

FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES



ogmios



Pat Dodson

Former Chair of Australia's Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and a Yawuru man (born in Broome), Pat gave the Keynote address at this year's Broome conference.

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Once ordained as Australia's first
 Aboriginal Catholic priest, and also an
 inspirer of Bruce Chatwin's *The Song
 Lines*, Pat Dodson has since been
 Director of the Central Land Council in
 Alice Springs, and a Royal
 Commissioner into Aboriginal Deaths in
 Custody. His biography *Paddy's Road*,
 by Kevin Keefe, happened to be
 published in the same month as our
 conference: ISBN 0855754486, from the
 Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS.

Guest Editorial

Nigel Crawhall, South Africa: Report on the 2003 Conference: Maintaining the Links

FEL is a small academic association based in the United Kingdom. They have a small infrastructure and rely entirely on their membership contributions and a great deal of voluntarism. This made the success of Broome all the more impressive.

Broome is located in a remote (from the urban viewpoint only) part of Western Australia, on the Northwest coast of Australia. It is closer to Indonesia than it is to Sydney or Canberra.

It was particularly fitting for the conference to take place in Broome, as the Kimberley region is a heartland for projects that promote and document endangered indigenous languages. According to UNESCO there were approximately 250 aboriginal languages in Australia at the time of contact. Today there are about 90 languages of which 90% are considered to be at risk. The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC), which played an important role in the conference, has provided spelling rules on 28 languages in their area. There was also sizeable representation from other areas of Australia, such as the Central Desert, the Northern Territories and even from moribund and extinct language interest groups from Victoria and New South Wales.

The conference provided a good balance between academic interests and community interests and voices. It would have been easy for the FEL to isolate itself from the social reality of indigenous peoples and focus on somewhat esoteric issues of languages that tend not to be known by anyone other than their speakers or specialists. FEL gave its full support to the efforts of conference organiser Joseph Blythe and the back up team from the KLRC to make sure that the conference was accessible to indigenous peoples and a showcase for their efforts at language maintenance. The event was opened by local elders, owners of the country, as well as leading Aboriginal rights activist, Pat Dodson.

Coming from Southern Africa, I was surprised and impressed by the wide spectrum of publications coming out of Aboriginal communities. In Africa, we often struggle to see good materials produced in dominant languages that are spoken by millions of people. Here in Australia, with state and private sector support, there is a lively publishing industry, some of it Aboriginal owned, that publishes books for language learning (first

and second), on oral history and mythology, traditional bush knowledge (food and medicine are popular themes), life stories of prominent elders, as well as more technical works like dictionaries and grammars.

At the end of the conference, participants had the opportunity to go on a field trip to visit a number of the communities living in the Kimberley area. This again reinforced the reality of peoples' lives who were the subject of the presentations. Participants could witness first hand the excitement of work done by groups such as the KLRC but also the reality of poverty and social problems experienced by many indigenous peoples around the world.



Nigel Crawhall

Through the conference process I had the opportunity to talk to Aboriginal activists and white Australians working on land rights, psychological services, and rural development. The parallels between the situation of rural Aboriginal communities and the experiences of San people in the Kalahari were striking and disturbing. There were the obvious parallels of cultural conflict between settlers and first peoples, issues of the generation gap inside communities and substance abuse problems. Listening to the detail of some of the socio-pathology was eerily familiar: types of murders and anger that is turned inward by communities. It was interesting to note that just as Australians were more advanced on their language work, they are also more advanced in some areas in the management of conflict and substance abuse problems.

It is not possible to speak of language endangerment amongst indigenous peoples without understanding the extreme psychological and sociological stress they endure in their relationship with dominant groups which have taken over their lands and have extraordinary power to influence peoples sense of self worth and cultural independence.

One of the highlights of the conference was listening to Aboriginal elders talk about their lives, their values, the old ways, their

relationship with the land and the landscape, and the intimate ties between language and place. This theme was echoed in a number of the papers from around the world (notably Thomas Thornton's paper on Tlingit place names). The kinds of issues we were listening to were reflected in papers about the Canadian far north, East Africa, Morocco and the Kalahari. These themes were reinforced in papers given by Joseph Blythe and Frances Kofod, amongst others.

The format of the conference worked well, with papers clustered according to themes and time for questions. Most of the papers elicited excitement and discussions. The conference organisers might consider building in time for more panel and discussion styled sessions rather than only formal papers. The formal presentation format can be intimidating for people not used to that format, and there were some themes about identity and power that could have surfaced more clearly in a panel format.

I found that, despite the excellent quality of presentations, we were not hearing a lot about the causality of language endangerment and extinction. Having completed a review of language death / shift literature earlier this year for my PhD thesis, I was aware that theoretical and analytical work is scarce, in contrast with the rich literature of case studies. An exception was the paper by Hans Boas about the demise of Texas German varieties. Boas used a series of empirical research tools to identify variables associated with speakers maintaining German or giving it up. Boas then used these same criteria to examine another German language loss situation in a different part of the United States. This was a really useful contribution to the discipline. I felt, however, that we are all challenged to move from micro-observations to some kind of theoretical framework that is built on various contrastive studies of causality in different settings.

Boas' contribution explained that particular scenario, but it did not move to a macro level where we are seeing the same pattern of language loss across North America at the same time. There are studies of a rapid demise of Norwegian, Gaelic, and other European languages at the same time in different places around the continent. There is a question still to be answered about why did this all suddenly happen between 1930 and 1950? Moreover, there has not been enough of an attempt to compare the loss of European immigrant languages with the loss of indigenous peoples' languages in the same territories. Is the demise of Gaelic in Cape Breton of the same nature as the threatened demise of Mi'mac for example?

Boas' contribution confirmed my thoughts that the dynamics of language loss cannot all be put under one sociolinguistic rubric. The reason that German speakers in Texas

give up their language is fundamentally quite different from language loss in the Kimberley area of Australia or the demise of !Ui languages in South Africa.

The radical power interface between indigenous peoples, many of whom lived subsistence life styles of hunting-gathering or livestock pastoralism, and colonising forces of mercantile capitalism or agropastoralism cannot be seen as the same phenomenon as language shift within migrant communities embedded in language dominant groups in European, American or African cities. There may be common characteristics, but I would argue that the causality and the sociological process are fundamentally different. Aboriginal participants in Broome were clearly shocked when Boas, in answering a question, noted that most Texan Germans were not concerned about their language loss. It was just one of those things. For people whose language is deeply

intertwined with their social organisation, their land use, their spiritual universe, it is hard to imagine language loss as '*just one of those things*'.

It would be worthwhile if the FEL could encourage more dialogue between concerned parties about the causality of language death and see where a theory of language loss, in its myriad of expressions, can be further elucidated. Included in this thought, is the need for more inter-disciplinary contributions to the dialogue. There was an excellent presentation on ethnomusicology at the Broome conference. Issues of history, sociology, psychology, music, economics, cultural studies, as well as linguistics are all relevant to understanding the tremendous complexity of the role of language in human society.

Organising an FEL conference is no small challenge and requires a team of dedicated people and some institutional support. I

offered to bring the news back to San and other indigenous peoples organisations in Africa to see if it would not be possible for us to host the FEL in southern Africa in the coming years.

Congratulations again to all the people who made the VII FEL conference possible.

My participation in the VII FEL Conference was sponsored by Argyle Mining, which paid for the airfare, and by the University of Cape Town that provided R3000 to cover registration and subsistence costs. I express my gratitude to both agencies for making my participation possible, and to the FEL organisers for helping solicit the funding and making me welcome in Broome.

FEL too would like to thank Argyle Mining for their generous support. Nigel Crawhall, of the South African San Institute, proved an indispensable asset to our conference.



Picture painted for FEL by the many Aboriginal people at FEL VII; each section was painted by a different language group.

2. Development of the Foundation

Call for Applications for FEL Grants 2004

The Foundation for Endangered Languages is now accepting proposals for projects of work that will support, enable or assist the

documentation, protection or promotion of one or more endangered languages.

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

Form for Submissions

There is a form that defines the content of appropriate proposals, which is accessible at the Foundation's website:

<http://www.ogmios.org>

It may also be obtained from the Editor of Ogmios, at the address on page 2.

All proposals must be submitted in this form, to ensure comparability.

Deadline

The time-limit for proposals in the current round will be **18 January 2004**. By that

date, proposals and supporting testimonials must reach me at the address below.

The FEL Committee will announce its decision before the 31st of March 2003.

Here are four points to note especially, the first two of them new this year.

1. The form now contains a **new question**, enquiring on the **potential for further work**, after completion of a first grant. This material will serve both to support the current application in the selection process, and also to provide the Foundation with arguments in their quest for further funds to supplement existing projects in the future.
2. Where possible, work undertaken within endangered language communities themselves will be preferred in the selection. **FEL is prepared to comment on draft proposals from communities or community linguists**, and suggest weaknesses and potential remedies (without prejudice) before the selection. Such draft proposals - clearly marked "DRAFT" - should reach FEL as soon as possible, and no later than 31 December 2003.
3. The Foundation's funds remain extremely limited and it is not anticipated that - in the first instance - any award will be greater than US \$1,000. Smaller proposals stand a better chance of funding.
4. The Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) is a separate from ELF, the Endangered Language Fund (www.haskins.yale.edu). It is perfectly possible (and has indeed occurred in the past) that the same project can be partially funded by both FEL and ELF.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Mangrove Hotel, Broome, Western Australia, on Tuesday 23 September 2003 at 11.30 a.m.

Note by the Secretary: *The following minutes, taken by the Treasurer, refer to the part of the agenda following the President's and Treasurer's reports (annexed to these minutes) and before and after the (re-)election of office bearers. The minutes have been annotated by the Exec Cttee at its meeting on 2 November, 2003*

1. Referring to the President's and Treasurer's reports on the grants awarded in the past year (in the absence of a separate report from the Grants Officer), NORMAN THOMSON proposed that in future the results of research subsidized by the Foundation be presented at subsequent Annual General meetings. The Treasurer noted that this was a good idea, worth acting on, with the provision that actual

published results of subsidized researchers' work often takes longer than a year to appear.

The Executive Committee discussed the issue and decided the best solution would be to request an annual reports and to make these available at the AGM.

2. NIGEL CRAWHALL asked about the Foundation's relations with the Rausing Foundation and UNESCO. The President replied that he had acted as a consultant to the Rausing Foundation in setting up its operations; he viewed the two foundations as complementary rather than rivals. Nigel Crawhall noted that the Norwegian state foreign aid agency NORAD plans to release funds to support indigenous peoples, a fact that our Foundation should take account of.

3. CLAIRE BOWERN suggested that in future the Foundation should consider providing or getting sponsorship for equipment to assist scholars researching endangered languages.

The Executive Committee wish to point out that equipment provision can be made as part of an application. Equipment-only applications can also be considered, but they would be judged on their own merits.

4. At this point the election of the Foundation's office bearers was held, the committee resigning *en bloc* and Michael Walsh temporarily taking the chair and presiding over the re-election of the entire committee. The Membership Secretary had tendered his resignation and his post had been taken temporarily by the President; there were no new nominations for posts on the Executive Committee.

5. The following slate was elected unopposed at the AGM in Broome, WA, on 23 September 2003.

Chairman: Nicholas Ostler

Treasurer: Christopher Moseley

Secretary: Nigel Birch

Executive Committee:

Blair Rudes
Joe Blythe
R. McKenna Brown
Salem Mezhoud
Paul Baker
Christopher Hadfield
Louanna Furbee
Joseph Tomei

6. There followed, under the heading 'Any Other Business', a discussion of two Motions put before the meeting:

7. A motion on the correct orthographic use of toponyms in the Commonwealth was tabled, proposed by [name of proposer not noted]. NIGEL CRAWHALL suggested that the

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting be pressed on the issue, as well as the government of Canada. The motion had arisen following a presentation by DAVID NASH to the conference on the evolution of agreed toponyms in Australia.

8. The motion was carried *nem. con.*

9. A motion was tabled opposing the suggested dropping of the language question(s) from future versions of the Australian national census. The motion was proposed by NICHOLAS THIEBERGER, who argued that there was a risk to linguists (and to the nation) of losing valuable statistical data if the questions on language use in Australian households were dropped for economic reasons. A form of words for the proposed resolution was put before the meeting, but following suggestions from the floor for amendments to the wording, it was agreed to work out the final form of words in a separate committee. Provisions in the wording included a suggestion from NIGEL CRAWHALL that the 3 categories of language use given in the Canadian census be given as a good example to follow; from DAVID NASH that it be pointed out that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has improved the language question over the last two decades; and that the collection of accurate language data is invaluable in monitoring the health of Australia's language heritage.

Executive Committee noted that comments on the Australian census had been relayed to the appropriate organisations/individuals.

10. HANS BOAS further proposed approaching Australian Members of Parliament to influence the Bureau of Statistics over the issue.

11. Good addresses for recipients of the resolution in its final agreed form arising from this motion were sought.

12. The motion was carried *nem con.*

13. In further discussion, KAREN ATKINSON proposed encouraging the use of endangered languages as a medium for presenting papers at our conferences. JANE SIMPSON responded that the cost of interpreting the papers into more widely-used languages would considerably raise the registration fees. FRANCES KOFOD asked if, when papers are offered, there are any restrictions on the language to be used for presentation. The President replied that in principle there were none, and that in the past papers had been given in at least French and Spanish. The President added that time was also a constraint

14. Discussion followed on the venue for our 2004 conference. The President noted that Barcelona, Wales and the Sorbian-speaking centre of Cottbus, Germany, had been offered as venues so far. A decision would be reached by the committee in the new year.

