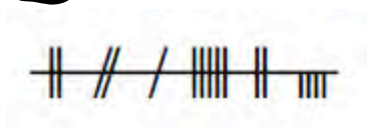


FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

OGMIOS



Two old friends of the Foundation, and long-time champions of their own endangered languages, Onno Falkena (Frisian) and Roza Laptander (Nenets) were brought together by FEL XII (2008) in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden. They were married on 12 May 2010 in Helsinki.

We congratulate them and hope we can continue to be match-makers!

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Waabiny Time: A new children's TV programme in the Noongar language of the South West of Western Australia was launched in April.

The accompanying website, written in Aboriginal English and Noongar, will allow Noongar children to interact with their language online as well as on television. See page 11 of Ogmios 41.

This image is from www.waabinytime.tv



1. Editorial

As usual I must first apologise for the late appearance of this issue. The date on the cover has passed once again. I can only plead that editing *Ogmios* is not my only task within FEL.

Recently the Foundation for Endangered Languages has been commissioned by UNESCO to co-ordinate the work of responding to the feedback comments sent by users of the on-line version of the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, which I edited. Ever since the work appeared on-line in February 2009, and well before it appeared in print a year later, a large number of users of the on-line Atlas have been submitting their comments and suggestions electronically. These range from expressions of interest and approval, through suggestions for further background material, such as dictionaries and teaching aids for small languages, to corrections to the data, based on a more intimate knowledge of the language concerned. There is a lot of variation in the nature of these corrections. There are corrections to location as pinpointed on the map (usually with a single standard-shaped point on the central location of the language), or to numbers of speakers – which is often a contentious issue – to disputations about whether the so-called language is really only a dialect (and therefore doesn't merit inclusion). Then there are those who question the indicated level of endangerment.

I have been ably assisted in this work by Renata Mattoso, who has experience of the project 'from the inside', during a period when she worked at UNESCO headquarters in Paris last year. The process involved checking the validity of the claims made about a particular language by referring the message to the regional editor concerned. That editor then checks the available data and makes a decision whether to amend the data in the Atlas.

Interestingly, by far the greatest interest in the Atlas, as far as numbers of electronic users can indicate, came from Europe. It appears that European users not only have the most ready access to the Internet – which is not surprising – but are also most contentiously engaged with the classification of endangered languages. There were responses from all over the world, but in other continents the comments tended to come from academics. Sadly, not many native-speaker communities outside Europe and North America appear to have access to this Atlas.

We have learned a lot in the process, which has been very time-consuming, and I feel that it will ultimately make for a constantly improving Atlas on-line, which in turn will make the next printed edition still more accurate.

Chris Moseley

2. Development of the Foundation

Announcement of AGM; Call for Officer and Committee nominations

As Secretary of the Foundation for Endangered Languages I hereby give notice that:

1. The 14th Annual General Meeting of the Foundation will take place on Tuesday 14 September, 2010 at Carmarthen campus of University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Carmarthen, Wales, UK. The time of the AGM will be announced via the Foundation's website www.ogmios.org in the week beginning 16 August 2010.

All members are entitled to attend and vote at this meeting.

2. The Agenda will comprise:

- I. Minutes of the 13th AGM
- II. Matters Arising
- III. Chairman's Report
- IV. Treasurer's Report
- V. Election of Officers for the year beginning 25th September 2009

Any additional items for the agenda should be sent to reach the President (nostler@chibcha.demon.co.uk) by 31 August 2010

3. The membership of the Executive Committee for the year following 14 September 2010 will be chosen at this meeting.

Nominations for election to Offices (Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary) and the Executive Committee should be sent to reach the President by 31 August 2010.

There are up to 15 places on the Committee (including the named Officers) and should nominations exceed vacancies, election will be by ballot.

Nigel Birch, Secretary, Foundation for Endangered Languages

3. Endangered Languages in the News

Prologue

It is 8 am, and Ranjani and I get down from the bus at Theppakadu. We are in front of the forest canteen, facing the reception center of the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. We've just had one of our wonderful daily rides through the forest, a 7 km journey from Masinagudy (the village where we are staying) to Theppakadu, the village in the heart of the Mudumalai sanctuary where Ranjani assists me in gathering data on the language of the Betta Kurumbas.

It's early June, the monsoons have been at work for more than 3 weeks and the forest is green. If you were here a month back, you'd know why I remark on the greenery. In summer, the forests dry up; the teak trees turn brown and shed their broad hand-shaped leaves. When the rains come, the trees are green again and the peacocks, especially, come out to stroll among the trees. We saw lots of peacocks on the bus journey. Their tails at this time are long and their necks a brilliant blue. In two months, with the rains fading and the mating season over, they will lose their tail feathers and only their long, glistening necks will remind you of the extravagant beauty you saw a short while ago.

Next to the canteen there is a wild plant with deep red, *gopuram* shaped flowers.¹ As we walk from the forest canteen to the little hamlet where my Betta Kurumba consultants live, we will see other wild tropical flowers. Every time I look at one, I think about the strangeness of my life -- here in my home region, these flowers are familiar, commonplace, to me. But when I change angle and see it through the eyes of the people of my other hometown -- Austin in America -- they are strange, exotic plants from a tropical land overseas. I have been doing this all through fieldwork, seeing with double vision: life through the eyes of my Indian hometown and life through the eyes of my American hometown.

Ranjani and I go into the canteen for *chai* and *vada*. We usually miss breakfast at home and have to grab a bite at this canteen before work. The canteen has one long table, and a smaller table at the side. There are the usual crowd of forest guards, forest rangers, and *adivasis* standing around or sitting at the table. The headman of the hamlet where my Betta Kurumba consultants live is always there. We nod at him and then head for the big table.

As we sit down, a number of *adivasis* get up and leave the table. I've been noticing that happen ever since I began fieldwork. Why don't they want to sit at the same table as me?

¹Glossary: *gopuram* 'cone-shaped structure used in southern Indian temple architecture', *chai* 'tea', *vada* 'a type of snack', *adivasi* 'indigenous ethnic group'.

After finishing data collection for the day, after we've taken the bus-ride through the forest back to Masinagudy, I ask my old Betta Kurumba friend, Bomman, about it. Bomman is the cook at a field station for ecological research in Masinagudy. Working among university students, he has learnt to interact on terms of familiarity with researchers like me. "Why do they get up and leave when I sit down at a table?" It turns out that what appeared to be a rude gesture, was really done as a sign of respect. "Why respect for me?" "It's your father", he says. "They remember your father and the respect they had for him they now show to you".

This is the problem I have with working in my home region! I am not an individual there. People never forget class distinctions, never forget the family you belong to. Your background is hung around your neck, like the spitting pots that untouchables were forced to wear suspended from their necks when they walked outside their own section of the village. You are pulled down by this load as you struggle to walk your own unique path in the world. As a daughter of a plantation owner who has fled from the ivory tower isolation of an estate bungalow to work among the adivasis and live among researchers, I am an anomaly here. Even the fact that I move around by bus is remarked on. "Why don't you use a jeep? Doesn't your estate have a lot of jeeps?" I am a student, I am a linguist, I am a researcher, the plantation is where I came from, but it isn't what I am.

This dissertation was inspired by my desire to get away from prescribed boundaries of family background and reach across to social circles other than the one I was brought up in. Social life in the Nilgiris today consists of separate social circles comprising plantation owners, government officials, small business owners, researchers, social workers, laborers, and adivasis. My field consultants belong to the adivasi circle. The adivasis in the Nilgiris consist of several ethnic groups who had been living in the region during the 19th century, when the British first set up tea and coffee plantations here and came to see the Nilgiris as a summer retreat away from the lowland heat of Southern India. The British also converted a large portion of the original tropical rainforests into teak plantations, employing local adivasis to clear the native vegetation. The Betta Kurumbas were one of the ethnic groups they recruited for this work. I belong to the plantation owner circle, people who followed in the footsteps of the British, expanding the area under tea and coffee cultivation and, on the departure of the British, carrying on the lifestyle lived by them. My childhood home was in Gudalur, 14 kms away from the place where I carried out fieldwork among the Betta Kurumbas. As a child, Kurumbas at the market place, on our family estate, and in the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary were a familiar sight. However, I got to talk to them only during my dissertation fieldwork in the area.

My first experiences with them seemed nice and egalitarian to me (well, as egalitarian as a researcher can get), despite the canteen situation I just described -- I didn't notice that table-issue at the beginning. I was introduced to the Betta Kurumbas by Noor, a Tamilian of Muslim origin who converted as a teenager to Christianity and now lives his life doing a balancing act between the Muslim cultural traditions of his family and his own Christian religious observations (if he still observes these -- it didn't quite look to me like he did). Noor was working as a field assistant for a German anthropologist, gathering stories for him and translating them into English. He was working with another adivasi group, the Jenu Kurumbas. It was he who told me that nobody had looked in great detail at the Betta Kurumba language, and one day he took me over to one of their hamlets close to the Mudumalai Sanctuary visitor reception office.

The Kurumbas at the first hamlet he introduced me to didn't seem to know or care about where I was from. I think they knew I was from Gudalur, but never made any reference to Silver Cloud Estate or my father. I felt welcome there and free of ties to my background. They even gave me a new name, Badsi, because "Gail" seemed too strange to them.

One day while sitting on the verandah of my consultant's house, eliciting data, a group of health-care workers arrived to give the people their vaccinations. My consultant didn't like injections and wouldn't take them. As I sat there persuading her to take one, the health-care worker noticed someone strange sitting at her house and came over to find out who it was. He recognized me at once and proceeded to tell my consultant and the others sitting there a long story about my father and all the good actions he was known for. I tried to pretend this wasn't happening. Interestingly, the Betta Kurumbas also acted like it wasn't happening and, after he left, we went to work and never ever referred to what he said. I was relieved that I was among a community who didn't care about social background ... or so I thought ...

The hamlet I went to on my next field trip was different. My consultant there made it clear that I was her former employer's daughter and always called me "Madam". I could not get anyone here to use my Betta Kurumba name "Badsi". Still, they were warm and friendly. And after all, this situation -- in which we acknowledge the different backgrounds we come from -- is the more real one. By my fourth trip, I have shed my early naive expectations that we would accept one other openly and without reservation. This dissertation is my chance to get to know the Betta Kurumbas and their community ways, but will I ever be able to reciprocate by letting them into my community and our ways? Highly unlikely!, given the social hierarchy that we are trapped in.

