IATIKU

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2

THE FOUNDATION

FOR

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

EDITED BY

NICHOLAS D. M. OSTLER

Iatiku

Newsletter of the Foundation for Endangered Languages: # 2
9 April 1996

Iatiku is the mother goddess of the Acoma tribe of New Mexico, who caused people to speak different languages so that it would not be so easy for them to quarrel.[1]

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

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Daniel Nettle, FEL,
Anthropology, University College London
Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, England

Those who find difficulty (technical or financial) in sending subscriptions in one of the two ways suggested should contact the President (Nicholas Ostler, address as above in the masthead) in the hope that an accommodation can be reached.

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Please enrol me as a Friend of Endangered Languages. I enclose my subscription fee, as indicated below, for the year beginning 1 May 1996. In return, I expect to receive the quarterly newsletter Iatiku, together with full details of the Foundation's incorporation, meetings and other activities in that year.

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Signed: Date:

Name: Tel. (daytime):
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1.   Editorial

This is the second issue of Iatiku, the first public expression of the Foundation for Endangered Languages. The Foundation is conceived as a free and independent association of those who are concerned at the loss of more and more of the world's languages. It will act

(i)   to raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all channels and media;

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

(iii)   to monitor linguistic policies and practices, and to seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary;

(iv)   to support the documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results;

(v)   to collect together and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages;

(vi)   to disseminate information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.

Since the first issue of Iatiku appeared, on the 1st of May last year, the Foundation has elected its first officers, identified the range of languages with which it will first look to set up links, and agreed its Manifesto.

The Foundation will be constituted formally in the UK as a company limited by guarantee. This will enable us to act as a recognized charity. There is a draft Memorandum and Articles of Association available for members to inspect, and these will be the Foundation's constitution.

We aim to ally concerned linguists with the growing interest and compassion of the public at large, to give the cause of endangered languages as sharp a profile among monolinguals in the first world as among those whose own linguistic heritage is actually threatened.

Based initially in a corner of Europe, south-west England, where there is no surviving competition to the global weed of English[2], it is not involved directly in particular linguistic battles, but it is well placed for access to the world's Anglo-Saxon media. We are not an outgrowth of any one language's, or group of languages', struggle for recognition. At the same time, the presence of Celtic languages, in Wales and by conscious revival in Cornwall, is close enough for us to hear the din of real combat, and to witness the nurturing of real linguistic growth.

We have access to some of the best linguistic expertise in our part of Europe, and through global

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[2]Like many other weeds, not without charms.

media to members all over the world. Yet we are an organization not just of linguists, but of concerned and knowledgeable citizens of the world. A major aim is **to provide funds for recording lesser known members of world's stock of languages.**

But we also have a mission is **to explain and interpret to our neighbours** what the pattern of those languages is like and how that pattern is changing, not always for the better. Through this we can hope to do something to influence that change, as well as to increase scholarly knowledge.[3]

This Issue of *Iatiku*

This is the second issue of our newsletter, which is intended as a quarterly publication. Conditions are still exceptional, however, and with this delivery it only just avoids being an annual one! With our organization still to be formally established, and the newsletter's circulation still very restricted, we have not yet attempted to secure articles written specifically for *Iatiku*.

Even so, there is no lack of material that warrants distribution. Besides the accounts of our own meetings, and the re-echoes, as far as we have been able to trace them of our Seminar on the Conservation of Endangered Languages held last April), I have included a variety of pieces that have appeared on the Internet in the course of the last year. The reach of the Net is, as yet, nothing like universal, even among the concerned linguists who we see as the first, core members of our Foundation. Even for those with access to the Net, it is difficult to keep track of all the new developments, so as to find the information when one has the opportunity to use it. Here you have a repository of new developments world wide in Endangered Languages since 1 May 1995.[4]

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[3]The Minutes of Meeting 5 give a first glimpse of the kind of activities which we shall kick off in this first year of our official existence.

[4]The main (but not exclusive) net sources of *Iatiku's* information are the following lists:
- LINGUIST at Linguist@tamvm1.tamu.edu
- NAT-LANG, for information and discussion of the languages of aboriginal peoples, run by Gary S. Trujillo, at nat-lang@gnosys.svle.ma.us
- ENDANGERED-LANGUAGES-L, for those working on, or interested in, the study and documentation of disappearing or endangered languages; not just linguistics, at majordomo@coombs.anu.edu.au. The list is owned by Mari Rhydwen (mrhydwen@ecel.uwa.edu.au).

For languages of the Americas, good sources are the (very frequent) electronic SSILA Bulletin, and the (postally distributed) SSILA Newsletter, issued to members of the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas by Victor Golla <gollav@axe.humboldt.edu>, Native American Studies, Dept. of Anthropology, Humboldt State Univ. Arcata, CA 95521 USA

We pass on notes of **appeals** with relevance to the survival of languages, which give readers a chance to do something immediate and concrete for the cause. These vary: in this issue, one concerns action directly relevant to a tiny language community, a second is a request for funds for a minority language publishing venture, and a third is an explicitly political call.

Among descriptions of recent **meetings**, we offer November's Symposium in Tokyo which served as the inaugural meeting of the International Clearing House for Endangered Languages, which has been set up as part of the UNESCO initiative and manages the Red Book. This section is drawn from the Clearing House's own Newsletter. Besides the overview of the symposium itself, it contains much useful comment and suggestion from Profs Shigeru Tsuchida (of Tokyo) and Akira Yamamoto (of Kansas). In particular, Yamamoto lists ten talking points, issues which could usefully set the focus for future conferences.

We propagate the latest details known to us on new **activities** around the world which increase knowledge of, or concern for endangered languages: here we bring you up to date on *Terralingua* (Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity), which is being organized by David Hermon from a base in Hancock, Michigan, USA; and the recent *Language Documentation Urgency List*, set up by Dietmar Zaefferer at the University of Munich, which is now beginning to collect language descriptions.

The next two sections are a miscellany, first of fragments of **discussions** of issues (and a poem!) related to endangered languages, and then of a few **sources**, both in the electronic world and the real one, where useful information may be sought. Discussions range widely:- how should a linguist react when resources seem to go to languages with little hope of recovery? what use is literacy to peoples whose languages may only ever have flourished with out it? what consistency can or should there be in what linguists pay their informants? The round-up of sources continues with a list of forthcoming **conferences** (interpreted widely enough to include a film festival), and recent **publications**.

In future issues I shall be including readers' letters, and also literary or discussion pieces which will start to make Iatiku a real forum for Endangered Languages. As the Foundation's activities begin to make themselves felt, they will provide a natural focus for *Iatiku* articles, but the Newsletter should remain more general than the Foundation, with a place for topical content, wherever the diversity of human language, and efforts to protect it, may roam.

This will be the last issue of Iatiku that is issued free. It contains, as a final page, a form to request membership of our Foundation: you will be a "Friend" of Endangered Languages until we are fully incorporated later this year. Later issues of Iatiku will go to subscribing members only. I hope you will want to join our enterprise in taking action on

behalf of the world's endangered languages. And if you do, please write in with your own suggestions and comments on this issue, as well as contributions for the next one -- due out in July!

2.   Development of the Foundation

Since the first issue of Iatiku on 1 May 1995, there have been three more meetings of the Foundation, on 12 June in London which appointed an Executive Committee, on 4 October at High Wycombe, which discussed a draft of the Foundation's manifesto, and on 15 January 1996 again in London, where a number of future activities were mooted. Brief reports of these meetings follow, including a copy of the Manifesto as it has emerged.

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 April 1996, to be held in the lead-up to the meeting of the Linguistic Association of Great Britain at the University of Sussex. Again, see below for the Agenda.

Taking into account member's suggestions we have also selected a draft list of language communities whose survival and progress will form the starting focus for our work.

Aims of the Foundation

Here is the new Manifesto for the Foundation, taking into account discussions at the Fourth and Fifth Meetings of the Foundation.

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, Grimes 1992) lists just over 6,500 living languages. Population figures are available for just over 6,000 of them (or 92%). Of these 6,000, it may be noted that:
- 52% 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 109 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:-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reports on   Meetings 3, 4, 5

Meeting 3: DTI London, 12 June 1995

Attendees:

Daniel Nettle,	Anthropology, UCL
Bruce Connell,	Inst. Social & Cultural Anthropology, Oxford
Greville Corbett,	President, LAGB
Stephen May,	Sociology, U. Bristol
Christopher Moseley,	BBC
Bob Robins,	CIPL
Clinton Robinson,	SIL
Allan Wynne Jones,	Menter a Busnes
Philip Baker,	Logosphere Project
Nicholas Ostler,	Linguacubun Ltd

(These affiliations are just for interest, of course: no-one was representing anyone but themselves.)

At this meeting an **Executive Committee** was appointed, with particular responsibilities as follow:

Nicholas Ostler	President
Allan Wynne Jones	Secretary

(Note: Allan resigned at Meeting 5 and was replaced by Andrew Woodfield.)

Daniel Nettle	Treasurer
Stephen May	Publicity
Christopher Moseley	Group Liaison

Meeting 4: SIL High Wycombe, 4 Oct 95

Present: Nicholas Ostler (Chair), Allan Wynne Jones, (Secretary), Roger Blench, Bruce Connell, Keir Hansford, Gillian Hansford, Stephen May, Christopher Moseley, Bob Robins, Clinton Robinson, Janet Pearson, Mahendra K Verma, Andrew Woodfield.

The main work of this meeting was to discuss the Manifesto which appears above.

The Secretary led members through the decision making process contained in papers provided by the Welsh Cooperative Centre, and the meeting agreed that "Company Limited by Guarantee" would be an appropriate status for the Foundation under the laws of the UK. This allowed the Foundation to pursue all kinds of activities (including revenue-earning ones), protect members from significant liability, but to retain the status of a charity. Any trading surplus built up by the Foundation could never be distributed to members.

Andrew Woodfield offered a connexion with the University of Bristol, which was welcomed by the meeting.

There was also some discussion of the relation of SIL to the Foundation. While it welcomed co-operation in the pursuit of its objectives, the Foundation stressed its own independence.

Meeting 5: DTI London, 15 Jan 1996

Present: Nicholas Ostler (Chair), Nigel Birch, Christopher Moseley, Daniel Nettle, Ian Roberts, Bob Robins, Clinton Robinson, Colin Williams, Andrew Woodfield, Allan Wynne Jones

Apologies: Allan Campbell, Greville Corbett, David Crystal, Dick Hayward, Rosaleen Howard-Malverde, Marilyn Martin Jones, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Steve May, Frances Morphy, Glanville Price, Anna Siewierska, Graham Turner, Mahendra Verma, Meurig Williams

Selections from the Minutes:

Allan Wynne Jones announced that he would be unable to continue as Secretary as he had just been appointed President of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.

. . .

(3) Election of New Secretary: Nicholas Ostler proposed Andrew Woodfield. This was seconded by Dan Nettle. Unanimously approved.

(4) Manifesto:
    The revised draft drawn up by Nicholas Ostler had been circulated before the meeting. A few minor alterations were suggested and approved. *(Chairman's note: The full text, as now approved, is included above, at the beginning of section 2.)*

(5) Engineering and Physical Science Research Council:
Multilingual Initiative, presented by Nigel Birch (EPSRC, Polaris House, Swindon. Tel 01793 444030 Fax 444006 email: nigel.birch @epsrc.ac.uk)

Nigel Birch outlined the structure and assessment procedures of the Council, which draws upon a pool or college of potential assessors when setting up ad hoc selection committees to consider grant-applications. These committees rely heavily upon peer reviews.
    The EPSRC currently supports research in cognitive science in addition to the support offered by the BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council). The Computer Science section is divided into 6 programme areas, one being Human Factors including speech and language. This area is described as 'The analysis and solution of problems relating to people's interactions, as individuals, groups or organisations, with information, artefacts, technologies and systems'. Its breadth of scope opens the door to possible funding for research projects on topics of interest to FEL.
    Four themes are emphasised: People, Domains of Application, Technologies, Effectiveness. EPSRC funding also includes a component for basic research on language and languages, provided that the research holds out some prospect of benefiting British society. Multi-lingual issues,

including issues relating to immigrant languages in the UK, are within the HF brief. EPSRC can provide support for workshops and meetings, and for the development of IT tools.

Various ideas were floated during the ensuing discussion. A Remit Statement for the EPSRC summarising its relations to the other Research Councils will be available in February. Nigel Birch said he would be happy to supply a copy of this document. He invited members to approach him for advice on the acceptability of projects and for assistance on how best to present them. The Chairman thanked Mr. Birch for his informative address. Many of those present had been unaware of the EPSRC's involvement in this area.

(6) Agreeing a Constitution:

Allan Wynne Jones had completed a questionnaire issued by Wales Cooperative Centre, upon which the WCC had drafted a model Memorandum and Articles of Association suitable for an organisation wishing to become a non-profit-making charitable company limited by guarantee. He suggested the following procedure be adopted:

- first appoint a Constitution Sub-committee. Let the Sub-committee meet to review the draft and adapt it to FEL's needs.

- Obtain informal legal advice on the redrafting.

- Take comments back to WCC who would incorporate them into a second draft.

- Circulate the second draft to all members in good standing and present it to the next meeting.

- Subject to the approval of those attending the meeting, submit the document for formal registration. The Welsh TUC would be willing to steer it through. A legal charge would be incurred at this stage, so revenue from membership subscriptions would need to have been collected beforehand.

This suggestion was welcomed. Allan Wynne Jones then proposed that the process of incorporation be set in motion. Seconded by Nicholas Ostler, this was approved.

The meeting then elected the following officers to serve on the Constitution Sub-committee: Nicholas Ostler, Dan Nettle, Chris Moseley, Steve May, Andrew Woodfield. It was agreed that they should meet on Monday February 5th at a suitable location in Bath or Bristol, to review the Memorandum and Articles draft.

(7) Post Box and Bank Account

Andrew Woodfield reported that the University of Bristol had agreed to serve as post box. The University preferred that the Foundation's address be: Department of Philosophy, University of Bristol, 9 Woodland Rd, Bristol BS8 1TB.

No objections were made, consequently it was resolved to accept the University's offer. After incorporation this would be the Foundation's registered address.

(ACTION Chairman) It was agreed that Nicholas Ostler should open a bank account in the name 'Friends of Endangered Languages' at a suitably located branch of a suitable bank, the first choice being the Co-operative Bank.

(8) **Future Activities:**

There was a fruitful discussion of possible projects that the proposed FEL might undertake. The following is a summary of the ideas that were floated.