15. MARY JANE NORRIS undertook to check the possibility of holding a future conference in Canada.

16. NIGEL CRAWHALL suggested holding a future conference in South Africa with indigenous (San) participation.

17. ALLAN MARETT said that the International Council for Traditional Music is planning a future conference in Canada in a future year and raised the possibility of associating it with an FEL conference.

18. The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Chris Moseley
Treasurer
September 2003

Annexe 1

President's Report: What is FEL Doing?

Our Mission

To support, enable and assist the
Documentation (record)
Protection(transmission)
Promotion(status, solidarity)
of endangered languages.

Our Performance

In 6 years since 1997
27 awards, totalling US\$ 16,500
7 of them in 2003, totalling US\$ 6,500
All funds from members, now over 200
worldwide, in every continent
7 conferences, 6 books, 21 newsletter
issues

Some Examples

Documentation

- Dictionary of Lavukaleve (Solomon Is.), Anyimere (Ghana)
- Surveys of Marind and Yei (W. Papua), 5 langs in Ethiopia, Romanika (E. Europe)
- Fieldwork with Tanacross (Alaska), Tehuelche (Argentina), Khang (Vietnam), Kuikuro (Brazil), Shabo (Ethiopia), Andajin (Kimberley, Australia)
- Oral histories for Udihe (Manchuria), Lacandon Maya (Mexico)

Protection

- Master-apprentice learning of Mountain Maidu (California)
- Readerin Sa'ban (Borneo)
- Literacy materials for Siwu (Ghana)
- Multimedia for Nyaheun(Laos)

Promotion

Status: Aid dictionary project for Mayangna(Nicaragua); survey status ofKagoro (Mali)

Solidarity: 7 conferences, in 4 continents, so far, organized by theme, not region, attended by local experts and western linguists, stressing solidarity among small language communities

Languages aided by FEL

Persistent Problem

Excellent quality of applications, but VAST over-subscription: with Internet publicity alone, 6 applications for every grant

Therefore:

We already have details of 120 more good cases, unfunded

Policy Resolution (2002)

1. Focus on Community Solidarity actions
2. Best use of (extremely) limited funds
3. VW-Stiftung & Rausing ELDP focused on Documentation by academic institutions
4. But still determined on:
5. Documentation, Protection and Promotion

Areas of Success

1. Growing income
2. Membership
3. Publishing Proceedings
4. Growing reputation
5. Conferences
6. Source of information for media
7. Expansion abroad: US 501(c)3 status

Problems that we have

1. Weak relations with communities
2. Little contact with linguists/workers
3. Little contact with members
4. Little money

Suggested Policies (2003-)

1. Change concept from grants to projects (open-ended) selected from past grant applications)
2. Use projects to build relations among FEL members (& sponsors), linguist-workers & communities
3. Approach other agencies for funding
4. Use funding to sustain projects (long-term), to build infrastructure: (tiny) secretariat,
5. Publish a strategy with goals so that FEL becomes less a grant-giving body (without funds), and more an agency with priorities

Annexe 2

Treasurer's Report 2003

The Foundation gets its main income to carry on its activities from membership fees and from donations. We also earn income from the sale of Proceedings of our present and past conferences. As for what we spend our money on, that consists mainly of grants to researchers and field workers,

mailing costs to subscribers, and printing costs for 'Ogmios' and the Proceedings volumes. The Foundation is a registered charity and our committee work is entirely voluntary, so there is no expenditure on salary or office overheads.



Chris Moseley, FEL Treasurer

At the time of this report there is a healthy number of paid-up members of the Foundation, our President and temporary Membership Secretary can tell us the exact figure according to the latest membership list. This indicates slow and steady growth, but we have a fairly high turnover of membership; I can't say for sure whether many of the new members we gained during our conference in Guatemala last year will be renewing. We have to live with the fact of having quite a high turnover of members every year; nearly as many members drop away as join us for the first time. As an added incentive to membership, two years ago we have devised a new system of graded membership - from Full membership, through Light, Reduced, Virtual to Solidarity membership, with varying degrees of benefits and costs to ourselves. We realise that some of those who would like to support us the most, those living in poor countries of great linguistic diversity, many of them endangered languages speakers themselves, are those least in a position to contribute financially, so our membership scale tries to take account of that.

We gain our new membership not from deliberate recruitment drives but rather from the publicity we get from the linguistic journals, from our web-site, from the distribution of 'Ogmios', from mentions in the press and media, and from events like this one. Our membership is overwhelmingly in the academic community, consisting mostly of people actively involved in research into minority languages, but it is not confined to English-speaking countries - we can boast a truly international membership.

The most important aspect of the financial operations of the Foundation is in giving grants. The amount we have to give at the time our committee reaches its decision

each year is always far less than the amount requested by even the very best of the applicants from around the world for our funds. This past year, once again, we have received some generous donations, and they will help to boost the amount we have had available for grant-giving this year, but even then we have had to be very selective - with a crop of applications of very high quality. The results of our grant selections for this year, for which our committee conferred on an international basis to arrive at the decision - I won't announce in detail here, because the awards are described in detail in the latest issue of Ogmios.

Although we've become an international organization, the main funding for our grants comes from our bank account in England, even though our Grants Officer is based in the USA. This meant that this year we transferred £2,547.52 from our British account to our US account for grants.

We have a bank balance of £3,639.88 at the moment in our British account, but we arranged for our local organizer of this annual conference to set up an account here in Broome to accept registration fees directly. This spared us the expense of complex international bank transfers for what is the main annual event on the FEL calendar.

This year I'd like to say a word about our charitable status. From the beginning of our operations we've been registered as a Charity in England, but by last year we had reached a point in our growth where international, specifically American, donors were taking an interest in supporting our work financially, and satisfying their charitable impulses has proved not as simple as we had hoped. For most of the past year we've been wrestling with the problem of becoming a charity in the USA so as to make donations tax-deductible there, but the provisions of the US Internal Revenue Service meant that we found it hard to avoid paying costly legal fees to make it possible. Recently, though, our president has been negotiating with Michael Yenigues in the USA and his offer to represent us as a charitable body may at last make it possible for us to cut through this obstacle. Of course, we'd like to be established as a charity in other countries too!

This year I won't go into detail as I used to do about how we disburse our funds on grants, as that is the job of our Grants Officer. As I've said at past annual meetings, we owe it to ourselves and our members, and also to our donors, to see that our money is spent wisely. But to do this we need a much more active committee and, a clearer division of tasks on the committee.

That concludes my report, but I'll answer any questions as best I can.

Motions Passed at the AGM

Motion 1: On Place-Names in Commonwealth Countries

Whereas:

- Thousands of world languages are at risk of dying out;
- Geographic place names are an important record and expression of people's knowledge, heritage and culture;
- Geographic place names may carry valuable ecological, environmental, spiritual, moral and cultural meanings;
- The process of European and other colonisation of indigenous peoples' territories has led to the removal or distortion of geographic place names;
- The practice of various Commonwealth governments is notably uneven with regard to restitution of indigenous place names;
- There is a Commonwealth Association of Indigenous Peoples which has called for greater awareness and dialogue in the Commonwealth on the issue of indigenous peoples' rights and empowerment;
- 2004 is the final year of the United Nations Decade on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Be it resolved that:

The Foundation for Endangered Languages calls on Commonwealth Governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat to take appropriate actions to promote the use of orthographically correct and properly documented place names, particularly those in endangered languages and the languages of indigenous and tribal peoples.

Motion 2: On Questions in the Australian Census

Recognising

- that the Australian bureau of statistics has improved the language question in the census over the past two decades; and
- that the collection of accurate language data is valuable in monitoring the health of Australia's language heritage;

This forum opposes the suggestion that the language question be dropped from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census questions, especially with relation to Australia's indigenous languages. Furthermore, this forum proposes that future questions relating to language in the census must take into consideration the following three categories, noting that they are already included in the Canadian census:

- a) a person's first language or languages
- b) a person's home language or languages
- c) a person's competence in other language or languages.

3. Language Endangerment in the News

Lost for words, and in the silence a world disappears: Conference Coverage in The Australian

Coverage of this year's conference began in advance, with an interview of the president Nicholas Ostler on ABC Radio Kimberley, based in Broome. It was broadcast live on 17 September at 5 pm, four days before the conference was due to begin. The ABC interviewer, Greg Hayes, also visited the conference, and talked to more speakers there, notably Nigel Crawley.

The conference was also attended by the leading journalist on The Australian, Nicholas Rothwell. His article only appeared a month and a half later, in the issue for November 12, 2003. Still, it was worth waiting for. Here it is, illustrated with the editor's own photograph of June.

© Nicholas Rothwell-Australian 2003

In the heart of the country, linguists are fighting to keep traditional language alive, writes Nicolas Rothwell

WHAT does it feel like, as an indigenous Australian, to speak your traditional language? June Oscar, the Bunuba-speaking head of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre based in Hall's Creek, Western Australia, knows.



June Oscar

"You can communicate your feelings in a way you can't in English," she says. "You can really hit things on the head, you can feel and understand what's being said to you. When we're using language in our country, we feel that country's listened to this language from the beginning of time. I'm happy and proud to have the chance to do that; it's different from everything else we do with the rest of the world."

And what does it feel like to have lost your language? Like many others, Danny Thompson, lead singer of the rock group Yugal, from Ngukurr on the Roper River in the Northern Territory, knows -- he has just

written a rap for his new CD, putting absence into words: "The last time my language was spoken was by my Dad, but he finished up in 2001. I didn't speak our lingo; we weren't allowed to at school. I still feel a strong feeling, wishing to speak my lingo. You have your identity if you have your language. If your clan doesn't have language, then you feel like nothing. Being somebody is important."

Language extinction is the hidden holocaust under way in today's Australia. There is no doubt, no ambiguity about what's going on; the only thing that's not quite clear is whether all Australia's remaining Aboriginal languages will be dead in 50 years or whether a handful of the strongest - maybe Yolngu-Matha in northeast Arnhem Land and Warlpiri in the Western Desert will survive in some form.

A benchmark study, carried out by linguists Patrick McConvell and Nicholas Thieberger two years ago, traces the vanishing. Perhaps 250 distinct languages (with hundreds of dialects) flourished across Australia before contact with the European world. By 1980, one-quarter were extinct. By 1990, half were gone or nearly so.

By now, only about 17 Aboriginal languages can still be classified as strong -- used by all age groups. The percentage of indigenous Australians speaking their language is about 13 per cent and dropping like a stone.

Most of these native speakers -- about 50,000 people -- live in small, marginal, economically disadvantaged communities in the Top End, Kimberley and Central deserts.

These figures are sketchy, though. The true picture may be darker still. Aborigines, in surveys or census checks, can tend to overstate their language skills; they are proud to know even a pared-back version of their grandparents' many-layered languages.

Interviews with indigenous language workers across remote Australia conducted by the HES during the past year paint a national portrait of deep linguistic vulnerability: the younger the Aborigines in bush communities are, the less likely they are to speak their languages well. Sometimes, a hybrid version of traditional language comes in. More often, a Kriol or English-based tongue makes inroads: indeed, Kriol, admired by some for its efficiency, derided by others as "newspeak", is today by far the most common Aboriginal language, spoken across the centre and north by thousands of people in its various regional versions.

With each dying traditional tongue, a world view dies -- a way of thinking, feeling, saying, that has been refined down scores of generations. If the desert Anmatyere people lose their language, who will know its

special word for the white powder that forms on the mulga apple? If East Kimberley Mirriwong fades away, who will remember jowaljobu, the word for "the temperature that makes one feel good"?

Recently, in acknowledgment of the crisis, the Foundation for Endangered Languages, the premier international body for language protection, held its annual conference in Broome -- the first time Australia has been under the spotlight in this way.

There was a vivid keynote speech from Aboriginal leader Pat Dodson, calling urgently for more funding for language centres; there were stirring accounts of language rediscovery in the Kalahari Desert. Fascinating, subtle questions hovered in the air: do indigenous people have the right to own their language and restrict outside experts from wholesale access to its deeper registers? Can linguistic communities be revived, along lines being tried in northwest NSW? How can Western educators help preserve threatened languages?

FEL's British-based president Nicholas Ostler knows what needs to be done. The pattern is similar across the world. To have a good chance of survival, a threatened language needs a home territory and a recognised political status. It helps if its speakers are isolated, have a strong literary tradition and a self-conscious cultural pride of the kind that has sustained Jews and Basques through centuries of exile or conquest.

Aboriginal languages don't have most of these things. In many cases, all they really have going for them is the will and courage of their last few speakers. David Newry, the determined chairman of Mirima Council in Kununurra, WA, who has run his Mirriwong people's language centre for 20 years, understands from his own life what having language means. "If I hadn't been brought up the language way, I wouldn't have been disciplined," Newry says. "When people were on the stations, they used to enjoy their language. If you really speak it, it makes you as proud as any Hollywood actor. Kids today growing up the Western way are undisciplined. If a lot of the things associated with language were taught to our children, if they saw the traditional view, they'd be better off. If only people in the wider world knew about this, maybe they'd be kinder and help us more."

Language, in other words, is more than language, more than mere cultural identity; it is social order, and self-belief, and the backbone of a distinct philosophy. For fluent speakers, it's not a relic but a way of shaping the future. Hence the fervent campaigns being waged by workers such as the Kimberley Language Resource Centre's Oscar. Maybe 100 of her 800-strong Bunuba people speak their language; she wants to double that total in the next 20 years.