Gail Coelho

Last speaker of Bo, Andaman Islands, dies

From BBC News web-site, 4 February 2010

The last speaker of an ancient language in India's Andaman Islands has died at the age of about 85, a leading linguist has told the BBC.

The death of the woman, Boa Senior, was highly significant because one of the world's oldest languages, Bo, had come to an end, Professor Anvita Abbi said.

She said that India had lost an irreplaceable part of its heritage.

Languages in the Andamans are thought to originate from Africa. Some may be up to 70,000 years old.

The islands are often called an "anthropologist's dream" and are one of the most linguistically diverse areas of the world.

'Infectious'

Professor Abbi - who runs the Vanishing Voices of the Great Andamanese (Voga) website - explained: "After the death of her parents, Boa was the last Bo speaker for 30 to 40 years.

"She was often very lonely and had to learn an Andamanese version of Hindi in order to communicate with people.

"But throughout her life she had a very good sense of humour and her smile and full-throated laughter were infectious."

She said that Boa Sr's death was a loss for intellectuals wanting to study more about the origins of ancient languages, because they had lost "a vital piece of the jigsaw". "It is generally believed that all Andamanese languages might be the last representatives of those languages which go back to pre-Neolithic times," Professor Abbi said.

"The Andamanese are believed to be among our earliest ancestors."

Boa Sr's case has also been highlighted by the Survival International (SI) campaign group.

"The extinction of the Bo language means that a unique part of human society is now just a memory," SI Director Stephen Corry said.

'Imported illnesses'

She said that two languages in the Andamans had now died out over the last three months and that this was a major cause for concern.

Academics have divided Andamanese tribes into four major groups, the Great Andamanese, the Jarawa, the Onge and the Sentinelese.

Professor Abbi says that all apart from the Sentinelese have come into contact with "mainlanders" from India and have suffered from "imported illnesses".

She says that the Great Andamanese are about 50 in number - mostly children - and live in Strait Island, near the capital Port Blair.

Boa Sr was part of this community, which is made up of 10 "sub-tribes" speaking at least four different languages.

The Jarawa have about 250 members and live in the thick forests of the Middle Andaman. The Onge community is also believed to number only a few hundred.

"No human contact has been established with the Sentinelese and so far they resist all outside intervention," Professor Abbi said.

It is the fate of the Great Andamanese which most worries academics, because they depend largely on the Indian government for food and shelter - and abuse of alcohol is rife.

Silent extinction: Language loss reaches crisis levels

By Richard Solash, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty web-site 18 February 2010

With fewer than 200 speakers left, Ket is critically endangered. The language is spoken in only a handful of villages that dot the upper Yenisei Valley in central Siberia. And with so few speakers, its demise might seem insignificant.

Like all languages, however, Ket is unique. Its grammar is one of the most complex ever documented by linguists. And for Ket speakers themselves, the language is filled with living links to their ancestors, their past, and their traditions. Its loss would represent a profound silence.

"Your ancestors, if you speak to them in your dreams -- they don't speak English. So what language are you talking to them in?" says Dr. Gregory Anderson, a Harvard-educated linguist and director of the Living Tongues Institutes for Endangered Languages. "There's a disconnect from your history that's very real and tangible for people that are undergoing language shift in a way that people who speak dominant majority languages like English or Spanish or Russian simply don't face."

Anderson's point is especially relevant when it comes to Ket. The language is not only a bridge to the Ket speakers' own ancestors but possibly to a larger human story. Emerging studies show that Ket may be a distant relative of native-American languages like Navajo. If so, the link could have wide anthropological resonance, helping to substantiate the theory of prehistoric human migration across an ice bridge from Asia to the Americas. And since Ket is spoken thousands of kilometers inland from Russia's eastern coast, the link may extend our estimates of the migration's scale.

For all these reasons, linguists watch in horror as languages such as Ket move closer to extinction in our ever more globalized world. Of the more than 6,700 languages spoken in the world, half are in danger of disappearing before the century ends.

Behind that statistic is a host of economic, social, and psychological factors that are together fueling a silent extinction. A handful of linguists fight language loss on a daily basis, but for many laypersons -- and governments -- UNESCO's International Mother Language Day on February 21 is the only day the issue is considered. Linguists say far more attention is needed if the world's languages, and all that they encode, are to remain vital.

Preserving oral literary tradition in Shughni-Rushani languages of Pamir in Tajikistan

Dr. Parvona Jamshedov (Tajikistan)

1. Introduction

After the collapse of the USSR and the declaration of independence by the republics that had composed it, a substantially new geopolitical situation arose in Central Asia and Eurasia. In Europe two contradictory tendencies began to gain strengthening toward integration, which are supported by the majority of European countries and processes of disintegration which are characteristic of Eastern Europe. The creation of Independent state from the republic of the former USSR did little to change the general political situation in the region that had been part of the former Soviet Union.

Along the valley of the upper Panj river which separates Tajikistan from Afghanistan there are many narrow valleys where different Pamiri languages are spoken. These languages belong to East Iranian group. These indigenous languages separated from West Iranian languages very long ago. There are six Pamirian languages are still in use in Badakhshan (Tajikistan, Afghanistan and China). They are Yazgulami, Rushani, Bartangi, Shughni, Ishkashimi and Wakhi.

It should be noted that the two other Pamiri languages – Vanji and Darvazi (Kalai Khumb) were also historically Pamiri languages but today they are substituted by a dialect of Tajik language. The process of extinguishing of Pamiri languages is continuing. The reasons for this process are:

All the inhabitants of Badakhshan Oblast are marked as "Tajik" and that means that their mother tongue is to be considered Tajiki.

None of Pamiri languages are taught at school in Badakhshan (except, according to B. Lashkarbekov, Wakhi and Afghanistan, taught in Pakistan.)

Officially no alphabet or script has been adopted for these languages in Tajikistan (although there were two attempts in 1930s and 1995)

Migration of Pamiri inhabitants to other regions of the globe

Since 1995 Tajikistan has declared Tajik to be its official language. After independence, the official language of the country may have been seen as a unifying symbol for the state.

The language law of 1989 of Tajikistan allowed for education of minorities in their own languages. But in fact only Tajik language is the language of school and Mass Media in the country.

The newly adopted Language Law (of 2009) even did not mention local Pamiri languages, and nothing is going to change in development and preserving these indigenous languages and dialects.

The local people of Badakhshan are still using their own languages in everyday life, trying to preserve them. But the influence of mass media and schools is affecting these languages in the area. Mainly the small Ishkashimi and Yazgulami languages are losing their position in the area and stand near the extinction point.

According the classification made by Anna Ash, Steve Morelli, Ken Walker, Gary Williams for the Australian languages, the Pamirian languages and namely Ishkashimi and Yazgulami fall under the Seriously endangered heading, which means that the language is spoken only by grandparents and older generations. While the parent generation may still understand the language they typically do not speak it to their children (Michael Walsh, Khorog, 2009)

The Shughni-Rushani subgroup of Pamiri languages belongs to the East Iranian branch of Indo-European languages.

Shugni is spoken along the eastern bank of Panj from the village Dasht to Darmorakht and the two big valleys Chund and Shokhdara. On the Afghan side Shughni is spoken along the western bank of the Panj and stepside valley towards Shiva (Shugni: X'eva). (The number of Shugni speakers is 100,000.)

Rushani is also spoken alongside the river Panj from Pastkhuf to Sipad (Rushani Xipuo) the border of Vanj region and on the Afghan side of the village of Pajwar (About 20-25 000 persons are speakers of the Rushani dialect).

Both these languages have never had a written script with the exception of a period of eight years when local scholars introduced a Latin-based alphabet for Shugni. In the thirties, ABC textbooks and some other books were published in Tashkent and Stalinabad in Shugni. In 1941 the script and books were banned by Stalin's regime.

The oral literature of the mentioned area was the subject of brief investigation from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. The first Shugni tale was published by R. B. Show (see Zarubin 1927).

In 1924 I.I. Zarubin, a Russian scholar, had collected 41 verses of "Lalayik" (Lullaby) and published them (Zarubin 1924). He mentioned the specific characteristic of the oral poems in Shugni and Rushani languages.

Zarubin visited Shughnan and Rushan and collected the following ethnographic materials (see Zarubin 1930, 1937, 1960):

1. The tale "Shahdukhtari moron" (The Princess of Snakes).
2. Six tales and one variant of the popular poem "Dargilmodic"

The contribution of other scholars like A. Semyonov, T. Pulody, Jan Rupka, A. Habibov and others should be mentioned. A monograph has been written fairly recently (1975) by Nisor Shakarmamadov a scholar from the Academy of Sciences, who himself is local to the Rushan region. In 1960 the Academy of Science of Tajikistan had organized an expedition to Shughnan and Rushan headed by Dr.

Nurjanov. They collected 40 poems (720 verses) 32 poems of local poets (470 verses) 194 rubai, 5 tales and 5 songs in Shugni and Rushani.

A second expedition, to Shughnan, Rushan and Ishkashim was organized by the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Science. This expedition collected 171 songs (2046 verses) 161 poems (1332 verses) and 109 tales and stories which are available in the library of the Institute in Dushanbe.

The Shughnani language has no written tradition: inhabitants of the area keep their tales, songs, poems and ruba'i very much in mind, and through them they spread by word of mouth.

That is one of the reasons why many songs, tales and rubais have some variants and sometimes each valley or even village has its own variants of the same songs or tale.

The oral literature in Shughnani and Rushani languages can be divided into two groups:

1. Old traditional poems and tales coming from ancient times from generation to generation.
2. New poems, songs and stories created in the course of the last century.

The first group can fall under the following heads:

- a) lyrics;
- b) tragedy, complaining of life and longing.

"Lalayik" (Lullaby) and "Dargilmodic" are the most popular songs in Shughnan. Everyone (except the young) knows some verses and variants of these songs. The first is about a child and the wish for a happy future for him or her. "Dargilmodic" (*dargil*-longing *modic*-mammy) tells about the separation and longing of lovers, and can also express different sides of life. "Bulbulik" (nightingale) is the Vakhani version of "Dargilmodic" which is popular only in Vakhani.

