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Jamie Brown, composer of A Cornish Requiem – See p. 16 for premiere details.
1. Editorial

Recently our Foundation inaugurated a new category of membership: Community membership. This category is open to representatives of endangered-language speaker communities who wish to make a collective effort to preserve their language from further erosion. It is free of charge, and membership is vested in the hands of the authorised representative who makes application to us. This copy of Ogmios, for example, will go to such a representative. In future issues of our journal I hope to feature articles in which the communities present themselves to the rest of our membership. So far we have eight such Community members, and I’m asking their representatives to step forward and describe their communities and the threats posed to their languages. In this issue, we present the first: the Livonians of Kolka, Latvia.

Christopher Moseley

2. Development of the Foundation

2015 FEL Conference: Theme – The Music of Endangered Languages

The theme this year will be to consider the role of music and songs in the revitalization and preservation of endangered languages. As always, FEL invites abstracts of papers concerning any language in the world, if they address the conference theme.

The 2015 FEL Conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, an international port city and gateway to America for many of the world’s languages since the 18th century, and home to a variety of languages, such as indigenous, creole and trade. In addition to its rich diversity and mixture of languages and cultures, New Orleans, well known as the birthplace of Jazz, enjoys many styles of music like rhythm & blues; salsa, merengue and Cajun, to name a few.

Indeed, New Orleans, and Louisiana in general, is a microcosm for the evolution and degeneration of languages in the modern world. Yet, the cultural origins of language still thrive in neighbourhoods and local traditions. Be it European, African, or the indigenous peoples of the region, language persists through songs and music. This rich variety of cultural origins and music of language provides an appropriate backdrop for exploring ‘cultural lifeways’ with an emphasis on ethnomusicology at this year’s conference.

There are many ways in which the music culture of endangered language communities is critical to sustaining and revitalizing language. Consider the following three categories:

- Songs are a vehicle for carrying forward the essence of history and culture. The repetitive, structured, danceable sounds of music are found in almost every society - along with language. What people perform or listen to becomes an issue of cultural significance.
- People use language in music to re-create and celebrate who they have been and establish what they wish to be. New words added to an old song look backward to earlier struggles and makes a statement about the present and future.
- Music is one of the ways that communities establish themselves and try to survive. Endangered peoples and cultures, not necessarily those in distant forests, are often large minority groups within nations that can suddenly erupt into civil war or persecution.
- Speakers of endangered languages can utilize the modern forms of music and musical instruments to make their language relevant, compatible to other languages and generate interest in their mother tongue, both from within the community and from outside.

FEL XIX thus calls for abstracts addressing the following, though not limited to, kinds of discussions in a number of areas related to the themes of music and endangered languages:

Language preservation and revitalization / increasing Language Awareness:

Where and to what effect are songs and music employed in the preservation of endangered languages? In what ways does this profit the communities? How does it assist language revitalization? What are the benefits and limits in the use of music in sustaining and revitalizing endangered languages?

Identity and Multicultural Urban Settings:

In what ways can languages and music be studied along the lines of maintaining cultural identity in a multicultural urban setting? How do cultural heritage and music feature in the linguistic landscape?

Dimensions of Community and Place; Local, Urban and Rural:

How do endangered languages speakers use their music to co-exist in urban and rural areas? What kind of knowledge is lost with language shift and how does such loss of such knowledge change communities? What is gained by maintaining indigenous perspectives on the local ecology?

Children and Youth / Education and Schools:

Why should the music of endangered language communities be part of school curriculums? How is music used to advance the revitalization of endangered languages in school settings? To what kinds of advantages can indigenous language be employed in school education?

Popular Music - Considerations and Influence:

What is the influence of indigenous music in popular music? How can that popularity be parlayed into the development and teaching of indigenous languages and music? What is the role of music in language awareness? What models of intellectual property rights can best protect in-
degenerate groups as they develop materials for education and cultural tourism?

Economic Aspects of the Cultures and Music of languages:

How have local communities supported the music culture of endangered language groups as part of preserving regional identity? What kinds of resources does the music of heritage languages provide for specific economic activities such as tourism? How can the economic effect of heritage languages and music be explored for language planning and policy?

About the FEL XIX Host City of New Orleans

The 2015 FEL Conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, an international port city and gateway to America for many of the world’s languages since the 18th century. As a colony under French, Spanish and American flags, Creole society coalesced as Islanders, West Africans, slaves, free people of color and indentured servants poured into the city along with a mix of French and Spanish aristocrats, merchants, farmers, soldiers, freed prisoners and nuns.

From 1820 to 1870, the Irish and Germans made New Orleans one of the main immigrant ports in America, second only to New York. New Orleans also was the first city in America to host a significant settlement of Italians, Greeks, Croatians and Filipinos. Just before the opening of the 20th century, thousands of Sicilians came to New Orleans adding to a collective of disconnected suburbs, many divided by language. Among the indigenous languages in Louisiana are small groups of Koasati, Choctaw, Chitimacha, and Tunica who borrowed words from Spanish, mixing it with the Mobilian Jargon, a trade language of the Central Gulf Coast.

Immigrants from a wide variety of nations brought along their traditional music and added them to Louisiana’s rich cultural “gumbo.” Jazz emerged from African and African-rooted dancing, singing, and drumming in New Orleans’ Congo Square. West of New Orleans, across the Atchafalaya Basin into east Texas, lays the homeland of Cajun music and zydeco, exuberant dance-music genres of Southwest Louisiana where some half a million people still speak Cajun and Creole French. Other sounds include the Isleño ballads known as décimas of St. Bernard Parish, which are sung in a 17th-century Spanish dialect from the Canary Islands; Italian music, and its fascinating interaction with jazz and rhythm & blues; salsa, merengue, and other styles from Central America and the Caribbean; the music of such Asian nations as Vietnam and Laos; and many more.

FEL Canada announcement

Strengthening First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages of Canada

Ottawa, February 21st, 2015

Dear friends and colleagues,

We’re Canada-based members of the Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL), writing to you to let you know about our new not-for-profit organization whose mission will be to strengthen Aboriginal languages in Canada – those of First Nations, Inuit and Métis – and endangered languages throughout the world.