• Designing an *interactive exhibition*, to be mounted in a space within an existing Museum or Exhibition Centre. AWJ mentioned a project for which a contract has already been drafted, intended primarily as an educational tourist attraction in Bangor or Caernarfon, illustrating the Welsh language in the context of world languages. DN noted that London University planned to do something on 3rd world languages as part of its 'end of decade' celebrations. A project by FEL to mount an exhibit on endangered languages could benefit from the cooperation and expertise of a number of institutions such as the Museum of Mankind (Royal Anthropological Institute), the National Sound Archive oral history section on audio and video tape (part of the British Library, director Alistair Bamford).

• Preparing an *information-package for journalists*, issuing press releases. Accuracy of information is paramount. Members have spoken on several occasions on radio and TV. CM reported that a few days before the meeting he and Mark Pagel (Oxford Zoology Dept) had appeared on a BBC TV World Service programme.

• Establishing *partnerships* with other organisations that have similar or complementary aims for such purposes as sponsoring conferences and obtaining funds for research. AWJ said that the Bureau for Lesser Used languages intended to press the EC to support an investigation into the intellectual foundations of the concept of linguistic diversity. A proposal from an English institution to explore this area would be welcomed. It would be desirable to have a follow-up to the Euromosaic project. CW pointed out that EC funds tended to go to projects that produced practical results in particular countries. Possible areas to explore included the role of East European languages in an enlarged EC, policy implications of multi-lingualism, commercial arguments in favour of linguistic diversity. Projects having a North-South focus are favoured.

- Script and *produce a video* on the loss of languages, or on particular languages. TV documentary film makers might give assistance (e.g. Andre Singer, ex-anthropologist and producer of Granada TV's 'Disappearing Worlds' series, currently involved in series 'Under the Sun'). CR mentioned that SIL is doing a video on a literacy project in Zaire. The diversity of writing systems and alphabets might be an interesting topic.

• Activities which develop the scope of *electronic media* to promote and support minority languages. Among these we can quote:

- 'STORYBOARD' proposal (NO), to give access to linguistic material characteristic of various cultures via databases available over the Internet

- 'HARMONIA' proposal (NO), to generalize the experience of minority language communities

in giving effective electronic support (notably in computing and TV) to use of the languages.

• Lobbying. Try to convene a meeting of sympathetic Lords to promote linguistic issues in Westminster (detaching these from specific political issues).

• Mounting particular campaigns linked to language communities known to members, based on the previous exercise to identify the areas of expertise amongst members..

Other ideas discussed this time at less length included hosting a *workshop*, gathering *documentation*, and laying on *courses* in minority languages.

At the end of this part of the discussion it was agreed that proposals depend heavily upon the initiative and enthusiasm of individuals, but members with bright ideas should be encouraged to communicate these to the Chairman or the Secretary and to bring proposals to meetings.

(9) Logosphere

Prof Colin Williams (Dept of Welsh, University of Wales, Cardiff CF1 3XW) was invited to speak. This is a long-term collaborative project initiated by David Dalby, ex-director of the African Studies Unit at SOAS, in which geographers and linguists use sophisticated statistical methods to produce linguistic profiles of regions of the world. Large or small regions can be pinpointed. Information at various levels of specificity can be represented. The data is drawn from many sources, including censuses and field-workers' reports. The data-base can be interrogated in various ways; it can represent the geographical distribution of speakers of a given language, the number of multilingual inhabitants of a town, dialectal variations within a given language, etc, and it can relate languages spoken in a region to other economic, demographic and ecological variables. A book by Dalby describing the project is due to be published in April 1996.

An informal document 'The Logosphere Seminar' was distributed. Those present were impressed by the ambitiousness of the project, though several were concerned that other teams of linguistic data-collectors in the world were probably ignorant of it. Logosphere would clearly be a potential source of the most up-to-date and reliable data, which is the crucially necessary basis for conservationist claims and arguments. Prof. Williams was warmly thanked for his presentation.

(10) News

A: Conferences

In general, it was resolved that any member who attends such a conference should be urged (a) to take FEL materials to the conference, (b) to submit a report of it to Iatiku.

Conservation of Endangered Languages: Echoes of the Bristol Seminar

Andrew Woodfield, now the Foundation's Secretary, had organized a seminar on The Conservation of Endangered Languages at the University of Bristol on 21 April 1995. There was some media coverage at the time, especially on the BBC World Radio and TV Services, but some of the echoes are only now being heard.

Andrew Woodfield's own account, "Having the Last Word" appeared in *Nonesuch*, the Bristol University alumni magazine for Autumn 1995, but the theme was not picked up in the UK national media until "Death of a Mother Tongue", by Gail Vines, appeared in New Scientist on 6 January. It came across as based on a string of interviews: but strangely enough, almost every one of the interviewees had given talks at our Seminar, and were saying what they said then.   Vines particularly emphasized Mark Pagel's claims that learning a language alters brain structure.

This article stimulated the BBC TV World Service to seek more interviews with Mark Pagel and Chris Moseley. Then in the week beginning 15 February the French review *Courrier International* carried a 4-page supplement "2000 langues en péril" which began with a translation of Vines' article, combining it with translations of articles on the unification of Chinese, linguistic minorities in France (alone with Greece in not having signed the EU charter on minorities), and an article by Fernando Savater decrying nationalists' tendency to turn languages into shibboleths.

Mark Pagel's views, this time correlating density of languages with climatic zone, surfaced again in a 3-page article by Natalie Levisalles "Aux pays des langues disparues" in the French daily *Libération* of 27 February, which interspersed the views of Michel Launey and various linguists at CNRS.[5]

And that's just what we've noticed without looking.

3.   Appeals

An Endangerment Situation In Brazil

Nilson Gabas, Jr. (gabas@marajo.secom.ufpa.br) has sent the following request for a letter from either individuals or institutions to support the rights of recently contacted Indians in the Igarape Omere region of Corumbiara, state of Rondonia, Brazil.

History

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (FUNAI) has known since the early 1980s that there were Indians living in the region of the Igarape Omere, in Rondonia, but only recently have these Indians been actually seen and contacted. Two distinct and small groups live there: the Kanoe (four Indians) and another group (seven Indians) who speak a previously unknown (or presumed extinct) language of the Tupari family of the Tupi stock. The land they inhabit includes three large farms, one of which

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[5]Sadly it also illustrated it with some cartoons to reinforce the oldest *canard* in our field: the profusion of words for snow among the Eskimo.

belongs to a landowner involved in a recent massacre involving squatters and hired gunmen.

The situation of these eleven Indians is precarious, because their presence is inconvenient for the ranchers (who have shown considerable ruthlessness in the past). To protect the Indians, a small group of personnel working for the Isolated Indians Department of FUNAI is in touch with them, guaranteeing their survival. This group cannot leave the area (they work in turns of 2-3 weeks) because of the possibility that the ranchers will take measures against the Indians.

Linguistic Situation

Kanoe, according to the classification of Aryon Rodrigues, is an isolated language that not fit into any of the other group of Brazilian languages. Besides the four Indians found in the region of the Igarape Omere, there are fewer than a half dozen other Kanoe speakers known, all elderly, living isolated from one another either in cities or in different Indian reservations.

The major linguistic work with the Kanoe language is an MA thesis on aspects of its phonology that was written by a student of Rodrigues. Other linguistic material includes only a few wordlists. One small paper about general aspects of Kanoe ethnography was published in the 1950s.

The language of the other group of Indians is either a new language or a language previously believed to be extinct. It is genetically affiliated to the Tupari family of the Tupi stock.

Legal Status

A formal request has been made by linguists and anthropologists to "interdict" the area (about 90,000 hectares) where these Indians live, to guarantee their survival. Interdiction would provide that the land on which the Indians live could not be touched for a specific period of time. This would give time for a working group to study the Indians, and to set up a reservation for them to live on permanently.

The request was published in November in the Diario Oficial da Uniao, the official publication of the Federal Government. The next step now is to get the approval of the Minister of Justice, the ministry to which FUNAI belongs.

Request

As a Brazilian linguist (PhD student at UC-Santa Barbara) who has been involved in the process of contacting these Indians and identifying their languages, I am interested in their survival. I would like to request from you (either as an individual or as member of any institution) a letter stating/requesting basically the following:

- You are aware of the question involving the Indians of the Igarape Omere, in Rondonia, Brazil;
- As a linguist (or anthropologist, etc.), you are interested on the maintenance of languages and cultures of these Indians, as well as their physical survival; - You would like to see measures taken to insure the survival of those groups, and you request

that the Minister of Justice of Brazil approves and signs the request for the interdiction of the area, as published in the Diario Oficial da Uniao (number 219, of Nov 16, 1995).
You can fax your letter or send it through regular mail to the following address:

Exmo. Sr. Ministro Nelson Azevedo Jobim
        Ministerio da Justica
        Esplanada dos Ministerios
        Bloco T 4o.Andar
        70004-900 Brasilia - DF
        fax 55-61-322-6817

Also, if you could, please send also a copy of your letter to the President of Brazil (who is sensitive to foreign pressure) at the following address:

Exmo. Sr. Presidente da Republica do Brasil
        Dr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso
        Palacio do Planalto
        Praca dos Tres Poderes
        70150-900 Brasilia - DF
        fax: 55-61-226-7566

A third copy of the letter, if possible, should be sent to FUNAI, for them to keep track of what is being sent to the Minister. The address of FUNAI is:

FUNAI - Diretoria de Assuntos Fundiarios
        DD. Sra. Isa Maria Pacheco, Diretora
        Setor de Radio e Televisao Sul
        Bloco A Ed. LEX 3o. Andar
        70340-904 Brasilia - DF
        Phonefax: 55-61-226-7168

Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation.

Nilson Gabas, Jr.
Museu Goeldi, Belem, Brazil
(gabas@marajo.secom.ufpa.br)

Support for Nahuatl Publishing

Date: Wed, 2 Aug 1995 12:38:00 +0100
Reply-To: nat-lang@gnosys.svle.ma.us
Subject: Tradicion Oral Nahuatl project
Original Sender: jaflores@alf.let.uva.nl

My name is Jose Antonio Flores Farfan. Together with Cleofas Ramirez Celestino, a Nahuatl native speaker, we are developing the project "Tradicion Oral Nahuatl." This project has already produced a couple of books for children and the general public, based on the Nahuas' oral tradition, and illustrated by Cleofas herself. Due to the recent devaluation, our project is paralysed. We finished a book on the Mermaid of el Balsas, but is still wanting the financial support to publish it. Maybe you would be interested in co-editing: suggestions for publishing welcome!

Best wishes, Jose Antonio Flores Farfan

Tribal Protest in India: Call for Action

The following announcement (excerpted here) appeared on the Indian Grammar list "vyakaran@email.uni-kiel.de" on 28 February.

15th. January 1996
   Sub: Appeal for Support and Solidarity to Fasting Adivasis and their Supporters

Dear Friend,

Tribals (adivasi) representatives from all over the country have assembled in Delhi to begin an indefinite dharna from 15th February 1996 to demand extension of the 73rd and 74th Amendments concerning Panchayati Raj to the Scheduled Areas in line with the recommendations of the Bhuriya Committee. And not without reason.

In 1947, the tribal people of Independent India felt intensely betrayed. What they had fought and laid down their lives for nearly 18 decades was systematically subverted. The transfer of power from the Colonial Regime did not result in the resolution of the structural conflict between the community and the state apparatus resulting from the imposition of a formal administrative structure on a self governing people by the British administration. The Rulers had changed, their minions were the same. Azadi was won, Swaraj was denied.

The Constitution tried to resolve this structural conflict through the arrangements provided in the Vth and VIth Schedules. These principles were accepted by the political executive and articulated by the first Prime Minister in his Policy of Panchsheel. But while the Governors refused to throw off the shackles of a colonial administrative structure, the President remained a silent spectator. History repeated itself, the tribals were twice betrayed in less than a decade. The situation remained unresolved, the contradictions sharpened, while legitimate aspirations were suppressed.

In the wake of the avowed policy of the state to devolve authority to the people under the 73rd. and 74th. Amendments, Article 243(M) of the Constitution was introduced as a saving clause. In restraining the automatic extension of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Scheduled Areas without suitable modifications, a fresh attempt was being made to resolve the age old conflict. The Article enjoined on Parliament the duty to promulgate the legislation. The logic behind this article, we were given to understand, was that tribal societies, were, by and large, the last vestiges of community self governance and would be the first to re-activate the process of popular self-rule.

The High Level Committee of tribal MPs under the Chairmanship of Dileepsingh Bhuriya MP, constituted to recommend suitable modifications for the new legislation, took up the responsibility to resolve the conflict between the community and the state apparatus and give it a concrete form in the context of the tribal area. The Committee submitted its report on 17 January 1995, an important benchmark in the history of democratic India as it brought within the scope of village governance, the stress on participatory democracy, community command over resources, management of conflict, administration of law and order, planning and implementation of development, accountability of the bureaucracy et alia. In short it provided the people the chance to govern their own lives and the space for the common man to intervene in the processes that shape his destiny. In the short history of the nation, this was the first time that an opportunity had arisen and we were excited to be at a historic moment when our intervention could make or unmake history. Hopes were raised only to be betrayed again.

The High Courts of Hyderabad and Patna have declared the extension of the state Panchayati Acts to the Scheduled Areas unconstitutional, while the Bombay High Court has stayed its application. But both Parliament and the Government have remained strangely silent and somnolent on this vital issue. So much for the claim of the 'revolutionary character' of the 73rd. Amendment. The ensuing legal vacuum has denied the tribals the right to village self governance as envisaged in the Constitutional Amendment. It appeared that the tribals would be betrayed for the third time. It was time the tribal people undertook the challenge themselves.

All over the country, tribals are agitating for the right to self rule and implementation of the Bhuriya Committee Report. The Civil Disobedience Movement is continuing since October 2nd 1995. But Parliament seems to be oblivious to their anxiety over the legal vacuum existing in the scheduled areas. On the other hand, while political parties are beginning preparations for the Lok Sabha elections, the issue of tribal self rule does not appear on their agenda.

Tired of the Government's and Parliament's refusal to legislate in accordance with the recommendations of the Bhuriya Committee Report and to resolve the conflict and restore the patent rights to democratic self governance to the tribal people, the tribal leaders of the National Front for Tribal Self Rule have decided today on incisive action to bring the issue on the national agenda and force the politicians to sit up and take notice. Consensus was reached on

1. indefinite dharna to commence from 15th. February 1996 at Samta Sthal (near Raj Ghat, Delhi)
2. indefinite fast to follow immediately after two days.
3. indefinite solidarity fast by Dr B.D. Sharma, Chairman of Bharat Jan Andolan, Adv. Pradip Prabhu, National Convener of Front and Dr. Vinayan, Gen. Secretary Bharat Jan Andolan and others
4. relay fasts and demonstrations in support of the fasting tribals in state capitals.

