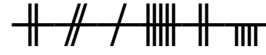


*FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES*

# OGMIOS



Participants in the tenth annual conference of FEL  
at the Central Institute of Indian Languages,  
Mysore, India, 25-27 October 2006

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Foundation for Endangered Languages is now accepting proposals for projects of work that will support, enable or assist the protection or promotion of one or more endangered languages. These endangered languages may be anywhere in the world.

**Deadline: February 28, 2007** By that date, full proposals (consisting of Case for Support and Application Form) must reach FEL at the address below. Proposals received will be acknowledged on receipt. The FEL Committee will announce its **decision by 31st March 2007**.

The Foundation for Endangered Languages is committed to raising awareness of endangered languages and supporting revitalisation and preservation of endangered languages through all channels and media. The Foundation awards grants to projects that further its aims as and when the funds permit. The Foundation's funds remain extremely limited this year and only an exceptional award will be greater than US \$1,000. Smaller proposals stand a better chance of funding

Research projects that focus on the revitalisation of the endangered languages and support of the use of endangered languages in community life (home, school, education, cultural and economic life)

will be given priority. Projects restricted to language documentation will not be eligible for funding this year.

Please pass on this announcement to your friends and colleagues in endangered-language communities who may not have access to Ogmios, the Internet or e-mail.

### Format for Submissions:

Applicants must submit a short "Case for Support" and a Application Form. Guidance on how to write a Case, and fill out the form, is accessible at the website: - <http://www.ogmios.org/grant.htm>

The Case for Support (CS) and Application Form (AF) are best submitted as Word files attached to an e-mail message sent to [FEL.at.chibcha.demon.co.uk](mailto:FEL.at.chibcha.demon.co.uk) and [hakimelnazar.at.yahoo.com](mailto:hakimelnazar.at.yahoo.com) Non-ascii text should be in some form of Unicode. The two files should be named "languageCS.doc" and "languageAF.doc", substituting the name of the language to be studied for 'language'.

Copies printed on paper will also be accepted as an alternative. In general, it is not necessary to send a hard copy of an electronic proposal for confirmation, but FEL may request this if there are major difficulties in reading the file.

All proposals must be in this format, to ensure comparability. Unless agreed in advance in writing, proposals must be in English.



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 Editorial
 

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This Winter 2006/2007 edition of *Ogmios* contains the usual mix of articles and items culled from the many available sources, mostly in cyberspace, dealing with threatened languages and related topics. As I mentioned in the previous issue, it would be good to see the balance of material appearing in these pages shifted in favour of original articles by our members, and commissioned articles, so we continue to look forward to submissions from you, the readers. You can send articles and illustrations directly to me at [chrismoseley50@yahoo.com](mailto:chrismoseley50@yahoo.com) or by post to the address given on the membership form. Meanwhile, enjoy the miscellany you will find in these pages.

Please note especially the announcement of the new way of paying your FEL subscription and ordering FEL publications directly on-line!

**This is the time for all old members to re-new subscription for 2007, so please do the necessary, and help fund this year's grants.**

You can either use the form at the end of the newsletter, or our new online system at [www.ogmios.org](http://www.ogmios.org).

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 2. Development of the Foundation
 

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### FEL versus *matsya-nyāya*, the 'fish-logic' of language survival in the raw: FEL X Conference Report

Nicholas Ostler, R. Elangaiyan



FEL X was jointly organized with the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore, India. The theme of the Conference was *Vital Voices: Endangered Language and Multilingualism* and it was held on the CIIL campus from 25th to 27th October 2006.



As with all FEL conferences, the location set the tone. Mysore, an old princely state in southern India is approached by a two-hour road journey from the main local airport at Bangalore, and the trip itself served as a vivid introduction to modern, as eternal, India.



Once arrived we were accommodated in highly atmospheric guest-houses, Royal and Roost, and proceeded to make ourselves at home with the other guests, including the *bandar log*.



The Conference, on *Vital Voices: Endangered languages and Multilingualism*, started with a Keynote address by L. M. Khubchandani: this attempted to capture the scene of oral communication in India before and after independence, suggesting that a new Communication Order has to emerge ensuring the rights of 'lesser used' languages but leaving the details of the new order to everyone's imagination.



Haobam Basantarani's *Multilingualism Endangered* was not presented as the author couldn't participate in the conference but it is included in the Proceedings under the Section

Outlining the Danger. This paper narrates the struggles for a collective identity by the indigenous communities of Tripura who have become minorities in their own land due to the influx of non-native population and the possible danger of one of the smaller minority groups (Reangs speaking the language Kai Bru) losing its distinct identity as a compromise for securing the collective identity of the native tribes. The suggestion to adopt the Intercultural Bilingual Education model of the Latin American Countries for Tripura, in fact, may be worth considering for other multilingual contexts in India too.

Two papers were presented under the Section **Extreme Endangerment**.

Hugo C. Cardoso's *Challenges to Indo-Portuguese across India* was an excellent narration of how some Indo-Portuguese (IP) Creoles have survived the test of time whereas some have not. It depicts the diachronic and synchronic perspectives of the creation (coming into being) and decline/maintenance of various IP Creoles. A few significant points from his paper are:

- Multilingualism is not necessarily a threat to any language for its survival;
- When the domains of use for a language are clearly assigned and practiced accordingly, such a language has bright chances for its survival;
- Official recognition and the resultant status and other benefits are very crucial for the maintenance of a language.

Cardoso, in a model for all similar cases of language endangerment, argues for promoting the cause of IP instead of Standard Portuguese.

Paul Monaghan's brief essay on the prospects of *Wirangu* and *Gugada*, the two neighbouring Australian languages reveals the threat from another indigenous language Pitjantjatjara apart from English. This is comparable with the situation in India's Tripura where Kai Bru faces a threat from Kok Borok, the language promoted as the collective identity for the native indigenous communities. The use of electronic devices for revitalization of these Australian languages may also be followed in countries like India.

Only two presentations were made in the Conference under the Section **Effects of Contact**. One was by Umberto Ansaldi and Lisa Lim on *Globalization, Empowerment and the Periphery: The Malays of Sri Lanka*. They trace the history of Sri Lankan Malay (SLM) as a Creole and its present condition of being endangered. The authors say, "That linguistic varieties which are classified as 'Creoles' are doubly endangered is a point that is worth reiterating". But there are cases like Sadri (a Creole used by tribes in Central India), which



is quite stable and is a threat to other indigenous languages in the region. But of course, the role of Sadri is different from that of the SLM. Probably, in a multilingual setting, the role of a linguistic variety is more important than whether it is a Creole or not.



The other paper was delivered by Elena Benedicto on *Language Loss to An Invisible Enemy: the Case of Tuahka*. Here is the case of a language shift that has been found out to be **sudden** and also owing to a single major event in the eco-region, and hence of considerable theoretical importance. The major event that is suspected (or probably concluded now) to be responsible for the language shift had been the arrival and functioning of a British (mining) company in the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century which caused the influx and frequenting of the Miskitu speakers in the Tuahka area. This event is comparable with the happenings promoted by today's globalization and hence should serve as an eye-opener to linguists working on language endangerment.

Chaithra Puttaswamy was not present in the Conference but yet her paper on *Contact and Convergence: Observations based on Phonology and Morphology of Malto* gives an account of changes, the Dravidian Malto has undergone due to influence from Munda and Indo-Aryan languages. This is probably a subtle suggestion to revitalize Malto.

Three papers were presented in the Section on **Roles of Religion and Documentation**. Begona Echeverria's paper on *Speaking in Tongues, Saving Souls: Religion in the "Resurrection" and Death of Endangered Languages* throws light on the role of gender in the domain of religion in the Basque language. The purpose of this paper was to suggest the inclusion of gender related questions while investigating how religion impacts endangered languages. In fact, this can be extended to other domains also. In most of the South Asian languages, women play an inferior role (with rare exceptions) in domains like religion, politics, social organization, trade and industry.



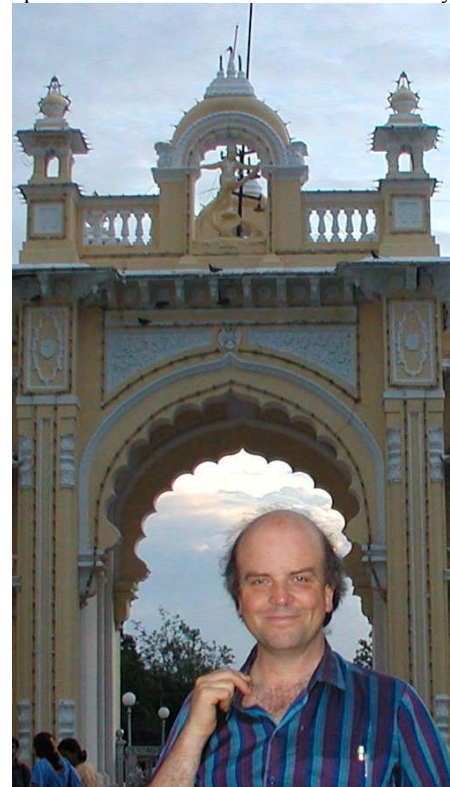
David A. Hough presented a historical account of the sufferings by Kosraeans in his paper on *Beyond Linguistic Documentation: Giving New Breath to Indigenous Voices*. His angry pronouncement equating globalization with colonization is justified by the points that he puts forward explaining the ill effects of globalization on communities big and small. But interestingly and fortunately, David Hough lists the positive components of globalization such as the Kosrae Language and Culture Website, CDs and Computer Assisted Software that are employed in boosting the revitalization of the language.

*Language Documentation in Andamans: Highs and Lows* by Abhishek Avtans and Anvita Abbi explained how languages documentation helps in bringing about a positive attitude in the minds of the indigenous people, here the Andamanese, towards maintenance.

The Section on **Literacy and Revitalization** has three papers, the first being *Future of Torwali speaking migrants in the urban areas of Pakistan* by Inam Ullah who could not attend the Conference. To him, Torwali (his mother tongue) is vulnerable to endangerment as it happens to be an unwritten language and due to large scale migration of Torwali speakers to the urban areas of Pakistan. He rightly suggests that a healthy type of multilingualism should be encouraged among the Torwali speakers in the urban areas using multimedia and newsletters. A website for the Torwali culture and language may also be suggested. To reverse the trend of migration, all agencies concerned will have to work together.

*Small languages in a polylingual situation – the case of Turung* by Stephen Morey narrates the multi-faceted threat facing the Turung language. Preservation of the culture and language of the Turungs now mostly depend

upon their awareness as a community.



Maria Sipos could not attend the Conference but her paper *On the Possibilities of Revitalizing Synya Khanty* provides an interesting reading on the extremely threatened Synya Khanty dialect spoken in the North-Western Siberia. Most of the documented riches of the dialect are in Hungary. The elite among the Synya population has already shifted to Russian. The news of Sofya Onina's descriptive grammar of Synya dialect is refreshing but its use in writing school textbooks is yet to be accomplished. Introducing the Synya traditional folklore material that has been preserved in Hungary to its own people will be of great motivating factor to a people who are found to be not very enthusiastic of their own traditional speech form. The suggestions that the Synya speakers shift to the Shuryshkary dialect of the Khanty language or to Russian do not seem to be convincing for two reasons: The work done hitherto in documenting the Synya dialect material would become meaningless and such a shift would result in undermining the Synya culture and identity.

The Section on **Majority – Minority Relationship** had two presentations. Elangaiyan's *Strategies Proposed for Arresting Language Endangerment in India* emphasizes the right of all languages to survive, irrespective of the size of the population and the status they enjoy. It has been explained how some languages become less fortunate and endangered. The setting in which different languages in India operate and the hierarchy they fall in are explained briefly. Strategies listed for arresting language endangerment in India could have been more elaborate and context specific.

The paper *On Profiles of Use for Majority Languages in Southern Nigeria* was by Ronald P. Schaefer and Francis O. Egboh-hare. This statistical study suggests that speakers of even major languages of Nigeria such as Yoruba and Igbo are contemplating a shift to English. Is this not a forerunner to foretell what is going to happen to major and minor languages of the world in the coming decades if language policies are not formulated and implemented to check this trend? The upper class elite (from all mother tongue groups) in India are already moving in this direction.

The Section on *Development and Changes* includes three papers, the first being *Carving Both Sides: Globalization in Education Reform and Language Politics in the Coroico Municipality of the Nor Yungas of Bolivia* by Victoria Stockton. She describes all the neglect and discouragement received by indigenous languages in Bolivia in favour of the colonial language, Spanish. But Victoria finds now that globalization and Bolivia's democratic reforms go hand in hand in enhancing the prestige and use of indigenous languages like Aymara. The Aymara-Spanish bilingual education is found to be ideal and rewarding in the context of emerging reversal of language shift. A word of caution is added that the ultimate success would be possible only if the present liberal policy at the macro level is transformed into practice at the grassroots level.



Maya Khemlani David spoke on *The Linguistic Scenario in the Temuan Community*. However, it is a great relief that the Temuans still fairly maintain their own language in the home domain.

*Linguistic minorities and marginalization of Botswana: Prospects for Survival* by Kemmonye C. Monaka and Gregory H. Kamwendo, who were not present in the Conference, throws light on the lamentable marginalization that the linguistic minorities in Botswana have been subjected to and the neglect shown to all indigenous languages with the lone exception of Setswana. NGOs and other institutions like some Universities are of some help and solace to these indigenous languages but ultimately the State will have to accord real recognition and extend support.

The Section on *Cooperation with Neighbour Languages* had two papers. Khadim Hussain Bahria could not attend the Conference. His paper on *Language Shift in a Minority Kohistani Community – The Case of Ushoj* highlights the absence of a pluralistic approach in Pakistan's language policy and educational planning.<sup>1</sup> This paper elaborately discusses the threat faced by the Ushoj language spoken by ethnic Ushojis. In about a period of two and a half decades (from 1992 to 2006) the number of speakers for Ushoj language has declined from 2,000 to a mere 500, mainly because of migration. There are no monolingual Ushojis. Khadim Hussain concludes that the language shift is mostly to Pashto. A writing system for Ushoj may help stem the tide of migration.

The other paper in this Section was presented by Hakim Elnazarov on *Multilingualism in Pamir: Challenges of Preservation and Revitalization*.