This initiative arose out of the 2013 FEL Conference “Endangered Languages beyond Boundaries” which some of you attended on October 2013 at Carleton University here in Ottawa. The conference highlighted the growing interest, concerns and ongoing research and collaborative efforts in the preservation, maintenance and revitalization of Aboriginal languages across Canada. Discussions during the conference wrap-up led to a proposal that a Canada-based effort be started to strengthen Aboriginal languages in Canada, in recognition of the challenges associated with their survival.

A focus on the First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages of Canada

As both recent and long-standing members of FEL (UK/International), we agree that, due to the urgency of the Canadian situation, a Canada-based effort is crucial; and the executive of FEL is supportive of the founding of an independent Canadian chapter. During the 2013 conference we were inspired by the stories and concerns shared by Aboriginal scholars and people working in endangered language situations all over the world, and here in Canada. The growing awareness of the importance of Aboriginal – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis – languages in Canada, and the significant ongoing efforts towards improving their survival suggest that the time is right, and that prospects are good, for a FEL Canada chapter to help make a difference in the future of Canada’s indigenous languages.

FEL Canada: A unique contribution

We recognize that there are already a number of important organizations working with Aboriginal languages in Canada, and we seek to work alongside them. On the government front, the Department of Canadian Heritage, through the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI) program, funds a variety of community-based language projects, while other federal initiatives and programs also support educational and learning resources for Aboriginal languages across Canada, in communities and schools, on reserves, in northern and remote locations, and in urban areas. However, while these programs support some good work, we feel that it’s not enough to depend on government funding alone, since it is not always reliable, sufficient, easy to obtain, or easy to administer.

In addition, there are various First Nation, Inuit and Métis language and cultural organizations all across Canada, doing excellent work in developing language expertise and teaching resources for their communities, and often in collaboration with other organizations, schools, universities, governments, and institutions. There is, however, a need for additional awareness of the importance of the situation in the wider Canadian society, and engagement with the issues by
Our purpose

Our statement of purpose and our key aims are inspired by FEL’s manifesto and specifically adapted to the Canadian situation:

FEL Canada exists to safeguard intangible cultural heritage for future generations by enabling the documentation, protection, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal – First Nation, Inuit and Métis – languages in Canada, and endangered languages throughout the world.

The key aims of FEL Canada are as follows:

1. to reclaim and strengthen use of Aboriginal and endangered languages in all contexts: at home, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life
2. to raise awareness, both inside and outside the communities where Aboriginal and endangered languages are spoken, of the diversity of these languages, their value to community and individual well-being, health and educational outcomes, and their value to shared human heritage; and to raise awareness about challenges to their survival
3. to develop new sources of funding and collaboration, and to allocate resources – financial assistance, training, consultation, information and facilities – for use in the documentation, preservation and revitalization of Aboriginal and endangered languages
4. to promote the availability and use of Aboriginal languages in education at all levels in Canada, both within formal school systems and in the context of community initiatives; to enhance educational quality and outcomes; and to enable collaboration and the sharing of educational expertise among language communities
5. to promote the recognition of Aboriginal languages as national and co-official languages of Canada, and to work out practical and financially responsible ways in which this recognition can be implemented

Who can be involved?

In keeping with the 2013 FEL conference themes, our approach is one of collaboration, building on community connections and a variety of research, skills and disciplines. We welcome the involvement of people from all kinds of backgrounds, and with all kinds of skills: First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals, communities and organizations; people in research and education at all levels; people with experience in working with minority language communities; people with skills in organizational management, accounting, fund-raising, law and communications – in short every person can make a difference in the future of Canada’s indigenous languages!

We have just incorporated under the Canadian law of Not-for-Profit Corporations and plan to apply as a charity.

When we issue a call for members in the near future, we would like you to consider joining. You could simply be a member, or you could also contribute through the organizational positions to be filled within FEL Canada:

- board member
- organizational representative
- communications manager
- accountant
- fundraiser
- volunteer language expert or consultant
- legal advisor
- computational assistant
- web designer

Can you help with one of these roles? Can you think of other people who might like to get involved? Are there other ways that people could help? Please let us know!

Your timely comments, suggestions and statement of interest would be very deeply appreciated, and will help us through the building of FEL Canada.

Migwech – thank-you!

Dale McCreey (Métis Nation of British Columbia)
Erik Anonby (Carleton University)
Lorna Wanosts’a7 Williams (Li’l wat First Nation, Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria)
Mary Jane Norris (Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation; FEL member since 2003 and organizer of FEL’s 2013 conference)
Olenka Bilash (Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta)
Onowa McIvor (Norway House Cree Nation – Director and Assistant Professor, Indigenous Education Uvic)
Serena d’Agostino (FEL member and Ogmios contributing editor)

FEL 2015 grants announced

Find out more on www.ogmios.org/grants

This year’s FEL grants were announced in March, being awarded to a world-wide range of scholars who are committed to research projects that will benefit the speech communities whose languages they are researching. These are the winners:

Christina Murmann

Christina Murmann studied Linguistics in Paderborn and Düsseldorf with a focus on acquisition and linguistic diversity. In her Masters Thesis she empirically investigated grammatical agreement marking in German Sign Language. In 2011, she had the opportunity to do linguistic fieldwork in northern Brazil, where she collected word lists with speakers of Wai’api (of the Tupi language family), Palikur (Arawakan), Kheu’ol (French and Carib-based Creole), Apala’i, Tiriyo and Kaxuyana (all Carib). Further, she recorded sentences and short texts including deponential nouns with speakers of Kheu’ol and Apala’i. In addition, she co-taught a course on the creation of dictionaries (using the Dictionary Development Program) at
the Federal University of Amapá (UNIFAP) and was involved with the language archive at the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Following her time in Brazil, she assisted Dr. Sebastian Drude with the maintenance of the language archive of the Awetí language (Tupi), which is part of the DOBES Archive at the Max-Planck-Institute in Nijmegen (The Netherlands). From March to September 2013 she was the Special Intern at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg). Besides carrying out linguistic research, in this role she mentored and supported Miriwoong language workers in various language maintenance and revitalization tasks such as the development of teaching materials and radio programs or the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Program. She returned to the MDWg in 2014 to start research for her PhD. This field trip was funded by the FEL among others.