Linguists scramble to save the world's languages

By Richard Solash, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty web-site 21 February 2010 (see also above article)*

When Gregory Anderson and K. David Harrison set off in 2003 to a few remote villages in Russia's eastern Tomsk Oblast, they took only the bare essentials: toothbrushes, socks, soap, plus their microphones, video cameras, audio recorders, and linguistics textbooks.

What brought them to this isolated corner of central Siberia was a business conference -- of sorts: a series of meetings with the less than 25 remaining speakers of Middle Chulym, or Os.

Anderson and Harrison are the two linguists behind the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages. A U.S.-based non-profit, it is one of a handful of initiatives spearheaded by linguists who are scrambling to save the world's endangered tongues. Experts predict that by the end of the century, half of the world's 6,700 languages will be extinct.

Language endangerment, a global phenomenon, has likely never before been so pervasive. As small, minority languages give way to socioeconomic and cultural pressures, they also yield to languages that replace them. In the process, unique linguistic and anthropological information is lost forever.

"Can it [language loss] be stopped or slowed? It's very difficult to know how that could happen," says Nicholas Ostler, chairman of the UK-based Foundation for Endangered Languages.

"It's a social fact about the way the world is developing at the moment which puts pressure on small language groups, and only if there's a radical change in the way the world is, the pressures that the world puts on things, [and] people's consciousness, is it likely to change."

Ostler's organization, like Anderson's and Harrison's, is fighting the trend. That involves research trips to some of the world's remotest spots - from Siberia to Bolivia to Australia - and working with locals

to preserve rare languages through recordings, transcriptions, and videos.

Then comes detailed analyses of the samples - most offering new insight into the grammar and sound system of a language - and sometimes even a rare glimpse into history.

It has been established, for example, that Yaghnobi, a minority language of Tajikistan, is a descendant of the ancient language Sogdian, spoken up and down the Silk Road in medieval times.

After documentation comes the hard part -- revitalization and maintenance of a dying language. But it's work that linguists cannot do alone.

"No matter what linguists think, say, or do, they can't do anything to maintain a language. All they can do is provide adequate documentation for it," says Anderson.

"The people themselves have to choose to maintain it. That requires a lot of effort, both in producing materials that will be suitable for schooling, for example, and a lot of personal effort that the people themselves require to make real the desire that they have to maintain their language."

With enough effort, disappearing languages can flourish again. One of the great success stories of recent times is Welsh, the language of Wales in Great Britain. It was well on its way to extinction only two decades ago, but now has hundreds of thousands of speakers.

But Welsh had something that most endangered languages do not: vigorous government support. And that support assured the Welsh revival included another crucial element: enough money to make the dreams of reviving the language a reality.

For all these reasons, many linguists say that UNESCO's decision 11 years ago to create International Mother Language Day on February 21 was a step in the right direction.

"The problem is that there's far more money for conflict resolution and battles and wars in the world than there is for understanding culture," says Mark Turin, founder of the UK-based World Oral Literature Project, which focuses on the cultural losses -- chants, songs, creation myths, and entire ways of life -- that accompany language loss.

"So, I would say UNESCO is fantastic, but it needs to be funded much more heavily. It needs to have more robust sticks and also carrots with which to attract and also penalize nations that infringe the basic linguistic rights of its citizens. And we need many more organizations that support things like UNESCO's mandate."

Finding the money

Turin relies on grant money and donations to keep his organization afloat, as does the Living Tongues Institute. Ostler's Foundation for Endangered Languages survives on membership fees, which are turned into a \$10,000 annual fund for language documentation and support projects. They all agree, however, that a lot more money -- and a lot more public awareness -- is required.

For now, the main sources of grant money include the U.K.-based Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, which gives nearly \$2 million in grants each year. It has funded over 150 teams to document endangered languages. The Volkswagen Stiftung in Germany has funded work on some 80 endangered languages in the last decade, and the National Science Foundation in the United States also funds documentation initiatives. Smaller sources exist in other countries.

Turin says that along with money and publicity, a sense of collective responsibility is what is really needed to save endangered languages.

"We all are [responsible]. We all are as a species. If we are interested in what makes us human, if we're committed to understanding knowledge, and where we came from, and where we're going, we need to connect with this, our linguistic past -- and present."

UN forum on indigenous issues opens with Ban calling for respect for values

From the UN News web-site

19 April 2010 -- The annual United Nations forum on indigenous issues opened today with a call from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

for Member States to promote development while respecting the values and traditions of indigenous peoples.

“The loss of irreplaceable cultural practices and means of artistic expression makes us all poorer, wherever our roots may lie,” Mr. Ban told the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York. This year’s theme at the forum is “Development with Culture and Identity.”

“I call on all governments, indigenous peoples, the UN system and all other partners to ensure that the vision behind the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples becomes a reality for all,” the Secretary-General added.

Mr. Ban’s call comes as New Zealand announced today that it will reverse its decision and support the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples. New Zealand was one of four countries – the others being Australia, Canada and the United States – that voted against the Declaration in 2007. Australia reversed its decision last year.

The landmark document outlines the rights of the world’s estimated 370 million indigenous people and outlaws discrimination against them.

A non-binding text, the declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues.

Some 2,000 indigenous representatives are estimated to take part in the two-week meeting, which include Member States, UN agencies and civil society groups.

During the forum, participants will focus on Articles 3 and 32 of the declaration, which guarantee indigenous peoples full and effective participation in development processes, including thorough consultation in the establishment of development programs and policies.

The agenda also includes topics related to indigenous peoples of North America and the relationship between indigenous peoples and forests.

The side events during the forum include a special screening of the film *Avatar* and an exhibit in the UN Headquarters lobby entitled “Indigenous Peoples and Self-Determination.”

“Indigenous cultures, languages and ways of life are under constant threat from climate change, armed conflict, lack of educational opportunities and discrimination,” the Secretary-General highlighted in today’s speech.

“Elsewhere, your cultures are being distorted, commodified, and used to generate profits which do not benefit indigenous people, and can even lead to harm.”

Indigenous peoples make up five per cent of the world’s population, but some 33 per cent of the world’s poor, according to *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*, released in January and the first UN report of its kind.

Of the some 7,000 languages being spoken today, more than 4,000 are spoken by indigenous peoples. Language specialists predict that up to 90 per cent of the world’s languages are likely to become extinct or threatened with extinction by the end of the century, eroding “an essential component of a group’s identity,” the Secretary-General said.

Manitoba proposes legislation to recognize Aboriginal languages

From the GovMonitor, Canada, 20 April 2010

New legislation which would recognize Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway and Oji-Cree as the Aboriginal languages of Manitoba was introduced today in the legislature by Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson.

“Indigenous languages have vanished or are in danger of disappearing in many parts of the world and the same fate is possible for Manitoba’s Aboriginal languages if we don’t act now to protect them,” said Robinson. “This legislation is the first step toward preserving and promoting Manitoba’s proud Indigenous language heritage for the benefit of future generations.”

According to the most recent Statistics Canada data, it is estimated that 25.2 per cent of Aboriginal Manitobans have knowledge of an Aboriginal language, down from 27.8 per cent from 2001.

It is remarkable any of Canada’s indigenous languages are still spoken following a century and a half of forced assimilation through the residential school system, said Robinson, noting the importance of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission now underway in Winnipeg in addressing past wrongs including language deprivation.

“I’ve learned that when a language is taken away from a people, it’s a major step toward the loss of a culture,” said Robinson.

“Today there is once again pride and interest among Aboriginal youth in learning their languages and traditions but, in many cases, a painful past has resulted in a gap in traditional knowledge that needs to be bridged. Government policies are to blame for this so it only makes sense that governments now take responsibility and action to address it.”

Indian tribes go in search of their lost language

By Patricia Cohen, from the New York Times Books section, 5 April 2010

As far as the records show, no one has spoken Shinnecock or Unkechaug, languages of Long Island’s Indian tribes, for nearly 200 years. Now Stony Brook University and two of the Indian nations are initiating a joint project to revive these extinct tongues, using old documents like a vocabulary list that Thomas Jefferson wrote during a visit in 1791.

The goal is language resuscitation and enlisting tribal members from this generation and the next to speak them, said representatives from the tribes and Stony Brook’s Southampton campus.

Chief Harry Wallace, the elected leader of the Unkechaug Nation, said that for tribal members, knowing the language is an integral part of understanding their own culture, past and present.

“When our children study their own language and culture, they perform better academically,” he said. “They have a core foundation to rely on.”

The Long Island effort is part of a wave of language reclamation projects undertaken by American Indians in recent years. For many tribes language is a cultural glue that holds a community together, linking generations and preserving a heritage and values. Bruce Cole, the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which sponsors language preservation programs, has called language “the DNA of a culture.”

The odds against success can be overwhelming, given the relatively small number of potential speakers and the difficulty in persuading a new generation to participate. There has been progress, though, said Leanne Hinton, professor emerita at the University of California, Berkeley, who created the Breath of Life program in California in 1992 to revive dormant languages in the state.

Representatives from at least 25 languages with no native speakers have participated in the group’s workshops so far, she said. Last month Ms. Hinton and a colleague at Yale received a federal grant to create a similar program based in Washington, D.C.

Of the more than 300 indigenous languages spoken in the United States, only 175 remain, according to the Indigenous Language Institute. This nonprofit group estimates that without restoration efforts, no more than 20 will still be spoken in 2050.

Some reclamation efforts have shown success. Daryl Baldwin started working to revive the dormant language of the Miami Nation in the Midwest (part of the Algonquian language family), and taught his own children to speak it fluently. He now directs the Myaamia Project at Miami University in Ohio, a joint effort between academics and the Miami tribe.

Farther east is Stephanie Fielding, a member of the Connecticut Mohegans and an adviser on the Stony Brook project. She has devoted her life to bringing her tribe’s language back to life and is compiling a dictionary and grammar book. In her eyes language provides a

mental telescope into the world of her ancestors. She notes, for example, that in an English conversation, a statement is typically built with the first person — “I” — coming first. In the same statement in Mohegan, however, “you” always comes first, even when the speaker is the subject.

“This suggests a more communally minded culture,” she said.

Now in her 60s, Ms. Fielding knows firsthand just how tough it is to sustain a language effort over time, however. She said she was still not fluent.

“In order for a language to survive and resurrect,” she said, “it needs people talking it, and for people to talk it, there has to be a society that works on it.”