We extend this appeal to you for support and solidarity to the fast of the tribal leaders. We would appreciate if you would:

1.   Request your friends and contacts to send letters/telegrams/faxes to the PM and President "Demanding Promulgation of Legislation based on Bhuriya Committee Report"
2.   Request your friends and contacts to join the fasting tribals in a solidarity chain fast.

Please let us know your response at the office of the Front in Delhi:
A-37, Nangli Rajapur, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi 110013, Tel: 4643997.

Thanking you. Yours in the struggle,
Pradip Prabhu
National Convener

The fax numbers for Prime Minister Rao are:

1. P.V. NARASIMHA RAO, Prime Minister of India
--- Fax: (011) 91 11
3013817 or 3019817

2. P.V. NARASIMHA RAO, PM of India , c/o The Indian Embassy, D.C. ---
Fax: 202-939-7027; 202-265-4351; Fax directly to the Ambassador:
202-483-3972.

For more information and updates contact
Sanjay Anand at
        swa2@cornell.edu
            (+1-607- 253-5420)
or Sangeeta Kamat at
        kamat@vms.cis.pitt.edu
            (+1-212-690-7145).

4.   News of Allied Societies and Activities

Inaugurating the International Clearing House for Endangered Languages: Tokyo, 18-20 Nov. 1995:

The following is an extract from the Clearing House Newsletter. We are grateful to The Department of Asian and Pacific Linguistics, University of Tokyo, for permission to reproduce this.

The International Symposium on Endangered Languages was held on November 18-20, 1995 under the auspices of the Department of Asian and Pacific Linguistics, Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo at the university's Sanjo Conference Hall.

Present at the symposium were:

Michael Krauss   University of Alaska, USA
Stephen A. Wurm   Australian National University, Australia
Harumi Sawai   Hokkaido Ainu Culture Research Center, Japan
Osami Okuda   Sapporo Gakuin University, Japan
David Bradley   La Trobe University, Australia
Suwilai Premsrirat   Mahidol University, Thailand
Knut Bergsland   Univ. of Oslo, Norway
E. Annamalai   ILCAA, Tokyo Univ. of Foreign Studies, Japan; Central Instiute of Indian Languages, India
Matthias Brenzinger   University of Cologne, Germany
Vida Mikhaltchenko   Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia
Akira Yamamoto   Univerisity of Kansas, USA
Willem F.H. Adelaar   University of Leiden, The Netherlands
Shigeru Tsuchida   Shung-ye Museum of Formosan Aboriginies, Taiwan
Madeleine Gobeil   Division des arts et de la vie culturelle, UNESCO
Robert H. Robins   President, CIPL
P.G.J. van Sterkenburg   Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie, The Netherlands

Dr. Francis Ekka of the Central Institute of Indian Languages, India, and Dr Nicholas Ostler of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, UK, were also invited, but unable to attend the symposium.

The proceedings of the symposium, will be published next year. The titles of the papers are as follows:

Michael Krauss: "The scope of the language endangerment and recent responses to it."

Stephen A. Wurm: "Methods of language maintenance and revival with selected cases of language endangerment in the world."

Harumi Sawai: "The present situation of the Ainu language."

Osami Okuda: "On the objectives of linguistic research on the Ainu."

David Bradley: "Minority language policy and endangered languages in China and Southeast Asia."

Suwilai Premsrirat: "On language maintenance and language shift in minority languages of Thailand: a case study of So(Thavung)."

Knut Bergsland: "Two cases of language endangerment: Aleut and Southern Sami."

E. Annamalai: "Language Survival in India: Challenges and Responses."

Francis Ekka: "Endangered languages in India : problems and prospects for survival."

Matthias Brenzinger: "Language endangerment on the African continent: various ways of dying and different kinds of deaths."

Vida Mikhaltchenko: "Endangered languages of Russia: an informational database."

Akira Yamamoto: "Linguistics and endangered language communities: issues and approaches."

Willem F. H. Adelaar: "The endangered situation of the native languages in South America."

Shigeru Tsuchida: (Title to be announced)

A resolution proposed by Professor Stephen A. Wurm was approved by acclamation by the people present at the afternoon session on the final day:

RESOLUTION

This gathering of endangered language specialists from different parts of the world welcome the establishment of the Department of Asian and Pacific Linguistics and especially the International Clearing House for Endangered Languages in it. They pledge to offer it all cooperation and assistance they can, as linguists interested in endangered langauges in the world, because it is a very important cause for us all.

November 20, 1995

A closing banquet was held on the evening of November 20, jointly with the inauguration party of the Department of Asian and Pacific Department. Congratulatory speeches were given by Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa (President of the University of Tokyo), Mr. Masayuki Inoue (Director of the International Scientific Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture), Mme Madeleine Gobeil (UNESCO) and Professor R. H. Robins (CIPL).

(K.M.)

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3. Concluding Remarks by Professor Shigeru Tsuchida at the Symposium
   (Excerpt)

In this symposium, the status quo of endangered languages from various parts of the world were reported, and various aspects of these languages were presented. All of us profited a lot from the speeches of every speaker and the discussions thereafter.

I believe everybody will agree on the fact that there ARE quite a number of languages in endangerment in the world, and without doubt the number will increase in the future, although, we have to admit, it is not easy to give a definition of what is an endangered language. The size of population is a good and easy index, but the critical number of native speakers seems to vary depending on the area. A language with 500 to 1,000 speakers in the

Pacific area seems to be rather stable, whereas another language with about the same size of speakers will be very much in endangerment in Europe or in Africa. We have also to recognize that there are some native speakers among the minority communities who do not want to be called ``endangered" or ``vanishing" or even ``dying", even though there seems to be involved here some kind of confusion of physical ethnicity with their language, plus psychological problem.

I also believe that everybody agrees that we have to hurry up in describing the grammars, compiling the dictionaries, and collecting texts of those languages in concern as much as and as soon as possible. But the first thing that we have to do is the documentation of the basic data of what language is spoken at where by how many people under what social background, etc.

We also feel that it may be the linguists' duty to attemp to restore and maintain such languages. But some hesitation was also expressed, i.e. an ethic problem whether we are allowed to interfere with the natural development of any language. At any rate it is rather ironical that whenever and wherever the restoration and maintenance of a language becomes a hot topic, it is already too late to do so.

There is one thing that I missed, i.e. the problem of phonetic symbols which can be used in internet without relying on any particular software. This is not particularly related to endangered languages, but sooner or later this will become a serious problem. In this internet-oriented modern world, we should have some kind of convention shared by all the linguists, so that we can convey any phonetic forms to anybody through an electric network. But we'll have to have another symposium or conference for that problem.

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4. An Appraisal of the November Symposium
   By Akira Yamamoto (University of Kansas)

[Editor's note: We have requested Prof. Yamamoto of the University of Kansas for an appraisal of the November symposium. With his permission, we publish those passages which we think are of general interest. - K.M.]

Arrangements:

Several presenters noted the importance of raising the public awareness of the endangered language situations. It would be useful if we could have brief news conferences (or news release) with mass media (radio, TV, newspapers, etc.) on the symposium. At the Linguistic Society of America meetings, we try to get at least some of the media to be involved in the discussions. This seems to be one of the most effective ways to inform the public and policy makers what linguists do.

Participants:

It was good to have representations of languages in different continents. If possible, we could include participants who would represent New Guinea, Central America, Philippines, Canada, etc. where we find many potentially endangered languages are spoken.

Symposium Sessions:

The presentations were surprisingly uniform in their foci. The first symposium, I believe, has laid the foundation for the future symposiums and for the Clearing House.

Since the first symposium painted a general picture of the language situations in different parts of the world, the future symposium could be organized according to some themes. I will list some of the possibilities:

1) Endangered languages and professional organizations (e.g., linguistic societies):
I think more and more linguistic organizations are emphasizing research on endangered languages or forming special committees on endangered languages. Some organizations (e.g., Linguistic Society of Japan, Linguistic Society of America, German Linguistic Society) are gathering information on the endangered language research that their members have done or are carrying out. The Clearing House would be the ideal center to coordinate such efforts which are, otherwise, scattered and unhelpful to each other.

2) Language policies and endangered language communities:
Beginning with the UNESCO Human Rights Proclamation, we could examine language-related policies in different parts of the world (e.g., US English only bills, US Native American Languages Acts) and their implications for the maintenance of the minority languages.

3) Linguistic research in endangered language communities:
different communities pose different issues and problems for linguistic researchers as well as for those local people who do their own language research. We need to be aware of different situations of linguistic research. This will lead to an important topic of training of future linguists. What do they need to know about the communities, what do they need to be prepared, why do they need to engage in linguistic research in the given community?

4) Local reactions to the language endangerement/community-based language maintenance (revival) programs:
How do local communities initiate their language maintenance programs? What is the role of linguists in these initiatives? What problems exist in the communities which may hinder the maintenance efforts? What programs are practiced in different communities? What are successful and waht are not?

5) Training of local language specialists:
Ultimately, the speakers of the endangered language communities themselves must be the main role players of the language revival or maintenance programs. How can they be trained to be efficient and effective language researcher, curriculum developers, material developers, and language teachers?

6) Orality and literacy in endangered language communities:
What might be the ways to maintain (or revive) the languages? Does literacy in the endangered language help maintain it as active? What have been done in enhancing oral traditions? What have been done to create a written tradition? What new materials (e.g., literature, poetry, essays, etc.) have been created and how?

7) Documentation 1: issues and problems in doing fieldwork.
In many situations, it is not easy for professional linguists to engage in fieldwork. In some cases, the problems are political and external to the endangered communities--being in the field may be physically dangerous for the resource persons who choose to work with outsiders, or for the linguists to be in a particular area of the given country. In other cases, the plroblems are internal to the endangered communities--who would the linguist select to work with may accelerate the already existing problems in a community, or may create a new set of problems (e.g., community politics, financial arrangements--cash income for the resource persons, dialect issues, etc.).

8) Documentation 2: the nature of the linguistic data.
Has the given language been researched? What documentation, if any, exists and in what forms does it exit? Is it easily accessible to non-linguists as well as to linguists? What are the nature of data urgently needed for the language? Do the existing or future data aimed at academic purposes? Are they useful for the language community when they want to establish some form of language program?

9) Documentation of endangered languages 3: the training needs.
What training do we need to provide for currently active or future linguistic researchers? Here, perhaps we can emphasize the nature of linguistic training of our students in academic settings.

10) The Clearing House on Endangered Languages: roles and functions.
What data and information would be crucial for the Clearing House to obtain, store, and disseminate? Who are the audience? Who would supply needed data and information? In what forms?

I think there are many other important themes and topics that we can deal with at a symposium such as you have organized. I also think that a *thematic symposium* would help concentrate on specific issues of language endangerment.

Akira Yamamoto
Professor of Anthropology & Linguistics
University of Kansas, USA
e-mail: akira@kuhub.cc.ukans.edu

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5. ICHEL database

What follows is an outline of the database and
computer system of our department.

5.1 Host computers

Our department is now equipped with more than
five computers up and running for various services
via Internet and for the daily use of our activities.

Among them, 'tooyoo' and 'tooyoo1' are the main
host computers for providing ftp and http services.
As regards the operating system, a Unix or Unix
compatible system is running on both machines.

Host name   IP address   Hardware   OS
----
tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp   130.69.116.39   IBM PC
compatible FreeBSD-2.0
tooyoo1.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp   130.69.201.129
SPARCstation 20   SunOS 4.1.4

Ftp and http services are available at the following
addresses.

  ftp://tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp
  http://www.tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

5.2 Contents of the database

One of the major roles of our department is to store
linguistic data such as the copora for the
grammatical analysis of languages, information on
specific topics such as "endangered languages",
and various programs for analyzing texts, and to
provide all these materials to the linguists of the
world.

The following list shows the current contents of
our database (including materials in preparation).

(1) "Red Book on Endangered Languages"
(2) Corpus of various languages (texts, field notes,
sound data, etc.)
(3) Programs for text-processing (sort, kwic, etc.)
(4) Typesetting and printing utilities for various
languages (TeX, etc.)

The "Red book on Endangered languages" is a code
name for any kind of activities related to
endangered languages. Please note that this is a
joint project of several research centers around the
world, not an activity of a single 'clearing house'.

At present, we have the data on endangered
languages in Asian and Pacific area (compiled by S.
A. Wurm and S. Tsuchida), and languagesin Africa

(compiled by B. Heine and M. Brenzinger). All
these data are encoded by the HTML format and
easily accessible to any kind of WWW browsers.
For other areas, we are either requesting data from
the linguists around the world or trying to make
links to other research centers which have relevant
data. For example, the data on the endangered
languages of Europe have been stored in Finland by
Tapani Salminen (http://www.helsinki.fi/
~tsalmin/endangered.html) and in such a case we
have simply made a link to this site.

5.3 Format of the Red Book data

As for the format of each entry in the Red Book, we
followed the one prepared by Prof S. A. Wurm and
others (shown below).

Name of the language

(1) Variant(s):

(2) Geographical Location:

(3) Relationships (isolate, distantly related to
known
        language(s), closely related to known
languages,
    dialect, etc.):

(4) Present State of the Language:
    a) children speakers:
    b) mean age of youngest speakers:
    c) distribution by sex:
    d) total number of speakers, members of the
ethnic group:
    e) degree of speakers' competence:
    f) sources:
      (i) information about the language:
      (ii) published and unpublished material of the
        language:
      (iii) competent scholar(s) and institution(s):

(5) Other Relevant Remarks:

5.4 Problem of fonts

As was mentioned by Prof S. Tsuchida in his
concluding remarks at the International
Symposium on Endangered Languages, one of the
most difficult problems in the current version of
HTML, which is now used as the standard format of
texts in http, is that there is no phonetic symbols
in its definition. This is because fonts for
representing IPA symbols are still not part of an
ordinary computer environment.

In the case of the Red book, IPA symbols were
sometimes used in the African part of the data by
its original compiler. We received the data in the
form of both diskette and hardcopy and this was
fortunate because without the hardcopy we would
not have been able to decipher the binary codes for
phonetic symbols. And in order to convert these
data into the HTML format, we had to define an ad

hoc string of characters representing phonetic symbols. In such cases, the procedure usually employed is first to define an 'escape character' and then to give descriptive (or any kind of) names that follow the escape character. In HTML, an '&' is used as the escape character to represent letters with accent, umlaut, etc. Therefore we decided to define the following strings for phonetic symbols, each beginning with an '&'.

   &? glottal stop
   &a schwa
   &o open-mid o
   &e open-mid e
   &i central i
   &d implosive d
   .....