Christina is currently writing her dissertation in English Linguistics at the University of Cologne with Prof Dr. Dany Adone as her supervisor. Her thesis discusses aspects of the linguistic expression of possession in Miriwoong, a non-Pama Nyungan language of Australia.

Sheena Shah

Sheena Shah obtained her doctorate in Linguistics from Georgetown University (USA) in 2013. Her Ph.D. thesis focused on the factors affecting proficiency among Gujarati heritage language learners in the U.K., Singapore and South Africa. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for African Language Diversity (CALDi, University of Cape Town). Sheena has conducted linguistic fieldwork on a number of African languages, including N’ulu (linguistic isolate, South Africa), !Xun (Kx’a, Namibia), H!oan (Kx’a, Botswana) and Ngjemboon (Bantoid, Cameroon). Her research interests include endangered, minority and heritage languages, language documentation and revitalization, language maintenance and shift, language policy, and language and education.

Claudio de la Rosa

Claudio de la Rosa Valdez was born in March, 1980 in the Huichol Community of Taymari, territory of Tuapürie Santa Catarina Cuxcomatlán, located in the highlands of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Western Mexico. At the time, the primary school in a nearby community was the only education center in the region, so Claudio had to leave the community to continue his education at the age of 12. While away from home he realized how important it was for indigenous youth to also have access to secondary education in their language, and that traditional knowledge is also essential for the fair and sustainable development of their communities. In the year 2001 he started a degree in Education Sciences at ITESO University, Guadalajara, México. Soon he joined and presided the Huichol Student Council, coordinated the Academic Support Program for Indigenous Students at the University of Guadalajara, and was part of the investigation team for the project “Improving Intercultural Education Conditions for Indigenous Nahua and Huichol in the State of Jalisco”. In the year 2008 Claudio goes back to his community and, with support from community authorities, ITESO University, and Mexican music band Cafe Tacvba, it is possible to open the first community high school in the territory of Tuapürie Santa Catarina Cuxcomatlán. Tamaatsi Páritsika Community High School is much more than a learning institution; it’s a community center involving youth in the healthy and sustainable development of their region and people. The study program includes courses like agro-ecology, forest management, Wixárika language (Huichol), food production, herbal medicine, carpentry, Huichol culture, computer science, and music, among others. Currently, over 50 students are enrolled and classes are taught by 8 teachers, Huichol speakers from surrounding communities that have a university degree, and when required for specific programs or courses, 1 or 2 volunteer teachers from domestic or foreign universities. The active preservation of Huichol language, or Wixárika, is central to the High School’s values. For this reason Tamaats Páritsika started a project in 2014 to promote its use through attractive and easily available language material. With the effort of two collaborators and students from first and last grade, in February 2015 was launched Niuki, the first mobile application to learn an indigenous language, Wixárika. Today, Claudio de la Rosa together with the teachers and students at Tamaats Páritsika work to create a complete learning guide for Wixárika that can be shared with the world.

Elwira Sobkowiak

I received my MA degree in Language Documentation and Description from SOAS, University of London in 2010. During my MA course I took part in a fieldtrip documenting Guernesiais, a severely endangered language spoken on Guernsey, Channel Islands. For my MA thesis I did a comparative study on noun class assignment strategies for loanwords in Senegalese and Gambian Wolof (Niger-Congo). I am currently a PhD student at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies ‘Artes Liberales’ at the University of Warsaw in Poland. My ongoing PhD research is focused on language contact in La Huasteca Potosina, a multi-ethnic and multilingual region in east-central Mexico. I analyse how, as a result of intense contact with Spanish, the grammatical structures of Huasteca Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan) and Teenek (Mayan), two languages representing distinct language families and of different morphosyntactic profiles, are shifting. Ethnolinguistic work in Mexico reflects my long-term interest in Mesoamerican cultures of the past but also concern about the future of Mexican indigenous languages, many of which are now in decline as their speakers are choosing Spanish as their preferred language of communication. My fieldtrips to Mexico have resulted so far in several hours of audio & video recordings of spoken Nahuatl. I have also worked in archives analysing colonial documents written in Classical Nahuatl. Apart from my PhD research, I am involved in some revitalization initiatives, such as working towards the implementation of bilingual and multilingual signs in indigenous regions in Mexico. I am learning to speak Nahuatl and Teenek. The FEL grant will fund publication of a book-compilation of local stories and...
legends in Huasteca Potosina Nahua towns from the municipality of Xilitla (and around) in San Luis Potosí state in Mexico. The project will involve cooperating with local Nahua community members and on successful completion of it free copies of the printed book, its digital copies on CDs as well as audio books will be distributed free of charge among the local residents in Xilitla and adjacent Nahua villages.

Vera Ferreira

After taking the licentiate degree in English and German Studies at the University of Coimbra (Portugal, 1999) and getting an M.A. degree in General Linguistics and Linguistic Typology at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich (Germany, 2000), Ferreira has started her PhD in General Linguistics at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University and specialized in Language Documentation and endangered languages in Europe.