The methods of language defence are basic: recording the knowledge in old people's memories, teaching the young, using every technique that works. Jeanie Herbert, the dynamic Warlpiri language queen from Lajamanu in the NT's Tanami Desert, is blunt about what needs to happen: "It's about time governments recognised that indigenous languages are really Australian and that English is just the language of the dominant society. We want our languages to be on an equal footing. I'd like to see Warlpiri people taking control of their lives, reading and writing in both languages." A high ambition, even for Warlpiri, perhaps the strongest traditional language in Australia, with close to 3000 speakers.

The picture is just as ambiguous in Alice Springs, home of the Arrernte people and base for many of the centre's pioneering linguistic preservation programs. Veronica Dobson, a celebrated native linguist who taught herself to read Arrernte and compiled the dictionary of her language, sees, for all her efforts, the change sweeping across her world: "Language is my life, Arrernte language. I live it, I am it. It's the hardest of languages to learn, with its double-r words, its prestopped nasals and its sneezing sounds; a beautiful language, though, in its effect. But today it's not really well spoken by young people, they speak in a different way, with words coming in from television. Yes, Arrernte's in trouble. It's debatable whether the language I speak, the old Arrernte, will survive. When the old people die, it will die with them. It makes you feel sad. I think in 100 years all Arrernte people will be speaking English. That's just the way it is."

That pattern is repeated a hundredfold across Australia. A quiet, deep pathos surrounds the story of each Aboriginal language in its individual encounter with the modern world.

IS there, then, any viable way forward, a strategy, beyond simply documenting, studying, watching as the dissolution of languages takes place?

A fall-back option is the unspoken aim of most language programs in remote Australia. Many of the linguists at the Broome conference, and many language workers who live on the front line, are engaged in projects to promote or finetune two-way learning programs, designed in a bid to keep indigenous tongues alive -- if necessary as subsidiary languages -- alongside English.

Why, though, such a fight against the odds to preserve language, when the more immediate problems confronting remote Aboriginal Australia are so pressing: the medical crisis of kidney disease and raging diabetes, the economic void, and housing shortages, the epidemics of alcoholism, the drug abuse, the domestic violence?

Partly because language loss may be near the root of that upsurge of chaos. Partly, too, because of the natural desire of native speakers to keep the deepest threads of their tradition alive. But even beyond the Aboriginal world there is a compelling argument in favour of language defence, an intellectual one, which the FEL puts squarely in its manifesto: "As each language dies, science 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."

For the languages of Aboriginal Australia, the hands of the clock stand close to midnight. The battle is almost over, the extinction near-total. As its linguistic patrimony vanishes forever, there is at least a case for thinking that mainstream Australia should be aware of what is being lost a little more with each new day.

Words are not enough

Jowaljobu: The East Kimberley Mirriwong word for the temperature that makes one feel good

Weche mema: Cape York Peninsula Pakanh word for splash, ripples in water

Mampu-mani: Walpiri for to take care of something

Bolwo gin: Northern Territory's Wagiman language group meaning cold windy weather

Walawala: Storm, from the Kamilaroi language of northern NSW

Tau-wa-tau-wa: Awabakal word meaning eat heartily, spoken in the Newcastle-Lake Macquarie region

Tanadlariburka: A sulky fellow in the Kaurna language around Adelaide

Most endangered languages

Throughout the remote north, Cape York and the centre, languages are dying. Even the seemingly strongest are threatened by the spread of television and the need to use English to function in the modern world. Here are five endangered tongues.

* **Wanyi**: Once spoken in the Nicholson River region, north of the Barkly Tableland, this language has only two surviving speakers. Its fate is clear.

* **Warwa**: The original language of the area where the Kimberley town of Derby stands, Warwa is no longer spoken by the Aborigines who live in the town, most of whom come from other language areas. Linguists know of only two Warwa speakers: a brother and sister, both old and linguistic exiles on their own soil.

* **Pertam**: This language of the southern Arrernte group was once spoken by people from the Finke River southeast of Alice Springs. Only a handful still know it and they have to use other languages to

communicate effectively with their neighbours.

* **Kaytetye**: Kaytetye is known by about 200 out of the 700 odd Kaytetye people; about 50 of these live at Neutral Junction, by Barrow Creek, close to the heart of the Northern Territory. But even on their own land Kaytetye speakers are in a minority, so they adopt other tongues as a matter of survival.

* **Gija**: Although spoken by some of the most famous artists in Australia, Gija, the home language of Warmun in the Kimberley, faces a bleak future, with no more than 240 speakers. The youngest fluent speakers are in their 40s and 50s. Although Gija children still learn their language, it is easier for them to use the snappy Halls Creek regional Kriol to speak to outsiders.

Unesco Adopts International Convention to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage

Paris, 17 October 2003

Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, the performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, as well as knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship, now benefit from an international legal instrument to safeguard intangible heritage through cooperation.

The Member States attending the UNESCO General Conference at Headquarters (September 29 to October 17), today adopted by overwhelming majority the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which completes the Organization's existing legal instruments for the safeguarding of heritage.

"The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of general interest to humanity," states the Convention, which underlines its "invaluable role" in "bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them." The convention requires a minimum of 30 States Parties to enter into force.

UNESCO's Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura welcomed the Convention, which "expresses the urgent need for action in this domain," he said. Mr Matsuura added, "Now I hope that many of you will ratify it, so that it may enter into force as quickly as possible." According to the Director-General, "Such an outcome is a good example of the work of mediation and dialogue which our Organization is capable of achieving on the most complex and controversial subjects."

Algerian judge Mohammed Bedjaoui, a former president of the International Court

of Justice in The Hague who chaired the intergovernmental experts' meetings to draft the text, added that "Despite all its complexity, this concept of intangible cultural heritage has affirmed and finally imposed itself on all of us as a key concept in understanding the cultural identity of peoples [...]. Every word of this convention is a grateful tribute to the creators and artisans of this wonderful heritage, to the great and also to the humble and anonymous, to the authors and the guardians of the temple of the traditions and knowledge of peoples."

The convention specifically provides for the drawing up of national inventories of cultural property to be protected, the establishment of an Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, composed of experts from future States Parties to the Convention, and the creation of two lists - a Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity and a List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

To the first list will be added in due course the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, proclaimed in 2001 by the Director-General on the recommendation of an international jury presided by Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo. This programme will continue until such time as the Convention enters into force.

The adoption of the new convention is the result of a long process of awareness raising, which intensified in recent years but began with the 1982 Mexico City Conference, where UNESCO's Member States first evoked the concept of intangibility to refer to the body of humanity's expressions of spirituality. In 1989, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, but the fact that it is not legally binding has limited its impact. The proclamation of the first Masterpieces in 2001 considerably stimulated interest in intangible cultural heritage and brought greater understanding of its essential role in the cultural identity of peoples. The second proclamation will take place November 7, 2003.

The complete text of the Convention can be found at:

<http://www.unesco.org/confgen/2003/intangible>
Given the recent adoption of this Convention by the 32nd Session of the General Conference, the text will be subject to linguistic adjustment in English, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese.

The 19 masterpieces are:

1. Garifuna Language, Dance and Music (Belize)
2. Oral Heritage of Gelede (Benin)
3. Oruro Carnival (Bolivia)
4. Kunqu Opera (China)
5. Gbofe of Afounkaha: the Music of the Transverse trumpets of the Tagbana Community (Côte d'Ivoire)

6. Cultural Space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella (Dominican Republic)
7. Oral Heritage and Cultural Manifestations of the Zápara People (Ecuador-Peru)
8. Georgian Polyphonic Singing (Georgia)
9. Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala in Nyagassola (Guinea)
10. Kutiyattam Sanskrit Theatre (India)
11. Opera dei Pupi, Sicilian Puppet Theatre (Italy)
12. Nogaku Theatre (Japan)
13. Cross Crafting and its Symbolism (Lithuania)
14. Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna Square (Morocco)
15. Hudhud Chants of the Ifugao (Philippines)
16. Royal Ancestral Rite and Ritual Music in Jongmyo Shrine (Republic of Korea)
17. Cultural Space and Oral Culture of the Semeiskie (Russian Federation)
18. Mystery Play of Elche (Spain)
19. Cultural Space of the Boysun District (Uzbekistan).

Modelling the Dynamics of Language Death, in Nature

A one-page "brief communication" appeared under this title in *Nature* (vol. 424: 21 August 2003), p. 900.

Its rather simple model suggest that there can never be stable equilibrium between two languages in a population. However, the model includes the assumption that all speakers are monolingual, and that populations are highly connected, with no spatial or social structure.

Any readers who are interested, and do not have access to *Nature*, can obtain a copy from the Editor of Ogmios.

A Loss for Words: article in Foreign Policy Nov-Dec 2003

A two-page spread, with some simply illustrated statistics, written by Ogmios editor Nicholas Ostler, appeared on pp. 30-31 of this Washington DC journal .

Charts illustrated Living Languages By Location, Nearly Extinct languages by Location, The World's Leading Primary Languages (with projections of the changing rankings 1950-2000-2050) and Welsh Revival among 3-to-15-year-olds.)

The article was not restricted to endangered languages as such, but found room to make a couple of less than complacent points about English, namely that it seems set to have a population more or less equal to those of Hindi-Urdu, Spanish and Arabic by 2050, all of them less than Mandarin Chinese by a factor of some 2.5; and that the effect of book publishing on Latin from the 15th century set a rather alarming precedent for

the long-term effect of the Internet revolution on English: market-led communications revolutions will no necessarily favour the existing dominant language.

The article also led to an opportunity to address an hour-long phone-in program on Wisconsin National Public Radio on 5 November 2003.

Near-Extinct 'Whistling Language' Returns

SARAH ANDREWS, *Associated Press Writer*, 17 Nov 2003

SAN SEBASTIAN, Canary Islands - Juan Cabello takes pride in not using a cell phone or the Internet to communicate. Instead, he puckers up and whistles.

Cabello is a "silbador," until recently a dying breed on tiny, mountainous La Gomera, one of Spain's Canary Islands off West Africa. Like his father and grandfather before him, Cabello, 50, knows "Silbo Gomero," a language that's whistled, not spoken, and can be heard more than two miles away.

This chirpy brand of chatter is thought to have come over with early African settlers 2,500 years ago. Now, educators are working hard to save it from extinction by making school children study it up to age 14.

Silbo" the word comes from Spanish verb silbar, meaning to whistle" features four "vowels" and four "consonants" that can be strung together to form more than 4,000 words. It sounds just like bird conversation and Cabello says it has plenty of uses.

"I use it for everything: to call to my wife, to tell my kids something, to find a friend if we get lost in a crowd," Cabello said.

In fact, he makes a living off Silbo, performing daily exhibitions at a restaurant on this island of 147 square miles and 19,000 people.

A snatch of dialogue in Silbo is posted at <http://www.agulo.net/silbo/silbo.mp3> and translates as follows:

"Hey, Servando!"

"What?"

"Look, go tell Julio to bring the castanets."

"OK. Hey, Julio!"

"What?"

"Lili says you should go get the kids and have them bring the castanets for the party."

"OK, OK, OK."

Silbo was once used throughout the hilly terrain of La Gomera as an ingenious way of communicating over long distances. A strong whistle saved peasants from

trekking over hill and dale to send messages or news to neighbors.

Then came the phone, and it's hard to know how many people use Silbo these days.

"A lot of people think they do, but there is a very small group who can truly communicate through Silbo and understand Silbo," said Manuel Carreiras, a psychology professor from the island of Tenerife. He specializes in how the brain processes language and has studied Silbo.

Since 1999, Silbo has been a required language in La Gomera's elementary schools. Some 3,000 students are studying it 25 minutes a week" enough to teach the basics, said Eugenio Darias, a Silbo teacher and director of the island's Silbo program.

"There are few really good silbadores so far, but lots of students are learning to use it and understand it," he said. "We've been very pleased."

But almost as important as speaking, sorry, whistling Silbo is studying where it came from, and little is known. "Silbo is the most important pre-Hispanic cultural heritage we have," said Moises Plasencia, the director of the Canary government's historical heritage department.

It might seem appropriate for a language that sounds like birdsong to exist in the Canary Islands, but scholarly theories as to how the archipelago got its name make no mention of whistling. [In fact, its name means the "Doggy Islands" - ed.]

Little is known about Silbo's origins, but an important step toward recovering the language was the First International Congress of Whistled Languages, held in April in La Gomera. The congress, which will be repeated in 2005, brought together experts on various whistled languages.

Silbo-like whistling has been found in pockets of Greece, Turkey, China and Mexico, but none is as developed as Silbo Gomero, Plasencia said.

One study is looking for vestiges of Silbo in Venezuela, Cuba and Texas, all places to which Gomerans have historically emigrated during hard economic times.

Now, Plasencia is heading an effort to have UNESCO declare it an "intangible cultural heritage" and support efforts to save it. "Silbo is so unique and has many values: historical, linguistic, anthropological and aesthetic. It fits perfectly with UNESCO's requirements," he said.

Besides, says Cabello, it's good for just about anything except for romance: "Everyone on the island would hear what you're saying!"

4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

Non à l'enseignement glossocide de tamazight ! - Déclaration de la Confédération de Tada

mercredi 30 juillet 2003:

La Confédération Tada des Associations
Culturelles Amazighes du Maroc

"Le Ministère de l'Education Nationale, en partenariat avec l'Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (I.R.C.A.M), a décidé d'introduire tamazight dans le cursus scolaire à partir de l'année scolaire 2003/2004...", ne cessent d'annoncer les médias officiels marocains depuis quelques semaines dans le dessein de faire croire aux "sujets" que leur langue et leur culture seraient enfin reconnues comme telles et prises en charge par le Makhzen.