Needless to say, this is only a makeshift. We need to work out a more generally acceptable system of notation for phonetic symbols, and we hope such a system will be adopted as a part of the HTML definitions.

                     (R.F.)

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From the Editor

Comments and suggestions are welcome. All the newsletter-related
correspondence should be addressed to:

   Kazuto MATSUMURA
   kmatsum@tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

For a hypertext version of this newsletter, please visit our homepage at:

   http://www.tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp/

This e-mail version is sent to those we know are interested in or concerned about endangered languages. If you prefer to receive our newsletter in a hard copy or do not wish to receive it in the future, please let us know.   (K.M.)

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International Clearing House for Endangered Languages

Postal Address:
Department of Asian and Pacific Linguistics,
Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies,
Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo,
Hongo 7-3-1, Bunkyo-ku, TOKYO 113 JAPAN

phone: +81-3-5800-5790
fax: +81-3-5800-3740
e-mail: staff@tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp
WWW: http://www.tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

Faculty Members:
 Tasaku TSUNODA, Professor
 tsunoda@tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

 Kazuto MATSUMURA, Associate Professor
 kmatsum@tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

 Rei FUKUI, Associate Professor
 fkr@tooyoo.L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

Terralingua
This society has been set up on the initiative of David Harmon of the George Wright Society in Michigan, USA, and focuses particularly on the **Diversity** aspect of the plight of Endangered Languages. Its latest communication (including Prefatory Matter to its Prospectus) appeared on the WWW on week of 8 March, and goes as follows:

8 MARCH 1996
TO: Respondents to the Terralingua Call for Interest
FROM: The Terralingua Ad Hoc Organizing Committee

First of all, thank you all for your interest in Terralingua, and sorry for the delay in contacting you again. The response to the Call for Interest has been outstanding, and we on the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee have been very gratified by your support. We look forward to working with you to build an effective organization. Because of the length of this message, we are breaking it into two parts: Part I, Prefatory Matter; and Part II, Prospectus. This message constitutes Part I. We are still working on Part II, and hope to send it shortly (within a couple of weeks or so).

CONTENTS OF THE ENTIRE MESSAGE:

PART I (HEREWITH):
PREFATORY MATTER
1. About the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee
2. What has happened so far
3. Response to the Call for Interest; Digest of comments received
4. The name of the organization

PART II (FORTHCOMING):
PROSPECTUS
5. Some basic organizational principles
6. Terralingua's structure
7. Finances and membership
8. Some initial projects
9. The next steps: Feedback on the Prospectus; Assent to membership; Making financial contributions; Activating the organizational structure

1. ABOUT THE AD HOC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
As you will remember from the Call for Interest / Statement of Purpose you received, the idea for Terralingua took shape at a Symposium on Language Loss held at the University of New Mexico in 1995. At that meeting, a small group of volunteers formed an Ad Hoc Organizing Committee. The Committee then spent the next several months drafting the Call for Interest / Statement of Purpose.

A number of you asked that the Committee identify ourselves. Here we are:

ANTHEA FALLEN-BAILEY is a graduate student in geography at the University of Oregon.

DAVE HARMON is the deputy executive director of The George Wright Society, a U.S.-based NGO which serves as a professional association for researchers, managers, and educators who work in or are concerned with parks and protected areas. He administers the day-to-day operations and finances of this small nonprofit organization; in addition, he manages the GWS's Worldwide Web site and edits its quarterly journal. Dave's research interests include exploring links between biological and cultural diversity, and making protected-area conservation more responsive to issues of cultural diversity.

LUISA MAFFI is a linguistic/cognitive anthropologist, currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Berkeley. She has carried out research in Africa and Mexico. Her interests are indigenous knowledge systems (ethnobiology, ethnoecology, ethnomedicine), language documentation and preservation, and the relationships between language loss, loss of traditional knowledge, and loss of biodiversity. She is organizing a conference on the latter topic. She is on the Advisory Board of the Native American Language Center, University of California, Davis.

MARI RHYDWEN is a linguist on the faculty of Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. She is the owner of the ENDANGERED LANGUAGES e-mail list.

PAUL WEISS is Team Leader, Bibliographic Control Team in the General Library at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He has a B.A. in linguistics (1984) from Cornell University.

The Ad Hoc Organizing Committee would also like to recognize the inspiration and advice given by three others. Michael Krauss of the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks was instrumental in identifying the need for an international organization devoted to preserving the world's linguistic diversity. Early on, Mike also recognized the need to bridge the gap between those working on biological species issues and those working on language issues. Garland Bills and Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez of the University of New Mexico's Department of Linguistics, organizers of the 1995 Symposium on Language Loss, lent their support to the organization's basic premises and graciously allowed a discussion of the organization at the Symposium.

All of the people on the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee are working in their capacity as individuals, not on behalf of their organizational affiliations.

2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR
Starting in mid-December, the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee launched Terralingua through a series of postings of the Call for Interest / Statement of

Purpose to a number of e-mail lists that seemed appropriate to our aims. This material has since been circulated, re-posted, cross-posted, etc., etc., to a wide variety of other lists and Web sites on the Internet.

In early February, Dave Harmon, who is acting as Terralingua's Provisional Secretary, was approached by Gary Nabhan, an ethnobiologist at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (Tucson, Arizona, USA), to ask whether Terralingua could be listed as a co-sponsor (no funding involved, obviously) of a symposium called "Losing Species, Languages, and Stories: Linking Cultural and Environmental Change in the Binational Southwest." Because an immediate answer was required, and since the aims of the symposium are in complete sympathy with Terralingua's Statement of Purpose, Dave took it upon himself to make the decision to agree. In the future, of course, a more formal approval method will have to be developed. (See the forthcoming discussion of organizational structure in Part II.)

Also in February, by means of a special contribution by a Terralingua supporter, we established a separate mailing address for Terralingua through the rental of a post-office box. This address is for membership and financial matters, and for general organizational purposes. Please note it.

Terralingua
P.O. Box 122
Hancock, Michigan 49930-0122 USA

We hope to establish a separate e-mail address for Terralingua soon. For the time being, continue to contact us through Dave Harmon at
          gws@mail.portup.com.
(More on these organizational matters is forthcomingin Part II of this message.)

3. RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR INTEREST; DIGEST OF COMMENTS RECEIVED
As of 7 March, just over 200 people had responded to the Call for Interest. People from the following countries have responded: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Saudia Arabia, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Arab Emirates, USA, Venezuela, and Wales.

Many of you have made suggestions--often quite substantive--about what Terralingua should be and do. The Ad Hoc Organizing Committee would like to make a digest of these comments available to any of you who'd like to read them. The file has been edited so that the identities of the commenters remains anonymous. If you'd like to receive this file (e-mail only), please send a note to Dave Harmon.

4. THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION
Many of you gave your opinions on the tentative name, "Terralingua: Partnerships for Biolinguistic

Diversity." A considerable majority of the people who expressed an opinion favored the name "Terralingua," so it will be retained. The general format of the subtitle was also favored--with one important exception. A number of you cautioned us that the coined term "Biolinguistic," which we meant merely as a shorthand way of saying "Biological and Linguistic," could be interpreted as referring to, or even implying support of, racialist theories. We of course intend no such interpretation. To remove any confusion, we have decided that the organization's full name will be: "Terralingua: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity."

Thanks again for your patience. We'll be back in touch with Part II soon.

(END OF PART I)

The George Wright Society
P.O. Box 65   *   Hancock, Michigan 49930-0065
USA
telephone (906) 487-9722   *   fax (906) 487-9405
e-mail: gws@mail.portup.com   or
gws@mtu.edu
A nonprofit association of park & protected area professionals

LDUL: Language Documentation Urgency List

This is a very recent enterprise (26 March) based on the Internet, undertaken by Dietmar Zaefferer (ue303bh@sunmail.lrz-muenchen.de). I enclose here enough of DZ'sinformation to identify the service: but those wanting to take part will have to send messages to the addresses given.

LDUL is an automatic mailbox and database for the collection and retrieval of information on how urgently the individual languages of this world are in need of documentation. The aim is to help in the decision of where to focus fieldwork and in the writing of proposals for fund raising purposes.

Overall documentation urgency (DU) is measured as the average of six special documentation urgencies in phonology, morphology, lexicon, text corpus, syntax, and semantics/pragmatics. These in turm are measured as overall degree of endangerment times special degree of documentation need, where endangerment is the inverse of estimated language vitality and special documentation need is the inverse of the estimated sufficiency of existing special documentation.

The language vitality score is calculated from eight different factors such as age of youngest speaker, number of speakers, percentage of monolingual speakers etc. (for details cf. the comments to the demoquestionnaire.)

The world-wide computer networks and especially the LINGUIST LIST have turned the world's community of linguists (at least its electronically accessible part, but via them a lot more) into a global village. And if the inhabitants of this village join forces, it should be easy to solve the third problem mentioned above using the pot luck party method: Everybody who knows about a language in need of proper documentation or in the process of disappearing throws his knowledge into a pool called LDUL. This is an automatic electronic mailbox and database with the following address:

ldul@cis.uni-muenchen.de

If you want to **know more about LDUL**, simply a message to this address with the following entry under "Subject" (the message body may be empty, or, if your mail system doesn't tolerate this, contain anything, it will be ignored):

about LDUL

If you want to **contribute**, send a message to the LDUL address with the following entry under "Subject":

send demoquestionnaire

The system will mail you a copy of a completed questionnaire with annotations that specify the different questions.

When you've done this you will hopefully want to complete an empty questionnaire, and you can get one by sending another message under

"Subject":

send questionnaire

The system will send you by return mail a copy of a blank questionnaire.

Once you have completed a questionnaire (please read the annotations to the different questions that come with the demoquestionnaire carefully!), write

deposit questionnaire

into the subject field and mail the completed questionnaire to the same address.

The way it is treated there is the following:

If the language code on the questionnaire you have completed is identical with the language code in a questionnaire already on file, your contribution is added to that file, else a new file is opened. So it's the language code that counts for the identification of a language and not its name(s), since there are too many ambiguous language names! If you deposit a questionnaire without the language code, LDUL will add it for you, if your language name is unambiguous, else it will complain.

For each vitality factor you have either checked one of the five values (there is a minimum, a maximum, and three intermediate degrees), or the option 'unknown'.

If you want to **consult the list**, you have several choices.

1. If you are interested in a **specific language.** say Lisu, send a message to the same address as above with the following entry under "Subject":

info on Lisu

Then LDUL will mail you the set of questionnaires that have been completed with Lisu in the list of names and aliases. The subject line of the message will look like follows:

Subject: Re:info on lisu (TLC=lis)

The (TLC=lis) information is important here, since there is another language named Lisu with a different three letter code (TLC=tkl), and if information is on file on that language as well, it will also be in your mail. So if you are in doubt about the identity of the language you are inquiring about, please consult the "Ethnologue Database" to find out among other things the three letter code of your language, e.g. via the World Wide Web:

http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/ethnologue.html
   or
http://www-ala.doc.ic.ac.uk/~rap/Ethnologue/
   or via Gopher:
gopher://sil.org/11/gopher_root/ethnologue/

2. If you want to know **which languages have been treated so far,** send the subject entry

get languages

to LDUL, and it will mail you the current alphabetical list of names of languages about which information is on file.

3. If you want to know the current **overall documentation urgency** (DU) ranking of the languages that have been treated so far, send the subject entry

get overall DU ranking

and LDUL will send you a list of the languages on file, ranked
according to their overall DU scores.

4. If you want to know one of the current **special documentation urgency** (DU) rankings of the languages that have been treated so far, send one of the subject entries

get phonology DU ranking
get morphology DU ranking
get lexicon DU ranking
get text corpus DU ranking
get syntax DU ranking
get semantics/pragmatics DU ranking

to LDUL, and it will send you a list of the languages on file with their appropriate special scores, ranked according to these scores.

5. If you want to know the **complete current statistics,** send the message

get statistics

to LDUL, and it will mail you its complete statistics in its current state.

Limitiations

There is no such thing as a perfect questionnaire and it should go without saying that no linguist wishing to do fieldwork should base the choice of his language exclusively on the LDUL data.

One factor that had to be neglected in the design of the questionnaire is the degree of relatedness of the language in question to the 'next' well- documented language: the lower this degree, the higher the documentation urgency.

Another thing is that the program cannot resolve contradicting information on the same language. It will rather compute the average scores, e.g. if one contributor thinks the quantity and quality of the documentation on Tsachila phonology is medium (.5) and another one thinks it is low (.25), it will come up with a score of .375.

Dietmar Zaefferer, Institut fuer Deutsche Philologie
Universitaet Muenchen
Schellingstr. 3, D-80799 Muenchen, Germany
Phone: +49 89 2180 2060 (office) or
+49 89 2180 3819 (office)
+49 89 36 66 75 (home)
Fax: +49 89 2180 3871 (office)
Email: ue303bh@sunmail.lrz-muenchen.de

5.   Overheard on the Web

Glasburyon - a poem

The following poem, by Montreal writer Mark Abley, is the most eloquent elegy for endangered languages that I have come across. Mark, who is now "standing on the brink of the Internet, fascinated and appalled in equal measure", has given permission for the poem to be posted on this list. If you download it or cross-post it, be sure to include the bibliographic information at the end.

Glasburyon

--1--

Shakespeare was an upstart, Dante a dabbler
compared to Shamil Bakhtasheni --
he of the snowpeak sagas, the quince-blossom lovesongs
and a leopard's argument with God. Not a word
of his work was dipped in printer's ink
and most of it is long forgotten;
little wonder, for the master lived

and died in the Artchi tongue,
spoken only in a windburnt village
where Dagestan falls towards the sea. The language
pleasured Shamil like a lover, giving him
poetry without an alphabet, listeners
without a page. His grave is rumored to lie
among the roots of an apricot tree
on the scarp of a Caucasian mountain
where, if you believe the villagers, once
a month the wind recites his lyrics.

--2--

She flew from Boston to Port Moresby
for this: an outboard ferry-ride

past a dripping wall of trees
to a yet unstudied village where

the Mombum language survives;
the wall splits open; she clambers out

and strides from the dock, escorted
by a flock of blue-winged parrots

to find the gathered islanders
seated on the red soil beside

a reed-thatched bar, watching "Fatal
Attraction" on satellite TV.

--3--

Reason tells me it doesn't matter
if the final speaker of Huron
goes grey in a suburb of Detroit
where nobody grasps a syllable
of his grandmother's tongue.

Reason tells me it's not important
if Basque and Abenaki join
the dozens of unproductive
languages lately disposed of; what's
the big deal, where's the beef?

Reason is scavenging the earth:
"More, more", it cries. You can't tell it
to use imagination. You can't
ask it to stop and listen
to the absence of Norn.