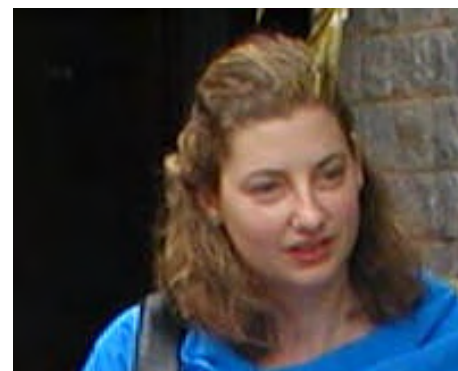
The indigenous Pamiri languages face the threat from the national language Tajik and the languages of globalization, namely, Russian and English. These indigenous languages are expected to surrender their ethnic identities in favour of the relatively new but strong national identity. The density of these minority groups and the lack of interaction with non-native groups including Tajik speakers are considered advantageous for maintenance right now.

There were four papers in the Section *Emerging Complexity & Community Language Support*. The paper *The complexity and emergence of Hindi as Lingua Franca in Arunachal Pradesh* was presented by Yankee Modi. After attaining Statehood, the Arunachal tribes gradually replaced the Nefamese Pidgin by Hindi for intertribal communication. The worry is about the restricted use of Arunachal languages, reserving domains of vital importance to non-Arunachal languages. The paper concludes with an open-ended question as what could be the answer for intertribal communication for a linguistically heterogeneous State like Arunachal Pradesh.

Nina Dobrushina for her paper *Multilingualism in Archi: Communication, Self-Identification and Social Prestige* has elicited responses from Archi speakers on their bilingual and multilingual capabilities (involving Avar and Russian). Though Archi is very stable and not declining, the Archi speakers use Avar with almost complete proficiency in it and have reverence for Avar as a symbol of their greater identity. In spite of their good command over Avar and Russian, the Archis do not have any problem for the maintenance of their own language. This paper again proves that multilingualism does not necessarily endanger languages.

The third paper in this Section was by Kavita Rastogi who was not present in the Conference. Kavita in her paper *Challenges and Responses to the Survival of a Tribal Language – Raji* narrates how Raji (a spoken language of the Tibeto-Burman family) has been highly influenced by the surrounding Indo-Aryan languages, namely, Kumauni and Hindi in India's Uttaranchal State. Use reduction and code reduction have been identified as the major challenges. Kavita has involved the community members in adopting Dev Nagari script for Raji. She, by her innovative methods, has been trying to instill a sense of pride, self-confidence and awareness in the minds of the Raji speakers so that the language can effectively be revitalized.

Last in this Section was Christine Schreyer on *Re-Orientations in Language Planning: A "Language-as-Cultural-Resource" Model from a Canadian First Nation*.



Christine Schreyer presents the discussion on orientations in language planning as defined by Ruiz in his 'language-as-resource' model and the views of the critiques of this model. She offers a new position as "language-as-cultural-resource" model. She gives an account of Taku River Tlingit First Nation and "Language-as-Cultural-Resource". This is the only paper in the Conference to highlight the importance of the link between the people and their land. People's awareness of their rights to their land and what it offers as a whole should naturally ensure their rights to use and maintain their own indigenous languages.





**Lisa Lim, Anvita Abbi, Chandramani**

The last Section *Epilogue* is by Udaya Narayana Singh. He has put forward his viewpoints under the title *The Sense of Danger: Some Reflections on Language Endangerment*. In his 'Preliminary Remarks', he has presented the mindset of the planners that many often echoes the bias of the majority communities towards the minority cultures and languages. In 'Some Assumptions', he quotes the views of Chomsky and the like to stress the point that even in the so-called civil societies, 'free speech' is in fact not all that free. He lists the 'Three Kinds of Tensions' and in 'Choices as Political Moves' he describes the brilliant dissent of Tulasidas, Kabir and others to be with the standard. After presenting the 'Steps and Caution' for surviving the endangerment he puts forward what is planned to be done in the Indian context, namely, **Language Endangerment Studies**. This is a major programme CIIL is planning to launch in association with Census of India and Commission for Linguistic Minorities.

The conference was notable for much besides the proceedings, however. There were viewings of ethnographic films of CIIL about the Toda and other peoples of India, a South Indian banquet thrown by FEL for the scholars of CIIL, and animated panel sessions on the first and last days. Moreover, the event made the Indian newspapers on two successive days. First, our press conference, raising the the profile of language endangerment, was reported by the *Times of India*, the *Star of Mysore* and other journals. But then came the event that showed that FEL is really a part of this era. The next day, two Pakistani gunmen were apprehended after a car chase in the Mysore suburbs, providing headline news for the day. They had been, according to Police Commissioner Praveen Sood., "on their way to the Central Institute of Indian Languages on Hunsur Road, where a three-day international conference on endangered language is being held" (*Star of Mysore* 27x06). Blood ran cold among most of us, belying the dictum of Winston Churchill that "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result."<sup>1</sup>

FEL X revealed a tension between the goodwill of all to language communities and the

concern of many for possible long-term embitterment due to colonialism. The passionate interest of the attendees, however, can only be inspiring for the future.

### Meet the FEL Committee members

*Most of the readers of this journal rarely, if ever, get to meet the members of the committee who serve them. So we've asked the members serving on the newly elected FEL Committee to introduce themselves in a brief paragraph. Here are their self-portraits:*

**Blair A. Rudes** currently serves as Vice President and U.S. Registered Agent for FEL Inc., the U.S. 501(c)(3) charitable sister-organization of FEL. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he serves as the director of the graduate Applied Linguistics Program. His research focuses on the documentation, historical linguistics, and philology of the indigenous languages of eastern North America, in particular the Algonquian, Catawban, and Iroquoian languages. He has developed lexical and grammatical reference works for the Tuscarora Indian Nation, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, and the Golden Hill Tribe of the Paugussett Nation, and currently in under contract to the University of South Carolina Press to publish a grammar, a text collection, and a dictionary of the Catawba language. He was employed by New Line Cinema to revive the Virginia Algonquian (a.k.a. Powhatan) language for dialog in the Terrence Mallick film *The New World* (2005) and is currently assisting with the Algonquian tribes in Virginia to use the materials he developed for the film in tribal efforts to revive their ancestral language.

**R. Elangaiyan** took his master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Kerala (India) in 1973. He took up a research project on Dhangar Kurux/Kurukh language (spoken in Nepal Tarai) in Deccan College, Pune in India with an aim of submitting a Doctoral thesis but did not complete the work for purely personal reasons. Later, in the year 1981, he joined the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore as a Research Assistant in the Tribal & Border Languages Unit which was renamed in the year 2001 as Research Group for Tribal & Endangered Languages. He did a survey of Kurux dialects spoken in Central India and its diaspora in the non-contiguous areas. The findings of this survey were used in preparing Kurux primers to be used for school literacy. He guided the Car Nicobarese mother tongue teachers and coauthored with them to produce school primers in the Car Nicobarese language and they are used in the schools. He had conducted several linguistics training programmes for CIIL teaching linguistics to Language Officers and University teachers in various states in India. Also he conducted several programmes for preparing literacy

material and biliteracy material for the benefit of several indigenous communities in different parts of India. He has been working on the grammars of Car Nicobarese language (to be completed in the year 2007) and Idu Mishmi, an endangered language spoken near the Indo-Chinese border (to be completed in the year 2008). He studied the phonology of Idu Mishmi and adopted the Roman script for that language with a difference that the script can be typed using any English key board of a computer. He is interested in studies on language endangerment, ethnolinguistics, translations (though he knows only six Indian languages - Tamil, Malayalam, Kurux, Car Nicobarese, Kannada & Hindi - he cannot include Idu Mishmi very confidently right now - and a bit of English) and language planning with special accent on term (terminology) planning. In the beginning of 2006 he conducted a workshop in Ranchi (central India) on Term Planning in Kurux for facilitating writing Kurux grammar in Kurux by the Kurux native scholars. He coordinated and conducted a Post Conference Seminar in the ICOSAL -3 Conference on 'Language Endangerment and South Asia' at Hyderabad in January 2001 and later in January 2005 he conducted a Symposium on 'Globalization and Language Endangerment' in the XXXIII Indian Social Science Conference in Gandhigram. He is an ardent supporter of pluralism of all sorts - religion, language, culture, politics etc. As an activist for pluralism he has been working for building awareness among different communities (within his reach) for this purpose.

**Hakim Elnazarov** got a university degree in Islamic studies in Tajikistan (1994) and Master in Educational Development from the Institute for Educational Development of the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan (1999); worked with the Aga Khan Development Network in East Africa (2000 - 2002). In 2003 joined the Institute of Ismaili Studies ([www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)) in London where he is currently based. First, he was a Research Fellow and currently is a Coordinator of the Central Asian Studies Unit at the IIS. His main research interests are religious education in Central Asia, philosophy of religion and minority languages of Central Asia. He published several articles and book reviews on the subjects in various journals and conference proceedings. Hakim is in the FEL committee since 2004 and major responsibility includes communication/liason officer to follow on grants, distributing FEL pamphlets, etc.

**Maya Khemlani David** is a Professor (Sociolinguistics) in the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, United Kingdom, an adjunct professor in Universiti Putra, Serdang, Malaysia and a Research Fellow with UPSI, Malaysia. She has presented over 60 papers in 19 countries and has written *The Sindhis Of Malay-*

<sup>1</sup> Story of the Malakand Field Force, 1897, Chap. X

sia: a Sociolinguistic Account (2001, London, ASEAN) and co-written Writing a Research Paper (2006, Serdang: UPM). Her co-edited and edited publications are Language and the Power of the Media (2006, Frankfurt, Peter Lang), Language Choices and Discourse of Malaysian Families: Case Studies of Families in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2006, Petaling Jaya, Strategic International and Research Development Centre), Teaching of English in Second and Foreign Language Settings: Focus on Malaysia (2004, Frankfurt, Peter Lang) and Methodological and Analytical Issues in Language Maintenance and Shift Studies (2002, Frankfurt, Peter Lang).

**Steven Krauwer**, membership secretary, is based in Utrecht (NL). He has a degree in mathematics and has worked as a senior lecturer and researcher in computational linguistics and language technology at the Utrecht institute of Linguistics (UiL OTS) of Utrecht University. He has been the coordinator of a number of EU-funded projects in the field of language and speech technology. He has recently retired but is still working for UiL OTS as an affiliate researcher and project manager.

**Tjeerd de Graaf**, until 2003 associate professor of phonetics at Groningen University (the Netherlands), has specialized in the phonetic aspects of Ethnolinguistics for the last 15 years. In 1990, he joined a Japanese expedition and conducted his first fieldwork with the minority peoples of Sakhalin. Since then he has contributed to various research projects on the endangered languages and endangered archives of Russia. In co-operation with colleagues in the Russian Federation and Japan, he focused on the use of sound archives for research on minority languages and cultures. Most of these research projects were funded by special

grants from the European Union and the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research NWO. Tjeerd de Graaf received a Doctorate Honoris Causa for his work from the University of St. Petersburg in 1998. Since 2002, he has been a board member of the Foundation for Endangered Languages (Great Britain). He is a research fellow at the Frisian Academy, which co-ordinates research on European minorities, in particular the language, history and culture of Frisian, one of the lesser used languages of Europe. In 2003, he spent a semester as visiting professor at the University of St. Petersburg and in 2004 and 2005, he was guest researcher at the Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University, Japan.

**Chris Moseley**, Treasurer and Editor of *Ogmios*, has been with the Foundation since the beginning and Treasurer since 1998. Until 2005 he was a translator from Finnish and Swedish firstly, Latvian latterly, at the BBC Monitoring Service in Caversham, England. Since then he has worked as a freelance translator and is currently working on a Ph.D.

thesis in linguistics at the University of London. He is also the co-editor of the Routledge *Atlas of the World's Languages* (1994, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007) and editor of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages* (2007).

**Nicholas Ostler** is based in Bath, UK. He has held the Chair for ten years, since the origin of FEL. He gained a Ph.D. in Theoretical Linguistics from MIT. In the 27 years since then, he was first for 30 months a lecturer at Japanese Universities, then for 18 years a consultant in information technology in the UK (especially on research in speech and natural language processing and corpus linguistics), active in European projects. Most recently he has written 'Empires of the Word' - a language history of the world' (Harper-Collins 2005) and 'Ad Infinitum - a biography of Latin' (forthcoming 2007). He also works on the grammar of the Chibcha family of South America.

**Louanna Furbie** is Professor Emerita of Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Although retired, she still trains graduate students and teaches the occasional class; this semester she is teaching Endangered Languages. She is primarily a Mayanist, having spent a career working on Tojolabal Maya, a language in early endangerment spoken in southern Mexico near the Guatemalan border. She has published a grammar, dictionary and text concordance of Tojolabal. At present she is engaged in training five Tojolabal speakers as a language documentation team for the language. In the last decade she documented Chiwere Siouan, the language of the Otoe-Missouria and Iowa Tribes of Oklahoma, USA, in its last years. She is the Archivist of the Linguistic Society of America and in that capacity she has organised a number of efforts in the past few years to help the LSA assume appropriate roles in endangered language documentation, especially in the electronic archiving of these languages. Among those was a conference on language documentation in 2005, a book from which she is co-editing with Lenore A. Grenoble. She is responsible for the FEL Giving web-site ([www.felgivingcatalog.org](http://www.felgivingcatalog.org)) and is engaged in preparing radio commercials in support of the FEL mission for her local National Public Radio station.

**Christopher Hadfield** has a degree in linguistics and a Master's in Social Anthropology from Manchester. He has worked at the University of West Bohemia in the Czech Republic and the University of Bordeaux in France. He currently lives and works in the Basque Country, Spain.

### FEL Grant Recipients report on their work

*The Foundation has just announced its call for grant applications for 2007. Details are available on the Foundation's web-site,*

*[www.ogmios.org](http://www.ogmios.org). Meanwhile, recipients of our awards in previous years have been reporting back to us on their research. The Foundation aims to encourage research work that will benefit endangered speech communities around the world. Here is one example. Bidisha Som, who was awarded an FEL grant in 2005, has written a report on the documentation of the severely endangered Great Andamanese language (Andaman Islands, India). Here are the conclusions of that report:*

### Bidisha Som, Great Andamanese language (Andaman Islands, India)

#### 5.1. Summary:

Research in endangered languages all over the world takes documentation as their primary focus. When the number of fluent speakers of a language stands at eight to ten at the very best, documenting the language not only as a structure but also as a mirror image of the society becomes imperative.