Or, en prenant cette décision, le Makhzen, dont lesdits Ministère et Institut ne sont que des instruments, n'a aucunement pour objectif d'émanciper et de promouvoir la langue amazighe. En fait, en décidant d'introduire tamazight à son école, le Makhzen ne fait que poursuivre sa politique séculaire anti-amazighe. Il n'ouvre les portes de sa méderssa devant cette langue que pour se l'approprier, la maîtriser, la dénaturer et l'affaiblir davantage en la vidant de son essence. Il suffit de voir les moyens dérisoires et humiliants destinés à cette action "historique" pour se rendre compte que le Ministère et ses complices ont tout machiné pour que ses résultats ne puissent être que catastrophiques pour la langue amazighe, pour la culture qu'elle véhicule et pour tout le peuple amazighe, qui a su et pu assurer sa persistance depuis des millénaires malgré les vicissitudes de son Histoire.

Pour introduire les "dialectes" amazighes à l'école, le Ministère s'est contenté de faire appel à des instituteurs d'arabe et de français qui n'ont aucune formation scolaire, et encore moins universitaire, en langue amazighe ! Certains d'entre eux sont, certes, amazighophones ; mais suffit-il de parler une langue pour l'enseigner ? Le Makhzen et ses acolytes savent très bien que non ! D'autres -et c'est le comble de l'absurdité-arabophones qu'ils sont, ils ne connaissent pratiquement aucun mot de cette langue que le Ministère et l'Institut veulent leur faire enseigner !

Pour "recycler" ces enseignants, le Ministère les a convoqués pour un soi-disant stage de douze jours, juste le temps d'apprendre un pseudo-alphabet tfinagh confectionné par les "savants" de l'I.R.C.A.M, en rupture totale avec la réalité de la langue amazighe, qui s'écrit et se lit dans toutes les régions de Tamazgha, depuis

des décennies, voire depuis des siècles, essentiellement en caractères latins et accessoirement en caractères arabes, le tfinagh, le vrai, étant réservé à des usages plus emblématiques que pratiques. Ces pauvres enseignants de dialectes n'ont donc rien à transmettre à leurs élèves hormis ce faux alphabet inutile, en lequel absolument rien n'est écrit !

En la propulsant à l'école avec des enseignants sans formation en la matière, avec un alphabet défiguré et sans programme scolaire digne de ce nom, le Makhzen vise à vider la langue amazighe de sa vivacité et de son essence et, ainsi, à persuader les écoliers et, à travers eux, l'opinion publique que tamazight ne serait qu'"un idiome inapte, sans écriture valable, sans littérature, sans grammaire, sans arts, sans histoire, incapable de véhiculer le savoir, et, donc, inutile".

Cette machination, typiquement makhzénienne, a pour but de susciter chez les Imazighens, par le biais de l'école, et après quelques années d'"expérimentation", une attitude de rejet à l'égard de leur propre langue et de leur propre identité, ce qui facilitera au Makhzen d'expulser encore une fois les "dialectes berbères" de son école pour "inaptitude". Ce même Etat marocain n'a-t-il pas déjà banni tamazight de son école en 1956 pour, disait-il alors, "préserver la cohésion nationale", comme si la langue d'un peuple pouvait menacer sa cohésion ? En faisant semblant de satisfaire les revendications, légitimes, du Mouvement Culturel Amazighe, le Makhzen cherche à gagner encore du temps en cantonnant l'Amazighité dans une "réserve dialectale", en attendant, et en préparant, son extinction.

Si cette intégration piégée de tamazight à l'école du Makhzen venait à être mise en application, elle ferait reculer notre langue, notre culture et notre Histoire de plusieurs décennies...

Devant ce danger, qui menace le devenir identitaire et existentiel du peuple amazighe sur sa propre terre, la Confédération Tada des Associations Culturelles Amazighes du Maroc lance un appel à tous les militants et à tous les sympathisants de la cause amazighe à rejeter catégoriquement et à dénoncer énergiquement cet enseignement glossocide de tamazight et à exiger de l'Etat marocain, avant une intégration sérieuse de la langue amazighe à l'école, une vraie reconnaissance de l'Amazighité du Maroc, en commençant par le commencement, à savoir la constitutionnalisation de tamazight en tant que langue nationale et officielle du Maroc, de tout le Maroc.

Le Makhzen a sans doute pu tromper presque tous les Imazighens pour quelque temps, il peut encore tromper quelques Imazighens pour longtemps, mais il ne peut aucunement tromper tous les Imazighens pour tout le temps !

Azrou le 29 juillet 2003

Pour le Bureau de la Confédération Tada des Associations Culturelles Amazighes du Maroc

Le Président : Said JAAFAR

5. Allied Societies and Activities

MITLI (MIT Indigenous Language Initiative) Advisory Conference

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 6 Sept, 2003
Andrea Rackowski <asrackow@MIT.EDU>
reports:

There were 20 participants at the conference, 14 of them from American First Nations (Mashpee Wampanoag, Aquinnah Wampanoag, Miami, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Mashantucket Pequot, Mohegan, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Tohono O'odham) and 6 on the faculty (in either Linguistics or Anthropology) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Wheelock College.

The conference began with an opening prayer said in Wampanoag by Jessie Little Doe Fermino. Following that, the President of MIT, Charles Vest, welcomed the group to MIT and thanked them for participating in the conference and sharing with us their ideas and advice on structuring the MIT Indigenous Language Initiative.

Session I: Overview of the State of Indigenous Languages

During the first session, participants spoke about language projects in their own communities. Several major themes emerged from the presentations.

1. Most communities were concentrating a lot of their effort on the language of children, working on immersion programs, classes in and out of the schools, pre-school programs (or plans for them), and training teachers. Daryl Baldwin, of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, especially stressed the need to teach the language to children, as they are the teachers of tomorrow and will be the future stewards of the language.
2. Another major issue that came up was the importance of individuals in the struggle for language maintenance and revitalization. Several of the people present at the conference were their tribe's only linguists or language teachers and were called upon to "wear many different hats" in satisfying the need for language expertise. Not only are individuals called upon to teach the language, they are also doing linguistic and archival research on it, working on dictionaries, training other teachers,

conducting sociolinguistic studies of who is still speaking it, managing tribal language programs, and conducting outreach to the community.

- Technology and its place in language revitalization was also discussed. Some tribes have had success with using computer technology to enhance language learning or write dictionaries. Producing such materials can, however, be expensive and is time-consuming. Most participants at the conference agreed that these tools could be useful as supplements for language learning, but should not be relied upon exclusively in teaching or maintaining a language.

Session II: How MITILI can address the issue of language endangerment

The second session of the day began with an overview of the American Indian Language Development Institute given by Ofelia Zepeda, who is one of the founders of that organization. Every year, the AILDI holds a summer institute at the University of Arizona that offers university courses for credit. Most participants at the institute are language teachers or researchers and many use the credits they earn at AILDI to get teacher certification.

Professor Zepeda noted that language maintenance was not a big theme of the institute until the mid-1990s, but since then the importance of language revitalization has become a central part of the AILDI. More and more courses on immersion methods and how to teach endangered languages are being offered and these offerings are very popular.

Following the discussion of the AILDI, talk turned to how the new MIT Master's degree in indigenous languages should be structured. Wayne Newell brought up the issue of the Master's thesis and whether it should be allowed to be written in a language other than English. His concern was that requiring the thesis to be in English might discourage some potential students from applying to the program, especially the people who might be most connected to the language and most expert in it and might therefore feel the least comfortable in English. Participants discussed the possibility of allowing people to record an oral project in place of a written thesis, or to allow people to write the thesis in their native language (although evaluating such a work presents obvious problems).

Another issue was the kind and amount of social and logistical support there would be for students in the program. Jessie Little Doe suggested that program materials should make it clear that support of available. The local community of Wampanoag is willing to offer all sorts of social and moral support for students who

might be homesick or in need of encouragement.

The next discussion centered on the length of the MIT Master's program – whether it should be a 2 year program with an optional additional “qualifying” year or a full 3 year program. There is a tension between providing a lot of training that will be useful to graduates of the program and not wanting to take people away from their communities for too long – even two years seems like too much for some potential students, and some participants at the conference felt that if the Master's were a three-year program it would be difficult to get people to agree to stay for the full amount of time. On the other hand, Jessie Little Doe pointed out that it takes an enormous amount of work to run a tribal language program and teach classes and it can be very difficult for someone to do this without adequate training. One of the possible solutions discussed was to allow students to take their final, thesis year back in their home community while they stayed in touch with their MIT advisor over email and telephone and periodic visits back to Cambridge.

A second issue with having a three year program is that it would require an additional year's worth of funding for each student. Since MIT is committed to fully funding all of the students in the program, the addition of a third year to the length of the degree program greatly increases the amount of fundraising that the department must do. There thus might be a tension between having fewer students in the program for longer, and having more students pass through the program.

An important part of this debate, however, is that MIT intends to maintain strong bonds with graduates of the Master's degree program, so that even once people have graduated, they will still be able to talk to their advisors and others in the department with questions or issues that come up in their linguistic work in their communities. Even if students only stayed in the program for two years, they would still have support and training available to them after graduation.

No final decision was reached about how long the program should be, although a tentative plan was to state the requirements for the Master's degree and then sketch out several possible timelines for finishing the coursework and thesis. Students could then finish the degree in whichever amount of time suited them best.

(It should be noted also that in order to help alleviate the enormous amount of work that can be expected of one person who is the tribal linguist, MIT also plans to solicit “teams” of students to attend the program at the same time, so that two people from the same community to come to MIT for the Master's degree and then would be able to

return to their community and work together on language revitalization.)

The next topic discussed was how to ensure that the students accepted into the program are really qualified and really committed to working in their communities. It was agreed that part of the application process should include letters of support from the community. Daryl Baldwin noted that Miami University has a similar procedure already in place for some of its programs – they write to the community to ask about a student's language ability when considering applicants.

Session IV: Future Directions

The last session of the day centered on the next steps for the MITILI to take. Jessie Little Doe suggested that there should be an advisory committee with Indian representation that would meet regularly to discuss running the initiative. She also suggested that the advisory committee should be available for regular email consultation as issues arise.

Another important next step will be securing the funding necessary to run the program. The MITILI is currently pursuing both public and private funding, but still needs to secure a significant amount in order to be able to realize the goal of a full program that funds all students equally.

Finally, the group discussed what the MITILI can offer to indigenous language communities, apart from the Master's degree program in linguistics. One thing that MIT as an institution can offer is connections to both academic and governmental organizations. The linguistics department is also well-connected within the field of linguistics and can offer advice on where to go for advice and who to ask for information. For example, if a tribe were looking to hire a linguist, we would be able to assist them with their search. The linguistics department can also offer linguistic help with specific problems, or can direct people to other sources of help.

President's Travels

After the conference in Broome, I joined the FEL excursion, and headed east and south to Fitzroy Crossing. On the way, we visited Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek, two highly scenic sites in the King Leopold Range, one a sheltered pass, rich in barramundi, archer fish, and basking freshwater crocodiles, the other an undermountain labyrinth reminiscent of Tolkien's Moria. Here in the 1890s the Robin-Hood-like hero of the Bunuba people, Jandamarra, held off many posses of stockmen who were out to get him, before finally being hunted down and killed by a renegade Aboriginal. He was still in his mid-20s. As fate would have it, June

Oscar, head of the Kimberley language resource centre, and a major figure in our conference, is of the Bunuba; and Jandamarra's chief pursuer was Joseph Blythe, none other than the great-grandfather of our conference chairman. There is a moral, as well as an action movie, in the making here.

In Fitzroy Crossing, I was picked up once again by my friends, Australia's Flying Linguists (see Ogmios 2.8), and in their Cessna we flew on to the south-east. At Balgo, where many residents speak Kukatja, we saw the new arts centre, which anyone can at least glimpse at <http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/regions/balgo-art.html>. It is a riot of cultural photographs, symbolic mosaics and weaving, and above all a gallery of pictures. Thence to Yurntumu, another Aboriginal settlement, but this time of Warlpiri-speakers; it is home to the another arts centre, and also the production of the hit comedy *Bush Mechanics*. This turned out to be a sad visit, since one friend of my carrier-linguists had just recently lost her son, no more than 30 years old. Her upper body painted in mourning white, she made a touching figure sitting under a mulgar tree. Still under a speech taboo, she could only express her grief to my friends through signs.

Another friend and long-time resident, Wendy Baarda, told us of her work in teaching children to read and write two languages, perplexing for all concerned because the A E I O U indicate such different sounds in Warlpiri and in English: how much simpler it would have been if the Spanish or Italians could have been the colonial power in the Northern Territory! To Wendy we owe issues of the local newsletter which have now joined the FEL library at Bailbrook Lane.

Back in New South Wales, the next major event was the conference, at the University of Sydney, on Digital Audio Archiving, to launch the PARADISEC project, creating a Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures. The project was announced in the last issue of Ogmios. It is organized by Nick Thieberger and Linda Barwick, as if to represent the interests of language and music. The conference was attended by interested parties, linguists and broadcasters from many countries in the region — Papua-Niugini through to Aotearoa (New Zealand) — and many from Australia too, although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are served by the Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive ASEDA (in AIATSIS) <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASEDA> rather than PARADISEC. The project's continued funding is at risk (as so often with such initiatives), but there is still hope. The day after the conference there was a launch meeting for yet another derived initiative: DELAMAN — the Digital Endangered Language and Music Archive Network, which allies PARADISEC with

ELAR, the archive to emerge from the Raising-funded ELDP at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London http://www.eldp.soas.ac.uk/arch_home.htm, various archives attached to the LINGUIST list <http://emeld.org>, ASEDA, DoBeS <http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES> and others. The full list is available at <http://www.delaman.org>.