--4--

Tega du meun or glasburyon,
      kere friende min --
"If you take the girl from the glass castle,
      dear kinsman of mine,"

so a voice claims in a Norn ballad,
plucked by a rambling scholar
off the lips of a toothless crofter

he found on a Shetland island
in 1774; soon the language
was a mouthful of placenames --

yamna-men eso vrildan stiende
      gede min vara te din.
"As long as this world is standing

you'll be spoken of."

--5--

That music? It's only
      a wind bruising the chimes
            in a crystal fortress
                  high on Mount Echo.

      Each time we lose a language
            the ghosts who made use of it
                  cast a new bell.

            The voices magnify. Soon,
                  listen, they'll outpeal
                        the tongues of earth.

Born in England in 1955, Mark Abley grew up in Alberta and Saskatchewan. He attended the University of Saskatchewan, then Oxford University thanks to a Rhodes Scholarship. He now writes features for Quebec's principal English-language newspaper, the Montreal Gazette. His previous books include "Blue Sand, Blue Moon" and "Beyond Forget: Rediscovering the Prairies". He lives with his wife and two daughters in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

The poem "Glasburyon" is taken from his poetry collection of the same name, ISBN 1-55082-112-1, published in 1994 by Quarry Press, P.O. Box 1061, Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 4Y5.

Scarce Resources: Issues arising in Siberia and Australia

On 4 Sept. 1995, Jonathan Bobaljik <jdbobalj@MIT.EDU> wrote:

...

The situation is that Itelmen is clearly moribund, and in practise lives only in memory. For a number of reasons, though, the language has become the focus of a number of projects by foreign academics. There is the German-based project which Johannes Rohr mentioned, which involves a linguistics and ethnography, and which is working towards producing a reader for the primary school, among other things. An ethnogrpaher from New York has included linguistic material in his project (in 1994, we left in the schools: one-page thematic "dictionaries", a collection of short stories both traditional and contemporary with Russian translation, grammar notes for teachers, and tape recordings of this material). And I have just received a small grant to continue the linguistic work begun on the New York-based project. There is, thankfully, collaboration among the projects, and Itelmen people (though not native speakers) are closely involved in most of the work.

This is all, I think, very important work, and I am pleased to be able to participate in the revival and documentation projects (otherwise I certainly wouldn't go back to Kamchatka in the dead of winter...)

My question to this list, though - and one I have certainly not answered in my own mind - is how to justify this expenditure of resources on this one group when it comes at the exclusion of neighbouring groups. Take, especially, Koryak - the neighbouring language to the North. Koryak is on the brink of moribundity - there are a handful of children who still come to school (age 5) from the camps speaking only Koryak and not Russian. The language is still alive, and may continue to be so for a little while, though it is certainly not in a prestige position and especially with the collapse of the USSR and concomittant collapse of the Northern (i.e. subsidized) economy, it is under more threat now than it has been for a while.

In this situation, of course, lies a partial answer to my question already. That is - the Koryak have recognition and limited self-government ensuring themseves some staying power politically and economically. They have representation in Moscow, and in principle control over the region's educational curriculum. The Itelmen, by contrast, do not enjoy such luxury. Rohr noted that there are about 1500 recognized Itelmen at the moment. By law, they are northern natives and thus enjoy "special rights" by which I mean the right to eak out a meager subsistence living on the land, though they suffer from massive discrimination generally. However, this status is confered at the moment by choice - you write in whatever you want on the "nationality" line on your passport application - there is no working legal definition of native status beyond that. In this, the local political groups (sort of a "tribal council") are vastly supportive of our work with the language and want the language taught in the schools. There is much (unofficial) debate as to whether or not there are any Itelmen anymore - the entire community is in danger of losing even the basic subsistence rights guaranteed them as northern natives. Just the fact of foreign academic interest, and in particular the teaching of the langauge, is a tile in the puzzle of the definition of identity for this group. Additionally, the cultural awareness programme in the school (of which the language teaching is a part) has been contributing to increasing pride and inter-ethnic understanding in an economically depressed area with all the social ills that accompany that, and thus is contributing, we hope, to a better social situation. I'm sure I speak for everyone involved in the projects, Itelmen and foreign, when I say that I am proud to be able to contribute to this trend in whatever way I can.

So, there are certainly reasons to be focussing on Itelmen. But there are reasons to be focussing on Koryak. We are producing nicely illustrated, glossy materials to teach children a few words and phrases in Itelmen as a part of their cultural heritage, though the language itself will never be a language of communication again. While doing so, we divert resources away from a neighbouring group where the fate of the language could well be decided this generation. There are few materials in the schools for Koryak language education, and

without foreign projects (i.e. money) there will continue to be fewer and fewer.
...

On 5 September 1995 Graham McKay <g.mckay@cowan.edu.au> commented:

The dilemma over Itelmen/Koryak and funding is repeated many times over in Australia with indigenous languages, in that limited resources are stretched many ways and at least in some sense what is available for one language or community is not available for another.

I don't think there is any real solution to this because of a number of complicating factors:

All the speakers and part speakers and non-speakers are people with a heritage and warrant SOME level of recognition and support on that basis against the tide of the majority culture if they choose to hold out against it. That is not to say how much support. And if resources are very limited they may be totally wasted if they are parcelled out into too many pieces that are too small to have any effect. eg there may be a definite limit to how many languages and language communities a single resource person can meaningfully help.

Group and individual motivation seems to have a significant role in the success or otherwise of any language maintenance efforts. There may be no point in putting a lot of support into a language just because it is still used if at least some of the speakers are not keen to do something with that language. (I am not making comment on any specific language here.) It may be better to offer support to a highly motivated group instead. Unfortunately the stronger the language the more likely it is that the speakers will not see the need for action or the potential consequences of loss until it is too late. In this sense the most highly motivated are sometimes those who have seen their language just slip beyond reach. The deaths of some of the last few old speakers brings it home to them.

By the same token one of the significant factors in people switching away from their traditional langauges may be, it seems, the level of recognition or opposition which the language receives in the wider socio-political context. If this is true then support may help people to feel that their language is worth continuing with. On the other side, some would argue that mainstream rejection of the group, by enforcing intergroup barriers, might enhance the staying power of the language.

On the other side of the coin, as pointed out by Fishman, the provision of support from outside agencies may actually undermine the self-sufficiency and motivation of speakers, causing them to rely on the programs rather than on their own daily use of the language. That is the indigenous communities may come to rely heavily on school programs and/or written language for language maintenance, not as a support to home

and community spoken use but as a replacement for it.

In many cases, though language is recognised as crucial to many aspects of culture and identity, indigenous groups find all their resources swallowed up in more life and death matters such as land tenure, employment, health etc. Language concerns may be able to be followed up more singlemindedly once those issues are dealt with. And that is another type of resource need.

In the final analysis the situations in which groups of speakers appreciate andbenefit greatly from outside support and local activity using the language can inspire us to seek to extend such activity and support to those which are not yet supported/involved and they may motivate other groups, by showing what can be done.

There is also the danger that linguists will put a higher priority on work with so called "viable" languages at least partly for their own professional purposes. This should not be confused with the interests of the indigenous people who speak or who have already lost their traditional langauges. One thing that is noticeable, though, is that without documentation while the langauge is still used some indigenous groups have great difficulty retrieving something of it later.

Perhaps work on Itelmen has brought the needs of Koryak to light. Work on Koryak may well bring some other needy language situation to light. Where will it stop?

Literacy - a Double-Edged Sword

On 27 October 1995, Nicholas Ostler, the editor of Iatiku, wrote:

1.   The Forum
Dan   Moonhawk   Alford <dalford@s1.csuhayward.edu> writes
>LINGUIST List: Vol-6-1503:
>Perhaps this is the time to open a new discussion which strikes at the root of our profession.
Yes, I agree. I hope the Moderators will give us a new title.

>What are the long-term consequences of "reducing"
>a language to writing? What changes in the language-culture dynamic when literacy is introduced? Is the professional imperative to put all languages into writing value-free? ...
>
>these are the questions that weigh heavily on me because of my experience, and I've never found the proper forum for discussing them.
>
Well, Linguist List is certainly one forum. Another might be endangered-Languages-l , to whom I copy Dan's letter and this reply of mine.

2.   The Value in Literacy
When talking to uncommitted people about the task of encouraging and protecting Endangered Languages, I often find that the readiest concrete point that they will appreciate is the need to give languages a script, a written mode of communication. (By contrast, the phrase "reduce to writing" connotes very much a linguist's eye view, perhaps deliberately assertive of the primacy of spoken language.)

One important thing here is about power and representation in the modern (Westernised) world. Languages which aren't written aren't known outside their home circles (often have no unique name, even), and has as been pointed out in other discussions on these lists tend to be counted as "dialects", not languages at all. They don't have a clear "footprint" of documents. The only texts they will have will be literary, and these texts will only be referred to in anthropological/ ethnological accounts: they can't be quoted. Our global culture looks for concrete, physical evidence of things: a language that simply "flutters live though the mouths of men" (Ennius) is not on the record. And until multimedia go a lot further than they yet have, records, in any significant quantity, will be written.

So the imperative, professional or otherwise, to put as many languages as possible into writing is not value-free: it stems from a primary value of OUR (Westernized) culture. It is the judgement of those outside the endangered language's culture that development of a written version is one of the best policies to promote and aid the cause and survival of it.

It's a tactical decision, of course. It could be wrong in certain cases, and it will be for the speakers of the language in question to decide whether it is. But the judgement of outsiders is that, in general, this step is benign. (Interestingly, those outsiders who don't give a damn, or who would prefer the language to be snuffed out, never advocate literacy as a sneaky way of getting rid of a language!)

(All this is quite aside from the loss to humanity if the language goes extinct without leaving a written trace. There we Westerners have a legitimate interest to speak out, quite apart from the concern of the community that speaks the language. But that doesn't require the community to adopt writing itself.)

3.   The Perils of Literacy
The point, about the debilitating effect on the memory of literacy, is well-made. It is something that will need to go into the "tactical balance" in deciding whether a community should become literate. But it is part of a general trend in human development, which could be called the De-Skilling induced by technological change. Introduction of Decimal Currency in the UK has lowered the mean ability in mental arithmetic, even as it has made calculations easier. Introduction of typewriter keyboards has lowered mean standards of legibility (and elegance) in handwriting, even as it has made the average document easier to read. Most recently, as I feel rather strongly, introduction of word-processors has lowered the standard of structured argument in

text, as people cut and paste old documents (theirs or others) to create new ones. More personally. I know that I am less and less inclined to get up and walk across the room to look for a file if I can sit here and search for its content in my computer memory.

It is not clear that sticking doggedly to the old ways is a possible option: the new technologies do have their advantages, too, and the hope is that these (ultimately) outweigh what is lost. Anyway, the forces (even if not so benign) that make for these changes are not going to go away. This must be true for endangered language communities too, although the culture which is changing may well be more vulnerable, because smaller and more attached to ancient traditions.

There is a feeling of "If you can't beat'em, join'em" about all this. I am actively concerned that Endangered Language Communities should take up modern electronic (as well as ancient (written) and mediaeval (printed)) methods to communicate among themselves and with others on terms of parity.

4. The Tyranny of Standards

Another of Dan's points concerns the divisive effects of introducing these technologies, because you have to standardize on one variant dialect over others.
> the very FIRST issue that comes up is "standards": whose dialect, of the four communities that live within 20 miles of each other, will we write it in?

Divisiveness seems to be intrinsic to small communities. (In bigger ones, it's just called patriotism, I suppose.) But someone who is doing sterling work in bringing the potential for writing/printing/electronic publishing to small languages has, I think, a major solution to this problem.

He'll no doubt speak for himself, but Russ Bernard <UFROBOT@nervm.nerdc.ufl.edu> and the CELIAC project in Oaxaca Mexico in a recent paper* argues that his experience in giving people the tools (to put their own language into writing) shows that prescriptive standards are NOT a pre-requisite. Once the documents start to be produced, norms will in time establish themselves. And as the profusion of Middle English documents shows, you can quite well have a flourishing literate culture without an imposed set of standards.

* "Language Preservation and Publishing", to be published in Indigenous Literacies in the Americas, edited by Nancy H. Hornberger, in the series Contributions to the Sociology of Language (Joshua Fishman, general editor)

Nicholas Ostler

Ladin dialects and Rumantsch: a Recent Referendum

From: <Manuela.Miribung@uibk.ac.at>

Organization: University of Innsbruck, Austria
To: nostler@chibcha.demon.co.uk
Date: Mon, 25 Mar 1996 12:59:44 +0100

My name is Manuela Miribung and I am a student of English and Political Science at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. I come from La Val, Suedtirol, Italy, and my mother tongue is Ladin, so I thought I'd send some information about my language.

Evaristus asked about the situation in <u>Switzerland</u>. Now, there are 5 Ladin idioms used there: Vallader, Puter, Surmiran, Sutsilvan and Sursilvan. Sursilvan is spoken by about 25,000 people and is therefore the largest group. Vallader and Puter, both used in Engadin, are spoken by some 10,000 people. The other groups are minor ones, so that altogether there are some 50,000 Swiss Romance speakers (= 0,8 % of the Swiss population). Of these, 40,000 live within Graubunden, so that the Ladin population in thisprovince amounts to some 42% of the population there.

In order to have a unified version of the language for publications etc, a koine was worked out by Prof. Heinrich Schmid in 1982: the Rumantsch Grischun. This language is now being used for all kinds of official, semi-official, commercial etc. writings: e.g. train timetables, telephone books, post-office and bank publications are all written in Rumantsch.It is used even for literary purposes, e.g. Flurin Speschia writes exclusively in Rumantsch.

Rumantsch is the fourth national language of Switzerland **and has been introduced as a "Teilamtssprache" on the whole national territory by the referendum of March 13, 1996 (68% voted for it).** Rumantsch will therefore be used in the public amministration also outside Graubunden.

There are two other groups of Ladins: one is in the Dolomites, North-Eastern Italy (about 30,000 speakers), the other one in Friuli, also in Italy (some 800,000 speakers).

The Ladins in the <u>Dolomites</u> live in 5 different valleys: Val Badia - where I am from - (9,000, = 95% of the population there, are Ladin), Gardena (8,500 = 86% of. pop.), Fassa (7,600 = 65%), Fodom (2,000 = 95%) and Ampezzo (2,000 = 30%). Prof. Heinrich Schmid worked out a common koine also for these idioms in the late 80s, the so-called Ladin Dolomitan. So far this language has not been used very much (also for political divergences on the matter), but there are various groups working on projects that are supposed to encourage its use. For example, one of these projects, SPELL, is working on a unified approach to grammar, spelling, neologisms for Ladin, and a publication in Basic Ladin.