The present work set out to write a trilingual dictionary of the Great Andamanese language in the three chosen semantic fields of hunting, gathering, flora-fauna and possession. With that a detailed analysis of this specialized lexicon was also proposed. This analysis sought to elaborate the ethnographic data encoded in the language through the vocabulary. Since the Great Andamanese is a severely endangered language, it is only normal that a large repertoire of this cultural information would also be lost. Once the language is lost people will no longer have the tools with which to express ideas and cultural symbolism specific only to them. This work is an attempt to document the fast disappearing underlying semantic, pragmatic and ontological constructs, i.e., cultural primitives of the language.

The main chapters present the lexicon of the three above-mentioned semantic fields. They are documented in computerized dictionary format of presenting headword followed by both English and Hindi gloss and part of speech as well as semantic fields/MOCF/taxonomic strata etc. Where necessary, cultural information is also added.

These chapters also cover the lexico-semantic interpretations of the words in Great Andamanese representing the three different semantic fields of hunting gathering, flora-fauna and possession. The analysis brings out the ethnographic information encoded in the lexicon of these areas. The Great Andamanese are no longer a hunting gathering community; hence there is a considerable loss of information in the areas of their cultural heritage that was an integral part of their life style not very long ago. Nothing is more crucial to such a community than the knowledge related to hunting, gathering, and the local flora fauna. And these are the worst affected areas of traditional knowledge system in a changed linguistic and cultural scenario, and hence in need of preservation. The semantics of pos-

session, specially that of inalienable possession, which includes the body parts and kinship terms in any language, is crucial not only as a reflection of the categorization of the human body and human relations in terms of concept formation but also as a tool to understand the world as a whole.

## 5.2. Major findings:

### 5.2.1. Ethnography of the Great Andamanese:

Culture can be regarded as an understanding and cognizance of the entire extra linguistic universe of a people and the expression of it through language. Diversity shown by languages in such expressions, thus, reflects the richness of human thought.

The traditional knowledge-system regarding hunting and gathering has lost much of its ontological primitives in the process of language erosion in case of Great Andamanese. By way of cultural information there was not much to elicit from the Great Andamanese at this point of time. The significance of some specific items is not remembered. The lexicon does not throw any light on the hunting life style except that it was a community with simple material and technological cultures. The names of the hunting implements are collected and presented. Lack of special information structure in this lexicon, perhaps, follows from the fact that there was never a complicated system with too much of 'traditional knowledge' involved. This said, however, one cannot account for the absence of a triggering of 'associated' knowledge in this field.

The flora and the fauna in Great Andamanese have an extended system of classification and categorization. The chapter on the Great Andamanese flora-fauna shows, through the ethno biological classificatory systems, that the Great Andamanese had developed an elaborate and interesting system of classifying their biological universe. The local flora is divided along the lines of morphological features and classified into the trees and non-trees. Among the plants in the latter category, any further classification is not very clear, though there are chances of further divisions on the basis of size and shape of the plants under consideration, which is implied in the use of certain classifiers. In the category of fauna, the classificatory system is more easily discernible from the data at this point of time. The major classification of the fauna, it appears from an in-depth analysis of the lexicon, depended on the use and functions of the fauna and not so much on their physical properties. Hence, it is seen that birds and fish form a single super-ordinate category among the fauna, and this category can be roughly translated as the food-animals. Other animals are outside this category. The animals outside this class of food-animals form separate classes depending, mainly, on their physiology. Thus, snakes form one class whereas worms and other small creatures fall roughly

into another category. Reptiles also form a separate class.

The traditional knowledge about the various plants and animals that form the biological surrounding for the Great Andamanese is vast. Knowledge about the usage of these things in the day-to-day life as well as for special purposes very often is fundamental to their classification. Though the medicinal plants are hardly used any more, the lexicon still preserves those pieces of information. There are approximately 10 to 12 varieties of ants and equal number of varieties of crabs that are found in Great Andamanese, each specified by a distinct name. This categorization is determined by a detailed knowledge of the structure, habitat, practice and their functions. Intermixing of lexical entries from various sub-groups of the Great Andamanese notwithstanding, the fine distinctions in any category of animals resulting in a rich vocabulary of the local fauna suggests a rich and subtle knowledge system underlying it.

Possession in Great Andamanese follows the broad divisions of alienable and non-alienable entities. Genitive marker that is added to the pronominal clitic marks the Great Andamanese nominal possession. The use of the genitive marker depends on the nature of the possessed noun. In case of the alienable nouns, there is only one genitive marker used uniformly for all. But in case of non-alienable possessions, there is a fine distinction of the genitive markers used, determined by the head noun. This category of nouns presents an intriguing picture about their conceptualization. The nouns falling in this category are the body parts and the kinship terms. There is an inventory of four genitive markers for this class of nouns. This same inventory is used for both the various body parts and the different primary kin terms. Whereas, four different genitive markers are used for four categories of body parts, the kinship terms make use of only three of these different genitives, depending on the nature of the relation under consideration. The analysis of the choice of genitives proves that there is a parallel between various body parts and kinship relationships. For example, the major body parts and spouse are considered equivalent and warrants the use of the same genitive marker for both these classes of nouns. Similarly, the body parts pertaining to the mouth and the parental relations are equivalent in their choice of genitives.

#### 5.2.2. Loss of Conceptual Primitives:

Language change and language death are associated with loss of primary conceptual structures that is proven by the chapter on Hunting and gathering. The data collected could hardly suggest any ethnographic information apart from listing the names of various weapons etc.

### 5.3. Limitations of the Study:

No research is without its shortcomings. These need to be honestly shared by the researcher so that future research can save valu-

able time avoiding them as well as strengthening them. It is perhaps, not justified to pronounce a verdict on the language on the basis of a study spanning a short period of time. Linguistic structures may be elicitable within a time frame but it is another matter to map the cultural and ethnographic conceptual structures with linguistic features. Also the thesis chose to analyze three different semantic fields, each of which is sufficient challenge to any researcher and hence needs a very detailed study in order to be conclusive. As a result, some questions remain. But keeping in mind the serious biological threat to the language [one of the oldest and most fluent speakers of the language, King Jirake's recent demise is a constant reminder], along with other factors, one could not help but gather as much information as possible before it is too late.

### 5.4. A Final Word:

Linguistic research has had a very old tradition in India. However, endangered language research is a relatively new field of study here. Work on the Great Andamanese, again, is rather different from working on any other minority language in this country, and that not only because of the sheer notoriety of the linguistic situation as mentioned already, but also because of the time constraint. This work is but a basic step on which future researchers can definitely build up.

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## 3. Endangered Languages in the News

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### Māori: The changing tide of Te Reo

*Census figures show the number of Māori speakers has fallen in the past five years, despite multimillion-dollar efforts to revitalise the language. Nikki Macdonald looks at the health of te reo ('the language' in Māori).*

## CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MĀORI LANGUAGE

Between softball practice and careering around with toy trucks, preschoolers at the country's first kohanga reo in Wainuiomata move easily between languages switching from Māori to English to accommodate the white-faced visitor. Among the youngsters is six-month-old Ranai-Numia Rimoni son of Te Awa Puketapu, 25, who was one of New Zealand's first kohanga kids. She and her peers are the new generation of Māori-language speakers, taking their own children to Māori language nests and schools, and using Māori at home. But despite enormous government investment in the language about \$200 million a year the number of New Zealanders speaking Māori has fallen from 160,527 in 2001 to 157,110.



The number of Māori speaking their language has risen slightly, from 130,485 to 131,613. But, as a percentage, that figure has fallen from 25.2 per cent to 23.7 per cent. Despite the statistics, Ms Puketapu is not concerned about the future of the language, especially with initiatives such as Māori TV maintaining interest. "I think it is pretty safe. I think we have done the hard yards, we've got it out of a point where it is in danger of going." She acknowledges, however, that kohanga are in decline, with about 10,000 children attending about 500 kohanga last year, down from 14,000 a decade ago. In 2005, 16 per cent of all Māori school pupils (more than 25,000 pupils) studied either in Māori or in a combination of Māori and English.

It is not enough just to go to a Māori language school, Ms Puketapu says. "It also falls back to the parents to get themselves educated. It's up to the communities rather than the Government to be setting up programmes where the generation that missed out can go to learn." A Research NZ-Te Puni Kokiri survey last year of attitudes to the Māori language found that both Māori and non-Māori were generally positive about the language and government support for it. Two-thirds of Māori said they often watched Māori TV. But Te Puni Kokiri senior analyst Tom White said some older Māori speakers said they had trouble understanding their children and grandchildren, or the Māori news, as the language had changed and developed so much. A five-yearly, 74-question Māori competency survey run by Reid Research has just been completed.

Results are not yet available, but Reid field manager Charlie Strivens studied its findings. Only 1 per cent to 2 per cent of Māori were fluent enough to do the survey in Māori, Ms Strivens said. Those aged in their 20s and 30s, and older people who grew up speaking Māori at home, had the best language skills. Many had a reasonable level of understanding, but lacked the confidence to speak it, feeling there was not enough situations to safely practise without fear of ridicule, she said. Some respondents were also concerned about a drop-off in proficiency after the kohanga reo level. Interviewer and Victoria University student Monique Franks who is taking Māori alongside her law degree says there is an enormous range of skills, from those who speak fluently to those who can manage only a *kia ora*. "My overall impression is that it is used more than we think."

Fluency is higher in Otaki where the Wananga o Raukawa is based and in the homes of those closely involved with the Māori community, and where the children go to kohanga or kura kaupapa, she said. Ms Franks' university Māori class is about 50-50 Māori and non-Māori. Many overseas students choose to study both language and cul-

ture simply out of interest, she said. Despite the overall reduction in Māori speakers, Te Puni Kokiri policy director Tipene Chrisp hailed the increase in Māori speaking Māori as a victory, after 50 years of steep decline of the language. "That number had been dropping dramatically, till about 1996. Now we are seeing a stabilisation."

Analysts would need to look at the age breakdown of the statistics, which is not yet available, to get a better picture of why the overall number of Māori speakers had fallen, he said. In 2001, the highest concentration of Māori speakers was in the over-60 age group but some of those people had probably since died. "My suspicion is that the age profile is changing, with more young people speaking Māori." Language revitalisation was a long-term process and major gains were expected to take about 25 years, Mr Chrisp said. Already learning English, Māori and Samoan (from his father), who knows what languages his children will learn in an increasingly multicultural, multilingual New Zealand.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3919171a7694,00.html>

### Uganda to teach in local languages

Uganda's National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) is set to train up to 30,000 primary school teachers to teach in their local languages, according to The Monitor newspaper in Kampala. Instructors will offer training for teachers using nine local languages and English. NCDC head Connie Kateeba told the paper: "It has been observed that a child who is taught in her mother tongue grasps better than one taught in a foreign language."

*The Guardian Weekly, UK 19.1.2007*

### CHILE ATTEMPTS TO SAVE DYING LANGUAGES

[http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story\\_id=12002&topic\\_id=15](http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story_id=12002&topic_id=15)

(October 29, 2006) Chile's Ministry for Education is developing a program to save the country's indigenous languages from extinction by teaching them to children in indigenous communities. The program, led by Education Minister Yasna Provoste Campilla, will aim to provide teaching materials for Mapudungun, Aymara, Quechua, and Rapa Nui.

"The idea is to have a sub sector in the area of language and communication that will allow the introduction of indigenous languages into the classroom, in this way ensuring their preservation," said Provoste.

In addition to the teaching program, Chile's Center of Public Surveys will publish a study

in November about Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche in Chile, estimated to have about 150,000 speakers. While Mapudungun is more widely spoken than many native American languages, it is notoriously difficult to teach, as it uses at least four different alphabets.

Chile has nine officially recognized living languages. At present, there is no official data about how many people speak Chile's indigenous languages, but a census in 2002 revealed that 35 percent of Chile's indigenous people understand their original language, while 17 percent are able to speak it.

While Chile already has two extinct languages, Kakauhua and Kunza, there could soon be an addition to these. The Yámana language from Patagonia is already extinct in Argentina, and since the death of her sister on Saturday, Cristina Calderón is its only remaining native speaker.

While there is little hope that Yámana will be saved from extinction, efforts are being made to save the southern language of Qawasqar. Linguist Oscar Aguilera has been studying Qawasqar since 1975. "About seven people use it on a day-to-day basis," said Aguilera, "and less than a dozen speak it with any fluency." Aguilera has managed to create a concise Spanish-Qawasqar dictionary and says he is developing materials for teaching the language to the youngest members of the

community with the hope of ensuring its survival.

Language extinction is a problem causing increasing concern worldwide, both from a social and political point of view. A language becomes extinct every 15 days, taking with it its unique cultural and historical background.

"In general, you could say that the great majority of the world's six million languages are being threatened with extinction," said Arturo Hernández, socio-linguist at the Universidad Católica de Temuco.

SOURCES: EL MERCURIO, UNESCO

By Cate Setterfield (editor.at.santiagotimes.cl)

### UK set to continue excluding Cornish from FCNM

Truru, Kernow - Cornwall, Thursday, 28 December 2006 by Davyth Hicks

The UK government appears set to continue to exclude the Cornish from the protection given to other nationalities in the UK and Europe under the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for National Minorities.

According to their draft Compliance Report the UK says that it will continue to follow its own criteria for FCNM implementation

tions Act (RRA). The Act defines what is an ethnic group in the UK, a classification required to be included under the Framework Convention. However, such a definition runs contrary to the spirit of the Convention which was established to bring basic protection for historic national minorities.

In a press release the Celtic League state that : "It implies that a Cornish individual must bring and win a civil court case in order to be included under the Convention, as the Welsh and the Scottish have done in the past. However, in the Compliance Report itself, mention is made of minority ethnic groups (e.g. Chinese), who the government indicates receive official support as per the Convention (FCNM), but do not have RRA case law references either. It suggests that the British Government is unclear about its own criteria."