Since 2007, Ferreira gives courses on Language Documentation and endangered languages at the Institute for General Linguistics and Language Typology (Ludwig-Maximilian-University) in Munich. From 2008 to 2012, she was responsible for the documentation of Minderico within the DoBeS project financed by the Volkswagen Foundation at the University of Regensburg. Vera Ferreira is the president of CIDLeS (Interdisciplinary Centre for Social and Language Documentation) and head of its Language Documentation and Typology group. She is involved in several projects focusing on the documentation and study of minority/endangered languages in Europe:

2015: “Documenting Fala – a minority language in Spanish Extremadura”


2008-2012: “Documentation of Minderico – An endangered language in Portugal”

Gang Li

My name is Gang Li I am a native people from Turfan, Xinjiang, I live in the suburbs nearby minority village where Uighurs gathered, so I could speak Uighur language from my childhood. In 2002, I was admitted to Xinjiang Normal University for Uighur language study, after graduation, I passed the national graduate entrance examination and enrolled in Minzu University for Manchu language study, through three-year systematic research and study, I got my master degree for that in 2009. After that I went to the community of Sanjiazi village as a servant for Manchu language research and investigation for three years, during that time, I combined my Manchu language study with practice, and now I am proficient in Manchu language, I also found that Manchu language has become a kind of endangering language, many Manchu people themselves are not speaking their mother tongue. In 2013, I was admitted to Minzu University again as a PhD candidate of Linguistic Typology, in current project, I can make best use of some resources at the village as well as of the academic resources in colleges, libraries and research institutions in Beijing, I’m always aware of the endangerment of Manchu language, and will try my best to conduct this project so as to make the possible contribution to preservation and revitalization of Manchu language. I also will also make best use of the grant supplied by you to complete this project.

Rafael Nonato

I became a linguist out of fascination for weird languages. Nowadays I don’t think there are weird languages anymore, and I spend my academic time arguing that languages only seem weird if you don’t look at them the right way. I got my Bachelor’s and Master’s from Unicamp, in Brazil, and my PhD from MIT, in the US. I have been working on the documentation of Brazilian Indigenous languages since I was an undergraduate sophomore and I have become a specialist in Brazilian languages Bororo (topic of my Master’s thesis) and Kísêdjé (topic of my PhD thesis). Since 2008 I have been heading a long-term project for the documentation of the endangered oral genres of the Kísêdjé language.

Emilienne Ireland

Over the past three decades, Emilienne Ireland has spent a total of nearly two years residing among the Wauja, an Arawak-speaking people of Central Brazil, as well as the Mehíaknu, Ikpeng, and other historically connected groups. Her research has focused on political relations and local history, Wauja language and literature, and the profound impact of bilingual village schools and literacy on a formerly oral tradition. During this 33-year period, the Wauja have experienced immense change in their practices as a language community. In 1980, the Wauja had an exclusively oral tradition, and spoke only Wauja and other neighboring indigenous languages, with no Portuguese. Today, unlike their elders, young people are bilingual in Wauja and Portuguese, and have learned to read and write in their village schools. The Wauja also have seen a shift from a network of community-based redistributive barter economies dependent on fishing, hunting, and agriculture, to local economies increasingly dependent on cash derived from government salaries, entitlement programs, NGO grants, sales of handicrafts, and tourism. Current research interests are documenting the Wauja language, focusing on oral literature and historical narratives; contributing to a Wauja-English online dictionary on the open-source Wiktionary platform; and, in 2015, training a team of young Wauja to build their own Wauja-Portuguese Wiktionary site. Additional areas of research include: dynamics of hereditary hierarchy; networks of hereditary political alliances linking Xingu people of diverse linguistic groups; changing notions of local group identity and indigeneity; the role of digital media in defining individual and community identity; and digital media as a tool for cultural repatriation. Ireland holds an M. Phil in Anthropology from Yale University, and a B.A. in Anthropology from Columbia University. Currently a Research Collaborator at the Smithsonian Institu-
Meet a Community Member: the Livonians of Kolka, Latvia

By Maija Reriha and Artis Orbis

The Livonians are the ancient original people of Latvia who were living there many centuries before the Baltic tribes arrived. At the beginning of the 20th century in the northern part of Kurzeme (Latvia is divided into four main regions and Kurzeme is one of them) people still used the Livonian language in their social and domestic interaction. The relative balance changed over time. Unfortunately, historical processes were not favourable to the Livonians. There were no schools for the Livonians and children had to study in Latvian. Latvian and Livonian are very different languages. Livonian belongs to the Finno-Ugric linguistic group. It is similar to Estonian. Despite the unfavourable attitude towards the Livonians, their descendants still live here, in northern Kurzeme, around Kolka. However, the Livonian language is not used anymore in daily life, fortunately, there are some people who are strongly aware of their ethnic origin and feel they belong to the Livonians. The language is used in religious ceremonies on special occasions and is used in musical performances. A number of books are published in and about the language. According to estimates, around 40 people have level B1 or higher knowledge of the language of whom approximately half of Livonian origin. Optimistic estimates suggest that 210 people have A1 and A2 knowledge. (Source Livones.net)

There is a section of the Livonian cultural society with 51 members in Kolka. The members of the group are the descendants of the Livonians; they speak in Latvian. They have established the collection of the objects of Livonian domestic and cultural life which is constantly enriched by new acquisitions. Behind each of the domestic objects lies a story of an individual member of “Kuolka”. The members of “Kuolka” volunteer to show and explain these exhibits to tourists or anyone who is interested. They all work in shifts as volunteers. The interest in their exhibitions increases year by year. At the beginning of the cultural centre “Kuolka” in 1993, there were only a few dozen visitors but, now, it reaches about 2000.

The history of the Union of Livonians and Kolkas cultural section is as follows:

1923 - 2nd April, Foundation of the Livonian Union.
1998 – 24th November, Renewal of Livonian Union in Riga.
1989 – 18th July, foundation of the Livonian cultural group section in Kolka.
1993 – 2nd April, Opening of the information centre “Kuolka”.
2000 - the premises of the centre “Kuolka” were expanded.

3. Endangered Languages in the News

Are lost languages coming back?

By Jenny Scott, BBC News, 20 January 2015

English may be the mainstay language of Britain and its islands, but it’s far from the only tongue in town. But while languages like Welsh, Irish and Scottish Gaelic are fiercely protected, others are threatened.

“Vel oo geearre jough?” says Adrian Cain to his four-year-old son Orry who has stumbled into the kitchen in search of breakfast.

“Moghrey mie,” replies Orry. “Kys t’ou?”

To English-speakers, this family scene must sound as if it is being played out in a language from some far-flung island. But we are far closer to English shores than you might suppose. For Manx is the native tongue of the Isle of Man. The language is similar to Gaelic, says Mr Cain, who works at Culture Vannin, which promotes Manx culture. “It makes the Isle of Man what it is,” he says. “But the last native speakers died in the 1970s. By the 90s, just a few people had learned it.”