Latest Grants from the Endangered Language Fund

Doug Whalen wrote, on 2 Dec 2003:

The Endangered Language Fund's seventh annual request for proposals has resulted in the submission of 68 projects on languages throughout the world. As usual, the quality of the proposals was high, leading to many difficult decisions. We funded 10 of the projects, and could easily have done 20. We are hoping to expand our resources for future grants.

As always, we depend on the generosity of our members. Just a dozen new members would sponsor a new grant. Please visit <http://www.ling.yale.edu/~elf/join.html> if you would like to join.

The selected proposals are:

Cora McKenna and Brenda McKenna (Nambe Pueblo, NM) **Tewa** Dictionary and Curriculum, Nambe Dialect. Nambe Pueblo is north of Santa Fe. Current Nambe classes serve learners from age 4 to 60, so the curriculum has to be specially designed. The Endangered Language Fund grant will help collect material for the classroom and a better dictionary.

Lisa Conathan and Belle Anne Matheson (UC Berkeley) **Arapaho** Description and Revitalization. The Northern Arapaho community feels a need for an audio dictionary. Pitch accents are not necessary for fluent speakers to write, but they are difficult for learners to remember. Conathan and Matheson will work on this dictionary along with a better description of the rules of the sound system.

Nadezhda Shalamova (Tomsk Polytechnic U.), Andrei Filtchenko (Rice U.) and Olga Potanina (Tomsk State Pedagogical U.) Documentation of **Vasyugan Khanty**. This project documents the endangered language and cultural heritage of the Vasyugan Khanty, of the Eastern Khanty group. It will provide texts and descriptions for the community and for linguistic science.

Dmitri Funk (Russian Academy of Sciences) The Last Epic Singer in **Shors** (Western Siberia). The heroic epics of Shors are performed by one last singer, who still remembers more than 60 of them. Funk will record as many as possible, so future generations can appreciate some of what they have missed.

Arthur Schmidt, Rita Flamand and Grace Zoldy (Metis) The Camperville **Michif** Master-Apprentice Program. Michif is a mixed language from Cree and French. Schmidt, a native Michif, but not a speaker, will apprentice himself to Flamand and Zoldy. The Endangered Language Fund grant will allow Schmidt to spend time in Camperville in Manitoba, Canada.

Cheruiyot Kiplangat (Centre for Endangered Languages, Kenya) Working to Save **Ogiek** and **Sengwer** of Kenya. The present project works with two languages of the Rift Valley, Ogiek and Sengwer. Language material will be recorded and made available. Information from elders on cultural practices will be the most valuable.

Claire Bower (Harvard U.) **Bardi** Language Documentation: The Laves Material. Bardi is an Australian language of the Nyulnyulan family. The considerable number of cultural texts collected by Gerhardt Laves in 1929 are easy to decipher if you speak the language, but difficult if you do not. Bower will check them with the remaining fluent speakers.

Francis Egbokhare (U. Ibadan, Nigeria) Documenting **Akuku** Oral Traditions. Akuku is an endangered language spoken in the Edo state of Nigeria. Egbokhare will record oral narratives for the younger generation and for linguists. Results will allow a better placement of the language within the Edoid family.

Rosemary Beam de Azcona (UC Berkeley) **Southern Zapotec** Language Materials. It appears that there are only two remaining speakers of San Agustín Mixtepec Zapotec, a southern Zapotec language of Mexico. Coatlán-Loxicha Zapotec is declining, though it has about 170 speakers. Beam de Azcona will record as much language material as possible.

Rick Thoman and Gary Holton (U Alaska Fairbanks) The **Tanacross** Athabascan Sound System. This project will produce a CD-ROM illustrating the sound system of Tanacross. Speakers will pronounce selected words and phrases with the rich array of ejectives, affricates and fricatives as well as contrastive tone. This CD-ROM will be a useful resource for Tanacross.

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6. Reports on Field Research

An unreported African sign language in Northeast Nigeria: Roger Blench and Victoria Nyst



In October 2003, I [Roger Blench] was conducting a survey in the Bura-speaking area of Northeast Nigeria, when I came across an apparently unreported sign language. Our team was in the village of Kukurpu [not on any map I can find, but ca. 40 km. SE of Biu on the Garkida road] when I saw two men signing to one another. When I expressed an interest, a third man was called, who apparently lost hearing later in life and could articulate Bura fairly intelligibly. He was able to translate signed utterances into Bura quite fluently. It then appeared that there was a relatively high incidence of congenital deafness in the immediate area and a community of signers exists. I was able to establish that none of the speakers had attended any school, let alone a school for the deaf and this is a remote area, so links with better-known sign languages seem unlikely. It seems likely that this sign language is quite independent. I was able to make a short videotape of the signers and I hope to post this on my website in due course. By a fortunate chance I was able to show the videotape to Victoria Nyst, who comments below.

I believe the existence of a signer who can 'translate' signed utterances would be of considerable assistance in learning more about this speech form. It may be difficult to return to the area in the immediate future and I would be glad to help anyone else who would like to investigate further. I have a draft electronic dictionary of Bura, which would obviously be useful.

Victoria Nyst (University of Amsterdam) comments:

Most research done on African sign languages has been carried out for the sake of dictionary making by the National Associations of the Deaf. This lexicographic research concerns the "official" sign language of a country, usually a sign language imported with the introduction of deaf education by foreign

institutions. Local sign languages in Africa are often seen as inferior and they have rarely been studied.

Exceptions are the descriptive grammar of Hausa Sign Language by Schmalig (2000) and a paper on the sign language of Mbour in Senegal (Jirou, not dated). A description of Adamorobe Sign Language (AdaSL), the local sign language of a village with a high frequency of hereditary deafness in Ghana is in progress (Nyst 2003; in progress).

The signing of the two deaf Bura men in the video fragment shows some remarkable similarities with other types of signing in West Africa, more specifically in the manner of articulation. Contrary to many signs in western sign languages, handshapes have a lax articulation. The signing space used is large, with outstretched arms when pointing at locations. The sign for the verb GO is identical to the sign for GO in Adamorobe Sign Language and in the sign language of a deaf family in Nanabin (Ghana). The same sign GO is found as a co-verbal gesture with hearing Malians, Ghanaians, and Nigerians. Other signs in the fragment are identical to signs and gestures in these other signed and spoken languages as well, such as 'sweat' with the meaning 'to work', 'sleep' with the meaning '(next) day' and others.

The striking similarity between the different types of signing and gesturing in parts of West Africa points to the existence of a regional gesture system. Frishberg (1987) suggests that AdaSL may be related to the 'gestural trade jargon used in the markets throughout West Africa'. Clearly, much more research still needs to be done to be able to answer this question. A descriptive study of Bura Sign Language and other local sign languages would be an important step forward.

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- Nyst, V. (2003) The phonology of name signs: a comparison between the sign languages of Uganda, Mali, Adamorobe and The Netherlands. In Baker et al. (ed) *Cross-linguistic perspectives in sign language research*. Hamburg: Signum
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Message from the President of Mexican PEN: "Cultural Diversity and Freedom of Expression"

Lucas Husgen
<lhusgen@KIROGI.DEMON.NL>

wrote: At the opening of the PEN Club Writers World Congress 2003 in Mexico City the speech below was delivered, concerning endangered cultural diversity worldwide.

The "Americas" Congress, which will take place in Mexico City from November 22-28, 2003, is the first World Congress of Writers of the new millennium to be held on the American Continent.

The Congress theme, "Cultural Diversity and Freedom of Expression", gives us the opportunity to work on two essential aspects of PEN's core mission. The first is respect for the human rights of those whose medium is the word, and, in particular, the written word, deployed either in creative writing or through daily narratives and testimonies. The second is respect for sovereignty and cultural diversity, which is so essential in the face of the increasingly antidemocratic tendencies that threaten to dominate the world.

The trend towards economic globalization challenges us to avoid cultural homogenization and safeguard diverse ways of life and languages, many of which, as with minority indigenous languages, are already in danger of disappearing. Mexico was selected as the site for this Congress because it is a country where different cultures have cohabitated and coexisted.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos imagined the existence of the Cosmic race, a product of the crossbreeding of all peoples. It now seems that new communication technologies have outrun us so that the ideal of a completely mixed-race humanity living in equality, free from the intolerances that often lead to war and conflict, has been replaced by a "globalized humanity" whose characteristics are social injustice and cultural homogeneity.

Near the end of the 20th Century, we realized that perhaps the main cause for the economic and spiritual underdevelopment of many nations has been the lack of respect for the cultural and economic rights of the individual. That is why, through this Congress, we wish to call attention to the fact that human development cannot be achieved as long as we continue to push cultural, educational and economic rights into oblivion, and that it is urgent and necessary to view these as civil and political rights...

María Elena Ruiz Cruz

President, Mexican PEN

7. Overheard on the Web

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

SIL Peru

Roger Blench notes:

SIL Peru has recently posted almost its entire back catalogue on the Web. Get there via SIL Homepage:

www.sil.org

Aymara-English textbook on-line

The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago is pleased to present the electronic publication of "Aymar Arux Akhamawa: Aymara Language is Like This," by Miguel Huanca.

Approximately four million people in the Andean region of Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina consider Aymara to be their native language, including over one-third of the population of Bolivia, making it one of the most widely-spoken indigenous languages in South America. For over a decade, the University of Chicago has been the only institution to offer regular Aymara instruction, supported with funding from US Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center grants. "Aymar Arux Akhamawa" is the only English-Aymara textbook available. This valuable resource is now made available at no cost for self-guided language learning via the world wide web, complete with digitally-recorded native-spoken dialogues, vocabulary supplements, original literature, and traditional song.

The on-line publication of this text can be found on the Center's website at:
<http://clas.uchicago.edu/thematic/aymara>

This is the second edition of the text developed by Miguel Huanca, who has taught 26 students in Aymara at the University of Chicago since 1994 through the biannual Aymara Summer Intensive Institute. The Summer Institute will next be offered in 2005. For more information about Aymara instruction at the University of Chicago Center for Latin American Studies, contact clas@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-8420.

--Josh Beck, Administrator, Academic Programs & Outreach, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Chicago
(<http://clas.uchicago.edu>)

9. Forthcoming Meetings

Interfaces in Language Documentation. Frankfurt, 4-5 Sept. 2004

The DOBES (Documentation of Endangered Languages) Project of the Volkswagen Foundation will sponsor a conference on interdisciplinary research in language documentation--"A World of Many Voices: Interfaces in Language Documentation"--at the University of Frankfurt/Main, September 4-5, 2004, in conjunction with a summer school on the documentation of endangered languages.

The organizing team consists of Arienne Dwyer, Jost Gippert, Raquel Guirardello, David Harrison, Ulrike Mosel, Peter Wittenburg (DOBES members), and Marcel Erdal, Bernd Nothofer, and Rainer Vossen (local committee).

The conference will bring together experts in the field of language documentation and also representatives of endangered speech communities, and focuses on two themes:

1. The impact of language documentation techniques and technologies on linguistic methodologies and theories, such as new insights from research on (a) text corpora, (b) spontaneous spoken language, (c) non-verbal communication, and (d) the joint research of linguists and anthropologists.

2. The impact of active cooperation between speech communities and outside researchers on methods and goals and on power relationships between participants: (a) conflicts and compromises between the goals of the linguists and the speech community; (b) innovative cooperative methodology; (c) the linguists' contribution to language maintenance and revitalization.

Please send your one-page abstract (in any format) to Jost Gippert (gippert@em.uni-frankfurt.de). The deadline for abstracts is February 1, 2004. Researchers who are members of endangered-language communities are particularly encouraged to submit abstracts.

Accepted papers will be allocated 20 minutes for presentation plus 10 minutes for discussion. To allow for in-depth discussion, conference sessions will be plenary, and the conference will conclude with a roundtable discussion. The organizers intend to publish the conference papers in printed form.

For further information visit the meeting website:
<http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/curric/dobes/conf1cir.htm>

Intensive Nahuatl Course (Yale U, June-July, 2004)

Yale University Intensive Summer Nahuatl Institute, in collaboration with the University of Chicago, will offer an intensive immersion course in Nahuatl during the summer of 2004.

Although based on modern Nahuatl from San Agustín Oapan, the course will familiarize students with colonial and classical Nahuatl by using a wide range of texts and workbooks. The course is focused not only on developing conversational skills but on imparting an understanding and overview of the general grammatical structure of Nahuatl. Students will be able to apply their knowledge to their own thematic interests in any Nahuatl dialect that they might work with (ancient or modern). In addition, an effort is made to address the specific needs of students in different disciplines (e.g., anthropology, history, linguistics) and at different levels of expertise.

Graduate students, undergraduates, and independent scholars are invited to apply. Although a beginning course, students with previous experience in Nahuatl are also welcome. Students will be able to work intensively with native speakers and those who have previously acquired skills in Nahuatl will be given the flexibility for a greater concentration of their efforts on translation, individual projects, and direct work with native speakers. Classes are 3 hours per day, Monday through Friday, with the instructor and native speakers. Additional intensive work or tutorials with native speakers may be arranged upon request. Students will be provided with recording and playback facilities for language laboratory work and to conduct their own research and independent study.

The course meets all the requirements for FLAS fellowships. Limited possibility of FLAS assistance to graduate students outside of Yale (contact Yale Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies in the spring).