Exclusion from the FCNM also leaves the Cornish open to further abuses, such as the recent cases of schoolchildren being punished for saying that they were Cornish and not English, as well as potentially undermining EU sponsored language projects.

However, the British government have pointed out that it is a draft report and that NGOs and individuals may recommend changes, which "will be considered", up until January 20th.

Complaints from NGOs over the proposed Cornish exclusion will also be sent to the Council of Europe who will then decide what measures to take. (EuroLang 2006)

Copies of the UK's draft report can be obtained from :  
Neil.Harris.at.communities.gsi.gov.uk

### Unity in Diversity? European Parliament rejects Bernat Joan's Report proposals

*Strasbourg, Alsace, Wednesday, 15 November 2006 by Davyth Hicks*

In what is a setback for all European endangered and lesser used languages, the European Parliament voted with a large majority against nearly all the substantive measures on Bernat Joan's Report today (15th

November).

The proposals for a EU language plan and legislation for collective language rights, the EU Ombudsman to resolve language disputes, to modify the EU Treaty to allow for a legal base for linguistic diversity, for the fundamental rights agency to take care of language rights, and continuing support for EBLUL and the Mercator Centres, were all rejected outright. The only proposals to survive were the recommendations that the 2003 Ebner Report be implemented and that EU citizens be able to communicate with the EU in their own national language, regardless of whether it has official status.

Catalan MEP Bernat Joan abstained in the final vote because the Parliament had, by then, rendered the Report toothless. He said: "We cannot support a report where, after the vote in committee and in the plenary, almost all the relevant points have been removed. This includes the recognition of equality amongst all European languages, regardless of their official status, the extension of the mandate of the Agency of Fundamental Rights and of the European Ombudsman to deal with matters of linguistic discrimination, or the guarantee of a fair funding allocation for those agencies responsible for lesser used languages."

Bernat Joan pointed out that "today we have been able to see that the true supporters of Europe's linguistic diversity still remain a minority in this parliament, albeit a significant one". The MEP regretted that, "for the majority of members, the slogan "unity in diversity" is nothing more than a mere formality taken absolutely out of context". He added, "for this parliament, multilingualism only refers to the official languages of the member states, neglecting a much richer and complex reality. Europe is not just a mere conglomeration of states and linguistic diversity is not only related to those languages with strong legal status."

In the previous night's debate, Bernat Joan spoke up for the Report's original proposals, and called on the EU to go beyond slogans and words and take clear steps with concrete policies to support existing diversity. The MEP, speaking in English because his Catalan mother tongue cannot yet be used, emphasized that "one of the fundamental values of the EU is the defence of our linguistic diversity, and if this is true, we need to see an overhaul of the linguistic policies at EU and

state level. Referring to the monolingual mindset of many states he said "The Jacobinist model is obsolete, it is far too out-dated for 21st century Europe. We must launch realistic policies to promote genuine European diversity".

Referring to one of the primary aims of the report to protect Europe's endangered languages he said, "Each language is good for humanity and if lost it is lost to all humanity...it is necessary to devote special care to all the endangered languages with the necessary budget to achieve this". He concluded by pointing out that the 2003 Ebner Report is still to be implemented.

The outgoing Commissioner for Multilingualism, Jan Figel, welcomed the "inspiring Report" which had been written "in the spirit of Unity in Diversity" and highlighted the Commission's recent initiatives to set up networks to promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity and that EU projects were now open to all languages.

Maria Badia i Cutchet (PSOE) said that we need to ensure that "all EU citizens can communicate with the EU in their mother tongue", referring to the 10% of EU citizens who cannot at present because they speak a

regional, stateless or minority language (RML). A Liberal MEP added that "we need legal protection for all of the EU's languages, and, if we support Unity in Diversity, we need to support the Report".

Bairbre de Brun (Sinn Féin- GUE), speaking in Irish then English, strongly supported all of the EFA- Green amendments, and referred to

the important work of EBLUL and its projects over the years and their conference in Dublin next week.

In contrast, Mr. Vidal Quadras (Spanish PP - EPP) reacted with scorn, calling the Report "an opportunistic attempt by the rapporteur to

come up with nationalist, separatist rhetoric," and that Mr Joan was "using languages to promote the disintegration of member states".

An Irish MEP said that "lesser used languages are as important, if not more, than the bigger languages, its important that we carry on supporting lesser used languages to show unity in diversity."

Concluding the debate, Jan Figel described language as "our cultural legacy" and that the Commission, as part of its action for lesser used languages, has been supporting EBLUL and the Mercator Centres.

However, EU support for EBLUL and the Mercator Centres ceases at the end of 2006, while spending overall on RMLs by the EU has seen huge cutbacks with an overall retreat from the previous position of ring-fenced funding for lesser used language projects. Moreover, with all EU project funding only big language projects are able to apply as the thresholds for application are often far too high for small, often impoverished, language communities.

In addition, the clause in Bernat Joan's Report calling for the continued support for EBLUL and the Mercators - NGOs dedicated to promoting inclusive linguistic diversity - was rejected. The current situation indicates that EU support for its own European lesser used languages, both financially and politically, it at its lowest.

It comes at a time when several European languages are facing endangerment and in need of help more than ever. Sadly, today's events in the European Parliament suggest that language activists need not look to the EU anymore for help. Unity in Diversity is an empty slogan - the EU is failing to communicate to the 10% of its population who speak a lesser used language despite calls to bring the EU "closer to its citizens". The mood from the grass roots indicates that a new wave of direct action may be needed to achieve the kind of linguistic equality that continues to be reserved for member state languages. (*EuroLang 2006*)

### Leanne Hinton wins Lannan award for Cultural Freedom

On 6 November the New York Times carried a full-page ad announcing the 2006 winners



of Lannan Awards for Cultural Freedom. One recipient is Leanne Hinton of the University of California at Berkeley, arguably the world's most effective and influential advocate for language preservation and revitalization. Leanne has long worked with California Indian tribes who are on the point of losing, or have lost, their heritage languages. Her famous Master-Apprentice program has been adopted by communities in which a few elders still speak the tribal language fluently; her regular Breath of Life workshops at Berkeley are an important resource for communities whose languages are no longer spoken but are sufficiently well documented that they can (with hard work and some luck) be revived. Shortly before Ken Hale died, he and Leanne co-edited the influential sourcebook *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. Everyone who works with Native American tribes, and with other communities around the world whose heritage languages are endangered or moribund, is greatly indebted to Leanne for her work and her inspiration. And with the most optimistic estimates predicting the death of 50% of the world's 6,000 or so languages by the end of this century (the most pessimistic estimates range up to a 90% extinction tally by 2100), all linguists ought to respect Leanne's work and to congratulate her on her Lannan Award.

*Posted by Sally Thomason on Language Log*

## Researching American Indian rhetoric

*John A. Berteaux Connections*

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/local/16159673.htm>

Prof. Ernest Stromberg stopped by my home last week to share a pot of coffee and discuss his new book *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance*. [sic]

An associate professor in the Department of English, Communication and Journalism, Ernie travels to California State University-Monterey Bay from a trim home in Seaside where he lives with his wife, Sherry. He grew up in Arcata.

In Arcata, he advises, "Diversity meant Native American people."

But in other parts of the United States, from Humboldt State University, where he received his bachelor's degree to Eugene, Ore., where he wrote his dissertation about American Indian Literatures, to Harrisburg, Va., where he taught at James Madison University before moving to the Peninsula, Ernie found, "it easy to forget that American Indians continue to exist."

Growing up with American Indian kids in school and sleeping over he noted early on that the idea of Indians in the popular media and the life he saw his friends living were quite different. Seamlessly, he ties his childhood experiences into a central idea in the book.

"From first contact," Ernie warns, "for American Indians the problem was mental as well as physical... When they got here Europeans had already conceived the individual."

I took him to mean that nonwhite and white were not simply descriptive terms of skin color; rather, from first contact they were used for social categorization, social control and social relationships.

America's indigenous population acknowledged and used to their advantage the fact that the way they spoke (and looked) stood in for intellect, moral sense and character. They acknowledged that there is a connection between the language we use and stories we tell.

I recalled something attributed to French linguist Saussure, who asks us to think about what had to be overcome to say "Black is beautiful." This is something that came out of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Up until the time that someone said "black is beautiful," black was considered ugly, dirty, and stupid. And then someone said "black is beautiful."

According to Saussure this wasn't just saying something new; rather, it was conceiving the world in a way it had not been imagined before.

"So American Indians recognized in their initial encounter with Europeans that we don't speak language so much as language speaks us?" I chimed in. Ernie nodded in agreement.

I asked about the word "survivance" that appears in the title. "It ties in," he says. "The book is about 'rhetorics of survivance.'"

Survival suggests images of someone just hanging on -- on the edge of existence. "Survivance," he quotes the text, "goes beyond mere survival to acknowledge the dynamic and creative nature of indigenous rhetorics."

He writes, from the early debates about treaty rights and native lands to present day controversies about casinos and team mascots America's indigenous populations continue to draw on the art of persuasion.

Nevertheless, Ernie adds, "While rhetorical studies have been enriched by important research done in women studies and African American rhetoric the rhetorical practices of America's indigenous people remain significantly incomplete."

To begin filling that gap in our knowledge, Ernie has produced an edited >collection that is worthy of note, unique, readable, and accessible for >a non-academic audience.

John Berteaux, an assistant professor of philosophy at CSU-Monterey, writes a monthly column. He can be reached at [john\\_berteaux.at.csumb.edu](mailto:john_berteaux.at.csumb.edu).

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<http://www.montereyherald.com/>

## President ponders alphabet change in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is contemplating a switch to the Latin alphabet. With the President Nursultan Nazarbayev himself raising it, observers think it may well become reality.

Addressing the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan in late October, Nazarbayev said it was time to think of switching. "I think we should return to the question of moving the Kazakh alphabet to Latin," he told delegates representing Kazakhstan's various ethnic groups. Following Nazarbayev's comments, a commission was set up to look into alphabet change. It is to investigate the problems Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan encountered when they switched to Latin and come up with proposals by March of next year.

Professor Kobey Khusayn, director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Linguistics, is a member of the commission. "Research is needed -- we need to know what is best for us -- how to do this, when to do this," he told EurasiaNet, adding that the institute has been given 7.5 million tenge (\$60,000 USD) for this.

The idea of changing from Cyrillic is not new; Kazakhstan agreed to make the switch back in the early 1990s, along with the four other former Soviet Turkic republics, following a series of meetings with Turkey. While Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were quick to adopt Latin script, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan delayed the switchover, and both still use Cyrillic.

If Kazakhstan changes, it would mark the fourth alphabet used in the country during the past century. In the early 20th century, Arabic was used. In 1929, officials introduced a modified Latin script, as Soviet officials sought to make a break with the country's Muslim past. After just over a decade in use, however, Latin was supplanted in 1940 by Cyrillic, as the need to have a common alphabet for all republics became Soviet policy. Following independence in 1991, alphabet change remained on the backburner for political and economic reasons.

The re-emergence of the alphabet issue is linked to Kazakhstan's modernization drive, some observers believe. Reasons for adopting Latin are both practical and ideological, assert supporters of the idea. On the practical side, computer compatibility is often cited, and Nazarbayev invoked this. "Latin script dominates in communications," he told the Assembly of Peoples.

Layla Yermenbayeva, a Kazakh-language instructor at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research, is among those advocating the switch for this reason. She says Cyrillic complicates the use of the Internet for educational purposes.

The Nachnem s Ponedelnika newspaper suggests that using Latin would facilitate foreign language learning for Kazakhs. However,

there could be a reverse effect: Kazakhstan's Russian speakers might perceive a switch as an obstacle to learning Kazakh. These are the people that the government most needs to learn Kazakh.

Meanwhile, many linguists support a switch to Latin, Professor Khusayn told EurasiaNet. The problem is not linguistic, he says, but "a cultural problem, a political problem, an economic problem, a problem of education, so politicians, economists, financiers and sociologists should be asked the question when and how."

Ideologically, the switch could be interpreted as a move away from the Russian sphere of influence; it is a move likely to appeal to ethnic Kazakhs as the country seeks to reposition itself in the post-Soviet space. Some commentators suggest that it could lead to a rapprochement of Turkic peoples. It is not clear whether the timing of Nazarbayev's announcement is linked to the Turkic state summit in Antalya November 17.

The switch would affect the young and old in different ways. The older generation would be at a disadvantage; they are the least likely to know English, or other Western languages, and would likely find it harder to adapt to the new alphabet. The younger generation would presumably have less difficulty in learning the new script. At the same time, they might find themselves cut off, at least temporarily, from their literary and cultural heritage, as the vast majority of literature in Kazakh printed in Cyrillic.

"I don't think it will be hard for the younger generation, nor for the middle-aged. They have all learned languages and know the Latin alphabet. It will probably be hard for pensioners and the inhabitants of rural areas," says Yermenbayeva. Inhabitants of rural areas have limited access to computers and the Internet and therefore have less exposure to the Latin alphabet.

The introduction of the Latin script followed similar patterns in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with the script first introduced into schools and then newspapers printed with parallel texts in Cyrillic and Latin. In all three countries, the pace of the introduction proved to be slower than expected.

The huge costs involved in reprinting everything from textbooks and official forms to street and shop signs also proved to be a factor hampering the adoption of the new script. However, with Kazakhstan awash with petrodollars, the cost may not be the most important factor. Nazarbayev cautioned against haste in deciding the alphabet issue. Indeed, care must be taken if the switch is to be successful.

The Latinization of the alphabet is one of several reforms currently being contemplated by Nazarbayev. In mid-November, he announced plans to clean up Kazakhstan's gambling industry. Starting January 1, 2007, all casinos in the country will have to move to

Lake Kapshagai near Almaty, or to Lake Burabay near Astana, the president said.

As with alphabet change, the establishment of "Las Vegas"-style pockets of vice on the steppe can be seen as connected with modernization attempts. Earlier in 2006, Nazarbayev introduced what has become his pet project: transforming Kazakhstan into one of the world's 50 most competitive economies.

**Editor's Note:** Paul Bartlett is an Almaty-based freelance writer specialising in education issues. *Eurasianet web-site*

### **Native language lives on in woman: Vi Hilbert of the Upper Skagit tribe stubbornly aims to keep Lushootseed alive.**

*Krista J. Kapralos, Herald Writer*

EVERETT - By her own admission, Vi Hilbert, 88, is stubborn.