The third group of Ladins is in <u>Friuli</u>. They do not have so many different dialects, since Udine could impose its version of the language on the surrounding area. However, they have not agreed so far on the spelling rules, so right now 4 different versions are being used. The one worked

out by Xavier Lamuela in the late 80s is being supported by Radio Furlan and might be the one accepted by everybody in the end.

I would be glad to hear from some of you
  - der n bel saluet a duec

Manuela Miribung

Some Irish Proverbs

Date: Mon, 15 Jan 1996 22:08:51 +0000
Sender: Teachers of Celtic Languages <CELTIC-T@VM1.SPCS.UMN.EDU>
From: "Tomas C. Breathnach"<tcbr@INDIGO.IE>

Beannachtai o tir na hEireann!   Greetings from Ireland.   I teach Irish in a second-level school in Ireland, but I also teach Economics and Computer Studies [for my sins!].

I have an avid interest in collecting old proverbs in Irish because I believe they manage to encapsulate a lot of the old way of thinking through the language.   These proverbs [in Irish we call them Seanfhocail - literally translated 'old words'] provide us with a key into the mentality of the people who spoke Irish in the past.   Without such a key, the language could become just another means of communication.

A few examples:-
1. *Ni tuisce deoch na sceal.* {Have a drink before you give us the news}
2. *An te a bhionn thuas, oltar deoch air - an te a bhionn thuas, buailtear cos air!* {He who is succeeding is feted with drink - he who is failing is kicked}
3. *Ni uasal na iseal, ach thuas seal agus thios seal.* {Neither noble nor lowly, but up for a while and down for a while}
4. *Da mbeadh soineann go Samhain, bheadh breall ar dhuine eigin.* {If we had good weather until November, somebody would have cause for complaint}.
5. *Is gaire cabhair De na an doras* {God's help is nearer than the door}.
6. *Ta Dia laidir agus ta Mathair maith aige.* {God is strong and he has a good mother}.

I could go on and on, but I would be interested in learning how the Irish proverbs co-relate with other Celtic ones - comparisons and contrasts.

Talk to me - I've been on this list for more than a week and have had no posting.   Is it true that "Is tuisce deoch na sceal" - see above?

Rath De oraibh.

Tomas

Schools in Hawaiian

Thu, 12 Oct 1995 22:07:30 -0700
Original Sender: whtaylor@netcom.com (William H. Taylor)

> Last I heard, Hawaii is the only state in the union which has a native language as an official language.   With that status, schools teach Hawaiian (I don't recall the name used) to kids and there is a plan to have a few schools where Hawaiian is the only/main language used in all courses.   The language has also been updated to include computer terms, etc.
  Benjamin Barrett

The schools (which are preschools) are the Punana Leo schools.   They are supported by the State of Hawai`i and the `Aha Punana Leo, which is a non-profit organization that was established in 1983 to serve the Hawaiian speaking community.   In addition, an all-Hawaiian high school has just opened in Hilo.   It is the first high school to use spoken Hawaiian instruction in over 100 years!

To Pay or Not to Pay? Thoughts Inspired by Fieldwork in Siberia

Jonathan Bobaljik (jbobalj@husc.harvard.edu) posted the following musings on endangered-languages-l on 19 March:

I am concerned about the idea of setting an (inter)national standard for paying field work.   There are two main reasons for this:

1. $10 is pennies to some, and a month's salary to others
2.   Money is not always an appropriate compensation.

I'm basing this on my experiences 1993-94 and again over the last 6 weeks in a village on the Kamchatka peninsula, Russian Far North-East (yes, it was *very* cold). The population is <500 and the economy is heavily depressed.

For starters, I had budgeted about $10/hour (U.S.) based mostly on what I'd been able to get permission for on various small projects while still a grad student.

It is worth pointing out that this is a very significant amount of money for people there. Most of the remaining speakers are retired, and live on pensions which range from $60-$120 /month. The flip side is that many things (such as food) actually cost as much as or more than food here in real dollar terms, making simple exchange-rate comparison quite difficult. However, I felt (perhaps wrongly), that offering more than $10/hour would be embarassingly, and perhaps offensively, generous.

In any event, the question of amount was moot.   As I had somewhat anticipated, the offer of any money at all ranged from quite embarassing to downright insulting.   A person I stayed with for two weeks refused to take any money for groceries, although I explained that my university was paying - so why should either she or I pay?

This is difficult for some of us who have grown up in the capitalist world to fully comprehend, but I am reasonably confident that this is an accurate

characterisation of the community involved. Some of the reasons for this scenario include (there are numerous others):

-        All of the speakers have spent the bulk of their lives in the Soviet Union, many born around the revolution. A large number of Russians today still see taking money from a friend as an insult. This includes for work for which they would otherwise be paid (e.g., if your friend's a mechanic, they won't take any pay for repairing your car). [aside - This alone has created great social tension even within families, as the reforms are pushed forward] The older Russians fall heavily into this class, and most of the native speakers are on friendly terms with me (many enjoy the chance to have an eager ear over tea, and to find someone for whatever reason interested in what they have to say).

-        For others, accepting money without working for it is to admit poverty. Most of the elders do not see speaking or recording as work. Many don't even see sitting with me and glossing earlier recordings as work.

In order to avoid the possible insult, I had hoped to be able to use the budgetted amount of money to bring gifts, which are usually acceptable. This included food, reading glasses, and more frivolous items such as chocolates, whatever I felt was most appropriate to a given situation. In some cases, I felt that a gift of a toy to a grandchild was more appreciated than any gift to the informant. For one consultant, I spent an afternoon taking portrait photos of her family - she has none of her younger grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In other cases, the consultant does not know they were compensated: I gave food to their (adult) children, explaining why.

Predictably, and especially since I was often working with groups at a time, with people wandering in and out, and staying for different lengths of time, this made for a rather uneven distribution. (I couldn't very well say "X - you've ben here for 26 minutes, so here's 2/3 of a kilo of tomatoes, but Y - you've been here 32 minutes, so you get an extra tomato"). [This will create a nightmare on my grant report..., though this is the least of my concerns]. In some cases, the inequalities were reasonably substantial.

The concern I have is that I made many of these decisions unilaterally. I feel I did the best I could, but would like to know what others have done in similar situations. In particular, if I were to force an elder to accept 50,000 roubles for an hour of talking over tea, I would risk not being welcomed back into their house for a subsequent session. More importantly, should I succeed in convincing the speakers that $10/hour is the going rate for consultant work, I will create a potentially disastrous situation for Russian linguists attempting to do field work as they will be unlikely to be able to pay anything near that percentage of their monthly salary for recording.

To wrap up. I think setting a standard is going to be useful in some cases (working in US universities and paying informants who happen to live in the city), but beyond this, a lot of economic and more importantly cultural factors are going to come into play. I have described what I have done in the last six weeks, and I think it was a reasonably appropriate response to the situation. I do feel that it could well be improved upon, and would very much welcome suggestions as to how it may be improved upon.

The More You Pay, The More It's Worth
(with apologies to Don McLean)

The above item, by Jonathan Bobaljik, was a discursive reply to a request from Robin Sabino <sabinro@mail.auburn.edu> to share information on going rates for paying linguistic informants. In the vent, all the responses came from North American and Australian researchers. Robin published a summary on 27 March, and here are some other highlights.

From Eric M. Kapono <erick@hawaii.edu>
What I assume below is that is that, "consultants" are not "informants" when it comes to extensive field research. While the latter can provide the details of the linguistic and cultural terrain, it is the former that navigate you through to your destination by pointing outlandmarks and other important features along the way.

Consultants of varying backgrounds (education, planning, legal, etc.) -- respected and bringing many years of experience to the job -- might charge a non-profit organization, say, $100/hr or $250/day. Thus, if you have found an individual you know to have broad knowledge of his or her native language and culture, is a native speaker him/herself, has respect amongst his/her own, and can provide language insight that *so few* others can, why is this level of expertise not compensated accordingly?

If one is researching Native American languages, the truly insightful individuals with a firm grasp of the breadth, depth and magnitude of their language may be very few and very far between. Recognize this person's level of knowledge like any other. If money is the means, then pay up.

From: Jeff Marck <Jeff.Marck@anu.edu.au>

The protocol for work with Australian Aborigines outside of Darwin is about $20/hr or $100 a day (Australian dollars = about 75 cents U.S). In addition to those direct payments a lot of money goes to:

1. Feeding people as they are often not eating properly in the morning and the sessions go better if they've had some fruit, and then providing sandwiches for lunch (these sessions often include younger relatives (who are non-speakers or marginal speakers) who pick up what they can as the sessions transpire. Cost $10-15 fruit and drinks in the morning and $15-20 for sandwiches and drinks at lunch). 2. Taking them to see their

relatives in town once or twice a week (these days supplement data collection and occur mainly on the weekend and there are no payments to the speakers for those days). 3. Helping financially at funerals. 4. Helping people as they become terminally ill and move to the city to be closer to the hospital and need household furnishings (radio first, TV second, beds third, tables and living room furniture last).

This is all in the context of a system of grants which is rather liberal in its payments to the native speakers. Researchers budgets "direct payments", the hourly or daily fees, and "gifts" (all the other stuff) and grant agencies and tax people here are used to it. and never challenge it.

From: rjpensal@mit.edu (Rob Pensalfini)

On behalf of every field-worker I would like to thank Robin for posting the summary on informant/consultant pay. It was interesting to see variations of up to 100% (from $10 to $20) even in the same regions.

There is often a major stumbling block to paying speakers what one feels they should be paid, and that is that grants often specify hourly rates of pay for consultants.

I was once in the unfortunate situation of being in receipt of two small grants for speaker pay for the same field trip, each of which specified a different hourly rate to be paid to the speakers. Of course there are ways around this but all of them are dishonest and I would never for a minute recommend them. One not-so-dishonest option is to pay the speaker for 'consultation' as opposed to 'language work' if the grant so allows. Thus, if I spend four hours with a consultant, only two of which are used for intensive language research, and the rest of the time is spent going places, finding objects to discuss etc, then the consultation has lasted four hours, not two. This is only fair, since the researcher has taken the speaker away from her/his other activities that he/she might otherwise be doing for four hours, not two. Much the way a lawyer will cbrage you for the time she/he spends sitting around in the courtroom as well as the time spent actually working on your case.

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

GALICIA: a New Electronic List of Galician Culture

Galicia is a country situated on the North-west coast of the Iberian Peninsula, on one of the several "Fines terrae" of Europe. Its Romanic language -Galician-Portuguese- was the vehicle of an important lyric production in the Middle Ages, which was studied from Galicia to Seville and from Seville to Provence, including the court of Toledo. Santiago de Compostela was, at that time, an atraction for pilgrims of all Europe.

The separation of Portugal in the twelfth century created a new kingdom. a new language -Portuguese- which is the oficial language of several states nowadays. The political union of Galicia with Leon and Castile and, later on with Spain, made it easier the development of Galician peculiarities which were already present in the medieval period, and the progressive distance from Portuguese. In addition, the autonomous normalization which was taken place since the late eighteenth century gave way to an autonomous language -Galician.

Since the end of the Middle Ages the process of formation of a Spanish State based on one oficial language -Spanish, also known as Castilian- and the progressive extinction of other languages -Galician, Basque and Catalan, together with Asturian-Leonese and Aragonese was taking place. However, that process was not so successful as expected, as those languages are still alive at the end of the twentieth century.

As a consequence of this failure and the existence of complex cultural, social and political movements of defence of their own personality in Galicia, Euskadi and the Catalan Countries since the late eighteenth century, a new constitution was passed in 1978 in Spain. This document acknowledges, for the first time, the coexistence of Spanish as a co-oficial language in those territories where other languages were originally spoken. In Galicia, no school or legal activities had been carried out in Galician since the sixteenth century. In 1995, Galician has achieved a high degree of competence in Galician society, although it has to face many problems.

Nowadays, there are lots of studies on Galician culture and a thousand works are published every year in Galician. In addition, the interest of non-Galician scientists and many foreign universities in our country, its culture and its language is increasing.

The creation of the Centre of Linguistic and Literary Researching Ramon Pinheiro -CIRP- in Santiago de Compostela makes us it feel necessary to create an electronic list to offer all INTERNET users a way of exchanging information and discussion about several aspects of Galician culture (language, literature, history, etc.).
TECNICAL INFORMATION:
This is an open and non-moderated discussion list.
To subscribe, send mail to majordomo@cirp.es with the following command in the text (not the subject) of your message: subscribe galicia
To get help, send mail to majordomo@cirp.es with the following command in the text (not the subject) of your message: help
If you have any problem or question, please contact: galicia-owner@cirp.es

Fuegan Web Site

Oscar Aguilera (oaguiler@abello.dic.uchile.cl) informs us of a new 'site' on the net which offers information (in Spanish for the moment) on Kawesqar (Alakaluf, Fueguian), an almost extinct

South American Indian language. This site is planned to be part of a larger one, "Lenguas de Chile," under permanent construction. Contributions and comments are welcome.

The URLis:
http://www.uchile.cl/facultades/periodismo/rescate.htm

You may also want to visit Aguilera's homepage:
http://www.uchile.cl/facultades/periodismo/Oaguiler.htm

New site for Quechua Language on the Web

Date: Sat, 9 Mar 1996 22:30:20 -0800
Original Sender: gibbons@best.com (Russ Gibbons)
Mailing List: NAT-LANG (nat-lang @gnosys.svle.ma.us)
I am creating a web site for Quechua Language, including Poems, Songs, Stories and eventually an on-line dictionary. If you would like to see what is already there, or submit something to post, please check:
http://www.best.com/~gibbons/
Thanks,
Russ Gibbons, Cultures of the Andes web site

An example text:

Phrases in Quechua:

Phrases in Quechua, frequently used, but without literal translations.

Sonsochakoq
Literally means "acting dumb" A person is up to something, maybe he is trying to listen in on a conversation by acting as a dummy, or maybe he doesn't want to work, so he is pretending to be working, but really he is just fooling around.

Warmichakoq
Literally means: hunting for women. If a guy leaves the house without telling where he is going, they assume he is looking for girlfriend.

Qaritukoq
Literally reads "pretending to be a man" This refers to someone who is trying to act like a strong-brave man, pretending he is powerful when he is not.

Champ'a Uma
Literally means "head, weed" it is a name given to a woman with messy hear, as if saying weeds are growing from her head.

"Siki" is a very important word in kechwa, it means "rear end, or bottom".

Yana siki
Literally means "black rear end" but it means a "dark person".

Yuraq siki
Literal translation "white rear end" but it means a "white person, or Gringo".