The course tuition is \$3,300. Room and board will be \$400-500/month. (To ensure housing students must send Yale Latin American Studies a non-refundable \$150 deposit at time of application. The deposit will be applied towards room and board costs.) An administrative fee of \$150 (payable to Yale CLAIS) will be charged. Travel costs and arrangements are the responsibility of the student.

The Yale course will run for 8 weeks during the months of June and July.

The application deadline is April 1. Students who plan on attending but are unable to meet this deadline should contact Yale CLAIS. Space is limited so applicants are encouraged to apply early. Before submitting an application, potential students must contact the coordinator, Beatriz Riefkohl (beatriz.riefkohl@yale.edu)

by e-mail to arrange a phone discussion. She or the instructor, Jonathan Amith (jonathan.amith@yale.edu) may also be contacted for any further information.

CILLDI 2004 (U Alberta, 5-23 July 2004)

The University of Alberta is pleased to present the fifth annual Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), July 5-23, 2004. This program provides a unique opportunity to earn university credit while learning about selected Canadian Indigenous languages and cultures. Participants include undergraduate and graduate students interested in learning an Indigenous language or gaining expertise in the areas of linguistics, language and literacy, curriculum development, second language teaching and research.

In addressing issues of Indigenous language loss in Canada CILLDI has been expanding to include a wide range of courses based on needs expressed in Indigenous communities. In addition, we are planning several non-credit courses that lead to certification. Information about these courses will be available at a later date.

There is an application fee of \$60.00 (if not a U of A student). Tuition fees are: (undergraduate) \$576.60 per 3 credits, \$979.80 per 6 credits; (graduate) \$559.24 per 3 credits, \$1,118.48 per 6 credits. Costs in addition to tuition include housing and food (rooms \$20 - \$30 each day and meals approximately \$20, subject to change).

For further information contact Daghida at (+1-780-492-4188; daghida@ualberta.ca) or Heather Blair (+1-780-492-0921; heather.blair@ualberta.ca).

10. Publications of Interest

Note:

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are available for review by readers. Write to the editor to request a copy.

***Upper Chehalis Dictionary. M. Dale Kinkade**

University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 1991, pp. xv + 378

***Thompson River Salish Dictionary. Laurence C. Thompson and M. Terry Thompson.**

University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 1996, pp. xxvii + 1411

***Hualapai Reference Grammar (Revised and Expanded). ed. Lucille J. Watahomigie et al.**

Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim, Osaka, 2001, pp. v + 613

***Transcending Monolingualism: Linguistic Revitalisation in Education. ed. Leena Huss, Antoinette Camilleri Grima, Kendall A. King.**

Swets and Zeitlinger, Lisse, NL, 2003, pp. 301

***Language Revitalisation: Processes and Prospects. Quichua in the Ecuadorian Andes. Kendall A. King.**

Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, 2001, pp. 258

***Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary. Cliff Goddard.**

IAD Press, Alice Springs. Revised edition 1996, pp. xiv + 306

***Fighting language endangerment: community directed research on Sm'algyax (Coast Tsimshian). Tonya Stebbins**

With an introduction by Fumiko Sasama. Suita, Osaka: The Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim Project. 2003 ISSN 1346-082X

This book presents a new approach to the documentation of endangered languages, based on the development of materials for Sm'algyax, the endangered language of the Tsimshian Nation, Northwest British Columbia. It deals with issues of particular concern in endangered languages taking the development of the *Sm'algyax Learners' Dictionary* as a case study. The book describes the community directed approach taken during the dictionary project; identifying strengths and challenges associated with this method. It involves a symbiotic relationship between descriptive, pedagogical and sociolinguistic areas of research, ensuring the preparation of user-friendly materials. As the history of the Tsimshian Nation is closely tied up with the vitality of the language, sociolinguistic factors important to understanding the state of the language today are identified and the typology of the language is described. A number of language planning problems that become particularly acute when working with communities of endangered languages are discussed in depth here. The discussion provides examples specifically relating to Sm'algyax, though

the methodologies developed here could be used in similar situations elsewhere. They include: orthography development; dictionary design; and the management of lexical expansion.

Because this text was published with funding from the Japanese government, it is not available for commercial sale. Instead, copies are available from the author (email t.stebbins@latrobe.edu.au).

To obtain a copy send a cheque for US \$10 (to cover return postage by airmail) to: Dr. Tonya Stebbins, Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University Victoria 3086, AUSTRALIA

In the Last Days of Living Latin: Twilight Linguistics (Monegasque). David Leedom Shaul

'Language death' rules out possible continued uses as a heritage language. Language efforts typical of Native American languages (preservation/revival efforts, curriculum, technology use) are hampered not only by English use, but also by no desire for English-like functions in the traditional variety (because of emotional and religious factors). In the 1960s, Monegasque (traditional in Monaco) was in a similar situation; it went through a period of 'preservation' to become a heritage language used in important, vital public contexts. The Monegasque model is an alternative to the Hawaiian model of total revival as an educational medium.

Texas Linguistic Forum Vol. 44, No. 2. (2002)
<http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/salsa/salsaproceedings/salsa9/salsa9contents.htm>

Bernard Cerquiglini: Les Langues de France

Presses Universitaires de France have published *Les langues de France*, by Bernard Cerquiglini, delegate general of the French government for linguistic affairs. The volume (446 pages, 25 euro) offers a complete overview of the linguistic variety characteristic of France: from Corsican to Breton, and from Flemish to the Polynesian and Melanesian languages spoken in the Pacific colonies. Cerquiglini is setting the political groundwork for acceptance of linguistic pluralism in place of French linguistic centralism. So the issue is not, as the Jacobins think, "threatening the primacy of French", but to convey the message that the country's linguistic variety is a form of wealth that should not be demeaned. More information at: www.puf.com

Central Tagbanwa: A Philippine language on the brink of extinction. Robert A. Scebold

Linguistic Society of the Philippines
Special Monograph Series 48,2003
Paperback: ISBN: 9717800146, Pages:
xiii, 168, Price: USD \$5.50

Abstract:

The Central Tagbanwa people of the Philippines are on the verge of losing their language forever. In the last sixty years, the ravages of war and disease, and the large influx of migrants have drastically altered the sociolinguistic dynamics of their homeland. There is no question that Central Tagbanwa is an endangered language. If the trend shown in this study continues, the Central Tagbanwa language will become only a sentimental memory to the generation now being born. The aim of this book is to preserve the linguistic heritage of the Central Tagbanwa people for generations to come.

1. Historical Background
 2. Sociolinguistic Dynamics
 3. Phonology
 4. Grammar
 5. A Brief Lexicon
- Appendices: Three Central Tagbanwa interlinear texts.

(Note: Central Tagbanwa is distinct from the other two mutually unintelligible Tagbanwa languages spoken in Palawan province: Aborlan Tagbanwa spoken in central Palawan, and Calamian Tagbanwa spoken in the Calamian Islands off the northern tip of Palawan.)

Orders may be placed by:
email: info_philippines@sil.org
fax: +63-2-726-2012
mail: Academic Publications, Summer
Institute of Linguistics, P.O. Box 2270
CPO, 1099 Manila, Philippines

**Nurturing Native Languages. Ed.
Jon Reyhner, Octaviana Trujillo,
Roberto Carrasco and Louise
Lockard**

This book is now available for sale and free on-line at
<<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/NNL/>>.

This 194 page monograph is the sixth in a series of paperback books published by Northern Arizona University focusing on the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures. It includes papers from the 8th annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conference held in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 2001, 9th annual conference held in Bozeman, Montana, in 2002, and 10th annual conference held in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, in 2003. It includes papers on:

Meld k e'esto ge a'aliga (Run, Hide Your Children) by Gary Owens

Native Language Immersion by Jon Reyhner

Assessing the Impact of Total Immersion on Cherokee Language

Revitalization: A Culturally Responsive, Participatory Approach by

Lizette Peter, et al.

Situational Navajo: A School-Based, Verb-Centered Way of Teaching Navajo

by Wayne Holm, Irene Silentman, and Laura Wallace

Sustaining Indigenous Languages in Cyberspace by Courtney B. Cazden

Saving a Language with Computers, Tape Recorders, and Radio by Ruth Bennett

How To Teach When the Teacher Isn't Fluent by Leanne Hinton

Preparing Indigenous Language Advocates, Teachers, and Researchers in

Western Canada by Heather A. Blair, Donna Paskemin, and Barbara Laderoute

Whaia Te Reo: Pursuing the Language': How Metaphors Describe Our

Relationships with Indigenous Languages by Jeanette King

Honoring the Elders by Evangeline Parsons Yazzie and Robert N. St. Clair

Spanish: A Language of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas by Florencia

Riegelhaupt, Roberto Luis Carrasco, and Elizabeth Brandt

Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language by Walter P. Kelley, Tony L. McGregor

Oral History Shares the Wealth of a Navajo Community by Sara L. Begay, Mary Jimmie, and Louise Lockard

Mothertongue: Incorporating Theatre of the Oppressed into Language

Restoration Movements by Qwo-Li Driskill
Missionaries and American Indian Languages by Evangeline Parsons Yazzie

**Language, Politics and Social
Interaction in an Inuit
Community. Donna Patrick**

2003. xii, 269 pages.

Cloth. Euro 88.00 / sFr 141,- / for USA,
Canada, Mexico: US\$ 88.00
ISBN 3-11-017651-3

Paperback. Euro 29.95 / sFr 48,- / for USA,
Canada, Mexico US\$ 29.95
ISBN 3-11-017652-1

(Language, Power and Social Process 8)

Since the early 1970s, the Inuit of Arctic Quebec have struggled to survive economically and culturally in a rapidly changing northern environment. The promotion and maintenance of Inuktitut, their native language, through language policy and Inuit control over institutions, have played a major role in this struggle. Language, Politics, and Social Interaction in an Inuit Community is a study of

indigenous language maintenance in an Arctic Quebec community where four languages - Inuktitut, Cree, French and English - are spoken. It examines the role that dominant and minority languages play in the social life of this community, linking historical analysis with an ethnographic study of face-to-face interaction and attitudes towards learning and speaking second and third languages in everyday life.

11. Reviews

Language Rights and Political Theory (ed. Will Kymlicka, Alan Patten) - Review Article by Scott Martens
304 pages ; Oxford University Press; (June 2003)
ISBN: 0199262918

*This item appeared originally at the author's weblog:
http://pedantry.blogspot.com/2003_08_17_pedantry_archive.html#106121767956358456*

Language Rights and Political Theory brings together a number of authors, primarily working within a Rawlsian liberal framework, to investigate issues in language policy. There are a couple of things that struck me about this work in contrast to other efforts to flesh out a theory of language policy that I want to highlight:

First, it is abundantly clear that the authors have only a handful of instances of language contact in mind as they write. The arguments and principles advanced in this volume derive overwhelmingly from just four states: Canada, the United States, Belgium and Spain. There is mention of other places and cases - it is not the work of 12 authors with blinders to the rest of the world - Jacob Levy is one of the few to give anything close to equal time to language issues outside the west - but there is almost nothing here of value to people interested in post-colonial language policy and this volume does not give you much of a sense of the diversity of linguistic contact situations.

Still, these four flagship cases - each involving linguistic conflicts that have come to boil in the last fifty years in well-connected, reasonably wealthy, western liberal democratic states - are informative. A focus on the most powerful states is not, *per se*, a criticism. The powerful are, obviously, powerful, and their conflicts tend to colour everyone's politics, even those quite culturally and politically remote.

Second, with the exception of Stephen May, I don't think any of the authors are particularly trained in or aware of linguistics. I can't blame them - the most visible school of linguistics in the English

speaking world is almost completely without value to a discussion of language policy. Still, there are places where this shortcoming is especially unfortunate.

However, the book does offer some valuable points for debate and clues in the search for a more productive theory of language policy and I will review each chapter in turn.

I. Language Rights and Political Theory: Contexts, Issues and Approaches

This introductory chapter, from the Canadian co-editors Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten outlines some of the challenges language policy poses for liberalism and some of the specific issues that a liberal theory of language policy has to face.

<http://qsilver.queensu.ca/%7Ephilform/>,
<http://www.mcgill.ca/politicalscience/faculty/patten/>,

Language simply can not be handled by analogy with those areas where liberals are more at home: race, class, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other traditional concerns. We have no difficulty envisioning collective institutions which are indifferent to those things, but we are hard pressed to imagine institutions which do not, either *de jure* or *de facto*, favour some small set of languages over others. Language rights are essentially collective rights - to conceive of them as rights individuals can exercise independently of their community is to seriously misunderstand the nature of language.

Kymlicka and Patten go on to describe the various fields of policy that are most frequently subject to linguistic prescription. This list includes access to government services, participation in public discourse, employment rights, access to education, the situation of indigenous minorities, historical oppression, the problems posed by immigration, and state language policies as a tool of constructive nationalism. They also take an initial stab at classifying language policies by their scope and nature, but this sort of policy distinction is, regrettably, strictly limited to European and North American states.

II. Language Rights: Exploring the competing rationales

<http://www.us.es/ddercons/ruth.htm>

Ruth Rubio-Marín places a great deal of emphasis on the distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental language rights. This seems - if I am reading her correctly - to represent the distinction between language rights granted to individuals in order to enable them to enjoy political liberties and rights designed to offer security to language communities, ensuring that their language is able to continue to exist. An example of instrumental rights is the requirement -

fixed by precedent in the US and codified under the European Charter of Rights - that people brought before a court be able to understand the charges against them and be able to defend themselves, even if that means employing the services of interpreters and translators. In contrast, an example of a non-instrumental language right is the right to schools in your language of choice, even if it is not the dominant language in your community.