However, experts believe Manx is making a comeback. At the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, Orry’s school, you will find part of the reason behind the resurgence. Here, 70 children aged between four and 11 sit learning maths and poring over geography books, all in Manx. The school was set up after campaigners lobbied the Manx government.

After starting out with just nine speakers in 2001, the school has grown consistently. “Parents have different reasons for sending their children here,” said head teacher Julie Matthews, herself a Manx speaker.

“Some speak Manx themselves and want their children to learn it. Others think a second language makes you more flexible in your thinking. And some like our creative teaching.”

Nowadays, 1,800 people can speak Manx with varying degrees of ability. Crucially, most are young speakers.

GCSE and A Level equivalents can be taken in Manx and there is even a Manx translation of children’s book The Gruffalo.

“There’s been a real generational shift,” said Mr Cain.

In Cornwall, language campaigners look on with envy.

“The Isle of Man has its own government, whereas we have to rely on funding from Westminster,” said Loveday Jenkin from the Cornish Language Fellowship charity.
Last year, the campaign received £120,000, which will run out in April 2015. It is not clear whether it will receive any more. "It’s so difficult to get people in London to understand Cornish is a living, breathing language," said Mr Jenkin.

He believes there are only "a few hundred" fluent Cornish speakers left. At one stage Cornish was classed as "extinct" by UNESCO, but campaigners have kept it going.

Tony Hak runs Friday night Cornish classes in London. His 30 students are mainly Cornish ex-pats looking to stay in touch with their roots.

"Awareness is growing," says Mr Hak. "We have to turn people away," he said. "It’s definitely more popular. But Cornish still needs help."

Unlike Cornwall, the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey have governments on their doorsteps. For language champions, the challenge is to use the small army of native-speakers - generally aged over 60 - to enthuse the younger population.

The historical language of Jersey is Jèrriais - a French-like language derived from Norman. Tony Scott Warren from L’Office du Jèrriais - a language trust - remembers when Jèrriais was spoken across Jersey.

In 1986, there were 5,700 Jèrriais speakers but in 2001 that figure had dropped to 2,700.

"Most enthusiasts are in their 70s and 80s and are not going to become teachers," said Mr Scott Warren. In Guernsey, speakers of the native language Guernesiais number less than 500 but hopes are high it could be back in fashion.

A translation service, set up by the island’s Language Commission, has attracted a wave of requests for Guernesiais phrases for weddings, headstones and even tattoos.

"Language is very emotive and part of your identity," said Josephine Dowding, from the commission. The commission, set up in 2013, co-ordinates the island’s many Guernesiais groups - ranging from a dance group to a choir.

"There’s a good vibe around Guernesiais now," said Ms Dowding.

"In this vanilla-coloured world, it’s important people appreciate what’s on their doorstep - and that includes the quirky nature of indigenous languages."

But why is it so important to retain languages with - at best - a few thousand speakers when almost all Britons speak English?

"There are all sorts of reasons why we should stop smaller languages being engulfed by the big beasts," said Christopher Moseley, a University College London lecturer and the editor of the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger.

"Each language represents a different world of thought - centuries of collected wisdom."

Some languages, he believes, have disappeared - the island of Alderney’s, for example.

However, his latest report into the findings, for GoEuro, suggests the Manx revival could see it moved out of its "critically endangered" category within decades.

"It’s very heartening," he said. "No other European language has been turned around from such a dire position."

Sleeping beauties awake: Revivalistics, cross-fertilization and well-being

Professor Ghil’ad Zuckermann, Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages, The University of Adelaide, Australia

Writer Russell Hoban (1925-2011) described language as an ‘archaeological vehicle, full of the remnants of dead and living pasts, lost and buried civilizations and technologies.’

Linguicide (language killing) and glottophagy (language eating) have been in operation in Australia since the early colonial period. For example, Anthony Forster, a South-Australian financier and politician said in 1843: 'The natives would be sooner civilized if their language was extinct'.

Even Governor of South Australia George Grey, who was relatively pro-Aboriginal, remarked in his journal in 1841 that 'the ruder languages disappear successively, and the tongue of England alone is heard around'.

It is not surprising therefore that out of 330 known Aboriginal languages, today only 13 (4%) are alive and kicking, that is spoken natively, as a mother tongue, by the community children. Blatant statements of linguistic imperialism such as the ones made by Forster now seem to be less frequent, but the processes they describe are nonetheless still active, let alone if one considers the Stolen Generations between approximately 1909 and 1969.

There are around 7,000 languages spoken worldwide. But 96% of the world’s population speaks only 4% of the world’s languages. Linguistic diversity reflects many things beyond accidental historical splits. Languages are essential building blocks of community identity and authority.

However, with globalization, homogenization and Coca-colonization there will be more and more groups all over the world added to the forlorn club of the powerless lost-heritage peoples. Language reclamation will become increasingly relevant as people seek to recover their cultural autonomy, empower their spiritual and intellectual sovereignty, and improve their wellbeing and mental health.

‘Revivalistics’ is a new trans-disciplinary field of enquiry, currently being established at the University of Adelaide, and explored in the new edX MOOC Language Revival: Securing the Future of Endangered Languages (https://www.edx.org/course/language-revival-securing-future-adelaide-lang101x). It studies the universal constraints on the one hand, and the culturally-specific peculiarities on the other hand, occurring in linguistic reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration attempts across various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe, from the Promised Land (Revived Hebrew) to the ‘Lucky Country’.
Revivalistics combines scientific studies of native language acquisition and foreign language learning. After all, the reclamation of a sleeping beauty tongue is the most extreme case of foreign language learning. Revivalistics is far more than Revival Linguistics. It studies language revival from various other angles such as law, mental health, education, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, geography, politics, history, biology, evolution, genetics, genomics, colonization studies, missionary studies, media, technology, talknology, archaeology, meteorology, theatre, dance, music, and even architecture.