Rupaq siki
Literal translation is "hot rear end" but it is used to refer to a "woman who is willing to jump into bed with any man".

Iskay siki
Literal translation is "two rear ends" but it is used to refer to a "person who spends their time in two homes", For example, a husband spends as much time at his parents home as with his wife, so he is undecided who he should live with.

Muyoq siki
Literal translation is "a rear end which goes around in a circle" but it is used to refer to "someone who likes to dance a lot" no matter if s/he knows how to dance, but dances as if they have ants in their pants.

Ruiro siki
Literal translation is a "round rear end" but refers to someone "who can't sit still on her seat, (like a ball that rolls off the chair, because it is round on the bottom) they keep moving or standing up constantly for nothing", annoying other people.

Q'oyo siki
Literal translation is "rear end with bruises" but refers to someone who always complains of cold weather, so you reply that their skin will turn purple because of the cold.

Sip'u siki
Literal translation is "wrinkled rear end" but it refers to a "woman who mates frequently with many men".

Siki sapa
Literal translation is a "big rear end", but refers to someone who can hardly walk, because they are so overweight, and their rear end is too heavy to move around.

Information on Teaching Materials for North American Native Languages

Shirley Silver, in her posting on NAT-LANG last week, was correct to identify SSILA (the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas) as a source of information on published and "semi-published" teaching materials and tapes for North American native languages. We are happy to respond to inquiries with copies of our bibliographical files for specific languages.
The best address to use to contact SSILA is <golla @ nic.csu.net>. You can also reach us at <gollav@axe.humboldt.edu>.
E-mail us if you would like information about SSILA and its activities.
--Victor Golla Secretary, SSILA

Bookstores that sell Irish language items.
A bit out of date, but has the vital info.

Name: Clo Iar-Chonnachta Teo.
Address: Indreabhan, Conamara, Co. na Gaillimhe
Eire
Phone: (091) 93307
Fax: (091) 93362
Abbreviation: CIC
Catalog(s):   Iuil '92   (8 pages)
Leabharliosta CIC 1991   (3 pages)
Catalog 2. 1991   (32 pages)
Catalog 3. 1993/94   (40 pages)

Notes: The 1991 catalog contains: Short stories, novels, poetry, history, children's books, grammars, fiction for teenagers, music cassettes, books on cassette, postcards, stickers, etc. Descriptions in Irish and English.

The Iuil '92 (July '29) contains newly release books and cassettes, descriptions in Irish and English. Includes "The Quiet Man Quiz 1000," a book of 1000 questions about the movie. Doesn't say if the book is in Irish or English though.

The 1993/94 catalog (bigger and better than ever!) is similar to the 1991 catalog descibed above. A list of books coming out soon, some new entries in the "Irish Language Learning Aids" section, and some video tapes (at least 2 of them i nGaeilge) round out this very nice catalog.

Postage to the US is a bit high, 30% of the cost of the books. (postage within Ireland is free, to the U.K. 10%, to other EC coutries 20%, and to Aust./Japan 35%).   But they take VISA /Mastercard, which is a big plus in my book.

John T. McCranie, Comp. Sci. and Linguistics Grad Student,
jtm@futon.sfsu.edu   http://futon.sfsu.edu/~jtm/
San Francisco State University

Comparative Linguistics in African Languages of the Sahel-Sahara zone

Date: Tue, 13 Feb 1996 05:57:49 CST
From: nicolai@unice.fr (Robert Nicolai)

Mailing-list ComparLingAfric is opened to topics where comparative linguistics in African languages of the Sahel-Sahara zone are the subject of discussion, this includes :
1) Languages and language families present in the Sahel-Sahara zone: Mande, Chadic, Berber, Nilo-Saharan... Analysis of results obtained in the research on genetic relationships.
2) Problems related to the description of changes in the context of languages of oral tradition.
3) Understanding linguistic changes and all the relevant factors concerning language transformation.
Research workers who do not specialize in the above-mentioned languages, but who nevertheless are interested in general issues of theoretical or methodological value for the work carried out or research tools involved, are welcome to contribute. Issues of the following type will thus be discussed:

- Empirical issues (Particular facts pertaining to a language or a group).
- Methodological issues (Procedures and methods of description).
- Theoretical issues (Principles of language change).
- Epistemological or cognitive issues (The validity of established facts and how these are obtained).
Contributions can be posted either in English or in French.
To add yourself from the list, send a message without subject to listserv@unice.fr
For further inquiries please contact nicolai@unice.fr (Robert Nicolai)

Himalayan Languages Project

George van Driem, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

The Himalayan Languages Project of Leiden University is a programme of ongoing linguistic research on hitherto undescribed and little known languages indigenous to the Himalayan region. Members of the multi-national research team consist of young linguists working towards their Ph.D. at Leiden University and post-doc researchers. This research programme is funded by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Scientific Research (NWO) and Leiden University.

Each Ph.D. candidate undertakes to produce a grammar of a Himalayan language, analysing and describing its phonology, morphology and syntax. The grammars include a bilingual glossary, morphologically analysed texts with translation, conjugational paradigms and a study of the people's indigenous pantheon, eschatology, religion and rituals. For the completion of this assignment, researchers in the employ of the Himalayan Languages Project are awarded a four-year scholarship, disbursed either through the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Scientific Research or through Leiden University. Additionally, field work expenditures, within reasonable limits, are defrayed by the Project.

Post-doc researchers are taken on by the Himalayan Languages Project for a shorter term to complete a monograph, grammatical study or substantive scholarly contribution on a previously little known Himalayan language. The financial details of the engagement are worked out on an individual basis.

The project is still recruiting qualified linguists. In order to be eligible for a research four-year position, a Ph.D. candidate must have completed a Master's degree in Linguistics or have accrued comparable academic credentials which qualify him or her to complete a linguistic description of the prescribed calibre. Post-doc researchers must have completed a doctorate in Linguistics and specialised themselves in the field of Descriptive Linguistics, Oriental Studies or both. Applications and inquiries regarding either ongoing research or

vacancies should be addressed directly to the Project Director, Dr George van Driem, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Postbus 9515 2300 RA Leiden, Netherlands electronic mailing address: Himalaya@rullet.LeidenUniv.NL

Australian Indigenous Languages: Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi Web dictionary

Date: Fri, 19 Jan 1996 16:52:48 -0800
To: endangered-languages-l@postbox.anu.edu.au
From: djn@elc.aiatsis.gov.au (David Nathan)

We would like to announce that a dictionary of Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi (northern NSW, Australia) has been put on the World Wide Web.

It is the Web's first page-formatted, hypertext dictionary. As far as we know, other Web dictionaries are either:

- -search engines (and the info returned includes hypertext links in few cases)

- vaguely or not at all formatted, without cross references

- not accessible at the moment

- simply don't work at all

Please have a look at the dictionary if you have time, at URL :

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AborigP ages/LANG/GAMDICT/GAMDICT.HTM

It is part of a site being built for information about Australian Indigenous languages at :

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AborigP ages/LANG/LangHome.html

Thank you
Dave Nathan and Peter Austin

Language Shift - New Mailing List

LG-SHIFT is an open, unmoderated forum for all scholars interested in Language Shift and any and all phenomena closely related to it.

The International Sociolinguistics Department of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) takes great pleasure in being able to host this forum for scholarly discussion on a topic of great current interest.

It is our hope to gather together in lively interaction, linguists, sociolinguists, anthropologists, social psychologists, and any others who can contribute to and profit from the exchange of information.

LG-SHIFT is run as an Internet mailing list. To subscribe, send an email message to MAILSERV@SIL.ORG with the following command line only as the body of the message:

SUBSCRIBE LG-SHIFT

You will receive a welcome file providing further details. For further information or questions contact Paul Lewis (Paul_Lewis@SIL.ORG), the current "list owner".

The list has started off well. I enclose an early exchange, on Urban and Rural Settings.

Date: Wed, 03 Apr 1996 20:05:54 -0500 (EST)
From: DORIAN@HENRY.BOWDOIN.EDU
Subject: [3] urban vs. rural settings
To: lg-shift@SIL.ORG

In the expectation that subscribers to the language-shift mailing list will have experience with a wide variety of settings, I thought this might be a good place to raise a question about the relationship between rural and urban settings in language shift and language revitalization processes.

In his 1994 book on "Multilingualism" I noticed that John Edwards associated urbanization with shift, saying that 'The language preserved in the country is forgotten in the town' (p. 107) & contrasting the artificial tho valiant effort of thinly spread and 'selfconscious' maintainers & revitalsts in urban centers with the 'unselfconscious' speakers of rural areas (p. 108; he exemplifies the patterns he describes by way of Irish & Scottish Gaelic-speaking areas, in particular).

I wondered what the experience of researchers in language shift is in this connection currently, and whether it's different in countries with greater & lesser levels of economic development. In Scotland the pattern has seemed to be changing in recent years. Certainly the rural hinterlands of Ireland and Scotland arent unselfconscious about their language choices these days, and havent been for some time. (Malcolm Chapman wrote about the painful selfconsciousness among native Gaelic speakers of bearing what was left of an ancient cultural tradition in his 1978 book on "The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture".) But my impression has been that one of the chief differences between rural & urban speakers is not their selfconsciousness (pretty widespread in both settings, only less negatively tinged among some urbanites) but their selfconfidence, with urban-based speakers acquiring selfconfidence more rapidly than rural speakers thanks to better education & income levels. (Re)location in an urban setting is more likely to lead to higher-paying jobs & to increased access to education, and both of those are in turn more likely to lead to politicization & concern for an ethnolinguistic heritage. If it's correct to identify a process of this sort, then the seeds of revitalization might after all lie in towns & cities, at least in some cases. Do overall levels of education, prosperity, & political autonomy within a region or a country need to be factored in, because of their presumed role in promoting a selfconfident middle class that includes members of the shift-prone community? Is clash between urban ethnic enthusiasts or activists with relatively greater economic security

and hinter land ethnics with more fundamental economic concerns inevitable?

This has since been followed up by largely supportive discussion from Richard Benton , citing the situation of Maori in New Zealand, and from Paul Lewis on the Mayan languages in Guatemala.

7.   Forthcoming Meetings

International Conference on Language Rights
June 22-24, 1996 at Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Organised by the Department of English, Hong Kong Polytechnic University in association with a programme committee based at the Department of Languages and Culture, Roskilde University, Denmark.

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* Plenary speakers *

E. Annamalai, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan
Language rights and language choice

Florian Coulmas, Chuo University, Japan
Language rights: state, group, individual

Alastair Pennycook, University of Melbourne, Australia
The right to do language

Robert Phillipson, Roskilde University, Denmark
Linguistic imperialism or linguistic human rights?

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Roskilde University, Denmark
Human rights and language wrongs

* Other invited speakers *

Martin Baik & Rosa Shim, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea
Language rights of dialect speakers

Albert Chen, Hong Kong University
Language rights and international law

Jean D'Souza, Pune, India
Language, education and the rights of the child

Robyn Kilpatrick, Amnesty International Hong Kong
Language rights and human rights

The aim of the conference is to discuss the meaning and implementation of language rights in Asia and worldwide. Major areas of discussion will include

Language and human rights

Language dominance

Minority language rights

Language rights under the law

Language rights in discourse and representation

Mother-tongue and bilingual education

Language rights in Hong Kong and Asia

The conference will consist of a mixture individual paper presentations and thematic symposia.

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* Registration *

Before 31st March: 100 US dollars or 750 HK dollars
After 31st March: 120 US dollars or 900 HK dollars
(Students half-price)

Cheques / Bank drafts to "The Hong Kong Polytechnic University"

Inquiries and completed registration forms to Peter Grundy, Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong

Fax: (0852) 2333 6569
E-mail: eggrundy@polyu.edu.hk

Up-to-date information on the conference, including a list of papers to be presented is available on World Wide Web at
<http://www.hku.hk/engctr/lrights/lrights.html>.
The list of papers is also available by e-mail from Phil Benson at <pbenson@hkucc.hku.hk>

Further details from <kandd@hkucc.hku.hk> or <http://www.hku.hk/engctr/>.
Phil Benson
English Centre
Hong Kong University
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong

Fax: (852) 2547 3409

E-mail: pbenson@hkucc.hku.hk

World Conference on Linguistic Rights
Barcelona, 6-9 June 1996

Within the International PEN Club there is a working committee on Translation and Linguistic Rights. They have been working since September 1994 on the project of a World Conference of Linguistic Rights. The final draft of a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights will be presented to this conference. About a hundred Non-Governmental organizations, having collaborated in the drafting, will participate.

More information on the conference can be obtained from:
Mercator Legislation
Ciemen, Pau Claris 106, Barcelona, Spain
tel +34 3 302 0144
fax +34 3 412 0890

Sixth International Conference on Minority Languages
Gdansk, Poland, 30 June- 5 July 1996.

The main theme will be Language Minorities and Minority Languages in a Changing Europe. The organizers of the conference are the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association, together with the Universities of Gdansk and Poznan. (The previous conference in this series was held at Cardiff.) More information can be obtained from:
Tomasz Wicherkiewicz
Secretary of 6 ICML
Adam Mickiewicz University
Chair of Oriental and Baltic Studies
ul. Mledzychodzka 5
PL-60 371 Poznan Poland
tel/fax +46-61-616836
e-mail wicher@plpuam11

Symposium on New Technologies and Less Commonly Taught Languages
July 8 - July 12, 1996
at the
1996 NFLRC Summer Institute
National Foreign Language Resource Center
University of Hawai'i

Advances in computer technology are providing important new tools for teaching and learning languages. These tools can play an especially valuable role in supporting instruction in less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). This symposium seeks to facilitate the sharing of resources, ideas, and information about all aspects of using new technologies in the teaching and learning of LCTLs.The symposium will consist of four parts:

ACCOMMODATIONS
Reasonably priced on-campus room/board packages as well as on-line travel arrangements through a local travel agency will be made available to participants. Participants will receive more detailed information about housing and meal options following notification of acceptance.

ABOUT THE NFLRC
Under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Hawai'i has since 1990 served as one of a small number of resource centers established to improve and enrich foreign language education nationwide. The Center engages in research and materials development projects, conducts summer institutes for language professionals, and publishes research reports and teaching materials.

NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER
University of Hawai'i
East-West Road, Bldg 1, Rm 6A
Honolulu HI 96822
USA
email: nflrc@hawaii.edu
voice: (808) 956-9424, fax: (808) 956-5983

VISIT US ON THE WEB!
http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/nflrc

Summer Intensive Yucatec Maya Course

Dates: June 10 - July 19, 1996

Four-week intensive language study on the University of North Carolina campus, Chapel Hill, to be followed by a two-week field experience in Yucatan, where students are placed with Maya-speaking families in order to practice language skills. Course includes special lectures and a weekend hieroglyphics workshop.