Chief Wallace of the Unkechaug in Long Island already has a willing student from a younger generation. Howard Treadwell, 24, graduated from Stony Brook in 2009 with a linguistics degree. He will participate in the Long Island effort while doing graduate work at the University of Arizona, where there is a specialized program researching American Indian languages.

Mr. Treadwell is one of 400 registered members of the tribe, which maintains a 52-acre reservation in Mastic, on the South Shore. The Shinnecocks have about 1,300 enrolled members and have a reservation adjacent to Southampton.

Robert D. Hoberman, the chairman of the linguistics department at Stony Brook, is overseeing the academic side of the project. He is an expert in the creation of modern Hebrew, the great success story of language revival. Essentially unspoken for 2,000 years, Hebrew survived only in religious uses until early Zionists tried to update it — an undertaking adopted on a grand scale when the State of Israel was established.

For the American Indians on Long Island the task is particularly difficult because there are few records. But Shinnecock and Unkechaug are part of a family of eastern Algonquian languages. Some have both dictionaries and native speakers, Mr. Hoberman said, which the team can mine for missing words and phrases, and for grammatical structure.

The reclamation is a two-step process, the professor explained. “First we have to figure out what the language looked like,” using remembered prayers, greetings, sayings and word lists, like the one Jefferson created, he said. “Then we’ll look at languages that are much better documented, look at short word lists to see what the differences are and see what the equivalencies are, and we’ll use that to reconstruct what the Long Island languages probably were like.” The Massachusetts language, for example, is well documented with dictionaries and Bible translations.

Jefferson’s Unkechaug word list was collected on June 13, 1791, when he visited Brookhaven, Long Island, with James Madison, later his successor in the White House. He wrote that even then, only three old women remained who could still speak the language fluently.

Chief Wallace said he had many more records, including religious documents, deeds and legal transactions, and possibly a tape of some tribal members speaking in the 1940s.

“When we have an idea of what the language should sound like, the vocabulary and the structure, we’ll then introduce it to people in the community,” Mr. Hoberman said.

While it may seem impossible to recreate the sound of a lost tongue, Mr. Hoberman said the process was not all that mysterious because the dictionaries were transliterated into English.

“Would someone from 200 years ago think we had a funny accent?” Mr. Hoberman asked. “Yes. Would they understand it? I hope so.”

Musings of a Terminal Speaker

By Peter Constantine, from *Words without Borders* web-site, 19 April 2010

The death of a language is rarely sudden: it is usually an unremarkable process of decline as a community gradually changes its linguistic allegiance, dropping an ancient mother-tongue for a stronger and more relevant language.

Why insist on speaking words that are understood in only a few villages at the expense of fluency in a powerful national tongue?

The Greek side of my family comes from a Corinthian mountain village. Until the winding footpath leading to the village became a dirt road in the 1950s, and a paved road in the late 1960s, the language of the village was Arvanitika—or Arbërishtë, as we call it.

Greece has many native languages that are dying, such as Tsakonika, Nashtata, Pomak, and Vlahika. Growing up in the Greece of the 1970s, I never gave much thought to the health and durability of our *glúkha trimerishtë*, our “valiant tongue,” nor did anyone else in our speech community. There was no movement to preserve the language, or to document it (it is a purely oral language) or to standardize it. When in the 1990s the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages sent linguists to survey the state of our language, the villagers felt that it was some sort of plot and chased them off with sticks.

One clear sign that not all is well with your native tongue is when you don’t know the word for “electricity” or “light switch”—because the words don’t exist in your language—but you do know that *purtékë* is the rod which you use to beat ripe olives off trees, and that *shékuljitë* are the hides of goats (*lekúratë e dhivë*) in which you ripen and store a cheese called *djáthë të shakuit*, “goat-hide cheese.” This special cheese stored in goat skins stays fresh for a whole year without a refrigerator—another word we do not have. So the modern Arvanitika speaker might know all about troughs (*korita*), shears (*ngëshëra*), sheep pens (*vathratë*), and all the parts of the plough (*parmendë*), but can’t say: “My iPhone doesn’t seem to get reception on this side of the mountain.”

Once a language no longer creates new words in the face of a new lifestyle, the language is bound to fade away as the old traditions become obsolete. Our people no longer weigh milk in “oka” units, or gather the milk in gigantic two-hundred-oka cauldrons (*leveté i’ madhë*). The European Union has disallowed our production of unpasteurized cheeses—in fact there was a recent warning on Greek television for Athenian weekend excursionists to Corinth not to purchase goat milk from local villagers. The new pasteurization directives have outlawed the old wooden milk pails (*kardhàre nga dru*), the flatpans (*brakáche*), the leather bottles (*askópulj*), the boiling pots (*kusi*), and the Corinthian milk pans, which we call *vëshlja hekurimtë*, “metallic ears,” because of their earlike handles.

I am not one to mourn the passing of the old ways. There was poverty and hunger in our villages, and the woods were filled with dangerous spirits—*ljugat* and *káljkëtë* and *buchera*—and evil water nymphs or nereids (*neráidhe*) lay in wait by brackish ponds after sunset to molest and drown shepherds. In the late 1930s, my uncles—the first generation to go to primary school—had to walk barefoot down the mountain path to a schoolhouse in a Greek-speaking valley, where they were threatened with canings should they speak their own tongue. But they did well in life: Uncle Yorgos rose to the highest ranks of the Greek air force, shedding all signs of his humble Corinthian provenance.

Unlike other endangered language communities elsewhere in the world, Greece’s native languages have no language-planning system or academy charged with standardizing the language and providing it with official new terms. When I visited Australia a few years ago, I heard that the Kurna Aboriginal language, extinct for nearly a century, was not only being revived but was also being given a new terminology. New words were created out of old: *mukarndo* (computer), for instance, is an amalgam of *muka muka*, “brain,” and *karndo*, “lightning.” I heard that the Council of Wiradjuri Elders meets regularly to accept or reject neologisms, and that comic books were being translated into native languages to spark the interest of the young.

Many of our villagers, on the other hand, insist that Arvanitika is not a bona fide language but just a way of speaking, as opposed to Greek with its wealth of modern words and ancient lineage. There is a strong feeling in all our age-groups that we would do better to speak only Greek, that it is an impediment to insist on our village tongue with its treasury of irrelevant medieval farming terminology but a dearth of words for all things modern and interesting. Athens is seen as the city of bright lights and opportunity, while the village remains a backwater of oil lamps and poverty.

Linguists have words for people in our predicament. We are terminal speakers, and once we start switching back and forth from our heritage language to the national tongue, adopting simpler grammatical forms, we are partial speakers or semispeakers. Our

language, once so rich, is moribund. As one of our dour proverbs says: "Ljá të kóratë edhé vate për karkalëte"—it has left the bountiful harvest and gone looking for locusts.

RBC becomes first Canadian bank to offer indigenous languages telephone service

From the CNW web-site, Canada, 30 March 2010

TORONTO, March 30 /CNW/ - RBC today announced the introduction of Cree and Inuktitut, two of the most commonly-spoken indigenous languages in Canada, to its multi-language telephone banking service. RBC is the first Canadian financial institution to offer telephone services in these languages.

Launched in 2008, RBC's multi-language telephone service has more than 2,600 specialized interpreters who help with day-to-day basic business and personal banking inquiries such as opening an account, paying bills or requesting foreign exchange information at no cost to the client. Interpreters are available to help translate 180 different languages.

"Canada is home to a variety of languages that many organizations do not recognize, or have the capacity to service through translation," explained Dale Sturges, national director, Aboriginal Banking, RBC. "We are pleased to be able to continue reaching out to an underserved market by incorporating Cree and Inuktitut into our customer service capabilities. RBC has a long history of building relationships with the Aboriginal community and we remain committed to finding innovative ways to partner with our clients to meet their financial needs."

Clients can call 1-800 ROYAL 2-0 (1 800 769-2520) to access the RBC agent-assisted service and within minutes will be connected with an interpreter via a three-way confidential conference call.

"Access to banking services plays an important role in the creation of wealth and economic sustainability in Aboriginal communities," added Phil Fontaine, special advisor to RBC. "Cree is spoken by approximately 117,000 people and there are roughly 35,000 Canadians who speak Inuktitut, making them two of the most common indigenous languages spoken across the country. The fact that RBC is providing services in these languages is a testament to its deep understanding of the unique needs of the Aboriginal market it serves."

About RBC and Aboriginal Canadians

RBC has a proud history of strong relationships with Aboriginal peoples.

We are committed to serving Aboriginal governments, communities, organizations, businesses and individuals by creating opportunities for sustainable economic development through: access to banking and capital; community and social development; employment, education and training; and procurement. RBC has been operating in the far north since 1921, and currently has six branches located north of 60 degrees, with additional agency banking operations located in remote First Nations communities. We employ approximately 100 full- and part-time employees in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. In 2009, RBC invested more than \$250,000 in community initiatives across the far north.

Ghana's indigenous languages are threatened by foreign languages

From the Ghana News Agency web-site, 14 April 2010

Accra, April 14, GNA - Professor Akosua Anyidoho, former Faculty Member, Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, has stressed the need for efforts to project and protect the nation's indigenous languages from potential threat of death.

She noted that Ghana could eventually lose her ability to contribute meaningfully to any global discussions and decisions in respect to

culture and language if nothing was done to project and protect the nation's indigenous languages.

"The current trend where Ghana's indigenous languages are being relegated to the background in all aspects of lives pose a great threat not only to the culture and traditions, but also to the very existence of the people as a recognized entity," she added.

Prof. Anyidoho, currently the Director of New York University-in-Ghana, an undergraduate study abroad programme at New York University, was delivering the keynote address at the Eighth Faculty of Arts Colloquium in Accra on Wednesday.

It is under the theme; "Communicating as a Nation: Back to the Future".

She pointed out that while government tried to strengthen the teaching and learning of English Language in schools, the critical role of language in forging national cohesion should also improve through the proper management of the multi-lingual situation in order not to infringe on any indigenous language of the people.

Prof. Anyidoho said the current situation was due to Ghana's policy of non-committal to indigenous languages and the adoption of only English as the official language of the country even though a large percentage of the population did not speak English, and the current attitude of parents who preferred to adopt English Language as the medium of expression at home.