Establishing Revivalistics in Australia is turning Indigenous Australians into experts of language revival, who will be able to assist many others in linguistic need.

John Adams, the second President of the United States in (1797–1801) wrote to Abigail Adams in 1780: 'I must study Politics and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematics and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematics and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Music, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelain.'

The author, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann (Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide, Australia) will launch -- along with Dr Rob Amery -- the first MOOC on language revival on 28 July 2015. Further particulars:

https://www.edx.org/course/language-revival-securing-future-adelaidex-lang101x#.VRJF0_mUcsZ

Montana offers a boost to native language immersion programs

By Amy Martin, from the National Public Radio web-site, USA (www.npr.org), 2 May 2015

Many Native Americans who attended a recent powwow in Missoula, Montana, remember what it was like to be punished for speaking a tribal language. For about a century, starting in the 1870s, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs ran boarding schools for Native American children, removing them from their families and homes and separating them from their language and culture so they would "assimilate."

Carrie Iron Shirt’s father was one of those children. "My dad, being in the boarding school, they were taught not to talk their language," she says.

Iron Shirt, 37, says her father still has bad memories of the treatment he received for speaking his native Blackfeet at school. "He didn’t want us to go through that," she says. "So my generation missed out on the language."

Iron Shirt tried to make up for that loss by enrolling her own daughter, Jade, in a private Blackfeet language immersion school. Now 16, Jade can speak the language fluently with her grandparents, something for which she’s grateful.

"You learn about your culture more," she says. "And that’s more your culture, you know? 'Cause our culture is dying."

Thanks to a new Montana state bill, expected to be signed into law this week, more Native American kids will have the same opportunity. The bill subsidizes Native American language immersion programs in public schools. As tribes have reclaimed the right to educate their own children in recent years, native language instruction has been introduced in some Montana schools. But this is the first time the state will be supporting immersion programs — which provide instruction in an indigenous language for at least half the school day.

April Charlo was first exposed to her tribe’s Salish language in a seventh grade class. She’s now the executive director of the Nkwusm Salish Language School, serving preschool through eighth-grade students on the Flathead Reservation in northwestern Montana.

For Charlo, immersion programs aren’t just about preserving indigenous tongues. She believes they are also essential for closing the achievement gap — an important consideration in Montana, where the high school graduation rate for American Indian students is almost 20 percentage points lower than for students of any other race or ethnicity. "The language and culture and tradition and ceremonies, they’re interlocked, they’re interlinked," Charlo says. "So when a child is learning their language, it just goes right to that connection."

And that connection, Charlo emphasizes, is what helps kids succeed. "It’s just a confidence … I know my language, I know where I come from."

Under the bill, schools that are interested in creating immersion programs must apply to receive funding that will help compensate native language instructors.

The only other state that provides funding for native language immersion in public schools is Hawaii, which has one native language. In Montana, there are nine.

Jonathan Windy Boy, a Democratic state senator and a Chippewa Cree Indian, sponsored the immersion bill. "We’re investing in a population of this state that has been neglected for too long," he says. "Investing in those human resources, I think … is going to be the best investment that we can provide for all of Montana to be a better place to live in."

The state legislature capped that investment at $22,500 total per year — half of what Windy Boy originally proposed and only enough to provide partial support to a handful of programs.

But some of the bill’s opponents, including Republican State Senator Roger Webb, think the cost of immersion programs should be borne exclusively by tribes.

"I would rather see individuals, you know, learn Spanish or French or Chinese," Webb says. As for native language immersion, "If they really believe that that’s an issue, it could be remedied on a home base."

But Montana resident Roy Big Crane, a member of the Salish and Pend d’Oreille tribes, emphasizes that the state has a special responsibility to help revive native languages.

"It was through the policies of the government, the states, Christianity, public school systems, that helped almost eradi-
cate the languages,” he says. “So that circle might as well come back and the state might as well put some money in to help bring it back.”

Argentina and Paraguay hold first festival of indigenous-language music

From Argentina Indymedia web-site (www.argentina.indymedia.org) (EFE agency), 1 May 2015, translated by the Editor

From Friday [1 May] Argentina and Paraguay will hold the first festival of indigenous-language music, based in Asunción and the Argentine town of Formosa, on the Paraguayan border, the National Secretariat of Culture announced on Thursday.

The musicians Mardonio Carballo and Alonso Arreola will present Las Horas Perdidas (The Lost Hours). Pre-Colombian languages such as Qom, Wichi, Guarani and Nahuatl will be featured in a programme that brings together music, poetry and literature.

The event will start off in Formosa and end on Sunday in Asunción, coinciding with the end of the International Book Fair which has been going on in the Paraguayan capital since 23 April. The festival will commence with a conference about the publication and distribution of books in Latin American indigenous languages, with the participation of Ema Cuañeri, envoy of the Qom indigenous people, who will present her book Na Qom. The author Mirna Paulo will present the publication Una mirada diferente de quienes somos (A different view of who we are) and the digital book Wichi Tenkai, dedicated to the Wichi people.

Besides this, Las Horas Perdidas, presented by the musicians Mardonio Carballo and Alonso Arreola, comprises a book, CD and DVD with interpretations in Nahuatl. Brigido Bogado, poet of the Mbya Guarani people, will launch his latest work, a book of poems entitled Ayew’I, while the filmmaker Daniel Gerez will be presenting his documentary Salavinamanta Tikuspay (From Salavina for Everyone).

As a colophon there will be a concert in indigenous languages, with, apart from the artists already mentioned, the Paraguayan Victor Riveros will be performing in Guarani, which shares official status in Paraguay with Spanish.

Finally, the women from the Ava Guarani people who comprise the group Kuña Reko Yvoty will sing the kotyu, a traditional Guarani song.

The festival is the result of a bilateral plan between the Cultural Secretariat of Paraguay (SNC) and the Argentine Ministry of Culture, according to a press release from the SNC. Speakers of the Qom and Wichi indigenous languages inhabit the central and southern Chaco areas between Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia, along with the Ava Guarani, while the Mbya Guarani live in areas bordering Brazil.