Faculty: Dr. Barbara McLeod, University of Texas
          Miguel Quemes, Universidad Autonoma
          de Yucatan

For more information, contact Sharon Mujica, Duke University / UNC, Program in Latin American Studies, 223 East Franklin Street, CB 3205, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3205, USA.
          Phone: +1(919)962-2414
          E-mail: smujica@gibbs.oit.unc.edu

American Indian Language Development Institute

Dates: 3-28 June, 1996

Now in its 17th year, the AILDI features four weeks of intensive study in American Indian linguistics, bilingual-bicultural education, and culture-based curriculum development, followed by local projects implemented in participants' home schools and communities. This year's theme is The Politics of Indigenous Languages, Literatures and Education: National and Grassroots Strategies for Language Maintenance; course, special workshops, and guest speaker presentations all highlight the development and use of native lannguage mAterials. Offering 6 graduate or undergraduate credit hours, the AILDI brings together linguists, tribal elders, bilingual/ESL specialists, teachers, aides, parents and school administrators in an integrated learning experience.

For more information, contact:
Karen Francis-Begay, AILDI Coordinator
Dept of Language, Reading and Culture
The University of Arizona
PO Box 210069
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0069   USA
tel.   +1-520-621-1068

Nordic Network for Intercultural Communication

Dates: 20 - 23 November, 1996

NIC Symposium 1996: the Nordic Network for Intercultural Communication will hold its 3rd annual symposium on Intercultural Communication and National Identity at Centre for Languages and Intercultural Studies (CSIS) Aalborg University, Denmark.

The symposium will deal with patterns of culture and communication seen in a comparative perspective. It will elucidate the interplay of language, culture and identity in a variety of

contexts, including the personal, political and professional. It will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the enterprise by inviting researchers from different academic backgrounds, e.g. anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, discourse analysis, language for special purposes, language teaching and learning, as well as the history of ideas.

Himalayan Languages Symposium
Noordwijkerhout, October 11-12, 1996

The simplicity of the name HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM represents a deliberate formulation which captures the spirit of the gathering. The first symposium brought together scholars stationed, temporarily or per manently, in Europe. Yet the term 'European' was avoided because it was hoped that the symposium would come to serve as a global forum for Himalayan language scholars. The term 'Tibeto-Burman' was eschewed because the Himalayan Languages Symposium is a podium for contributions on any language of the Himalayas, whether Burushaski, Kusunda, an Indo-Aryan tongue or other language. 'Languages' was chosen above 'Linguistics' so that specialists from kindred disciplines like philology, history, anthropology or archaeology would feel welcome to make their contributions to the study of Himalayan languages. Finally, the fact that the first international HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM included contributions on languages of Szechuan and the Tibetan Plateau demon strates that the term 'Himalayan' is intended not in a restrictive, but in a panoramic sense. The HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM provides an open forum for discussing linguistic matters in a specifically Himalayan context with colleagues, who study the languages which make up the com plex linguistic tapestry of the Indochinese borderlands, a culturally rich and vast territory which typologically straddles the Indosphere and the Sinosphere.

This year, the HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM will again be hosted by the Himalayan Languages Project in the Netherlands for two causes. A compelling reason is that we shall also be hosting the XXIX International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics this October at Noordwijkerhout, and we have received many requests from interested scholars in India, Nepal, the United States and Russia (not all of whom were Himalayan language scholars) asking that the HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM be held simultaneously with the International Con ference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, just once. The unique coordination of the two events will enable scholars to attend both the Symposium and the Conference as well as give perennial conference goers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the HIMALAYAN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM.

The deadline for abstracts is the 1st of June, 1996.

Address all communications to:
Himalayan Languages Symposium
Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

Postbus 9515
2300 RA Leiden   The Netherlands

telephone: 31-71-527-2725 or 31-71-527-2510
telefax: 31-71-527-2501, ATTN: Himalayan Languages Project
electronic mail:
HIMALAYA@RULLET.LEIDENUNIV.NL
http://iias.leidenuniv.nl/host/himalaya

Contributions on Burushaski, Indo-Aryan languages, Tibeto-Burman languages and any other languages of the greater Himalayan region are welcome at the symposium.

Language Contact: International Ivar Aasen Conference
Univ. Oslo, November 14-16 1996.

Subtitled: Multilingualism in a Majority/Minority Perspective and Norms, Status and Standardization. Our aim is to treat these themes both from a linguistic and a more socio-cultural point of view.

The invited lecturers are:

Suzanne Romaine, Merton College, Oxford U.

Peter John Trudgill, English, U Lausanne

Uffe Östergaard, Cultural Reseach,U. Aarhus

Frans Gregersen, Danish Dialect Research, U.Copenhagen

Inegerd Municio, Political Science, U. Stockholm

Aija Priedite, FN-Coordinator for the Education Program for Language Minorities in Latvia

Donall O Riagain, Secretary General, European Bureau for Lesser used Languages

Herbert Chimhundu, Coordinator for the ALLEX-Project, U. of Zimbabwe

D. Miguel Strubell, The Catalan Sociolinguistic Institute, Dept Culture, Barcelona

Stephen Walton, Scandinavian Dept, UCL

John Hume, MP, MEP (Member of The European Parliament), Northern Ireland

Congress Organizers are Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature and The Ivar Aasen Foundation

More information at our Internet address:
http://www.hf.uio.no/inl/aasen/

Oslo, April 2 1996

or the Organizing Committee
Dagfinn Worren
Avdeling for leksikografi
Institutt for nordistikk og litteraturvitskap
Universitetet i Oslo
Tel.: +47 22 85 43 91
Fax: +47 22 85 43 81
E-mail: dagfinn.worren@inl.uio.no

Festival of Films in Languages of Limited Diffusion (Eremuak'96)

In order to try and strengthen the production of films in languages of limited diffusion, the most important professional associations of the Basque Country - writers, translators, producers, actors,... - and associations of linguistic normalization have joined together to found the Festival of Films in Languages of Limited Diffusion. The Festival is supported by the European Union and the local Basque government institutions.

The Festival is held annually and starts on the first week of July. It has two sections, competitive and information. Amongst its immediate goals are the creation of an International Review which would serve as the data base and vehicle for information and debate on films in languages of limited diffusion, and the strengthening, together with the Festival, of a Film and Video Market for films of limited diffusion.

Why sould there be a Film Festival for lesser used languages?

It could be argued that we are running behind, as if we had a hundred years to catch up on. To pretend that the culture manifested in languages of lesser demographic, territorial, literary and cinematographical scope can compete with the products of languages with much greater clout might seem to be a tall order. Nevertheless it is no less true that differences in volume not are concerned with cultural matters nor with ones of proportion but rather it is a question of macroeconomics. On this point, a movie filmed in a minority language can be, and, in fact, quite often is, more stunning and amusing than the fare the big distributors usually have on offer. Since the lag in the cinema produced in the lesser used languages is not a time lag but a commercial one, bringing them up to date is something that is feasible and foreseeable if only those of us who are affected are able to pool our resources.

To that end we have set up EREMUAK Film Festival, with humble beginnings but looking forward to the future: We are bringing together mature cinema producers who are trying to break into the market and budding cinema producers in search of their identity, and we award the films by judging only ther inherent qualities. EREMUAK wishes to be a gathering point for exchanging and broadcasting ideas, and more than just a mere gesture of mutual solidarity.

BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY

The present territory of the Basque language is comprised of seven provinces, three under French administration and four under Spanish administration, which are run by two autonomous governments: the Navarre Provincial Governments and the Basque Autonomous Community. Over the last few years, the latter has actively promoting cinematography, creating schools, subsidising and promoting the production of full-length feature films.

LINGUISTIC STANDARDS

The status of Basque has been turning for the better towards the end of this century. It has been adapting itself to the demands of modern education and administration, and a general model of spelling and morphology has been established. This has given it access to areas which have long been beyond its reach, especially audiovisual communications. It has a public television channel (Euskal Telebista) which an important producer of programmes and broadcasts.

BASQUE CINEMA

Although modest, Basque cinema is a reality. The cinematographic work over the last few years has created an important infrastructure of technicians and directors who are highly esteemed and reputed throughout the Spanish state. The range of film actors is gradually increasing, since some are also being hired from outside the country. "La muerte de Mikel" (The Death of Mikel), "Tasio" (Tasio), "Alas de Mariposa" (Butterfly Wings), "Vacas" (Cows), "El cura Santa Cruz" (Father Santa Cruz) and "Dias de Humo" (Days of Smoke).... are some of the most representative titles.

ZARAUTZ

This festival is based in Zarautz, on the coast of Guipuzcoa, in the Basque Autonomous Community. A unique venue, the tourist trade activity has hardly altered its character. In providing services for modern and cosmopolitan times, Zarautz could well be a shining example of how Basque can adapt long standing tradition to modern times and of the old Basque language to current demands.

EREMUAK - Eremu Urriko Hizkuntzen Zinemaldia Zarauzko Turismo Bulegoa Nafarroa Kalea z/g E-20800-Zarautz Basque Country EUROPE

Tel.: 34-43-132629 Fax.: 34-43-832658 e-mail: eremuak@eus.gn.apc.org

8. Publications of Interest

Stabilizing Indigenous Languages
edited by Gina Cantoni

Available in April 1996, Stabilizing Indigenous Languages is the proceedings of two symposia sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) at Northern Arizona University in 1994 and 1995. This 256 page monograph is available for $2.00 mailing costs. Write Jon Reyhner, Bilingual/Multicultural Education Program Coordinator, Center for Excellence in Education, P. O. Box 5774, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5774. Make checks out to Northern Arizona University. No purchase orders please. Quantity discounts on shipping are available: phone 520 523 0580, FAX 520 523 1929, or e-mail <Jon.Reyhner@nau.edu>.

Selected Contents

Ojibwe language and history

For those interested in the Ojibwe language and linguistics, the Spring 1996 issue of the Oshkaabewis Native Journal and the accompanying cassette tape will be available on April 12.

To get your copy, acquire subscription information or details on back issues, you may

1. Visit the ONJ web site at: http://www.glrain.net/glrain/onj.htm
2. Send your mailing address to Anton Treuer at: atreuer@bji.net
3. Write to Indian Studies, Bemidji State University at: Box 19, Sanford Hall, 1500 Birchmont Drive NE, Bemidji, MN 56601, USA

The Oshkaabewis Native Journal is a bi-annual forum (published every spring and fall) for contributions to knowledge about the Ojibwe language. Contributions include monolingual and bilingual Ojibwe stories in the double vowel orthography, scholarly articles and reviews of Ojibwe language material.

The Spring 1996 issue of the ONJ contains Ojibwe stories and scholarly articles by Joe Auginaush, Gilles Delisle, Robert Fairbanks, Emma Fisher, Henry Flocken, Rose Foss, Daniel Jones, Dennis Jones, Nancy Jones, William Jones, Archie Mosay, John Nichols, Earl Nyholm, John Pinesi, Anton Treuer and Porky White.

MultiLingual Computing - The Magazine of LanguageTechnology

Joseph Tomei of Hokkaido University, Institute of Language and Culture, S317 Kyoyobu, N17 W8, Kita-ku <jtomei@lilim.ilcs.hokudai.ac.jp> writes:

Since 'endangered languages' includes those languages which currently have a power base but are in danger from encroaching world languages, those of you who are working in those situations might be interested in a new magazine called MultiLingual Computing (subtitled: The Magazine of Language Technology), which deals with, among other points, the problems of the localization of software products (rough definition 'putting everything associated with the program or the computer in a target language'). It's definitely for the computer-literate programming type, but it might be useful to know to suggest as a reference for people interested in this work.

The cover price is $5.95(US) and it's published 6 times a year. The address is:
Multilingual Computing, Inc.
111 Cedar St.
Sandpoint, Idaho 83864 USA
info@multilingual.com

"Anyone who isn't confused isn't well-informed."

Nationalist Mobilization in Catalonia and the Basque Country:
Alternative Routes To Ethnic Autonomy
by Daniele Conversi.
Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press/ London: Hurst & Co., 1995

Two of Europe's strongest nationalist movements are those of Spain's Basque and Catalan minorities. Rooted in cultures that long predate the modern state, bound together by languages and traditions that have historically divided them from their neighbors, the Basques and the Catalans have

struggled for centuries to retain their ethnic identities against the devastating impact of modernization and state-enforced assimilation.

This new study by Daniele Conversi examines and compares the history, motives, and methods of these two movements, considering the influence of such intertwined aspects of nationalist mobilization as the choice of language, race, and descent as core values; the consequences of large-scale immigration; and the causes and effects of social violence. The result is a fresh analysis of the ways ethnic elites create a national vision through the use of cultural material and symbols, and the ways their choice of core values can shape the methods and character of their movements.

The success of the Basque and Catalan movements in achieving regional autonomy in post-Franco Spain has been accomplished through radically different programs that reflect a wide range of choices, values, and methods. Conversi's penetrating interpretation of these programs offers vital new understanding not only of the recent history of Spain but of the dynamics of nationalist movements throughout the modern world.

Daniele Conversi received his Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. He teaches at the Institute for European Studies/Peace Studies at Cornell University.

The Zia Pueblo In New Mexico and the Karuk Tribe In Northern California

Native Language Communities: A Descriptive Study of Two Community Efforts to Preserve Their Native Languages

By Christine P. Sims
Linguistic Institute for Native Americans
Albuquerque, NM

This study, commissioned by the National Indian Policy Center, reviews the historical background and language experiences of the Zia Pueblo in New Mexico and the Karuk Tribe in northern California. It examines the factors contributing to language maintenance and language loss in these communities and analyzes the approaches each has taken to language preservation. Topics include the role of Native literacy, school-based language programs, community-based maintenance strategies, and language planning resources. The study concludes with a series of national policy recommendations.

The 130-page publication should be of special interest to Native educators and planners of language preservation programs. For more information on how to order a copy, contact:

Bob Arnold, Director
National Indian Policy Center
2021 K Street, N.W., Suite 211
Washington, DC 20006, USA
+1 (202) 973-7667
+1 (202) 973-7686 (fax)
Email: barnold@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu

"Living Languages Of The Americas"

There is a new resource on SIL's Web site--an on-line version of a book recently published by SIL called "Living Languages of the Americas" (1995). It combines information from the Ethnologue and the SIL Bibliography for all the languages in the Americas.The Web address is:
          http://www.sil.org/lla/

The book itself was originally intended for distribution to OAS member states for public relations purposes. Paper copies can be ordered from: International Academic Bookstore, SIL, 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236 (fax: 214/709-2433;
 e-mail academic.books@sil.org).