She was an only child raised in the Upper Skagit tribe. Her mother loved to perform and her father was a medicine man. When they passed the stories on to Hilbert, he spoke in Lushootseed, the language of Western Washington's Coast Salish tribes.

Hilbert was a child in a desperate era for American Indian tribes. Tribal children went to boarding schools where they weren't allowed to speak their native languages. Many children forgot Lushootseed, but not Hilbert.

She stubbornly tucked it away in her mind and in her heart.

Years later, the language emerged from an age of darkness and was brought into the light once again. Hilbert was one of the few people who remembered enough of it to speak it again.

At an event sponsored by Everett Community College's Diversity and Equity Center Thursday, Hilbert shared her language with about 70 students. The students leaned forward in their seats in an effort to catch every word, and afterward they knelt on the floor in front of Hilbert to thank her.

"She's living history," said Earl Martin, director of the college's counseling center and a member of the Cree tribe. "The knowledge she passes down orally is just as valuable as anything that's in our library."

Hilbert has dedicated her life to the rebirth of Lushootseed. She worked in the linguistics department at the University of Washington for 15 years. In 1989, she received an honorary doctorate from Seattle University and was named a Washington State Living Treasure.

Hilbert has worked closely with linguists to develop a written form of Lushootseed and publish dictionaries for the language.

"Given her age, I've wanted to get her here while she's still able to speak," said Christina Castorena, associate dean for diversity for

EvCC. "She's a local jewel, and it's an honor to have her here."

Hilbert clutched a dark blanket around her thin shoulders as she sat in a chair on the stage in Baker Hall on the EvCC campus. She demanded that the students speak up if they wanted to ask her a question.

"I'm bossy," she said, smiling slyly.

Hilbert said she's been criticized by some tribal members for sharing Upper Skagit culture. She argues that every culture is important and should be shared with as many people as possible. Sharing Lushootseed and ancient Coast Salish stories won't dilute the value of the culture.

"The language will live because it's important," she said. "The culture will live because it's important."

### **Saving Serrano**

SAN MANUEL INDIAN RESERVATION - A quiet battle is being waged to save the ancestral language of the Serrano Indians. The Serrano language was once spoken by indigenous people throughout the San Bernardino Valley and High Desert. Today, there is only one man whose ability to speak that tongue approaches fluency, said Kaylene Day, a staff linguist for the Serrano Language Revitalization Project. The ultimate goal of the project - an effort of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians' Education Department still in its infancy - is to give tribe members the ability to use the Serrano language in daily conversation. "They want their children and future leaders to be versed in the culture so that identity is strong," education director Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright said. The last person to be fluent in the Serrano language, Dorothy Ramon, died in 2002. With linguist Eric Elliott, Ramon compiled Serrano lore into the book "Wayta' Yawa", the title of which translates to "Always Believe." Ramon's nephew, Ernest Siva, remembers the sounds of Serrano from his childhood. "My mother, she and my older aunt, everyone in the family spoke it," Siva said. Day said Siva is the only person who is almost fluent in Serrano. There are times, Siva said, when he'll use Serrano phrases, though he acknowledged that his aunt's ability to converse in that old language exceeded his own. Siva said Day and others visit him every Thursday to work on the language project. He also teaches Serrano classes at the Morongo Indian Reservation near Calton. He is president of the Dorothy Ramon Learning Center - a nonprofit created to preserve and share knowledge of Southern California's indigenous cultures.

Preserving the Serrano language, Siva said, "has to do with our identity and our culture. The traditions that we had. It's like living on our land. A lot of us move away, but as you notice, we return to our roots."

Historically, the Serrano language was spoken but not written, Day said. Written Serrano



was not used until the 1990s, and part of the language project has been to craft a new Serrano alphabet that is different than the one used in Ramon and Elliott's book. Work to create a new alphabet began around September 2005, Day said. That effort has produced a 47-letter alphabet that uses many common letters as well as symbols not used in English. For example, the ' symbol is used as a letter that symbolizes the sound of a "glottal

stop" - much like the sound between "uh" and "oh" in the English phrase "uh-oh," Day said. A curriculum is being developed to teach the tongue to other members of the tribe. At this point, the San Manuels are not telling the public how actual words would be written in the new alphabet. Wright said tribal members are concerned that to do so could lead to the misappropriation of their culture. Wright, a native Hawaiian, said the tiki kitsch that is often used as party decorations is an example of how the San Manuels would not want their culture to be represented. Wright considers the kind of island-themed ornamentalizations that can be purchased at party supply stores to be a bastardization of Polynesian ways. In Day's view, the most successful effort to revive a language was the reintroduction of Hebrew in modern Israel. The Torah and other Hebrew writings provided a wealth of knowledge for 20th-century speakers. The San Manuels do not have that much material to work with, but Day said there are 15 to 20 hours of recorded Serrano to guide the study of an almost-forgotten language. Siva can also draw on notebooks that he compiled while a USC student in the 1960s. As a student, Siva studied music and traveled to Washington, D.C., to research Luiseno Indian music. While at the National Archives, he got sidetracked and found research on Serrano that he transcribed into his own notes. "I realized I could read it," he said. Day was drawn to indigenous languages when she studied linguistic anthropology while a student at the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University. "I discovered American languages when I was in college. They were so different from anything I'd ever seen," she said. "Language loss made me sad, how much language diversity we're losing. It's sort of like losing a species."

What's in a name? The word "Serrano" is actually not part of the Serrano language - it's derived from Spanish. The ancestors of today's San Manuel Band of Mission Indians lived in the San Bernardino Mountains before Europeans came to California. Spanish settlers called tribe members Serranos. The word is similar to "sierra," the Spanish word for mountains. In their own language, the Serranos called themselves Yuhaviatam, which translates to "people of the pines." Source: *San Manuel Band of Mission Indians*

<[http://www.sbsun.com/ci\\_4780412](http://www.sbsun.com/ci_4780412)>

## Bolivian Government Support of Indigenous Languages Meets Resistance

Monte Reel, Washington Post Foreign Service, Tuesday, January 30, 2007; A10

LA PAZ, Bolivia -- Andrea Mamani stood in front of her students the other day and started the afternoon lesson by pointing to her head.

The 22 students, aspiring public health-care professionals in white lab coats, responded in ragged unison: "P'i'iqi."

She pointed to her arm. "Ampara," they answered.

Mamani was teaching them Aymara, an indigenous language spoken mainly in the rural highlands of Bolivia and Peru. The students in her class, most of them urbanites, had scant previous knowledge of the language. But they are pioneers in a training program that President Evo Morales -- the country's first indigenous president -- hopes will become standard for all government employees.

The Bolivian government estimates that 37 percent of the population speaks a native language that predates the arrival of Spanish colonists in the 16th century. Officials hope that language-training programs in public schools and government offices will raise that percentage -- but not just for the sake of scholarship. In the words of an Education Ministry informational pamphlet distributed in La Paz this month, promoting those languages is part of a broad effort "to decolonize the mindset and the Bolivian state."

For Morales, the attempt to elevate languages such as Aymara and Quechua is emblematic of his government's indigenous-based social agenda. It is enormously ambitious, plagued by conflict and difficult to implement.

After announcing last year that all government employees would have to undergo indigenous language training, Morales's administration sought to require it of public school children as well, no matter where they lived. The proposal riled many in the parts of Bolivia that have little connection to indigenous communities, areas such as the eastern lowlands, where words spoken in Quechua and Aymara are often heard as threats to a way of life.

"Evo wants to make Quechua and Aymara the official languages of Bolivia, instead of Spanish," said Fernando Suarez, 43, a taxi driver in Santa Cruz, echoing a common fear in a region that seeks greater independence from Morales's government. "That might be fine for the highlands where they actually speak those languages, but not here."

Government officials say they are not trying to replace Spanish. But they argue that promoting Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní and other native languages should be a priority for a country where more than half of the people identified themselves as indigenous in the most recent census.

"These languages used to be studied only in rural contexts, but now they are being introduced to urban contexts as well, throughout the entire educational system, from primary schools to the universities," said Juan José

Quiroz, an Education Ministry official who oversees indigenous language programs.

The government's promotion of that agenda has been, at times, abrasive. Félix Patzi, a former minister of education and culture, last year labeled Bolivians who did not speak an indigenous language "an embarrassment." He sent letters telling school administrators that the government would not recognize their institutions unless they guaranteed indigenous language instruction this academic year. He also proposed replacing Roman Catholic instruction in public schools with a controversial "history of religions" class that would place more focus on traditional indigenous beliefs.

After initially supporting Patzi, Morales backed down on the new religion course. He also has appeared to relax his insistence on the indigenous language requirement; officials said last week that the training would not be obligatory for students this year.

Also last week, Morales fired several members of his cabinet, including Patzi, associated with the controversy over the government's agenda.

Meanwhile, the president's approval rating has slid from nearly 80 percent shortly after he was inaugurated a year ago to about 59 percent, according to a poll in La Razon, a La Paz newspaper. In the past month, street protests have raged and demands for autonomy in various districts have grown louder as a constituent assembly, elected to rewrite the constitution, remains deadlocked.

"The initial crack in his popularity" was "all about the education proposals," said Jim Shultz, a political analyst in Cochabamba, referring to Morales. "They resonated with this symbolic fear that non-indigenous people have in this country, which questions whether Evo really understands their needs and perspectives."

Though Morales's tone might be softening for the moment, he has not abandoned indigenous-friendly reforms. Universities report that enrollment in indigenous language programs is up since he took power, and the Education Ministry continues to open new centers where the languages are taught.

Last year, a student at San Pablo Catholic University in Bolivia wrote his graduate thesis in Aymara -- a first for the country. His professors conducted their oral questioning of the thesis in Aymara during a public ceremony on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Education officials say the reemergence of Bolivia's indigenous languages is part of a regional trend. Interest in indigenous communities and traditions has grown in the past 20 years throughout South America.

"In the 1980s, people here didn't want to speak Quechua or Aymara," said Adrián Montalvo, who helps set education policy for native language programs. "Those languages were limited only to the community and family spheres, and it was considered shameful to

speak them elsewhere. But now people speak them much more freely."

Donato Gómez Bacarreza, an expert in Andean languages and head of the language program at La Paz's San Andrés University, said his instructors have recently begun giving classes, at the government's request, to members of the national Congress. He also said people in the business community, including local bankers and Japanese auto executives, have signed up for Aymara and Quechua classes to better connect to Bolivia's native people. He and other linguists have been struggling for decades to resuscitate the languages, and he said he now sees a clear payoff.

"What we are fighting for is our cultural identity," he said.

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#### 4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

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### **!Khwa ttu cultural centre launched in Western Cape, South Africa**

Those of you who attended the FEL conference in Stellenbosch, Soutp Africa, in 2005, will have fond memories of our excursion to the yet-to-be-opened cultural centre for the San people, !Khwa ttu, in the Western Cape. The centre was officially opened in March 2006, and issued its first newsletter in October. Below is the Foreword of the first issue; you can follow the link to the centre's website to find out more.

#### **Foreword**

Is there a better way of embarking on another exciting activity such as the !Khwa ttu Newsletter than by writing about the official opening of the centre on 8 March 2006? We thought to report on this would be an appropriate entry point for the first edition of the newsletter, which we plan to publish at a quarterly interval.

This newsletter is meant to inform the San communities of southern Africa, the local and international public, donors and government departments about the current affairs of the !Khwa ttu San Culture and Education Centre.

The Newsletter will refer to what !Khwa ttu stands for: promoting the San heritage, training and educating the San, interacting with tourists and exchanging experiences with other indigenous people. All articles in the Newsletter are completely authentic as they are based on either interviews with the people directly involved in the activities or on written contributions and testimonies that are central to the described events.

Any feedback, constructive criticism and suggestions are most welcome.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the Newsletter and feel encouraged to visit us very soon.

The !Khwa ttu team

[www.khwattu.org](http://www.khwattu.org)

### **First Jaqaru language course completed in Peru**

December 18, 2006 is now an historical date for Tupe. On that day the graduation for the first Jaqaru Language Course was held. This course is the beginning of sustainable work that opens the door of hope for the survival of Jaqaru.

Eleven people from Tupe, mostly teachers, and twelve others, also mostly teachers, received their certificates. Yolanda Nieves Payano Iturrizaga, linguist and native speaker of Jaqaru, taught the class, as a teacher

in the ISP Pedagógica de Catahuasi (Normal School). The Director of the Normal School Mag. Manuel Gil Hernández was present for the ceremony; Prof. Abelardo Ventocilla called by telephone in representation of the support of the Gobierno Regional de Lima Provincias. And Dr. MJ Hardman and Dr. Dimas Bautista Iturrizaga called at the end of the ceremony and congratulated all of the participants by telephone through a loudspeaker connected to the telephone and installed in a tree, so that all could hear.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of this event. Jaqaru is in very serious danger of extinction. For the first time in a very long time there is some hope of its continued existence. For decades Dr. Hardman and Dr.

Bautista have sought the necessary means for the recognition of the language; just now, on December 18, their hopes became reality. With this act Dr. Hardman passes the torch to a linguist from Tupe as a realization of one of her dreams; in this way the work already done can serve the future together with works yet to be done by the young people now preparing themselves.

A little history: Beginning in the forties Dr. Bautista began searching for help to read and write his language, but without success. In the fifties he met Dr. Hardman and achieved his goal: once the phonological analysis was complete with the phonemes clearly identified, Dr. Bautista himself formulated the alphabetic representation of his language, and from that date it has been written and read. The basic description of the grammar was completed and in the sixties published in Holland. Fifteen years later it was finally published in Peru by IEP (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos). In the sixties we began the odyssey seeking bilingual education for Tupe. There were promises and pronouncements, but no official backing was ever forthcoming. Dr. Hardman taught informal courses for many years for the people in Tupe. And one Tupe professor, Lisandro Sanabria Casas, did successfully obtain backing one year for Dr. Hardman to teach the students of the 3rd and 4th grades to read and write Jaqaru. Meanwhile, We sponsored a scholarship for Prof.