She acknowledged the critical role of language, saying though the need to project indigenous African languages had received various attention at a number of local and international conferences, little progress had been made and retained even though Africa and Ghana in particular had played down issues of multilingualism, although it still had a role to play in socio-economic and political decision-making.

"In Ghana some intellectual advocacies have been pushed for a recognized national language, but these have not seen much improvement or action," she said.

Prof. Anyidoho expressed concern that though only 49 per cent of Ghanaians were literate according to the 2005 Ghana Statistical Service Survey Report, meaning majority of the people functioned well in the indigenous languages, the use of the English Language continued to dominate both the political and economic circles of communication, making it difficult for the non-literate to flow with current developmental trends.

She said the consequences included a continued exclusion of the masses in decision-making, continued widening of the gap between the rich and poor, poor information sharing and limitation of writers to draw knowledge from African flavour of indigenous languages to enrich their writings.

Prof. Anyidoho said Ghana did not have the resources to resuscitate her fading indigenous languages and culture as pertained in some developing countries and therefore needed to develop a clear cut policy on the projection of her indigenous languages, backed by explicit guidelines on their implementation in all sectors.

She suggested that Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives should take keen interest in the effective use of indigenous languages.

Prof. Kwaku Osam, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Ghana, said since the inception of the colloquium, the faculty had received various suggestions and inputs from outside and within the university that had helped in enriching its programmes.

He thanked the management of Stanbic Bank for sponsoring five awards for students in the faculty and sustaining its programmes.

Writing Kalenjin dictionary 'tough', says author

From the Standard, Nairobi 26 April 2010

By Kipkirui K'Telwa

How does one write a dictionary for the Kalenjin when the members of the community speak different dialects?

This is the question that linguist Kibny'aanko Seroney tackles in the newly released dictionary, *Samburtaab Ng'aleekaab Kaleenchin*.

This work attempts to unite the over ten Kalenjin-speaking ethnic groups to create a single talking point.

Kibny'aanko defends his work saying: "Kalenjin language users still understand each other, meaning there is an underlying principle of sameness of language."

In his work, which has taken him 15 years to research, Kibny'aanko attempts to address, in a broad way, the elusive question of Kalenjin orthography (writing system).

"The missionaries and colonial administrators, as we know, didn't analyse the Kalenjin language in a broad sense but took isolated cases based on the territorial confinement to develop the language," he says.

They subverted the development of Kalenjin language to their convenience, he says.

"They put down Kalenjin words in a manner that suited them and not as it was used by the indigenous speakers themselves," he notes.

To reverse this negative trend, Kibny'aanko has put together a huge volume that is also available online.

This makes Kalenjin one of the first indigenous African languages in East Africa to go online.

There is also an electronic version, which is available at: <http://www.africanlanguages.com/kalenjin/dictionary>; <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/books/samburtaab-ngaleekaab-kaleenchin>

The author refers to the online version as a European version while the Mvule Africa published copy is labelled Nairobi edition.

He describes online publishing and editing as a friendly venture because it allows users to add new words or comments, thus it auto-updates itself.

Desire to correct mistakes

Kibny'aanko attributes the success of his work to information technology and adds that this has enabled many people to publish their works both online and offline.

The Warwick University-based scholar says he compiled the dictionary because of his desire to correct mistakes made by missionaries.

"Only the late Dr Taita Towett made meaningful attempts to record Kalenjin words," says Kibny'aanko.

Kalenjin vowels function differently from Kiswahili and English ones.

"It is important to preserve indigenous languages which are fast-disappearing. If books are being written then the disappearance of languages will be stopped," counsels the scholar who also authored *From Strength To Strength*, a biography of Ambassador Peter Rono.

His dictionary needs support from other Kalenjin scholars for improvement and expansion.

Unfortunately, the absence of a committee for Kalenjin language standardisation poses a challenge to Kalenjin linguists and speakers.

For example, technical and emerging words require a committee to construct and standardise them based on meaningful concepts. It is difficult to acquire the equivalent of words such as 'computer.'

Human appetite for knowledge

Recording language helps to convey concepts that reflect human appetite for knowledge. If a language is not used, then it becomes redundant or impotent. That a useful language is used to convey human products such as literature, drama and theatre is not in dispute.

Tragically, absence of mother tongue textbooks has made it difficult for most African languages to grow. Teachers are not generating teaching material to fit the ever-changing knowledge.

Therefore this dictionary will generate both knowledge and controversies in equal measure among Kalenjin scholars and readers.

For example, a Kipsigis-Kalenjin will accuse Kibny'aanko of either inverting or reversing most Kalenjin words. For example, whereas Toweettian and colonial writers would easily identify the word 'Kalenjin', Kibny'aanko has presented it as 'Kaleenchin.'

But while appreciating the new challenge, Kibny'aanko avers that the late Dr Toweett was aware of the acute problems of orthography.

"Studying the variants of Kalenjin linguistic groups in isolation helps create imagined linguistic differences rather than the real difference."

Even the Kipsigis/Kibiskis scholars and speakers will be left confused.

4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

'Waabiny Time' – the new TV show to teach kids their language

From Adriano Truscott, 30 March 2010

By chance I stumbled across this most historic event: the launch of the first Indigenous language program specifically for an early childhood audience. I couldn't believe luck and to me, this was almost a dream come true: having language learning on television and increasing the status and awareness of our local Aboriginal languages, in this case Noongar. Noongar belongs to the south west of Western Australia and is taught to varying degrees in a number of primary schools. While it is a language that is evolving with increasing numbers of speakers, it is, like most of Australia's Indigenous languages, critically endangered.

Waabiny Time, which means *playing time* in Noongar was launched at Noongar Community College in Perth, Western Australia, where I met with Cath Trimboli, the programme's director and producer. The show contains Indigenous stories, songs and activities, children and is broadcast nationally over 13 episodes. "Waabiny Time celebrates Aboriginal culture in a traditional and modern context...by making Noongar language a strong part of the program we are giving it the value and exposure it deserves."

Securing funding and support of the language speakers were among the main challenges that were faced in the project.

"Many Aboriginal languages have numerous dialects, so it was important that we worked with a language group that had an overarching language. With the Noongar language we were fortunate to have traditional speakers as well as the teachers and consultants who were willing to be a part of Waabiny Time. We enrolled these language experts to advise and consult throughout the project. I was fortunate enough to work alongside an amazing team that I could count on and keep going when the going got tough.

When asked about what advice could be given to small language groups and communities who wanted to see their language in the media, Cath said:

"Media has the potential to reach such a vast diverse audience. I encourage small language groups and communities to use the media whether it be print, broadcast and more and more nowadays digital media, to celebrate language as a significant part of culture."

Waabiny Time is broadcast nationally in Australia on the National Indigenous Television (NITV) from April to June.

5. Allied Societies and Activities

The World Oral Literature Project

The World Oral Literature Project was established in January 2009 at the University of Cambridge to document and make accessible the voices of vanishing worlds before they disappear without record. Performances of creative works of verbal art – which include ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, folk tales, creation tales, songs, myths, legends, word games, life histories or historical narratives – are increasingly endangered. Globalisation and rapid socio-economic change exert complex pressures on smaller communities, often eroding expressive diversity and transforming culture through assimilation to more dominant ways of life. As vehicles for the transmission of unique cultural knowledge, local languages encode oral traditions that can become threatened when elders die and livelihoods are disrupted.

Our goal is to encourage collaborations between local communities and committed anthropologists and linguists by providing supplemental grants for the field documentation of oral literature and by organising lectures and workshops to discuss the best strategies for supporting research on endangered narrative traditions. In addition, we publish and archive collections of oral literature, online and in print.

In our first year, with generous support from the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research, we awarded £40,000 in grants to scholars and communities who are documenting endangered oral literatures and living traditions. Examples include recordings of ceremonial chanting in the Vaupés region of Colombia; an audio archive of the vocal repertoire of the last royal singer of Mustang, Nepal; and a collection of Altaian heroic epics sung by ritual practitioners. Copies of the resulting digital collections are deposited with the project as well as with local communities. See our website for more details on the grant programme and for audio samples of the collections that are already online.

Our first workshop was held on December 15-16, 2009, and proved to be a great success.

Sixteen speakers presented on their work and Professor Emeritus Ruth Finnegan, an expert on African oral literature, offered a compelling keynote. The presenters were joined by delegates and participants from all over the world, including students, linguists, anthropologists, community representatives, museum curators and archivists. The packed room and diversity of participants created a lively atmosphere that has led to ongoing collaborations and partnerships. Podcasts of the papers are available online through our website so that anyone may benefit from the content of the discussion.

We are currently investigating how collections deposited with us – both contemporary field recordings generated by our grantees and other fieldworkers, as well as heritage recordings – can best be protected and disseminated while still respecting the intellectual property rights and sentiments of local communities. While Cambridge may be the location where materials are hosted and maintained, both physically and digitally, communities will require copies of the output so that future generations can access and make use of the cultural knowledge and language of their ancestors.

The New Zealand Film Archive has a mission to collect, protect and connect New Zealanders with their moving image heritage. These three verbs also summarise our aims. Collection is the gathering and documentation of oral literature in the field, not in an extractive or acquisitive manner, but in a way that is responsible, collaborative and predicated on trust. Protection is its archiving and curation – doing the best we can to ensure that these unique cultural materials are maintained, migrated and refreshed as new technologies become available and older technologies become obsolete. The connection is

made when collections are returned to source communities and when they reach a wider public in print and online.

To find out more about the project, for information on how to apply for a grant, or to explore ways to support the initiative, please visit <www.oralliterature.org> or write to Dr Mark Turin at mt10003@cam.ac.uk.

New programme in language revitalization

From Linguapax, 28 February 2010

Starting 1 April 2010, aimed mainly at speakers of endangered languages from Latin America, the Universidad Indígena Intercultural (Intercultural Indigenous University) is launching a postgraduate diploma in language revitalization, through two of its associate centers, The Centre for Applied Linguistics (CILA) of the San Marcos University of Lima, Peru, and the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology, CIESAS, in Mexico City (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social), also home of Linguapax Latin America. Another 5 universities or Centers are also involved, including the PROEIB Andes in Bolivia, the University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, the Cauca University in Colombia, the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas in Guatemala and URACCAN University from Nicaragua.