Rubio-Marín goes on to investigate the different kinds of measures this distinction entails, and supports the idea that language policies should properly be placed in a framework of legal rights rather than mere regulation.

III. A Liberal Democratic approach to Language Justice

<http://www.stanford.edu/%7Edlaitin/>
<http://www.stanford.edu/%7Ereich/>

David Laitin and Rob Reich disagree with Rubio-Marín's advocacy of a rights-based framework for understanding language policy. They attack this conception by dividing liberal normative approaches to language policy into three categories: compensatory justice, nationalism and liberal culturalism. They argue against each one in turn.

Compensatory justice is identified with the idea that linguistic minority communities are or have been the victims of unjust policies and that language rights are justified on the basis of compensation. The example they use is Catalonia, where the rhetoric of historical injustice has been used to gain the help of the state in re-establishing security for their language. This is problematic for Laitin and Reich because few minority language speakers are willing to accept compensation in order to integrate into the majority community. Therefore, they must envision their language as something of intrinsic value. This undermines claims for compensatory justice in their view.

The archetypical instances of nationalist language policies are in Eastern Europe, where most of the current states are less than a century old and their the national language came into being in conjunction with the demand for a nation-state. The language served as proof of the existence of a unified nation and the desire for a nation served to promote the language. Liberal nationalism therefore envisions language policy as a mechanism for reclaiming cultural sovereignty or national territorial rights. Laitin and Reich regard this position as foundationally incompatible with liberalism, since it entails a state authority over people's freedom to live in the language they choose.

Liberal culturalism is the position Laitin and Reich associate with Will Kymlicka, but it is one I would associate with an uncritical sort of multi-culturalism. It is a

position which tends to regard groups which share an identity - be it ethnic, religious, racial or linguistic, as a single entity possessed of rights that merit protection. Laitin and Reich point out the difficulties this presents for the individualistic focus of liberal theory. These groups do not speak with one mouth, nor do they have a common view of what they want or need.

They offer an alternative: the prospect of politically negotiated language rights. Where a language community is able to mobilise within a system of essentially democratic decision-making to secure its language rights, they should be secured. Like all but the least liberal monolingualism advocates, they deplore the beatings children once received for using their own languages in school, but otherwise do not see any particular liberal interdiction against monolingualist policies. They explicitly advocate the politicisation of language issues, limited only by general liberal principles of just and unjust behaviour towards individuals. I think they are rightly critical of liberal theorists for distrusting democratic processes to decide on what rights are appropriate for which communities. We are, after all, able to advance more sophisticated notions of the democratic process nowadays than mere majority rule.

It is, at times, hard to get a bead on where Laitin and Reich are coming from. On the one hand, they are critical of the efficacy of bilingual education and on the other seem to deplore the way in which the wealthy in Catalonia are able to purchase private Spanish language educations while the poor are stuck in Catalan-language schools. They are deeply hostile to Stephen May's promotion of minority political rights in terms of power relationships, but I do not see how they expect any linguistic minority to promote its rights in a politicised framework without such advocacy.

I am inclined to attribute to Laitin and Reich a sin worse than the distrust of politics that they attribute to other liberal thinkers: the development of a political theory that serves no purpose but to justify the status quo. They point to Quebec and Spain as places where political negotiation ultimately secured significant language rights, but it does not seem to occur to them that bilingual regimes in schooling and government in the US are the product of the same kind of political mobilisation.

IV. Accommodation Rights for Hispanics in the United States

<http://www.columbia.edu/%7Etp6/>

Thomas Pogge offers the least universalist perspective on language policy, restricting his arguments to the Spanish language in the United States. He is particularly critical of Will Kymlicka's advocacy of minority language rights, and defends a quite resolutely monolingual nationalist policy.

Pogge argues that historical injustices are irrelevant to Spanish language policy, since it is impossible to segregate from the descendants of recent immigrants that part of the Hispanic community descended from those present in the United States at the time that its borders were extended. Second, he makes the baffling claim that linguistic inequality does not entail any sort of injustice as understood by liberals. He supports this claim, as far as I can tell, only with the idea that if Hispanics choose to live among their own, it is by choice and therefore of value to them.

Pogge goes on to offer us a red herring: He raises a strawman argument against teaching English to Spanish-speaking Americans - an unlikely position that he attributes to Kymlicka, but which Kymlicka does not claim in any the quotes that Pogge uses. As far as I know, forbidding English education for children in American schools, or even failing to mandate it, is a not position advocated by any mainstream political force. Thus, Pogge's attack on it is quite irrelevant to the actual context of the United States. Had he attempted to generalise his position to Belgium, Switzerland or even Canada, where it has far more bearing on matters, he would have been compelled to confront his case to a far more complicated context.

To justify monolingual English education, Pogge advances the notion that the best education for children is the education which is best for each child. That's fine, as far as it goes, but there is an enormous gap between this postulate and a policy of English-only education which Pogge makes no effort to bridge. He neither makes empirical claims about what form of education is best for children, nor does he defend himself from the charge that he wants the government to decide in lieu of parents. Given what I presume to be a liberal preference for freedom of choice, this deserves some explanation.

This "English for the children" sort of rhetoric is unconvincing to me. Consider an alternative form of the same argument. In post-9/11 America, it is likely that Muslim children, especially those of more visible and conservative sects, face significant disadvantages in education and employment. They are taunted at school and almost certainly have a harder time getting a job, especially in the sorts of unskilled trades that many immigrants need to survive in a new country. Are we, therefore, for the sake of the children, justified in Christianising them or at least pressing them to adopt a more secular and less visible form of Islam? I should think the liberal answer to be "no." Pogge proposes nothing to explain why this is less true of language than of religion.

V. Misconceiving Minority Language Rights: Implications for Liberalism

<http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/staff/index.php?user=stephenm>

Stephen May is a sociolinguist who I associate primarily with Maori language issues. In some ways, I am more comfortable with May than the other authors here, because he does not speak the language of Rawlsian liberalism, opting instead for the language of cultural criticism. He is particularly hostile to the explicit monolingual nationalism of Thomas Pogge, and the more hidden form he sees in Laitin and Reich.

First, he is critical of the magic link between the nation-state and the identification of a single official language. There is a reason for that link and May makes no mention of it: the belief that a common citizenship and a common political space is difficult to sustain without a common language. However, May is still on fairly firm ground pointing out that arguments from civil solidarity are post-facto justifications of national monolingualism. The historical foundation of states, especially America, is far less simple.

May also highlights the asymmetry of claims about the importance of reinforcing the dominant language over minority ones. He points to the either/or nature of many language claims as representative of this problem. I, too, noticed how the authors of many of the chapters in this book seem to think that bilingualism is simply impossible, or assume that any bilingualism is just a step towards assimilation into the dominant language and culture. There is no inherent reason why this should be true. Although May does not make this case, in the era before the modern nation state, whole multilingual communities persisted for generations, and in many places they were the norm, not the exception. Even today, in large parts of the Balkans universal or near-universal bilingualism is still the norm, and in the most Anglophilic nations of Europe - the Low Countries and Scandinavia - near universal bilingualism has become a stable situation.

May goes on to criticise the notion that language *must* define identity as an essentialist and reductionist view - fighting words for the cultural critic. One can be American while still speaking Spanish, Spanish while speaking Catalan and British while still speaking Welsh. I think that he is on the right track here. It was once considered unthinkable that one could be Irish without being Catholic, and to claim that to be American requires being Anglophone is just as pernicious a position unless it can be supported by some stronger claim than the presumption that one nation must have just one language.

VI. Linguistic Justice

<http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/PVP/pvppres2.htm>

Philippe van Parijs is, I assume, largely kidding with his contribution to this volume. Deploying the notion of distributive justice, he proposes to use cash to compensate minority language speakers for the effort they must expend in learning the majority language, since he deems this an effort which benefits the majority at a cost to the minority. This resembles Swift's famous proposal for resolving Ireland's overpopulation problems in the 19th century.

However, let us for a moment take van Parijs seriously. It makes some sense in light of the history of van Parijs' native country: Belgium. The history of language politics in Belgium was, until 1989, a history of Dutch speakers learning French, while French speakers saw no particular need to reciprocate since Flemings were largely able to understand and express themselves in French. This persisted even after Dutch-speakers became a majority of the population. Flemish bilingualism was largely beneficial to French-speakers, who were therefore able to expend less effort learning and using a non-native language.

Consider, however, the effect of guaranteeing every Spanish speaker in the US a regular payment from the government. What would this do for Spanish retention rates among Latin American immigrants? It has the distorting effect of making it profitable to retain a native knowledge of Spanish, undermining the very effect so earnestly sought after by integrationist policies. Money has secondary effects, and offering money to Spanish speakers creates a moral hazard for the whole community, discouraging their language from behaving as we would expect by dying off.

VII. Diversity as a paradigm, analytical device and policy goal

<http://www.unige.ch/eti/personnel/grin.htm>

François Grin takes a long hard look at the logic and consequences behind support for social diversity and finds them lacking.

One paradox that Grin identifies is the distinction most countries make between "indigenous" minorities and "immigrant" ones. The United Kingdom has more Gujarati speakers than Scots Gaelic speakers, yet Scots Gaelic enjoys some legal status in the UK, while Gujarati has none. The goal of fostering diversity would presumably be just as well served by support for the Gujarati community as for Scots Gaelic.

Grin recognises that our natural sense of justice leads us to grant more support to these "indigenous" communities than to others, but asks whether making time the deciding factor in language rights isn't problematic. Where does one draw the line?

Spanish, French and German have been spoken in the United States for as long or longer than English. Each predates the founding of the United States by a considerable time. Should support for language rights in the US only include languages spoken before 1492? If so, how does one transplant this decision to the rest of the world? Europe's ethnic distribution is the product of millennia of migration, assimilation and remigration where no magic date separates some previously just distribution from the present. Grin does not have an answer.

VIII. Global Linguistic Diversity, Public Goods, and the Principle of Fairness

<http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/Dec/photos2001-2002/we17.jpg>

Idil Boran is, to me anyway, the most sympathetic author in this volume. She looks at arguments in favour of biodiversity to see if they can inform arguments for linguistic diversity. As Boran points out, she is not the first to consider this train of thought. There are a number of similarities between language diversity and biodiversity. The most diverse ecosystems tend to be fairly small, and advocating biodiversity means protecting relatively small territories. In the same way, the world's hundred most common languages are spoken by some 90% of the world's population, while thousands of other languages are spoken by small communities.

Furthermore, the very places with the richest biodiversity also tend to be the places with the richest linguistic diversity. This is not a coincidence. Biodiversity and linguistic diversity are generally greatest in areas that have not been fully colonised by agricultural civilisations. Just as farmers bring with them their own organisms to the detriment of local flora and fauna, they bring with them their languages and tend to liquidate or assimilate less efficient users of fertile land. Biodiversity and linguistic diversity also tend to be greatest in areas that are heavily partitioned by geographical barriers. The same mechanisms that limit the movement of species limit the movement of cultures.

Discourse on biodiversity tends to be centred on the notion of a public good. A public good, in liberal discourse, usually means something which is identified as beneficial to at least most people, but where it is difficult to exclude anyone from enjoying the good if it exists. This undermines voluntarist and market-driven solutions to distributing the good and theorists most often treat the identification of a public good as something which justifies an exception to the liberal predisposition towards freedom of choice.

Boran covers many of the arguments in favour of viewing linguistic diversity as a public good. First, she considers the

arguments from aesthetic value so often favoured by classical humanists. Language is not exclusively an instrument of communication. It is also a medium for artistic works. To lose a language means to lose all the arts which are only accessible in that language - its poetry, its literature, its songs, etc. However, she finds this argument problematic. There are ample disputes over the recognition of artistic ventures as public goods, and what policy implications this entails. Look, for example, at the constant griping in the US over state funding for controversial artists, like the display of Robert Mapleson photos in public museums. Adding language issues to this mess seems ill-considered.

She also looks at arguments from scientific value. Although local cultures do contain a variety of useful information about the world - information which is often far less self-evident to occidental scientists - we should not overestimate the value of this knowledge. In my estimate, Boran is right to think this is also a weak argument.

She also identifies an individual's freedom of choice as grounds for supporting language diversity. However, this is difficult to accept at face value. An individual's freedom to live in a particular language is conditioned on access to a substantial community of speakers. This can not be guaranteed in the same manner as an individual freedom to hold particular political views or religious beliefs. The essentially collective nature of language rights makes this entire line of thinking problematic.

Instead, she offers us a principle of fairness which can be interpreted as a more serious effort to apply the logic of just compensation advanced by Philippe van Parijs. If we identify linguistic diversity as a public good, it is appropriate to accept its maintenance as a public cost born by linguistic majorities.

IX. Language Death and Liberal Politics

<http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/degreeprog/courses.nsf/wzByDirectoryName/MichaelBlake>

Michael Blake claims that language rights can only be understood by embracing what he feels is a paradox. He contrasts two hypothetical situations: In the first, a language changes over time until its speakers no longer understand the earlier form of the language; in the second, a language changes over time until it becomes indistinguishable from some other language which was earlier clearly distinct. Is it not appropriate, in both cases, to claim that a language has died? Why then do we object so forcefully to the second case but are unbothered by the first?

Blake's example is a case where a more complete knowledge of linguistics would have been very useful, because while he wants us to understand the second to

correspond to what happens in unjust language death, what he describes in fact virtually never occurs.