Nieves Payano Iturrizaga to study linguistics in Bolivia to become a linguist with specialization in Jaqaru. At that time linguistics was well developed because of the INEL (National Institute of Linguistic Studies), founded by Dr. Hardman and Dr. Elena Fortún. On finishing her studies, for more than a decade Prof. Nieves sought a position in Peru where she could work for the benefit of Jaqaru, but without success, even though we tried through every possible governmental office and level.

Now, because Prof. Elena Huaytalla Rosales, teacher at the Instituto Pedagógica de Catahuasi, took an interest in the formation of

teachers for Tupe, and understood the necessary role of Jaqaru for that purpose, things have changed. She took the initiative to take the problem to the Gobierno Regional, and thus, with the sponsorship of the then Director Regional of Education Wilfredo Cornejo Ybargüen, brought about the course I

taught in July of 2006. The current course has come about with the continuing support of the Regional Government under the leadership of the current Regional Director de Education, Yulimo Fulgencio Milla Salas. The position for Prof. Nieves became a reality in October of 2006.

It did actually happen! We are old and at times it has seemed impossible that we would live to see it, and meanwhile, with the terrorism that devastated Tupe and the influences of the recently completed road, we

saw each year fewer of the young with fluency in their native Jaqaru.

And often they knew little or nothing of the language and at times refused to use even the little they knew.

And now is a time of celebration. The teachers have again taken hold of their language. There was a message from Prof. Nieves just before the graduation saying that the teachers wanted to use Marka, the name they use for where they live when they talk in Jaqaru, instead of Tupe a name obviously Spanishized from Txupi, and considered to be the Spanish translation of Marka.

It is hard to exaggerate the happiness we feel. The class is already a step toward sustainability. We couldn't be there in person, but the teachers managed to connect a loud speaker to the telephone and they hung it on a

tree so that we could congratulate everyone at the end of the ceremony. And it was appropriate that we be there thus, as support, because the work now passes from us to the young people, who now have what is needed to continue with the work, building on our work of the last half century, so that Jaqaru may live. ¡Jaquars jakp"á!

Dr. MJ Hardman

<http://grove.ufl.edu/~hardman/>

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#### 5. Allied Societies and Activities

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## Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project launches OREL Online

Resources for Endangered Languages. OREL is a new and unique resource - a library of over 200 annotated and categorised links to websites for people interested in endangered language documentation and revitalisation. To access OREL go to <http://www.hrelp.org/languages/resources/>

There is a version of OREL also available in Arabic at <http://www.hrelp.org/languages/resources/oriel-ar/index.html>

Peter Austin

Marit Rausing Chair in Field Linguistics

Director, Endangered Languages Academic Programme

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

## National Minorities in Lithuania; A study visit to Vilnius and Klaipėda for Mercator Education

7-14 November 2006

Tjeerd de Graaf and Cor van der Meer

### Introduction

The Mercator-Education project hosted at the Frisian Academy has been established with the principal goal of acquiring, storing and disseminating information on minority and regional language education in the European region<sup>2</sup>. Recently a computerised database containing bibliographic data, information about people and organisations involved in this subject has been established. The series of Regional Dossiers published by Mercator-Education provides descriptive information about minority languages in a specific region of the European Union, such as characteristics of the educational system and recent educational policies. At present, an inventory of the languages in the new states of the European Union is being made showing explicitly the position of ethnic minorities. In order to investigate the local situation in one of these new states in more detail and to inform representatives of the communities about the work of Mercator Education and the policies of the European Union in this field, a delegation from the Frisian Academy visited Lithuania in the week 7-14 November 2006.

### National Minorities in Lithuania

Our stay in Vilnius started on the first day with a general orientation at the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians living abroad, which is supported by and giving advice to the government of the Republic of Lithuania. The director provided us with material on the projects initiated for the various minorities in the country. The most important

national minorities are presented in the table below<sup>3</sup>:

Nationality	Number	percentage of the total population
Lithuanians	2907.200	83,4 %
Polish	234.900	6,7 %
Russian	219.700	6,3 %
Byelorussian	42.800	1,2 %
Ukrainian	22.400	0,65%
Jewish	4.900	0,12%
German	3.200	0,09%
Tatar	3.200	0,09%
Latvian	2.900	0,08%
Roma	2.500	0,07%
Armenian	1.400	0,04%
Other nationalities	6.100	0,18%
Not specified	32.900	0,94%
Total	3483.900	100 %

This shows that in a total population of the country about 16,6 % of the people do not have a Lithuanian background. Nationalities such as the Polish and Byelorussian are autochthonous and have been living within the borders of present-day Lithuania since times immemorial. This holds for instance for the Karaims who came to Lithuania 600 years ago. There they found a new motherland and were able to preserve their national identity, faith and customs. In later times representatives of many other nationalities came and in this way Lithuania always was a multinational state. In the publication of the Department on *National Minorities in Lithuania* 17 of these national groups are mentioned, which are organised into more than 200 public organisations. The Department supports per year more than 300 projects, such as 40 weekend schools for children belonging to a certain minority group.

In addition the Department organises activities for Lithuanians living abroad, where in 46 countries there are 150 Lithuanian schools for their children (about one million Lithuanians are living abroad). Lecturers of Lithuanian are sent to these schools and information on Baltic culture and history is provided to schools, universities and other institutions.

In article 37 of the Lithuanian constitution it is written that citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture and customs. This right is also protected by the Law on Ethnic Minorities, the Law on the State Language, the Law on Citizenship, the Law on Education, the Law on Equal Opportunities and other ones. Lithuania is the party in most international agreements related to the protection of human rights and rights of national minorities. In 2000 the government ratified the Framework Con-

vention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe. However, for some reason the Charter for Minority and Regional Languages has not yet been ratified.

### The Institute of the Lithuanian Language and Vilnius University

On the following days of our visit we met colleagues and students at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language and the University. In the morning we first presented our work at the Frisian Academy and Mercator Education in lectures titled *The Mercator network and the language situation in Friesland* (Cor van der Meer) and *Endangered Languages and Endangered Archives* (Tjeerd de Graaf).

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language is a centre for research into the Lithuanian language. It is a research institution, the main activities of which are related to lexicology, lexicography, and research into the grammatical structure of the Lithuanian language, research into the history and dialects of the Lithuanian language, and sociolinguistic research.

The main work of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language consists of:

1. The preparation of the *Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language* (in 20 volumes) and its computerised version, the accumulation of a computerised database of the Lithuanian lexicon.
2. The preparation of the *Dictionary of the Standard Lithuanian Language*.
3. The compilation of an academic grammar of the Lithuanian language, research into the evolution of Lithuanian syntax.
4. The gathering of data on and research into Lithuanian dialects, the preparation of an atlas of European languages and more similar projects.

During our visit we saw the very modern facilities of the archives for language material, in particular sound recordings and we learned about the digital techniques which are used for the preparation of the 11-million word contents of the Lithuanian language on the internet. In the archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore we were informed about the local safeguarding of endangered sound material.

In the University of Vilnius (which is one of the oldest in the Baltic countries) we met with the staff of the Department of Polish philology and had the opportunity to tell a group of students about our work. We also had a nice discussion with these students, who informed us about their language background, their motivation to study and their plans for the future.

### Schools with curricula in the languages of national minorities (Polish and German)

A very important way to preserve the national consciousness is education in the mother tongue. In 1999-2000 there were 223 second-

<sup>2</sup> The work of Mercator has been described on the web site [www.mercator-education.org](http://www.mercator-education.org).

<sup>3</sup> Data in this section are quoted from the brochure *National Minorities in Lithuania*, which is probably a later publication than the booklet with a similar title (Vilnius 2000), where the minorities (in particular the Russian one) are larger. More details can be found on the web site [www.tmid.lt](http://www.tmid.lt).

dary schools with non-Lithuanian teaching<sup>4</sup>; among them were 69 schools with Russian language education, 73 with Polish, and 1 with Belorussian. There were also mixed schools: 29 of Lithuanian-Russian, 11 – Lithuanian-Polish, 28 Russian-Polish, 1 Russian-Byelorussian and 10 – Lithuanian-Russian-Polish. Several national minorities, such as Poles, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, Armenians, Karaims, Tatars and Greeks have their own Sunday schools and special summer courses, like the one for the Karaim language.

During a visit to the Jono Pauliaus 11-ojo gimnazija, a Polish school in Vilnius, we met the director Adam Blaskiewicz and attended a few lessons. This school is situated in a building in the outskirts of the town, where before Russian was used as language of education. Most of the lessons are given in Polish, but the students have to pass their final examination in Lithuania according to the requirements of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education. In addition to the mother language (Polish) and the national language (Lithuanian) foreign languages can be chosen (at present mostly English)

In Klaipėda we met with the director and staff members of the Hermann Sudermann secondary school, the only German school in the Baltic countries<sup>5</sup>. This school has been initiated in 1992 mainly for children who are of German descent, such as from families who stayed after the war when the former German Memel Land became (again) Lithuanian and part of the Soviet Union. The number of pupils increased from 90 to 550, because also non-German parents send their children to this school. In the school we attended a few lessons, where in the higher classes part of the curriculum is provided in German. There are links with the Simon Dach Haus, a community centre for the German minority, which organises all kinds of cultural activities.

Both schools expressed their interest in a further exchange of information on bilingual and trilingual schools in the Netherlands and should like to participate in the Mercator Network of Schools.

In the Faculty of Slavonic Philology of Vilnius Pedagogical University we met with the dean, Gintautas Kundrotas and professors of Russian, Polish and Byelorussian, who told us that in recent years also the interest in teaching Byelorussian in secondary school education is increasing.

#### **Projects for stateless cultures and languages (Karaim and Yiddish)**

During our visit to Trakai, a small town west of Vilnius, we learned about the Karaim minority which settled in Lithuania at the end of

the 14<sup>th</sup> century on the invitation of the grand duke Vytautas. Trakai became the administrative and spiritual centre of this community, which was able to keep its traditions until present time. Their language belongs to the Turkic language family and it is still spoken by very few community members. Recently a special teaching method with multimedia equipment has been developed by Eva Csato, a Hungarian linguist, who learned the Karaim language and provides special summer courses for the Karaim people in Trakai<sup>6</sup>. We met with representatives in the new community centre, enjoyed the products of the Karaim kitchen and visited the religious temple (kenesa) and a special ethnological museum. With one of the community members we considered possibilities to continue the teaching and other cultural activities for Karaim with the support of Mercator or similar international organisations. This should be done in the framework of projects for the safeguarding and revitalisation of endangered languages.

In the past the Jews had very important communities in Lithuania, where before the Second World War Vilnius was called the Jerusalem of Eastern Europe. In 1924-25 Jews had about 300 secondary schools and 20 gymnasiums, one teachers' seminar in Kaunas, and two rabbinical academies. In that time 93% of the Jewish children attended schools with subjects taught in Yiddish, which was the most important common language spoken by the Jews in Eastern Europe. During the tragic events of the Second World War more than 200.000 people of Jewish origin were massacred and whole communities ceased to exist. Also in the Soviet time, Jews did not have their own schools, press or publishing facilities. However, in recent years a certain revival takes place and schools have been created where Jewish subjects are taught, such as Hebrew.

During a visit to the Vilnius Yiddish Institute we learned about these matters. In 2001 this institute was founded at Vilnius University with the mission to organise academic and cultural programs for the preservation, enrichment and continuity of Yiddish and East European Jewish culture. It provides courses in the Yiddish language and Jewish culture, together with special summer courses in these subjects<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Regional activities in North-West Lithuania (Klaipėda and Samogitia)**

The Klaipėda area has a special history which is related to the German empire, to which in the past (from 1252 until 1920) it belonged as the so-called Memel Land. During and after the Second World War most of the German

and also many Lithuanian inhabitants left this area and new people came to the town of Klaipėda and surroundings, often from various other parts of the former Soviet Union. This explains why many people in this area are speaking Russian and belong to several ethnic groups.

We visited the beautiful, about 100 km. long peninsula Neringa (Kurische Nehrung), where the nature reminded us to the Frisian Islands. A German living in the main village of Nida, has set up a tourist bureau (Balt Tours), which is organising attractive vacation trips for people from Western Europe<sup>8</sup>. He showed us around and informed us about the local situation and the symbols of German culture (such as the house of Thomas Mann). Due to the similarity with the nature and other aspects of Fryslân, we discussed possibilities for an exchange program with tourist organisations there.

Samogitia is the region in North-West Lithuania, which can be considered as one of the most ethnically pure regions in the country,

try, with an ethnic Lithuanian population of more than 95% in some districts. It is characterized by an own cultural identity because of its own history and a rather different dialect. Many local people consider this as the Samogitian language which is different from standard Lithuanian. They also have an own flag and other symbols of their special identity.

We met with representatives of the Samogitian community in the central town of the area, Telšiai, where they showed us the local ethnographic museum. In the university town of Šiauliai we met the vice rector, who is also the author of a book on the Samogitian language and developed a special writing system for the language. He and his colleagues should like to learn about the bilingual situation in Fryslân in order to use this for a further emancipation of Samogitian, which at the moment it not taught at school.

#### **Some topics for future joint activities**

Here we should like to give some suggestions for a future follow-up of our visit and possible new activities with colleagues in Lithuania:

- New regional dossiers for Mercator Education can be produced by representatives of the bilingual schools in Lithuania, such as the Polish school in Vilnius and the German school in Klaipėda. The possibility of a regional dossier on Yiddish in Lithuania will also be studied;

- These schools can become partners in the Network of Schools and exchange information with more than 60 similar schools in other countries of the European Union;

<sup>4</sup> This information can be found in the booklet *National Minorities in Lithuania* (Vilnius 2000)

<sup>5</sup> The school is presented on the web site [www.zudermanas.ku.lt/de](http://www.zudermanas.ku.lt/de) (German version)

<sup>6</sup> This multimedia CD project for the endangered Turkic language Karaim in Lithuania can be found at [www3.aa.tufs.ac.jp/~djm/karaim/karaimCD.htm](http://www3.aa.tufs.ac.jp/~djm/karaim/karaimCD.htm).

<sup>7</sup> For more information see [www.judaicvilnius.com](http://www.judaicvilnius.com).

<sup>8</sup> The further details can be found at [www.balttours.lt](http://www.balttours.lt).