One of the main objectives of the diploma is to offer professional training to develop projects in language revitalization methods, theory and practice. With a focus on communal co-participatory project development and outstandingly sustainable revitalization management, the diploma is aimed at favoring the emergence of speakers enabled to develop revitalization projects. These will hopefully become fresh air in a world of ongoing demise of linguistic diversity--- as becomes evident every day with, for instance, the passing away of the last speakers of Bo, such as Bo sr in the Andamans Islands in India, as recently reported by Professor Anvita.

Programmed to start in the Spring term this year, the program is conceived as a pilot effort to test the possibilities of triggering and facilitating sustainable revitalization initiatives in about 50 languages, encompassing highly endangered languages such as Xinca, an isolate from Guatemala, Maya languages (Itza, Yucatec, Chuy, Kanjobal) from the fringe Mexico-Guatemala, Amazonian languages from Brazil and Peru, Nasayuwe and Namtrik from Colombia, Garifunas and Ulwas from Honduras and Nicaragua, among many others. The diploma faced 500% more demand than planned. Selection is limited to 25 grants of a total of 30 places (5 spaces are open for independent students who can face their fees on their own. Sponsors welcome! A couple of places are left!).

The diploma is organized in a one year long program:

At the outset, it includes 6 weeks of intensive coursework in Lima examining the basis for language revitalization and successful provocative experiences worldwide. Based on online tutorial work, in the rest of the program students are allocated in the field with tutors communicating with them and among themselves via a moodle platform. We are also trying to secure additional funding to develop more field work encounters between tutors and students. A closing face to face phase in an intensive month is also contemplated to wrap up the diploma and evaluate the future prospects of students' projects, all aimed at revitalizing their languages and cultures in the long run, one of the most poignant challenges of a program such as this. Several linguistic families of Central and South America are represented. Potential students include 134 applicants from 11 countries; namely, Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panamá and Venezuela comprising around 50 languages of at least 12 distinct linguistic families. Such a number speaks of the need for these types of initiatives and urges opening up spaces for language revitalization programs, envisioned in the idea of turning the program into an MA in hopefully the near future.

Notwithstanding the scarce space which makes it very hard to accommodate such huge diversity, we hope to incorporate as many speakers as possible, from Patagonia to Mexico. Criteria for the final selection of candidates are gender-and geographical diversity balanced, also involving degrees of endangerment and viability of the languages proposed. Some other strategies that have been designed to potentiate, disseminate and cross-fertilize revitalization initiatives are establishing working groups of transnational languages, facilitating and reinforcing cross border relationships between languages such as

Yucatec Maya and Maya Itza and Kanjobal and Chuj, which in practice constitute a Maya continuum. Hopefully these initiatives will strengthen the awareness of linguistic and ethnic unity of indigenous people thus contributing to the vindication of their own languages and cultures.

Endangered Languages Program

From Mariyam Mediovaya, Endangered Languages Program, 21 April 2010

Greetings,

Endangered Languages Program is pleased to announce its continuation into the third year!

Endangered Languages Program aims to support preservation and revival of those indigenous languages which are threatened with extinction and which are vital to indigenous cultures of Siberia and North/Central America.

One of the components of the Program is financial assistance to projects working towards these goals. In 2008 the program offered assistance to eight grassroots language preservation projects in Russia and the US. In 2009 the number increased to twelve, and we are looking to support similar number of projects this coming year.

ELP was initiated in 2008 under the umbrella of Sacred Earth Network, but since then has moved under the umbrella of EarthAction Network (EAN), 501(c).

We are very much hoping for your assistance in dissemination of this information among interested organizations and individuals. Both active projects and new initiatives are welcome to apply to the Program. Please address inquiries about the Endangered Languages Program to the Program's Coordinator, Mariyam Mediovaya, at mariyamsacredearth at gmail.com

Again, we are grateful in advance for your assistance in helping us reach out to interested individuals and organizations who might benefit from the Program.

With best regards,

Mariyam Mediovaya

Coordinator of the Endangered Languages Program (ELP)
EarthAction Network, Amherst, MA, USA

Email: mariyamsacredearth at gmail.com

Website: www.earthaction.org/endangered-languages-program.html

National Museum of Language, USA

From the National Museum of Language, College Park, Maryland

As we hope you are aware, in May, 2008, the NML opened a small but effective exhibit room--an actual museum, albeit a small one, located in College Park, Maryland. This milestone came a decade after the NML was founded, a period during which the NML's public face was as organizer of lectures and panel discussions on language and linguistic topics, presented in various venues around College Park. A web site was created and continually improved; today it is a rich and wonderful virtual museum <http://www.languagemuseum.org/>.

To date the Museum has hosted over 1000 visitors, including, most importantly, many groups of school children with their teachers. In addition to the exhibit hall, which traces the development of writing systems and offers several computer stations, there is an activity room where visitors can try their hand at Chinese calligraphy. Visitors are guided by volunteer docents. The Museum is open Tuesdays and Saturdays and two Sundays each month. Admission is free.

When David Crystal visited the NML last October, he recounted the story of attempts to found a language museum in London--to be named "World of Language"--to an enthralled audience of NML members and guests. The ambitious plans had to be suspended owing to lack of funding. He also described his participation in the planning for the *Casa de les Llengües*, a large, well-funded museum of language which is scheduled to open in Barcelona in 2012. Then in Feb-

ruary the NML was honored by a visit by Mr. Antoni Mir, Executive Director of *LinguaMon/Casa de les Llengües*, who updated us on the progress of the Barcelona museum. When it opens, the Catalans will boast having the first full-fledged world-class museum of language.

While the NML has existed for over a decade and has had a working museum open for more than a year and a half, it has yet to find the resources to create the kind of museum its organizers envision. It hardly needs to be noted that the last two years have proved to be very difficult ones in which to find funding. We continue to seek foundation and government grants, but we believe that gaining increased support from the professional language community is vital. The President and Board of Trustees of the NML firmly believe that their efforts thus far in creating the Museum justify their hope and expectation that the language community--scientific linguists, lexicographers, teachers of languages and linguistics, translators, and others--will, when they see what has been accomplished, support this endeavor.

If you agree with us that a museum of language is an idea whose time has come, and that Americans should not have to travel to Barcelona, Spain, to visit one, please join us in our effort. Visit our web site <http://www.languagemuseum.org/> to gauge the breadth and depth of NML programs, and while there click on "Become a Member Today" and sign up. You can become a "Contributing Member" for \$100 a year. The "educator" level (\$25) was introduced late last year to offer a way for parents, grandparents and others to show their appreciation to the children's language teachers through a gift membership. Established professionals could also use this to recognize their junior colleagues.

While your financial support is important and greatly needed, the NML would also welcome any assistance you can give it. Advice and suggestions on exhibits and other museum activities would be most helpful. Please be in touch.

6. Publications, Book Reviews

Marshallese language gets online dictionary

By Craig Gima; from the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 24 January 2010

Just like in the Hawaiian language, the Marshallese word for love — iokwe or yokwe — is also a greeting and can mean hello and good-bye.

Look it up.

University of Hawaii emeritus professor Byron Bender and software application developer Steve Trussel have just unveiled a new Marshallese-English Dictionary.

Bender said he and three colleagues spent 10 years putting the dictionary together using an IBM mainframe computer and computer punch cards before it was published by the University Press of Hawaii in 1976.

The online dictionary took less than a year to compile on a home computer, he said.

Over the years, Bender had been compiling information to eventually put out a second printed edition of the dictionary, but while taking a morning walk last year he bumped into Trussel, a former UH-Manoa graduate student in linguistics, and they decided to put the dictionary online.

"I really didn't appreciate it until we got into it, how wide open something online can be," Bender said. "You can jump back and forth with all kinds of links."

iqkwe {yi yaqey}. Also yokwe. n. al.; n. inal. iqkweū; n. pers. ri-rokwe; v. distrib. iqkiokwe; n. constr. iqkwein; v. dir. - tok/lok/waj. greet; to love; bid farewell; sympathize.

One of the features on the online dictionary gives the meaning of place names in the Marshall Islands and information on the location of places. Trussel hopes to eventually add maps.

Trussel said as a graduate student, he put a Gilbertese-language dictionary online and has worked with other database applications.

The project was a labor of love and neither he nor Bender will be making money off it, he said.

"It's something I love to do and Dr. Bender likes to do, and we just got together on it and it came out," Trussel said.

Bender believes the online resource will be used by linguistics researchers and by the Marshallese people. Native Marshallese speakers can use it to learn English and young Marshallese students, many of whom now live in the U.S. and other English-speaking countries, can use it to reconnect with their native language, he said.

Internet access in the Marshall Islands is expensive, Bender said. So he and Trussel will eventually transfer the dictionary to a CD-ROM that can be distributed there.

The dictionary is also designed to be interactive. Users are asked to submit corrections and additions so the resource can be updated.

"The public can contribute to the dictionary," Trussel said. "It's kind of like a beta version. It's changing every day."

Searching through the entries reveals a few gaps in the 1976 dictionary. Among the words likely to be added: computer and Internet.

Dying Words

Nicholas Evans: **Dying Words**. Wiley-Blackwell 2010, 208 pages.

Nicholas Evans will be known to some of our readers as Professor of Linguistics at the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, and for his work on the Kayardild and Dalabon languages. With his rich background knowledge, Evans provokes the question: What it is that is actually unique and valuable about endangered languages? And the result is a book that is fundamentally different to the other volumes in the burgeoning literature of language endangerment.

Particularly fascinating is the attempt to recall past attitudes to conquered languages, such as Fray de Sahagún's determined efforts to master and codify the Nahuatl language, so as to destroy its culture and religion from within.

Evans even takes account of non-verbal communication systems which have been lost, such as the deaf-mute *dilsiz* members of the Ottoman court reported by travellers; and his account of early sound recordings of speech by such pioneers as Kroeber and Harrington is fascinating.

Evans seems to have decided not to discuss revitalisation efforts, but concentrate on the content and unique features of the languages themselves. And that is what makes this book so unique: drawing on a very wide range of little-known languages past and present, he is able to make historical and geographic and genetic connections which the average specialist linguist may be too close to his or her subject-matter to see. He is well aware of the pitfalls of fieldwork too: for instance he retells Jared Diamond's anecdote about the ethnobotanist working in Papua New Guinea who recorded 1,400 plant names but elicited nothing about rocks, until a geologist friend was present and elicited many more, because he obviously knew about rocks.

