egt/udhr/udhr.html>
and
<http://www.indigo.ie/egt/udhr/udlr.html>

Michael Everson, Everson Gunn Teoranta
15 Port Chaeimhghein Íochtarach; Baile Átha Cliath 2; Éire (Ireland)
Gutháin: +353 1 478-2597, +353 1 283-9396
<http://www.indigo.ie/egt>
27 Páirc an Fhéithlinn; Baile an Bhóthair; Co. Átha Cliath; Éire

Lessons in Quechua

From *gibbons@best.com* (Russ Gibbons) via NAT-LANG (*nat-lang@gnosys.svlc.ma.us*) on 11 Sep 1996

There are now several Web sites that offer free Quechua lessons, and Quechua literature through the internet.

http://www.andes.org/q_vocab.html has vocabulary, grammar, dialog and audio files; along with links to other Quechua language web sites.

8. Forthcoming Meetings

'Human Inheritance: Genes, Language and Evolution': Wolfson Lectures at Oxford University, Spring 1997

The FEL Secretary, Andrew Woodfield, reports:

The Wolfson lectures this year are on the theme 'Human inheritance: genes, language and evolution'. The following may be of interest to members of FEL with access to Oxford. All are at 5pm in the Hall of Wolfson College and are open to the public.

23 Jan Thurs. Prof Lord Renfrew (Cambridge) 'Approaches to world linguistic diversity'

4 Feb Tues. Prof D. Ringe (Penn) 'Language classification: scientific and unscientific methods'

4 Mar Tues. Prof R. Ward 'Language and genes in the Americas'

The other lectures are not specifically about language.

Symposium on Endangered Languages in Africa, Summer 1997

This will be held at the University of Leipzig from July 31st to August 1st, 1997. The Symposium will be part of the 2nd World Congress of African Linguistics which takes place from 27.07.-3.08.1997 in Leipzig.

The *Symposium on Endangered Languages in Africa* will be organized by Matthias Brenzinger and chaired by Bernd Heine, both from the Institut für Afrikanistik, University of Cologne. The papers submitted to the Symposium may either focus on specific endangered languages and regional situations and by that contribute to the documentation of endangered African languages, or may pertain to discussions on theoretical and methodological aspects of language endangerment on the African continent. Provisional titles of presentations (20 min) and abstracts (maximum one typewritten page) should be submitted to:

Matthias Brenzinger
Institut für Afrikanistik Tel: (+49) 221 - 470 2708
Universität zu Köln Fax: (+49) 221 - 470 5158
D-50923 Köln Germany
e-mail: Matthias.Brenzinger@uni-koeln.de

All participants of the Symposium are obliged to register for participation at the 2nd World Congress of African Linguistics through the organizers of the Congress:

Ekkehard Wolff
Institut für Afrikanistik Tel. (+49) 341 - 97 37 036
Universität Leipzig Fax. (+49) 341 - 97 37 048
Augustusplatz 9
D-04109 Leipzig Germany
e-mail: wocal97@rz.uni-leipzig.de

Language Development Institute, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson - June 1997 *Linguistic Diversity & Pluralism: Family, Community, and Tribal Perspectives*

From 2 to 27 June, the University of Arizona, Department of Language, Reading and Culture and the American Indian Studies Program will host the 1997 American Indian Language Development Institute (the 18th AILDI). Offering 6 graduate or undergraduate credit hours, the AILDI involves linguists, tribal elders, bilingual/ESL specialists, teachers, aides and school administrators in an integrated, holistic learning experience focusing on American Indian languages and cultures. All courses lead toward regular degree programs and toward bilingual and ESL endorsements.

Further information can be obtained by sending name and address, + place of appointment and position to:

AILDI, Department of Language, Reading and Culture, College of Education, Room 517, P.O. Box 210069, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721-0069; or call (520)621-1068; FAX (520)621-8174;
<http://AISP.harvill.arizona.edu>

9. Publications of Interest

Some Encouraging Readings on Language Maintenance, by Nancy Dorian
of Bryn Mawr College, Depts of German and Anthropology
<DORIAN@HENRY.BOWDOIN.EDU> wrote in the LG-SHIFT mailing list on 22 November 1996:

The literature of language maintenance and language shift is a lot heavier on the shift end than on the maintenance end, as I expect everybody's well aware. For that reason I wanted to mention some literature that bears on the possibilities for maintenance, just to highlight it a bit.