- On the level of a research institute (like Vilnius Pedagogical University) problems of bi- and trilingual education could be studied together and information can be exchanged with similar institutions in Fryslân (like the AFÛK);

- In Samogitia, more information can be provided about the bilingual situation in Fryslân and the work of the Frisian Academy. Like in the case of Kashubian in Poland this will help to obtain the recognition and emancipation of the local language and culture in this part of Lithuania;

- Together we should like to support research and teaching activities for the documentation and revitalisation of endangered languages, such as Karaim;

- In Lithuania there will be interest to participate in a new Centre for the study of multilingualism as has been proposed for Fryslân and the Frisian Academy. Together with new partners in Lithuania the Frisian Academy and the Mercator Project will contribute to a network of institutes which can apply for new European grants;

- Specialists from the Frisian Academy and the Mercator Project will be invited to take part in special seminars and conferences in Lithuania, in particular related to bilingual education;

- In academic fields there will be co-operation in the field of lexicography (the preparation of dictionaries) and dialectology (such as the study of Low German loanwords in Lithuanian dialects);

- The sound archives of language material will get further information about the existing project on Endangered Archives which Tjeerd de Graaf has initiated with the archives in St. Petersburg and Vienna (financially supported by the British Library);

- Lithuanian scholars will be invited to conferences in Fryslân, such as in 2008 the one on Endangered Languages at the Frisian Academy;

- The Vilnius Yiddish Institute will send information about new courses and literature on Yiddish, which may be useful for the Fuchs collection of Yiddish books at Tresoor, the provincial library of Fryslân;

- The Frisian Academy will be informed about and receive literature on languages, history and culture in the Baltic area;

- Tourist organisations in Fryslân might be interested in possibilities in Lithuania (tourism to the Kurische Nehrung) and vice versa.

### Conclusion and acknowledgements

Our short stay in Lithuania has been very interesting and useful and we really hope that it will trigger new activities in the future where both parts of the European Union in

West and East can further exchange ideas and profit from each others' experience and from this co-operation. Finally we should like to thank all colleagues in Lithuania for their assistance and hospitality. In particular we highly appreciate the help by Markus Roduner during the preparation of all our visits and the successful completion of our plans.

Paterswolde, November 2006

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## 6. Book Reviews

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### Daniel Abondolo (ed.), *The Uralic Languages*.

Routledge Language Family series, paperback reissue 2006 (originally issued in hardback 1998).

ISBN 10 0 415 41264 1

The Language Family series of volumes from Routledge is making a welcome return to the market in paperback form. Along with the Uralic volume, we can also see the reappearance of the Dravidian, Turkic, Indo-European, Bantu and Semitic language series. Each volume is edited by an acknowledged expert in the field, and consists of chapters on the individual languages or groups of languages within the series. They are therefore invaluable to the comparative linguist and language typologist, but this particular volume is of additional interest to the endangered language specialist, because most of the languages it covers are to a greater or lesser extent endangered. This book contains extensive material on the history, phonology, morphology, grammar, syntax and lexicon of a range of languages whose long-term future is far from assured in all but three cases (Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian), and includes Saami, Mordva, Mari, Udmurt, Komi, Khanty, Mansi, Samoyedic, Nganasan, Nenets and Selkup. An invaluable guide to a widespread family of languages, with information not available elsewhere in English, collected under one cover. The volume is comprehensively supplied with maps and tables.

Chris Moseley

### E.M. Rickerson & Barry Hilton (ed.), *The 5 Minute Linguist: Bite-sized essays on language and languages*.

London & Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2006.

ISBN 10 1 84553 199 X

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives designated 2005 as 'The Year of Languages' in the United States, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) did its best to ensure that this celebration did not go unnoticed. Among the many prongs of its activities was a radio series broadcast on American public, commercial and college stations called *Talkin' about*

*Talk*. The project was co-ordinated by the two editors of this volume, centred at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. It consisted of a whole year's worth of weekly five-minute broadcasts, 52 in all, authored by various experts on different aspects of language, and set out to explain the answers, in simple layman's terms, to some commonly asked questions about language: "How many languages are there in the world?", "Why do languages change?", "Do all languages have the same grammar?", "What does it mean to be bilingual?", and, if of interest to readers of this organ, "Can a threatened language be saved?" – among many others. The title and starting-point of each five-minute talk is a question. Like so many great ideas, it's a simple and effective one, and it cannot have failed to provoke a lot of revision of assumptions about language among its listeners.

Equinox Publishing, based in London, is to be congratulated on putting these talks into printed form, slightly revised, and augmenting it with a further eight papers, bringing the total to 60. To a professional linguist, perhaps the questions posed in some of the titles may seem a little naïve, but on both sides of the Atlantic the monolith of English tends to impose a curtain of ignorance about other languages and language in general, so this little initiative is to be heartily welcomed.

Chris Moseley

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## 7. Letters to the Editor

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### From Juris Cibuls, Latvia, by e-mail:

In May there will be an international conference on ethnic aspects...[see section 9 below -ed.] Then this year we will celebrate the 90th anniversary since Latgale decided to become part of Latvia....

I don't remember if I have told you about my exhibition in Thessaloniki. The official authorities of the Council of Thessaloniki prohibited displaying of a Macedonian primer from Skopje. I had to take it back to Riga! I was glad they did not confiscate it. I still remember the times when I was not allowed to exhibit the Polish primer (during the times of 'Solidarity'), when the Soviet customs confiscated the Latvian primers from America, etc.

In October I went to Lithuania to visit my friends there. We went also to a small town Trakai near Vilnius where Karaims still live (some 200 persons). I have written an article about them and it will be published soon.

Now I have my exhibition in Latgale. It is dedicated to the 85th anniversary since a Latgalian primer by F. Trasuns was published. The exhibition takes place in his museum. I am happy and proud of having the original of his primer, so I was able to make a xerox copy and present it to the museum.

Best regards

Juris

## 8. Overheard on the Web

**Mapuche is ours, not yours**(Geoff Pullum in *Language Log*, 24 November 2006)

Back in 2004, prompted by Bill Poser's report of a lawsuit in which a relative of the person who coined the term *googol* was suing Google over a property claim on the word *Google*, I satirically **claimed** personal ownership of the nouns *crump*, *ether*, *parsley*, *heli-copter*, *oligarchy*, and *rhodium*, the preposition *of*, and all derivatives of the verb *snuggle*. I took it to be self-evidently hilarious that anyone could claim ownership of some ordinary non-trademarked dictionary word, especially on grounds of a family connection (and never mind the fact that *Google* and *googol* are not the same word). Now the **Mapuches** seek to claim ownership of their entire language, on the basis of a tribal connection, and they regard **Microsoft's** localization of its software by translating messages into Mapuche as theft of the Mapuche people's stuff. It really is very hard for a satirist to keep out ahead of real life, isn't it?

A couple of correspondents have suggested to me and Mark that the press reports are crazier than reality; they claim Spanish-language accounts of what is going on reveal that the Mapuche people are objecting to pre-emption of decisions about which alphabetic writing system to adopt for their language. Quite a few have been on offer, and the Microsoft decision to go for one of them, known as *Azmfuche*, was taken without general agreement by the Mapuche but will now be definitive. But my general impression is that even the Spanish sources reveal plenty of fundamentally misguided political ranting on the part of the Mapuches. A language is not something that could be or should be controlled by a people or its political leadership, and making software available in a certain writing system or language is not a threat to, or a theft of, cultural patrimony. Not even if it does encourage a tendency toward standardization in some particular direction. So far I still see this story as having a tinge of the ridiculous about it. For some serious and informed discussion of the issue that takes a more sympathetic view, see the posting by Jane Simpson "Sovereignty over Languages and Land", *Paradisec* web-site for transient languages and cultures, 25 November 2006. as well as discussion on the Spanish-language sites *El Morro Cotudo* and *Zona Impacto - Mapuches en el cyberespacio*.

**Sovereignty over languages and land**(Jane Simpson et al. in *Univ. Sydney Transient Languages and Cultures*, 25 November 2006)

Assertion of intellectual property rights over languages is happening. Here's an FAQ in a public archive for Australian Aboriginal material (**ASEDA**, **AIATSIS**).

<http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/ASEDA/faq.html#manage>

Q: Why do speakers restrict access to material in their languages?

A: Many speakers of endangered languages consider that their language is their intellectual property, passed down to them from their ancestors. If it is made freely available to others, then their rights in that language can be diminished. Usually they do not want strangers to use words and sentences of their languages in an inappropriate way, and want to be consulted prior to public use.

At *Language Log*, Mark Liberman has a couple of comments on Tom's recent post about this with respect to the Mapuche people's complaint against Microsoft, and following Geoffrey Pullum's post on the same topic.

If this idea were really to be accepted into the system governing the usual laws of property, I suspect that the consequences would surprise and displease many of those who start out supporting it. For some discussion, see "The Algonquian morpheme auction" (3/3/2004).

To the bad consequences... The "usual laws of property" is the soft spot. What are they? We're dealing here with people who by and large have customary ways of behaving, sometimes called customary law, rather than written statutes. Bringing customary law into a legal system is tricky (cf. the Australian Government report *The Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Laws*)—but possible.

Take the example of land held in common by Indigenous people. In Australia, recognising Aboriginal title to land required passing an Act (*Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* 1976) which allowed Aboriginal Land Trusts to "hold title to land in the Northern Territory for the benefit of Aboriginals entitled by Aboriginal tradition to the use or occupation of the land concerned". This in effect created a special land title, Aboriginal freehold title, one which is owned in common by the members of the Aboriginal Land Trust. The land held by the trust cannot legally be bought or sold.

A similar process *could* be developed to look after property rights held in common for languages. So the bad consequence mentioned in "The Algonquian morpheme auction" — *Disney owns my language!* — could be blocked. But the costs would be huge, both in developing the process, and then later, since bringing customary law into the seductive embrace of the state will probably just fatten the litigious and their helpers (as noted in an earlier *Language Log* post).

Mark Liberman then asks:

Here's a question: if the use of a language has to be licensed by the tribal elders, can they withhold this permission from someone who wants to criticize them, or to say something else that they don't approve of?

I'm guessing he's thinking of a group withholding permission from an outsider to use their language to criticise them. In the Australian Indigenous societies I know, people have the unquestioned right to speak the languages accepted as their parents' languages. So "tribal elders" aren't on about licensing kids to speak their own language. But outsiders? Well, I can't see why Indigenous communities couldn't have that right. Just as copyright laws allow a map-maker or a publisher to refuse a critic permission to republish a map. Or trespass laws allow me to prevent a critic from coming onto my land, let alone erecting a billboard on it criticising me (however justifiably).

Three differences are important here - a difference between rights held by an individual and rights held by a group, a difference over which rights can be traded and which are inalienable, and a difference as to whether a right-holder has the right to license other people to enjoy some part of that right. Individuals—so Australians, North Americans and some other groups believe—have rights to control access to land and re-publication, and to buy and sell those rights, or licences to them. We allow people to assert rights to some words as trademarks, and to license others to use the trademarked words. As for groups, leaving aside companies and trusts which act as pseudo-individuals, we (well, most of us) think it reasonable for groups—our governments—to assert a basic right to control access to our countries (sovereignty), and we're pretty wary about selling off this right.

Some Indigenous groups don't recognise individual rights to trade in land, or to trademark words, or to sing another person's song. They do assert rights *as a group* to control access to their land and to their languages, but probably not to trade those rights. Sovereignty over languages as well as land. But in actual practice, probably the best way of getting rights over language recognised (unless money is involved, as it **can be**) is to rely on what customary law relies on - politeness, and educating outsiders as to what is polite. Which is the flipside of Mark Liberman's comment "Whatever the outcome, linguists' best protection against such problems is to be solidly based in the speech communities in question".

**Comments**

Very interesting defense of the possibility of having property rights over languages. I wonder, however, if the subject of that right can be the group, to the exclusion of the individual. It is obvious that an "outsider" cannot speak a language if he or she does not learn it from at least one individual that speaks it. And once s/he learns it, why would s/he be considered an outsider anymore (provided that things like racial exclusion are not in

your bag of reasons)? Furthermore, things could get even more complicated. I bet, for instance, that Microsoft did not ask its employees to learn Mapudungu but it hired at least one native speaker of Mapudungu (not an outsider) in order to translate Windows to that language. I think we all can agree that that translation must count as that speaker's utterances. How come does anybody could have rights over the possibility that a person speaks his/her own language? Language cannot be equated to land. It is easy to see why could be dangerous to grant individual rights to sell pieces of a collective land (at the end, it could destroy a community). But it is hard for me to see what the risks are with language. At the end, those claims are just a manifestation of prescriptive discourse, which have always had a magical flavor (in both Western and Non-Western societies), and whose final goal is to install a tool for the negotiation of power, that is, a political tool. And with respect to indigenous people, that could even be a good thing, but we need to address the actual political and social motivations (their call for recognition and empowerment) rather than falsify the nature of language.

Posted by: Miguel Rodríguez-Mondofredo | November 27, 2006 09:29 AM

**Language as property:** In some societies the right to speak for a language is deemed a property that is inherited from your parents - along with rights to use particular tracts of country and associated creation stories and songs. So even if I learned to speak Warumungu really well, I'd still be an outsider, because I have not inherited the right to the language. It would be another matter if I were properly 'adopted' and lived in a Warumungu family and took on the rights and responsibilities that come with adoption.

Bound up with language as property are the ideas of **respect for ownership**, and **denial of access to the language**. Respect seems to matter to speakers of many small languages, regardless of how strong the language is. It's their language; they have the right to say how it's spelled, what the words of the language are, when and where it's used in public. Denial of access is far less common—probably because mostly people want to use languages they know well to talk to other people in. Perhaps the most famous group who have denied a type of access to their language are the Pueblo Indian group who speak Towa (Jemez) and who do not want their language written down. In Australia my impression is that when languages are strong and children speak them, the speakers usually welcome outsiders learning their languages, and encourage them to do so (as Raymattja Marika has done by producing Yolngu language materials). When a language is moribund and is not needed for communication, then descendants of speakers may be upset about what they have lost, and resent outsiders learning it. And in such situations passions rise if they believe outsiders are making money from their language—e.g. non-Indigenous tour guides showing tourists Indigenous places,

and providing Indigenous names for plants and animals, and sharing Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge with the tourists.