Of course he draws on his knowledge of these languages to show the unique world-view reflected through these languages, and what the world stands to lose if they disappear forever. His experience is also particularly rich in the Trans-Fly languages of New Guinea – but he

cites many far-flung examples from elsewhere, to throw into relief the many distinctive features of human thought embedded in widely disparate linguistic structures. This book is warmly recommended to anyone who is already fascinated by, or still needs to be made aware of, the world's great linguistic diversity. It is also copiously illustrated – another plus in the usually dry linguistic literature.

Chris Moseley

7. Places to go on the Web

Language Description Heritage digital library

From Michael Cysouw, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 17 March 2010

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to announce the Language Description Heritage (LDH) open access digital library, available online at <http://ldh.livingsources.org>

The LDH is being compiled at the Max Planck Society in Germany, specifically at the MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig in cooperation with the Max Planck Digital Library in Munich. The goal of the LDH is to make available existing descriptive and analytic work about the world's languages. The main focus is to provide easy access to traditionally difficult to obtain scientific contributions. Specifically, there are many unpublished theses and manuscripts with valuable data on individual languages that are often unknown and unavailable to the wider linguistic community. Also many out-of-print publications with a limited availability in research libraries deserve a much wider audience and recognition.

To enhance to flow of scientific discussion, we offer this platform to make electronic version of said contributions freely available. The Language Description Heritage Digital Library minimally provides photographic scans, downloadable in PDF format (more is planned for the future). Most importantly, all content in this digital library is available under a permissive Creative Commons (CC-by) license, so everything can be freely used for all scientific purposes. When you are the author and/or rights-holder of a suitable publication, please and consider making your works available under a CC-license. This is a very simply process. Basically, you sign a permission form

(<http://ldh.livingsources.org/files/2009/08/formular13081.pdf>) and send this to us. Detailed instructions can be found at <http://ldh.livingsources.org/for-authors/>

We recommend you assign a bare CC-by ("Attribution") license to your work, though you might also opt for an even freer CC-zero ("No Rights Reserved", equivalent to "Public Domain"). Clear an open licensing enhances the exchange of scientific ideas. In choosing a license, please be aware that there is a difference between scientific recognition and commercial recognition of your work. Whatever license you choose for your work, this does not regulate scientific recognition! To obtain more scientific recognition it is best to make your work as broadly and easily available as possible, so others can find and acknowledge your work without restriction. To enhance the exchange of scientific results, we recommend you to choose a highly permissive license.

Michael Cysouw
Max Planck Institute for evolutionary Anthropology
– Library
Language Description Heritage (LDH) project
Deutscher Platz 6
04103 Leipzig, Germany

Email: ldh@eva.mpg.de

Scientific Mentoring: Prof. Dr. Bernard Comrie, Dr. Michael Cysouw
Library Assistance: Gisela Lausberg, Kirstin Baumgarten

Endangered Languages and Dictionaries project

The Endangered Languages and Dictionaries Project at the University of Cambridge investigates ways of writing dictionaries that better facilitate the maintenance and revitalization of endangered languages. It explores the relationship between documenting a language and sustaining it, and entails collaboration with linguists, dictionary-makers and educators, as well as members of endangered-language communities themselves, in order to determine what lexicographic methodologies work particularly well pedagogically for language maintenance and revitalization.

In addition to developing a methodology for writing dictionaries that are more community-focussed and collaborative in their making, content, and format, the Project is creating an online catalogue of dictionary projects around the world. If you would like your dictionary to be included in the catalogue, please fill out the Dictionary Survey at <http://www.lucy-cav.cam.ac.uk/pages/the-college/people/sarah-ogilvie/elad1.php> or contact Sarah Ogilvie at svo21 at cam.ac.uk. We really hope you will want to participate, in order to make the catalogue as comprehensive as possible.

Dr Sarah Ogilvie
Alice Tong Sze Research Fellow
Lucy Cavendish College
Lady Margaret Road
University of Cambridge
Cambridge CB3 0BU, England

8. Forthcoming events

Call for Papers: Humanities of the Lesser-Known

New directions in the description, documentation and typology of endangered languages and musics

September 10-11, 2010, in Lund, Sweden

Deadline for registration and abstract was February 28, 2010

Conference website: <http://conference.sol.lu.se/hlk-2010>

The Birgit Rausing Language Program announces its second conference, *Humanities of the Lesser-Known*, to be held September 10-11, 2010, in Lund, Sweden. The central focus is the documentation and description of endangered or lesser-known languages. The conference is divided into the following thematic foci: grammar, prosody, semantics and musicology, with a special focus on interfaces between these domains.

We aim to provide a platform to discuss interdisciplinary approaches connecting these domains of communication, with particular reference to a diverse sample of cultures.

Invited Speakers:

- Peter Austin (School of Oriental and African Studies)
- Matthew Dryer (University of Buffalo, USA)
- Sun-Ah Jun (UCLA)
- Stephen C. Levinson (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics)
- Asifa Majid (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics)
- Anthony Seeger (UCLA)

We invite submissions from all areas of linguistics and musicology of endangered or lesser-known languages or cultures, and particularly welcome papers which deal with the interfaces between different domains of human communication.

Contact: [hlc2010 at ling.lu.se](mailto:hk2010@ling.lu.se)

Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Box 201, SE-22100 Lund, Sweden

Lakota Summer Institute

From Lakota Language Consortium (www.lakota.org)

Teachers and Friends of the Language-- Join us this summer at Fort Yates, ND for Sitting Bull College's 2010 Lakota Summer Institute - co-sponsored by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, SBC, and the Lakota Language Consortium. The 2010 LSI offers key courses in second-language teaching methodologies and Lakota linguistics, conversation, and revitalization. The over-all schedule includes 14, 1-credit morning and afternoon courses, spread over 3 weeks. Check out the online schedule. A lot of planning has gone into making your LSI experience as beneficial and exciting as possible. Don't miss out!

3L International Summer School on Language Documentation and Description

from Leiden University, 12 March 2010

Leiden University, 5 - 17 July, 2010

The Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL) is proud to host the third 3L International Summer School on Language Documentation and Description from Monday, 5 July to Saturday, 17 July, 2010.

Registration for the 3L Summer School is now open!

For more information on the program, courses, instructors, and more, please visit the 2010 3L Summer School website located at

<http://www.hrlep.org/events/3L/leiden2010/index.html>.

The 3L Summer School offers a variety of courses on all aspects of language documentation and description for both future and novice field linguists. Courses cover both practical and typological issues and include:

- Practical training in fieldwork methods and grammar writing
 - Recording techniques and software for documentation, description and archiving
- In-depth courses on specific areas such as negation, tone, and kinship terminology
- The documentation of endangered Sign Languages
- Courses investigating various aspects of languages found in Central and South America, Indonesia, Africa, and the Caucasus

A Student Conference will be held during the Summer School on Saturday, 10 July, 2010, giving students an opportunity to present their ideas or research and receive feedback from their instructors and fellow peers.

The 3L Summer School draws upon the extensive expertise of the three organizing universities in the 3L Consortium: University of Lyon, Leiden University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. It builds upon the successes of the first 3L Summer School held in Lyon in 2008, and the second 3L Summer School held in London in 2009.

The 3L Summer School in 2010 will be followed by the Leiden Summer School in Languages and Linguistics, which will take place in the second half of July.

Contact: Patricia Willers (organising assistant)

Email: leidenzomerschool@gmail.com

Travelling Languages: Culture, Communication and Translation in a Mobile World

From Serena d'Agostino, 13 April 2010

In association with the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Leeds and the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University

3-5 December 2010, Leeds, United Kingdom

The world is ever 'on the move'. The opportunities and challenges of both real and virtual travel are very much at the heart of the emergent interdisciplinary field of 'mobilities', which deals with the movement of peoples, objects, capital, information and cultures across an increasingly globalised and apparently borderless world. In the practices, processes and performances of moving – whether for voluntary leisure, forced migration or economic pragmatism – we are faced with the negotiation and re-negotiation of identities and meaning relating to places and pasts.

Within the increasing complexities of global flows and encounters, intercultural skills and competencies are being challenged and re-imagined. The vital role of languages and the intricacies of intercultural dialogue have largely remained implicit in the discourses surrounding mobilities. This Conference seeks to interrogate the role of intercultural communication and of languages in the inevitable moments of encounter which arise from all forms of 'motion'.

This international and interdisciplinary event is the 10th anniversary conference of the International Association of Languages and Intercultural Communication (IALIC) and is being organised in association with the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change. Through this event we aim to bring together many of the sub-themes of previous IALIC conferences and focus upon the issues of culture, communication and translation in a mobile world, including: languages and intercultural communication in local and global education, tourism, hospitality, migration, translation, real and virtual border-crossings.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We are pleased to receive 20 minute research papers or descriptions of pedagogical practice which address or go beyond the following themes:

- Moving languages - continuities and change;
- Real and virtual border crossings;
- Tourist encounters and communicating with the 'other';
- Tourism's role in inter-cultural dialogue;
- The languages of diasporas and diasporic languages;
- Dealing with dialects and the evolution/dissolution of communities;
- Hospitality and languages of welcome;
- Learning the languages of migration;
- Linguistic boundaries and socio-cultural inclusions and exclusions;
- 'Located' and 'dislocated' languages and identities;
- Practices and performances of translation.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words including title and full contact details as an electronic file to Jane Wilkinson at IALIC2010@leeds.ac.uk. You may submit your abstract as soon as possible but no later than **1st June 2010**.

For further details on the conference please visit:

www.leeds.ac.uk/german/ialic_conference_2010.htm or contact us at

IALIC2010@leeds.ac.uk or via emailing to ctcc@leeds.ac.uk

Language documentation and conservation: strategies for moving forward

<http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/ICLDC/2011>

2nd International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation: Strategies for Moving Forward. Honolulu, Hawai'i, February 11-13, 2011

Call for papers, ABSTRACTS ARE DUE BY AUGUST 31, 2010, The 2nd International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation (ICLDC) will be held February 11-13, 2011, at the Hawai'i Imin International Conference Center on the University of Hawai'i at Manoa campus. Two days of optional technical training workshops will precede the conference (Feb. 9-10). An optional fieldtrip to Hilo (on the Big Island of Hawai'i) to visit Hawaiian language revitalization programs in action will immediately follow the conference (Feb. 14-15).