- Roger Keesing, 1992, "Custom and confrontation: The Kwaio struggle for cultural autonomy" (U. of Chicago), details a case of determined retention of ancestral lifeways & language, but at tremendous cost to the people concerned.

Some less costly cases, then:

- Paul Kroskrity, 1993, "Language, history, & identity: Ethnolinguistic studies of the Arizona Tewa" (U. of Arizona).
- Juliana Flinn, 1992, "Diplomas & thatched houses: Asserting tradition in a changing Micronesia" (U. of Michigan).

- Asher Stern, 1990, 'Educational policy towards the Circassian minority in Israel', in Koen Jaspaert & Sjaak Kroon, "Ethnic minority lgs and education" (Swets & Zeitlinger, Amsterdam).

These cases are of interest because they involve indigenous peoples who've managed to retain their languages without major changes in their economic fortunes.

The next pair of cases involve peoples who've managed to turn sharply improving economic fortunes to their advantage:

- Rita Decime, 1994, 'Un projet de trilinguisme intégré pour les enfants des écoles maternelles de la Vallée d' Ayas', International Journal of the Sociology of Language 109; and
- Thomas Markey, 1988, 'Ladin and other relic language forms in the eastern Alpine region', in Jacek Fisiak, "Historical Dialectology" (Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin).

At the economically very high end:

- Kathryn Woolard & Tae Joong Gahng, 1990, 'Changing lg policies and attitudes in autonomous Catalonia, Language in Society 19.

And at the politically very high end:

- Per Langgaard, 1992, "Greenlandic is not an ideology, it is a language", in Nelson Graburn & Roy Iutzi-Mitchell, eds., "Language & educational policy in the North" (Berkeley Working Papers of the Canadian Studies Program, U. of California, Berkeley).

I should also mention:

- Leanne Hinton's paper, 'Survival of endangered languages: The California master-apprentice program' will appear in the first 1997 issue of the International Journal of the Sociology of Language, in the section on Small Languages & Small Language Communities. It's an excellent introduction to the program, since it doesn't assume any background in the languages involved and goes into a fair bit of detail about the teaching and learning methods used by masters and apprentices.

MITWPL Papers on Endangered Languages

MIT Working Papers in Linguistics is pleased to announce the publication of its 28th volume of Working Papers, "Papers on Language Endangerment and the Maintenance of Linguistic Diversity". This volume, edited by Jonathan David Bobaljik, Rob Pensalfini, and Luciana Storto, grew out of a workshop series held at MIT in January 1995. The workshop placed a particular emphasis on the thorny question of 'what works in language maintenance?', and in addition to papers presented at the workshop the editors have collected papers from other authors recommended by presenters and a preliminary bibliography drawn from the extensive bibliographies provided by members of this list.

The contents of the volume are:

- Introduction (general questions of endangerment and survival) - Jonathan Bobaljik & Rob Pensalfini
- Can Senior Secondary Studies Help to Maintain and Strengthen Indigenous Languages ? - Antonio Mercurio and Rob Amery
- The Ulwa language wakes up - Thomas Green
- A report on language endangerment in Brazil - Luciana Storto
- Modern Irish: A Case Study in Language Revival Failure - Andrew Carnie
- Explaining and Reversing the Failure of the Irish Language Revival - Peter Slomanson
- Universal grammar and the roots of linguistic diversity - Ken Hale
- Language Endangerment & the Non-indigenous Minority Languages in the UK - Mahendra K. Verma
- Policy Statement: the need for the documentation of linguistic diversity - Linguistic Society of America
- A Preliminary Bibliography on Language Endangerment and Preservation - Jonathan Bobaljik, Rob Pensalfini & Luciana Storto

The volume costs US\$12 (+postage/handling of \$2-\$3 surface, \$5-\$12 air) and can be ordered from MIT Working Papers in linguistics by writing to them at MITWPL, MIT Room 20D-219, Cambridge MA02139, USA or by sending email to MITWPL@MIT.EDU.

Scott Palmer, Jaap Feenstra: on the Dynamics of Language Shift

On 20 Sep 1996, Robert_Jackson@SIL.ORG wrote to the LG-SHIFT Mailing List:

Scott Palmer has written an important paper on the subject of language shift and decline. The paper, "The Language of Work, and the Decline of North American Languages", "explores the possibility that, for North America, there is a general, external pattern of events which is setting the stage for language shift. It is catalytic to a change with regard to language, but it does not have as its central focus the issue of language."