Groups always have trouble with balancing the rights of individuals and the rights of groups. In any society some individual could go against the wishes of the group and do something that the group doesn't approve of - e.g building an unapproved extension to a house, or teaching outsiders a language. And there's always a problem determining who the group is.

Posted by: Jane Simpson | November 27, 2006 12:55 PM

I recall a situation, years ago, when a friend of mine, a professor of Urdu and Hindi in the United States, received death threats for teaching a class in Arabic language. That's it, no assertion of insults to the Prophet or anything, just that it was a sacred language and no non-Muslim should be allowed to teach it.

More to the point, the only people who would use Microsoft's translation would be speakers of the language, so clearly speakers of the language have complete control over whether it is used or not. It cannot destroy the language, it can't even reduce the use of another variety of the language, any more than the availability of a Spanish version of the software does. If the community is worried that individuals would adopt this unapproved version of the language, aren't they just as worried that individuals would adopt Spanish or English? I fail to see how any harm is done to the language or the culture or to any property rights, individual or collective, in either.

Posted by: Jay Cummings | November 28, 2006 04:57 AM

### Who Owns Language?

(Stentor Danielson, on Debitage, 13 December 2006)

There's some interesting discussion going on over the Mapuche tribe's suit against Microsoft, which asserts the tribe's sovereignty over its language (Mapudungan) and therefore denies Microsoft the right to produce versions of its software in Mapudungan.

This may be partly a case where a procedural violation -- the Mapuche were not consulted directly by Microsoft in the process of producing the Mapudungan versions of the software -- is being fought on the territory of the substantive outcome. But I think there's also something to the substantive case. (Indeed, here it's difficult to disentangle the two, since the Mapuche's objection seems to be not so much to the very idea of a Mapudungan version of Word as it is to *Microsoft making a Mapudungan version of Word*.)

Defenders of Microsoft make both deontological and consequentialist claims. Deontologically, they point out that the idea of group ownership of language is absurd within our Western system. The usual rebuttal is to argue that rights (or at least some rights, of which property rights would be the clearest

case) are culturally relative. I'm more interested here in the consequentialist case\* -- how does Microsoft making a Mapudungan version of Word hurt the Mapuche? Or more generally, how does an outsider's use of an element of a culture harm insiders?

My answer depends on three main concepts: structuration, diversity of values, and power. Structuration refers to the fact that social institutions evolve through use. A language is thus not a fixed object that can be picked up, used, and put back the way it was. The popular descriptivist position in linguistics -- words and grammatical structures mean whatever people use them to mean -- is a correct structurationist position\*\*. By diversity of values, I mean that different people have different ideas about what society should be like. *Ceteris paribus*, it's better for a given person's values to be realized than not. One's pursuit of those values will be constrained by the available institutions, but they will also shape how one uses those institutions, and hence what those institutions look like when one is done with them.

Finally, power refers to the fact that different people and groups have different abilities to reshape institutions in accordance with their use of them. Problems arise when inequalities of power align with (real or potential) differences in values. The minority (in power, and often numerically as well) then finds their ability to achieve their values limited, because they have limited influence over the social institutions available to them. This is a problem even when the difference is merely numerical -- while it may be fair in each instance taken in isolation for the larger group to get its way, when taken as a whole a persistent minority will end up getting outvoted every time. The solution here is autonomy -- to separate the institutions used by the majority and the minority, so that the majority's use of their version does not affect the version used by the minority. This goes some way toward explaining the emergence of subcultures and the fierce defense of existing cultural diversity.

Thus, when Microsoft makes a Spanish version of Word, it's little threat to most of the Spanish-speaking community for two reasons. On the one hand, Microsoft's values with respect to the Spanish language are not likely to be that divergent from those of most Spanish-speakers. Second, Microsoft's power vis-a-vis the 400 million Spanish speakers is comparatively limited -- indeed, Microsoft is largely at the mercy of the general public's usage and the pronouncements of Spanish grammarians. But both of those factors tilt against the Mapuche. It's far more likely that Microsoft will have different values from the Mapuche, and it's reasonable for an oppressed group to be especially suspicious of one of the world's biggest corporations on this count. And Microsoft's power to define Mapudungan is greatly exaggerated vis-a-vis a small and disempowered group like the Mapuche. Thus group rights to language sovereignty (and by similar arguments, rights to sovereignty over other cultural products) are absurd in the case



of "big" languages like English and Spanish, but may be a legitimate defense mechanism in the case of "small" languages like Mapudungun.

Bringing the question of power into the discussion, however, raises yet another difficult problem -- establishing the legitimacy of the Mapuche's desire to limit outsiders' use of their language. We want to let the Mapuche decide when and how their language may be used, rather than presume to decide on their behalf what would be good for them. But this presents us with a Scylla and Charybdis situation. On the one hand, in recognition of our own limited understanding of the situation and our disproportionate power, we want to avoid an imperialistic use of our own ideals of legitimacy to judge claims made by Mapuche individuals or groups. But on the other hand, we also want to avoid a naive assumption that Mapuche views on this issue are internally uncontested or that we can treat the traditional leadership of the tribe as legitimately speaking for everyone (assuming we can even rely on our own understanding of what that traditional distribution of authority is).

\*Since I think any assertion of a right must have an underlying consequentialist justification, though of course the relativistic argument could be used to deny the relevance of the sort of utilitarianism I'll apply.

\*\*Though this should not be taken to the extreme of denying the validity of debate over the proper use of language. While Platonic sorts of arguments about the transcendental correctness of certain meanings are invalid, pragmatic arguments -- "we should use these words in this way because it allows us to make certain useful distinctions" -- are still fine. Indeed, such pragmatic arguments merely articulate what structuration tells us will be happening inevitably.

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## 9. Forthcoming Meetings

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### **Babel in reverse? Language ideology in the 21st century, 20-22 Feb 2007, Catholic Academy Wolfsburg / Mülheim**

Sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation

Language shift and attempts of language revitalization are manifestations of language ideological views. Language ideologies constitute thereby the basis from which support for as well as criticism against language revitalization is generated. Language death is not a new phenomenon. Novel is the speed with which languages are presently lost. To what extent language endangerment is an effect of changing communicative requirements and to which extent it is an effect of language ideology remains an unresolved question so far. There can be no doubt, however, that dominant language ideologies, shaped in the course of nation building processes, are detrimental to the preservation of local languages. Such language ideologies address elite interests and

overlook the interests of everybody else. Indigenous language minorities are crucially affected. As self-fulfilling prophecies, language ideologies play a crucial role in rendering multilingual polities into the monolingual nations they imagine to exist. Modernist language ideologies threaten linguistic diversity and they do so irrespective of the communicative requirements of their speakers. The present conference addresses these issues by discussing language endangerment with a focus on language ideology.

The questions to be addressed at the conference are:

To what extent are attempts for or scepticism against language revitalisations manifestations of modernist language ideology?

What language ideological views are in the way of developing new functions of local languages?

What is preventing speakers of endangered languages to use them more frequently?

What is undermining the utility of local languages?

To what extent can lack of utility of local languages be counter-balanced by cultural or socio-psychological factors?

How can dominated languages be marketed?

To whom does language revitalization appear to be irrelevant, inappropriate or a threat and why is that so?

How do local identities and cultures differ with or without local languages?

Do we perceive languages as systems or as performances and what are the effects thereof with regard to language revitalisation and language rights?

What are the limits of language policies with regard to language revitalisation?

[www.uni-due.de/japan/conferences\\_en.shtml](http://www.uni-due.de/japan/conferences_en.shtml)

### **Conference on Endangered Languages and Cultures of Native America, 13-15 April 2007 Salt Lake City, Utah.**

(CELCNA III) (3rd annual CELCNA), University of Utah

Sponsors: Smithsonian Institution and CAIL (Center for American Indian Languages, University of Utah)

Keynote speakers: Marianne Mithun (UCSB) and Christine Sims (Acoma Pueblo; University of New Mexico)

Deadline for ABSTRACTS is past.

Registration: \$25 (students \$15) [to cover cost of conference rooms, refreshments]

Abstract guidelines: Abstracts, no longer than 500 words (a paragraph or two will do), should include paper title, name of author/authors, affiliation. Abstracts should be submitted by e-mail, in Microsoft Word document, RTF, or PDF. Include contact

details for the period of time from January to April 2006. Only one abstract per person (except where a paper has multiple authors).

Accommodations: University Guest House - two minute walk from the meeting venue (Heritage Center) and CAIL. To book accommodations, contact the Guest House directly (mention CELCNA): University Guest House University of Utah 110 South Fort Douglas Blvd., Salt Lake City, Utah 84113-5036 Toll free: 1-888-416-4075 (or 801-587-1000), Fax 801-587-1001

Website [www.guesthouse.utah.edu](http://www.guesthouse.utah.edu)

(Please make reservations early; rooms will be held for the conference only until early March.)

Additional information: Contact Nancy Garcia or for particular questions, write Lyle Campbell. If you need information not easily arranged via e-mail, please call: Tel. 801-587-0720 or 801-581-3441 during business hours, or Fax 801-585-7351.

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Tel. 801-581-3441 (office), 801-585-9785 (Dept.), 801-587-0720 (CAIL); Fax 801-585-7351

### **"Ethnicity in Europe: Sociopolitical and Cultural Processes" 24 – 26 May 2007 Rēzekne, Latgalia/Latvia**

Since January 2006, *Rezekne Higher Educational Institution* (RHEI) *Department of Philology* in cooperation with *Centre d'études linguistiques pour l'Europe* (Italy) has been carrying out the common project „A Survey of the Ethnolinguistic Situation in Latgale“. The project investigates ethnical and linguistic processes in Latgale, drawing attention to the influence of religion and language on both the (concrete) micro-environment (individual, family) and the macro-environment (community, society). Data collected during the project will be summarized by January 2007.

The conference will be organized in order to present and evaluate the results of the project and to work out practical recommendations for developing fields such as language policy, culture and education. We would like to share experiences with experts from other countries and regions. Hence we invite scientists and practical persons (representatives of culture, education, mass media, etc.) of the fields mentioned above to participate in our conference.

The conference intends to provide the frame for interdisciplinary discourse in the following fields:

Sociolinguistics and Ethnolinguistics

Language Policy and Language Planning

Language Education

History of Culture, Art

Philosophy, History of Religions

Folklore, Literary Science

Social Sciences.

The languages of the conference will be Latvian, Latvian, English and Russian. Translation will be provided if necessary.

Presentation time: 15 minutes + 5 minutes for discussion.

The conference will take place in Rēzekne – in the heart of the historical and ethno-cultural region of Latgale, in Eastern Latvia (for further details about Rēzekne see <http://rezekne.risc.lv>).

Participation fee: 30 EUR or 20 LVL, including coffee breaks and preliminary conference materials.

Payment should be made to RHEI bank account (in Lats) until April 30, 2007 (or during conference time):

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Conference secretaries/Registration Office:

Sanita Lazdiņa

Rēzeknes Augstskola

Atbrīvošanas aleja 115, Rēzekne, LV – 4600

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e-mail: [lasa1.at.inbox.lv](mailto:lasa1.at.inbox.lv)

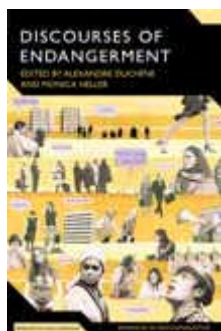
Social arrangements of the conference:

Acquaintance event

Conference Dinner – 15 EUR or 10 LVL

Post - Conference Latgale excursion (May 26th) – about 10 EUR or 7 LVL

The second circular will be sent to all prospective participants who register at the Secretariat of the conference ([lasa1.at.inbox.lv](mailto:lasa1.at.inbox.lv)) by 22 January 2007.



Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, January 2007

Hardback: ISBN 0 8264 8745 9 U.K. £75.00

[www.continuumbooks.com](http://www.continuumbooks.com)

Current academic discussions and public debates frequently focus on the importance of defending languages against various kinds of dangers. Many focus on defending institutionalized languages against multilingualism, or conversely defending minority languages against the incursion of larger ones. This book challenges such a view, to argue that the discussions in question are not about language itself, but rather that we are witnessing, on the terrain of language, ideological struggles which are centrally about the position of nation states and of minorities in the new globalized world order. Covering a wide-range of languages from different sociolinguistic perspectives, this book is essential reading for academics interested in language endangerment and sociolinguistics.

**K. David Harrison, When Languages Die: The extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge**

Oxford University Press, NY, 2007

Hardback: ISBN: 9780195181920 Pages: 304 U.S. \$ 29.95

<http://www.oup.com/us>

Speakers of thousands of the world's languages are now switching to speaking global tongues, abandoning their ancestral tongues at an unprecedented rate. As these languages vanish, what exactly is being lost? This book highlights the complex systems of knowledge embedded in language, and shows their loss, on the individual and global scales. Language abandonment is a loss not only to the communities, but to the scholars of every field, and to humanity as a whole.

**Osahito Miyaoka, Osamu Sakiyama, Michael E. Krauss: The Vanishing Languages of the Pacific Rim**

Oxford University Press, NY, 2007

Hardback: ISBN: 9780199266623 Pages: 552 Price: U.K. £ 65.00

<http://www.oup.com/us>

This book presents the first comprehensive survey of the languages of the Pacific rim, a vast region containing the greatest typological and genetic diversity in the world. As its languages decline and disappear, sometimes without trace, this rich linguistic heritage is rapidly eroding. Distinguished scholars report on the current state of the region's languages. Their analyses range from the regional to the local and focus on languages in a wide variety of social and ecological settings. Together they make a compelling case for research throughout the region, and show how and where this needs to be done.



**Sarasvati, Hindu goddess of culture, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore**

## 10. Recent Publications

**Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller (ed.), Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and interest in the defence of languages**

# *Foundation for Endangered Languages*

## **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 channels and 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.

Membership in the Foundation is open to all. If you need an application form, please contact the Editor at the address on page 2 above.



Foundation for Endangered Languages

Please send this form, or a copy of it, to the Foundation's UK Treasurer:

Chris Moseley, 9 Westdene Crescent, Caversham Heights, Reading RG4 7HD, England

e-mail: chrismoseley50.at.yahoo.com

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