I say "virtually never" because whether it really occurs at all remains the subject of some controversy. In linguistics, this process is called *decreolisation*, and it is exceedingly rare if it ever actually happens. The study of language contact is complex and somewhat disorganised. There are still vast gaps in our knowledge and plenty of controversy over what happens when languages come into contact. One of the things that can happen is creolisation. This corresponds, in some respects at least, to what Blake is describing.

There is no controversy over the idea that sometimes elements from one language are adopted into another. The current thinking is that this process is pervasive and forms a part of the past and present of nearly every language in the world. The elements that are most frequently and obviously adopted are lexical. Languages borrow words from each other. However, there are ample well-documented instances of morphological and syntactic borrowing as well. The school of linguistics that I more or less adhere to does not even make very sharp distinctions between lexical items, morphological rules and syntactic structures, so for me this poses no difficulties at all.

The problem is the other half of what Blake is claiming: borrowing foreign elements can turn two languages into one. This idea is one of the theories about the origin of Black English. (Also known as African American Vernacular English, but when I call it AAVE, I'm saying that this is a matter for linguists, and if you aren't a linguist you shouldn't be talking about it. When I say "Black English" people are quite clear on what I am talking about. So I stick to "Black English.") The decreolisation hypothesis claims that non-standard speech patterns among African Americans came into being because African language patterns persisted among early American slaves, who spoke a creole instead of standard English. In this view, the language of African American communities has been converging with the standard language ever since.

This hypothesis is not on the whole highly regarded among linguists. Historical records of slave language in the US do not support such an account and arguments from historical reconstruction - claiming that copula dropping in Black English is evidence of African origin because of pervasive copula dropping in Bantu languages - are not convincing. Russian is also a copula dropping language, yet we would not call this fact evidence of the African origin of Russian. Black English appears to have originated as a dialect of colloquial American English which grew away from the standard due to low levels of literacy and segregation.

There are a few other borderline cases. Hawaiian Creole English speakers clearly manipulate a variety of intermediate levels of language between a completely basolectal creole (= incomprehensible to outsiders) and standard English. The same is true to some degree of the Caribbean creoles. However, in each of those cases, the people who speak mesolectal forms (= may be more comprehensible to outsiders) enjoy some mastery of the standard language. It is not clear whether the underlying creole languages are being progressively transformed into the standard language, or if growing bilingualism with the standard language isn't simply creating mesolectal forms among the already bilingual.

Unfortunately, the whole of Blake's argument is built on this base. He demands that before a linguistic right can be established, we must show that the second situation has occurred due to a historical injustice rather than happenstance. He believes that progressive assimilation can occur in an entirely just, voluntary manner. But this process describes no real situation. In every case that might in some way resemble Blake's description, we have a community which has been compelled, by more or less coercive means, to become bilingual in some more dominant language. Without extensive bilingualism in the minority community and unequal access to power, there is *never* assimilation, and even in cases where there is widespread bilingualism, social inequality and extensive borrowing, there is not always linguistic assimilation.

Blake's core argument - that language death is not always the consequence of coercion so we must look to historical factors in assigning language rights - collapses entirely on this matter of historical record. He might have made the case that either extensive bilingualism or unequal access to power occurs for reasons that are, if not just, then at least difficult to remedy without creating more injustice. That is that case Jacob Levy makes in the next chapter, and I am far more sympathetic to that kind of claim.

X. Language Rights, Literacy and the Modern State

<http://volokh.com/index.htm?bloggers=jacob>

Jacob Levy, like Blake in the previous chapter, claims that the death of a language can not necessarily be identified with an injustice. Levy, however, uses a somewhat novel approach in making this claim - the costs associated with acquiring literacy. He is correct to say that literacy does not play an important part in discussions of multilingualism. Modern linguistics, which has since the era of de Saussure eschewed literacy as a subject of study, is unfortunately the main culprit. It is part of a general trend in theoretical linguistics to

ignore any area of language study that might actually prove useful to someone.

Levy recognises, unlike many other commentators on language issues, that multilingualism is a feature of many language communities. Instead of fingering bilingualism as the mechanism of linguistic assimilation, he claims that the cost of becoming literate in multiple languages, rather than the cost of becoming conversant in a foreign tongue, drives language death. I found this claim surprising, because it is quite contrary to most people's experience in learning languages. Developing true verbal fluency - the ability to follow conversations in diverse local accents under noisy conditions using local idioms - is quite a bit more difficult than developing basic literacy in the more standard form of a language.

Then the logic of it came to me. This claim is true for a set of languages. Chinese, Japanese, English and French are the prototype examples of languages where even native speakers have a great deal of difficulty acquiring literacy and second language speakers are still more disadvantaged. Otherwise, this claim is simply false for the overwhelming majority of the world's languages, particularly its smaller and more threatened ones.

Literacy in Inuktitut, which is written using an unusual and moderately complicated writing scheme unique to Canada, spread spontaneously after its introduction by a Methodist missionary in the 19th century. Inuit children, who are hard-pressed to develop fluency and literacy in English, sometimes enter school already literate in their native language. This situation is also common in Africa. Among my father's native languages was Kituba, a trade language spoken in Bandundu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He developed fluency through exposure as a young child, but became literate in a matter of minutes after he was introduced to its largely phonetic writing scheme.

I do not find arguments from the added burden of literacy terribly convincing. The creation of written forms for languages is not, in fact, usually the realm of "linguistic activists and outside preservationists" as Levy claims. It is in most cases the work of either the state in some guise or of missionaries. Missionary linguistic work nowadays is carried out primarily by an organisation called the *Wycliffe Bible Society* and its more secular wing, the *Summer Institute of Linguistics*. One of the most common features of missionary linguists' stories is the speed and ease with which literacy spreads once it has been introduced. It is unheard of for linguistic assimilation to outpace the spread of literacy, as Levy claims, when a reasonably phonetic writing system is introduced to a community. In many instances, its spread is faster than the missionaries themselves. In

the case of Inuktitut, missionaries would sometimes arrive in new villages prepared to teach people how to read only to find that the written language had preceded them, and this in a culture that could only write in the snow because they had no paper.

Levy is on firmer ground when he points out that one of the key advantages of literacy is access to a wider society. Many modern languages were constructed, some more explicitly than others, as unions of diverse dialects. Building a competitive linguistic community is a form of cultural self-defence. However, it can be better understood as a sort of compromise measure. Consider the case of Inuktitut. Although partitioned into a number of partially incomprehensible dialects, there is a growing degree of standardisation on the phonologically conservative dialect of Iglulik. Although this means that some Inuktitut communities' unique language forms may be lost, this standard Inuktitut is a far better vehicle for their culture and traditions than English. By choosing this strategy, Inuit are accepting the loss of smaller group identities in return for preserving some of what is valuable to them.

Personally, I wish this strategy was more widespread. I know of no comparable movement among Canada's Cree and Montagnais communities, who are numerically superior to the Inuit and who could even more effectively take advantage of a common linguistic strategy. Unfortunately, the political barriers to doing so are much larger for them, since they are divided by two scripts, several churches, two different preferred European languages, and spread across six provinces and one of the territories. However, regardless of its necessity or justice, this phenomenon of language construction by merging dialects is rarely if ever spontaneous. It is, almost without exception, a result of a policy designed to sacrifice some linguistic diversity in return for some good. It is true that it is not in all cases the result of brutally unjust policies imposed from the outside, but it is unlikely to occur unless there is some perceived threat to a language community. Levy's claim that language death through this kind of process is spontaneous is difficult to support.

Levy finally returns to what is the best argument against linguistic diversity and the only one I think actually has enough merit to be worth discussing. Living one's entire life in a language of limited scope is an expensive proposition. It cuts its speakers off from opportunities for personal development. Language should not be a prison, and I am largely in agreement with Levy's statement that children should not be tools in the maintenance of unsustainable sociological divisions. However, they have no choice but to be tools in the maintenance of sustainable

ones, and distinguishing the lost causes from the viable languages is not an easy task, nor one that the designers of language policies can so easily avoid.

XI. The Antinomy of Language Policy

<http://www.ceetum.umontreal.ca/weinstock.htm>
Daniel Weinstock covers many of the same issues in language policy described at length by previous authors, but goes on to describe a vision of a more just kind of language policy. It is composed of three principles:

1. Minimalism.

The only language dependent goal that states should be allowed to pursue is effective communication. Language policies which serve other goals - nation-building, cultural preservation, political unity - are to be rejected.

2. Anti-symbolism.

The selection a particular language by the state should not have a symbolic significance. It would, under Weinstock's principles, be wrong for the United States to declare its official language to be English so that non-English speakers can be identified as Unamerican.

3. Revisability.

The state should be prepared to change its language choices in the face of demographic change. It should be committed to effective communication, and if a change in language policy serves this goal then it should be adopted.

Weinstock concedes that this set of policy prescriptions will generally favour the dominant language, but at least it will do so for pragmatic reasons, and without any sudden deprivation of reasonable linguistic rights to communities of any size. I find myself in substantial agreement with Weinstock, although I think there are many cases where these principles do not form an adequate decision procedure for language policy.

I fear that Weinstock's prescriptions, as good as they are, are too little, too late. Had these principles been in place in Canada and the United States since their respective foundings, it is unlikely that either state would have English-speaking majorities today. In the era before mass media and rapid transportation, they would perhaps have constituted a relatively just and economically efficient basis for language policy. However, the instrumental value of mass languages today is so great that to imagine that any sort of minimalist language policy can be economically efficient may be an unreasonable assumption.

XII. Beyond Personality: The Territorial and Personality

Principles of Language Policy Reconsidered

http://www.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/fac_law.htm#reaume

Denise Réaume contrasts two general classes of language policy and the justifications behind them. The "territorial principle" attaches language rights to particular geographic territories, constructing for each language a place where it can be dominant. Your right to use your language in all parts of your life may be restricted if you are not resident in a territory where your own language is legally established. The "personality principle", in contrast, guarantees language rights without respect to location.

Réaume is right to consider the territorial principle suspect. It is little more than a weak extension of territorial ethno-linguistic nationalism, a principle responsible for more than its fair share of the world's ills. There is nothing special about an existing set of national borders or administrative divisions that makes them worth entrenching as linguistic frontiers. Furthermore, creating these territorial divisions always creates new linguistic minorities by stranding people of both languages on the wrong side of the line.

However, she goes a step further, pointing out that a personality principle may justify no more protection for language than any other kind of social division, like religion. Clearly, this is inadequate. Religions can generally be practised individually and privately without losing their value to those who adopt them. Languages can not.

Territorial solutions do have this vexing property of actually working and alternatives often do not, and that is where Réaume finds herself in a pickle. She wants to use the personality principle to advocate radical policies designed to promote minority languages and is hard pressed to do it. Even Canada, champion of the personality principle, has a very different situation on the ground than the Trudeauist vision of coast-to-coast bilingualism. Québec and New Brunswick are the only places in Canada where French is genuinely thriving and they are the only places where the legal code genuinely favours French.

Réaume takes a very Canadian approach to justifying radical minority language support. Language rights are, to her, justified on the basis of collective, rather than individual rights. The constitution of Québec is one of the few in the West to recognise any notion of collective rights by that name and collective rights form the basis of the native claims that are so vexing for Canadian politics right now. However, her argument is subject to the criticisms advanced by Laitin and Reich against collective rights. Réaume will convince no one outside of Canada because her position is so utterly remote from the traditional liberal embrace of individual rights.

XIII. What kind of bilingualism?

<http://www.mcgill.ca/politicalscience/faculty/patten/>

Alan Patten picks up many of the same themes as Réaume in the final chapter of the book. He distinguishes a number of arguments for multilingualism and attempts to discern what sort of language regime - territorial or personality based - each tends to favour.

Patten argues that a concern for language rights based on access to public institutions favours the personality principle rather than regionalist language policies. This is not inherently true, because the resources to support bilingualism are not unlimited, and the group which most needs support in accessing public institutions may vary from place to place.

Patten goes on to analyse arguments from social mobility, which he deems more likely to favour a territorial principle. Where there are millions of speakers of some language living in close proximity, it is possible to have a reasonably complete set of social institutions in that language, ensuring that members of that language community do not face diminished opportunities. Where a language community has insufficient numbers, there is no prospect of equal opportunity except by acquiring a more dominant language. Therefore, it makes the most sense to promote minority languages where they are viable, and to promote integration elsewhere.

Patten also considers arguments from social cohesion, although he does so under the name "democratic participation." He views this argument as supportive of territoriality, but curiously I am inclined to come to the opposite conclusion. If people do not share a common language, it is even more damaging to their cohesion to segregate them geographically. The difference, I suppose, follows from a different set of assumptions. If you presume linguistic disunity to be the norm no matter how you cut a territory up, you will not support a principle of one state - one language. If you make the opposite assumption, you might well conclude that it is better to have two monolingual states than one bilingual one.

Patten's last argument is from intrinsic identity. To whatever extent language is constitutive of identity, people ought to have the right to the identity they like no matter where they are. This tends to favour a personality-based language policy.

Unlike Réaume, Patten does not come out in favour of unalloyed personality principles in language policy. He finds that arguments from social mobility and social solidarity are good arguments, even if they do not trump the case for personality principle.

Foundation for Endangered Languages

Manifesto

1. Preamble

1.1. The Present Situation

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

The most authoritative source on the languages of the world (Ethnologue, Grimes 1996) 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:-

- To raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all channels and media;
- To support the use of endangered languages in all contexts: at home, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life;
- To monitor linguistic policies and practices, and to seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary;
- To support the documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results;
- To collect together and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages;
- To disseminate information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.