It presents "The language-of-work hypothesis" which proposes "that the widespread pattern of language shift among indigenous communities in North America has its roots in a change in the language of work for these communities. "This change in the language of work has been the result of key developments in the economic structure of the dominant society, changes in how indigenous community members relate to that structure, and ultimately changes in the ways in which the community organizes work. "This change in the structure of work has a direct bearing on the lives and thoughts of the parents of young children. Their desire and role is to prepare their children for

life. As it becomes increasingly necessary for community members to work at jobs that require the use of the dominant language, this results in revised perceptions on the part of parents regarding what training their children need in order to survive. So they talk to them in the national language instead of the indigenous language, and the children grow up as first-language speakers of the national language....

You can obtain it in either the RTF (Rich Text Format) format. In order to get the full article you need to send a message to:

mailserv@sil.org

You should NOT put anything in the Subject: window. In the TEXT window place the following command

send [LG-SHIFT]49PLMER.rtf

Then on 21 Jan 1997, Bob came back with the following offer:

Things have quieted down on the Language Shift List after the activity that Scott's paper introduced. Shortly after Scott's paper was made available, Jaap Feenstra sent a paper to me in response to Scott's paper which is equally interesting. The title is Language Shift_a Value-driven Complex in a Changing Environment. You may down-load it by sending to the address:

MAILSERV@SIL.ORG

the command:

send [lg-shift]jaapfe97.rtf

The introduction to the paper reads as follows:

This paper is written as a result of reading Scott Palmer's paper, The Language of Work, and the Decline of the North American Languages, and it evolved from my reactions to his earlier drafts. Time has not allowed me to do extensive research on the subject, but over the years I have given this whole issue considerable thought, and the experience of having been raised in a bilingual Frisian-Dutch setting has been of great benefit to me. (I will attach a write-up on the Frisian language situation as an appendix.)

In explaining the phenomenon of language shift many people have looked for a dominant factor, be it the residential school system, modern media (radio, TV, etc.) or the language of the economy. There are advantages in postulating hypotheses that relate everything to one factor, as it brings some order into the complexity of language shift. However, I believe that in the end it is more beneficial to look at the whole complex of value and environmental change. In essence I believe that language shift is a value-driven complex_a value-driven complex in a changing environment. I admit, in looking at language shift, there is a continual interplay of environmental factors and value factors and I believe that in the majority of cases the value factors carry the greater weight.

10. Obituaries

Kasabe (Luo)

Bruce

Connell

<bruce.connell@anthropology.oxford.ac.uk>

writes:

During fieldwork in the Mambila region of Cameroon's Adamawa province in 1994-95, I came across a number of moribund languages. These I gave a brief report on at the Leiden Colloquium on African Languages and Linguistics in August of 1995 and to the endangered-languages-l list (11/09/95). For one of these languages, Kasabe (called Luo^{2*} by speakers of neighbouring languages and in my earlier reports), only one remaining speaker, Bogon, was found. (He himself knew of no others.) In November 1996 I returned to the Mambila region, with part of my agenda being to collect further data on Kasabe. Bogon, however, died on 5th Nov. 1995, taking Kasabe with him. He is survived by a sister, who reportedly could understand Kasabe but not speak it, and several children and grandchildren, none of whom know the language.

Kasabe was a Mambiloid language, apparently most closely related to Njerep (which itself has perhaps no more than five remaining speakers) and Twendi (35 speakers), and probably Yeni (now extinct). Together these four languages appear to have formed what was probably a dialect cluster within the larger Mambila aggregation. Langa, which is still reasonably viable, may also have been part of the cluster. In any case, it is probable that these languages were once situated in the area where Langa now is, in the shadow of Mount Djeni (also called l'Aigue de Mboundu on maps of Cameroon). The most commonly held belief is that that coming of the Fulani *jihad* during the 19th century, the subsequent enslavement of many and the massacring of resisters scattered and decimated their populations, to the point where their languages were no longer viable.

² Not to be confused with the Nilotic language Luo.

Foundation for Endangered Languages

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Please enrol me as a member of the Foundation for Endangered Languages. I enclose my subscription fee, as indicated below, for the year beginning with the current quarter. In return, I expect to receive the quarterly newsletter *Iatiku*, together with full details of the Foundation's incorporation, meetings and other activities in that year.

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