Of the population of Argentina, 2.38% is indigenous, a figure which rises to 4% in Chaco province and 6.1% in Formosa, according to the latest census in 2010.

About twenty indigenous peoples live in Paraguay, making up 1.7% of the population, according to official figures.

Ten ways to boost tribal language programs

By Christina Rose, from the Indian Country Today web-site (www.indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com), 27 April 2015

The traditional arts of building canoes and fishing traps, making rabbit fur blankets, and pine nut picking are celebrated in the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California’s Training Program.

Through these activities, the tribe’s youngest children are not only learning their language, they are becoming cultural leaders in their communities.

Community participation is the biggest challenge in revitalizing tribal languages, and a recent podcast highlighted the successful efforts of two tribal language programs, The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and the Puyallup of Washington State.

Three speakers, Lisa Enos, Washoe, coordinator of the Washoe Language Program, and the Twulshooteed (Puyallup) instructor Amber Sterud-Hayward, Puyallup of Washington State, and Brittany Corpuz, Instructional Coach and a Grant Coordinator, brought insights from their programs, and offered nine ways to encourage language learning and cultural revival, with minimum funding.

Like so many other tribes, the Washoe are facing losing their original languages. Of 1,500 registered Washoe tribal members, there are only eight fluent speakers of the Washiw language, all of them over 70. For the Puyallup, there are only five certified Level One speakers among the 4,800 tribal members. Level One speakers are not fluent, but in the process of learning the language.

Funding

First things first—funding language programs can come from a variety of sources. A $487,279 grant from the Administration for Children and Families funded the language and culture program, while the Puyallup program is tribally funded.

Elders

Partnering with elders is a common solution for immersion schools and language nests, but getting the elders to the children can present challenges. The Washoe Language Program brings the children to the senior center once a month, and they all participate in cultural crafts and other activities. As an added benefit, “At the senior center, the children are exposed to other Native languages and dialects as well,” Enos said.

Cultural activities

Although many tribal programs provide food as an incentive to engage the community, Enos said the Washoe Tribe gets even more community involvement with hands-on cultural activi-
ties. All of the activities serve to connect the children to their culture while learning their language.

When the children and the elders made a rabbit fur blanket, “a buzz went through the community because it hadn’t been done in 50 years,” Enos said. “What our children are learning, they bring back and teach to the community.”

The children have made snowshoes and canoes, and one of the fathers helped the children make baskets. The grandparents are helping with the moccasins the children make. “One night, the kids were teaching their parents hand games, and the officer patrolling the area saw a lot of cars at Head Start. The next thing you know, our tribal officer sat down and played hand games with the kids, and that was exciting because they get to see the officials in a different light,” Enos said.

Community Involvement

According to Enos, the cultural activities in Head Start’s Language Nest restored excitement and enthusiasm within the community for history and traditions, but it took almost a year before the language project really took off. Written into their grant was the promise of hours of elder involvement and an involved tribal leadership, but it wasn’t immediately achieved.

Enos said the activities are igniting a passion in the community that they weren’t able to inspire with nightly classes for the adults. “We had sporadic involvement, but now it is really catching like wildfire,” Enos said. “What the children are learning in school and afterward has really flooded over into the families and the community.”

The high school youth now speak the Washoe language at basketball games, and the younger ones are using it in gym, which has inspired the adults. “It’s all natural. All the kids are asking how to say their names in Washoe. The more it is heard, the more involvement we get,” Enos said.

Books

Washoe tribal legends were incorporated in language based books and materials, and then coordinated with activities. Illustrations were done by tribal members, and elders helped translate the books. “We had a party and handed them out. There was a lot of excitement about it. The community got involved, tribal leadership came, and we had a book signing with four generations,” Enos said.

Handouts for parents

“We try not to limit what the kids are learning based on school activities,” Enos said. At meal times, students learn how to ask for different foods, and then handouts are taken home to parents. Vocabulary is separated into phonetic language and the handout challenges students and parents to use the words in a sentence. “They can see how words change in the first person, second person, like that. Parents and children are learning more at home because they are on the same page with what they are learning,” Enos said.

Curriculum development

The Puyallup Tribe found their way through trial and error. In the original 2007 program, simple phrases such as “I see a cat.” or “I see a bird” were utilized, but did not require conversation.

The program was updated in 2014, when new staff members Chris Duenas, media developer; Zalmai Zahir, Twulshootseed language consultant; and Hayward put forth new efforts that resulted in a program that modeled language use in daily life.

Hayward said the original use of simple phrases wouldn’t produce any speakers “because you are telling people what they should say.” They began asking tribal members what they wanted to say.

Hayward said language and lifestyle should be related. A school setting requires one sort of vocabulary, a work setting another, and at home, yet another. “Our curriculum has literally turned into exactly what people want to say. Some are good at hearing audio, some people want video to see how your mouth forms, some want it written down, and some want it phonetically. We just decided we had to give people whatever they needed to speak the language, and we saw a big change.”

Using Media

The Puyallup program saw a big increase in interest after the new media developer added additional language features to the Puyallup website and social media. “If you don’t have media developer, I strongly suggest you get one. It has allowed people outside the community to reach our language, which they are very hungry for,” she said.

Social media has played a huge part for the Puyallup language program. Videos made for tribal members range from simple to more advanced. “That has been a huge push within our community,” Hayward said.

Hayward said people were intimidated by subtitled videos produced in the beginning. “So we switched to making little Facebook videos that were partially in Twulshootseed (the Puyallup language) and partially in English. Now people from all over are looking at those, and people practice at home.”

Games

Hayward described what works in her tribe’s program for students with no prior language skills. “We have found playing Go Fish in the language worked. We made a sheet with numbers and face cards and translated ‘Do You Have’ and ‘No, I Don’t.’ into a phonetic sheet that anybody from kindergarten to 7-year-olds can play. We do it once a week at our tribal administration building, teachers do it at the tribal school, and for homework, the kids play at home with family members,” Hayward said. “Playing games is an incredible way to forget you are speaking another language, and we do not allow English in that game.”