The 1st ICLDC, with its theme "Supporting Small Languages Together," underscored the need for communities, linguists, and other academics to work in close collaboration. The theme of the 2nd ICLDC is "Strategies for Moving Forward." We aim to build on the strong momentum created at the 1st ICLDC and to discuss research and revitalization approaches yielding rich, accessible records which can benefit both the field of language documentation and speech communities. We hope you will join us.

TOPICS

We welcome abstracts on best practices for language documentation and conservation moving forward, which may include:

- Archiving matters
- Community-based documentation/conservation initiatives
- Data management
- Fieldwork methods
- Ethical issues
- Interdisciplinary fieldwork
- Language planning
- Lexicography
- Methods of assessing ethnolinguistic vitality
- Orthography design
- Reference grammar design
- Reports on language maintenance, preservation, and revitalization efforts
 - Teaching/learning small languages
- Technology in documentation - methods and pitfalls
- Topics in areal language documentation
- Training in documentation methods - beyond the university

This is not an exhaustive list and individual proposals on topics outside these areas are warmly welcomed.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts should be submitted in English, but presentations can be in any language. We particularly welcome presentations in languages of the region discussed. Authors may submit no more than one individual and one joint (co-authored) proposal.

ABSTRACTS ARE DUE BY AUGUST 31, 2010, with notification of acceptance by September 30, 2010.

We ask for ABSTRACTS OF NO MORE THAN 400 WORDS for online publication so that conference participants can have a good idea of the content of your paper and a 50-WORD SUMMARY for inclusion in the conference program. Selected papers from the conference will be invited to submit to the journal Language Documentation & Conservation for publication.

9. Obituaries

Dolphus Roubedaux

On 4 February Louanna Furbee wrote news of the passing of an old friend of our Foundation:

Hi Nick and Chris,

Don't know if you'll recall Dolphus, he was at the Charlotte, NC, FEL meeting, an Otoe-Missouri Indian who was at the time stationed in North Carolina; we gave a joint "field report" on his efforts to become a speaker of his heritage language, Chiwere Siouan. He worked around the edges of his military career with me on learning Chiwere and later was helped immensely in that effort by Jimm GoodTracks. He was a really sweet person who cared deeply about his heritage language and culture, so much of which had been lost to him. A couple of years ago, he left the military and returned to Oklahoma. He was physically and mentally very damaged by his service in Afganistan and worked hard to recenter himself and put his life back together, helped by embedding himself in the activities back home that mattered the most to the recovery of his language and culture. He had developed diabetes, probably what put him out of the military, and apparently it moved fast.

One of the many young lives damaged so by these wars, and a loss to his family, friends, and tribe.

Louanna

Dear Louanna, Jimm, Janet

Thank you for this sad news. It's stirring to be reminded how much the effort on behalf of heritage languages is "playing for keeps". Each of us has so little time.

Sounds like Dolphus was the kind of guy who kept struggling hard to make the best of his life and his position for those around him. I feel that's the best that any of us can aspire to. Perhaps there will be some Chiwere at his funeral.

Yours ever

Nick

John Edwards Nance

From the Oregonian, contributed by Loren A. Billings, 13 March 2010

John Edwards Nance Dec 19, 1935 - March 09, 2010
John Edwards Nance, writer and photographer, who chronicled the Tasaday tribe of the Philippines, died Tuesday, March 9, 2010, at his home in Columbus, Ohio. He was 74.

Nance spent 40 years photographing and writing about the Tasaday, a group of cave-dwelling people discovered living in the Philippine rainforest in 1971. He authored 3 books and took tens of thousands of photographs of the tribe. He also established Friends of the Tasaday, a foundation that helped preserve their rainforest home, provided them with education and health care, and taught them sustainable agriculture.

A graduate of the U of Oregon...Nance left Oregon in the late 1950s to travel the world... landed a job with the Associated press...in 1968 he was assigned to Manila as AP bureau chief. It was there that he covered a story about aviator, Charles Lindbergh on an expedition to meet a group of 26 people discovered by a trapper living in isolation in the rainforest. John's articles and his subsequent book, "The Gentle Tasaday," published in 1975, helped catapult the group to worldwide attention. The peaceable Tasaday, whose unique language did not include words for enemy or war, were studied in the caves by dozens of social scientists, who determined that they lived a stone-age like existence, subsisting on roots and tadpoles.

Nance eventually left the AP, moved back to Oregon, and authored 2 more books, "The Mud-Pie Dilemma," and a history of the Philip-

pines.

In the late 1980's, the Tasaday fell victim to political intrigue, when interests eager to claim their rainforest for mining and logging exploitation engineered an elaborate scheme to declare them a hoax. Despite the fact that the Aquino government conducted an official inquiry and eventually declared the tribe authentic, worldwide media and scientists using second-hand studies pronounced them fake. Linguists eventually proved their authenticity. Nance spent the next 25 years working on behalf of the Tasaday...

On 19 March Harald Hammarström responded to this notice:

Dear Loren,

Most of the claims of the newspaper are discussed at length in various essays in:

Thomas N. Headland (ed.) 1992 The Tasaday controversy: Assessing the evidence. Washington, DC: The American Anthropological Association which also references all the earlier literature. The only later additions to the debate I am aware of are the papers by Lawrence Reid, of which the latest (referencing the others) is:

Lawrence A. Reid 1997 Linguistic Archaeology: Tracking Down the Tasaday Language,

In: Archaeology and Language, I, pp, 184-208 ed by Roger M. Blench and Matthew Spriggs, Routledge.

Since Lawrence is on the list I hope he will correct me if there are further later things.

As far as I can tell (another non-specialist), the best explanation for the linguistic and other data is that the Tasaday were indeed a relatively isolated group who did no agriculture of their own after splitting off from Cotabato Manobo less than a thousand years ago. It may well be true that the stone-age image was sexed-up, i.e., they were told to get rid of modern influences from the sporadic 1960s meetings, for the initial studies in 1972, but this does not invalidate the basic explanation as above.

All the best,

H

10. Hymeneal

And finally, another picture from the Laptander-Falkena (Nenets-Frisian) wedding.



FEL Manifesto

1. Preamble

1.1. The Present Situation

At this point in human history, most human languages are spoken by exceedingly few people. And that majority, the majority of languages, is about to vanish.

The most authoritative source on the languages of the world (Ethnologue, Gordon 2005) lists just over 6,900 living languages. Population figures are available for just over 6,600 of them (or 94.5%). Of these 6,600, it may be noted that:

56% are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people; 28% by fewer than 1,000; and 83% are restricted to single countries, and so are particularly exposed to the policies of a single government. At the other end of the scale, 10 major languages, each spoken by over 100 million people, are the mother tongues of almost half (49%) of the world's population.

More important than this snapshot of proportions and populations is the outlook for survival of the languages we have. Hard comparable data here are scarce or absent, often because of the sheer variety of the human condition: a small community, isolated or bilingual, may continue for centuries to speak a unique language, while in another place a populous language may for social or political reasons die out in little more than a generation. Another reason is that the period in which records have been kept is too short to document a trend: e.g. the *Ethnologue* has been issued only since 1951. However, it is difficult to imagine many communities sustaining serious daily use of a language for even a generation with fewer than 100 speakers: yet at least 10% of the world's living languages are now in this position.

Some of the forces which make for language loss are clear: the impacts of urbanization, Westernization and global communications grow daily, all serving to diminish the self-sufficiency and self-confidence of small and traditional communities. Discriminatory policies, and population movements also take their toll of languages.

In our era, the preponderance of tiny language communities means that the majority of the world's languages are vulnerable not just to decline but to extinction.

1.2. The Likely Prospect

There is agreement among linguists who have considered the situation that over half of the world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation. We and our children, then, are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out.

This mass extinction of languages may not appear immediately life-threatening. Some will feel that a reduction in numbers of languages will ease communication, and perhaps help build nations, even global solidarity. But it has been well pointed out that the success of humanity in colonizing the planet has been due to our ability to develop cultures suited for survival in a variety of environments. These cultures have everywhere been transmitted by languages, in oral traditions and latterly in written literatures. So when language transmission itself breaks down, especially before the advent of literacy in a culture, there is always a large loss of inherited knowledge.

Valued or not, that knowledge is lost, and humanity is the poorer. Along with it may go a large part of the pride and self-identity of the community of former speakers. And there is another kind of loss, of a different type of knowledge. As each language dies, science, in linguistics, anthropology, prehistory and psychology, loses one more precious source of data, one more of the diverse and unique ways that the human mind can express itself through a language's structure and vocabulary.

We cannot now assess the full effect of the massive simplification of the world's linguistic diversity now occurring. But language loss, when it occurs, is sheer loss, irreversible and not in itself creative. Speakers of an endangered language may well resist the extinction of their traditions, and of their linguistic identity. They have every right to do so. And we, as scientists, or concerned human beings, will applaud them in trying to preserve part of the diversity which is one of our greatest strengths and treasures.

1.3. The Need for an Organization

We cannot stem the global forces which are at the root of language decline and loss.

But we can work to lessen the ignorance which sees language loss as inevitable when it is not, and does not properly value all that will go when a language itself vanishes.

We can work to see technological developments, such as computing and telecommunications, used to support small communities and their traditions rather than to supplant them. And we can work to lessen the damage:

- by recording as much as possible of the languages of communities which seem to be in terminal decline;
- by emphasizing particular benefits of the diversity still remaining; and
- by promoting literacy and language maintenance programmes, to increase the strength and morale of the users of languages in danger.

In order to further these aims, there is a need for an autonomous international organization which is not constrained or influenced by matters of race, politics, gender or religion. This organization will recognise in language issues the principles of self-determination, and group and individual rights. It will pay due regard to economic, social, cultural, community and humanitarian considerations. Although it may work with any international, regional or local Authority, it will retain its independence throughout. Membership will be open to those in all walks of life.

2. Aims and Objectives

The Foundation for Endangered Languages exists to support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages. In order to do this, it aims:

To raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all media;

To support the use of endangered languages in all contexts: at home, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life;

To monitor linguistic policies and practices, and to seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary;

To support the documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results;

To collect together and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages;

To disseminate information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.