Free Resources

Among Hayward’s top suggestions: make your language popular, visible, and accessible. Speak your language in your community with all community members. Utilize YouTube and Facebook and use the tribe’s website as much as possible. Include a phrase of the day or week with a short recording.
4. Language Technology

Open letter to the European Community

On 23 March 2015 the following letter was circulated among linguists, signed by Dr Georg Rehm of Metanet, Berlin, Germany.

Dear colleagues,

We would like to ask all of you for your support of an Open Letter to the EC, requesting to address the multilingual challenge in their forthcoming Strategy on the Digital Single Market (DSM).

The open letter is a response from the Language Technology community – including Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, Natural Language Processing, Data, Knowledge, Cognitive Science etc. – to the EC consultations for their DSM Strategy.

Unfortunately, there is a very severe danger that our field is completely vanishing from the EC priorities. It’s not part of the current strategic priorities of EC Vice President Andrus Ansip.

Language Technology has already been removed from the Horizon 2020 Work Programme for 2016/2017. We must act immediately! Otherwise our field won’t be recognised by the EC for the foreseeable future.

This is why we would like to ask you to join the initiators of the Open Letter which is online for signing at:

http://multilingualeurope.eu

If you agree with our appeal, please sign the letter and circulate this message to your colleagues and networks.

We have to collect as many signatures as possible by the beginning of next week. We will then inform all Commissioners about this letter. On Wednesday (March 25), VP Andrus Ansip will discuss the DSM priorities with his DSM Project Team:

http://europa.eu/newsroom/calendar/events/2015/03/25_digital.single_market.plans_en.htm

The next few days are our only chance to get their attention. Let’s use it!

Your support is very much needed! Please feel free to circulate this message in your networks.

Thank you very much for your support!

Best wishes,

Georg

5. Obituaries

Joshua A. Fishman (1926-2015)

A beloved teacher and influential scholar, Joshua A. Fishman passed away peacefully in his Bronx home, on Monday evening, March 1, 2015. He was 88 years old. Joshua A. Fishman leaves behind his devoted wife of over 60 years, Gella Schweid Fishman, three sons and daughters-in-law, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. But he also leaves behind thousands of students throughout the world who have learned much from him about sociology of language, the field he founded, and also about the possibility of being a generous and committed scholar to language minority communities. As he once said, his life was his work and his work was his life.

Joshua A. Fishman, nicknamed Shikl, was born in Philadelphia PA on July 18, 1926. Yiddish was the language of his childhood home, and his father regularly asked his sister, Rukhl, and him: “What did you do for Yiddish today?” The struggle for Yiddish in Jewish life was the impetus for his scholarly work. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with a Masters degree in 1947, he collaborated with his good friend, Max Weinreich, the doyen of Yiddish linguistics, on a translation of Weinreich’s history of Yiddish. And it was through Yiddish that he came to another one of his interests—that of bilingualism. In 1948 he received a prize from the YIVO Institute for Yiddish Research for a monograph on bilingualism. Yiddish and bilingualism were interests he developed throughout his scholarly life.

After earning a PhD in social psychology from Columbia University in 1953, Joshua Fishman worked as a researcher for the College Entrance Examination Board. This experience focused his interest on educational pursuits, which eventually led to another strand of his scholarly work — that on bilingual education. It was around this time that he taught what came to be the first sociology of language course at The City College of New York. In 1958, he was appointed associate professor of human relations and psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, and two years later, moved to Yeshiva University. At Yeshiva University he was professor of psychology and sociology, Dean of the Ferkauf Graduate School of Social Science and Humanities, Academic Vice President, and Distinguished University Research Professor of Social sciences. In 1988, he became Professor Emeritus and began to divide the year between New York and California where he became visiting professor of education and linguistics at Stanford University. In the course of his career, Fishman held visiting appointments at over a dozen universities in the USA, Israel, and the Philippines, and fellowships at the Center for Advanced study (Stanford), the East West Center (Hawaii) the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, and the Israel Institute for Advanced Study.

Throughout his long career Joshua A. Fishman has published close to one hundred books and over a thousand articles. He has not only been prolific, but his original and complex ideas have been very influential in the academy, as well as extremely useful to language minorities through the world. His first major study of sociology of language, Language Loyalty in the Unit-
ed States, was published in 1964. A year later, he published Yiddish in America. In 1968, he published the earliest major collection dealing with language policy and management, Language problems of developing nations. In the same year, he edited and published Readings in the sociology of language, a first attempt to define the new field.

By the 1970s Joshua Fishman’s scholarship was recognized throughout the world for its importance and its relevance about the language issues prevalent in society. In 1973, he founded, and has since edited, The International Journal of the Sociology of Language, a journal of excellent international reputation. Joshua Fishman has also edited a related book series published by Mouton, Contributions to the Sociology of Language (CSL), with over 200 titles. In both of these endeavors Fishman has encouraged young scholars to research, write and publish, supporting and contributing to the academic careers of many throughout the world, especially in developing countries. For years he replied daily to letters and e-mails from students from all over the world. His greatest motivation has been dialoguing with many about the use of language in society and answering student questions. The world was his classroom.

While conducting an impressive body of research, and being responsive to the many who asked for advice, Fishman traveled extensively, encouraging the activities of those seeking to preserve endangered languages. He will be remembered by the Māoris of New Zealand, the Catalans and Basques of Spain, the Navajo and other Native Americans, the speakers of Quechua and Aymara in South America, and many other minority language groups for his warmth and encouragement. For a quarter-century, he wrote a column on Yiddish sociolinguistics in every issue of the quarterly Aft Shen. He also wrote regularly on Yiddish and general sociolinguistic topics for the weekly Forverts. Together with his wife Gella Fishman, he established the extensive five-generational “Fishman Family Archives” at Stanford University library. In 2004 he received the prestigious UNESCO Linguapax Award in Barcelona, Spain.

Joshua Fishman’s prolific record of research and publication has continued until today, defining modern scholarship in bilingualism and multilingualism, bilingual and minority education, the relation of language and thought, the sociology and the social history of Yiddish, language policy and planning, language spread, language shift and maintenance, language and nationalism, language and ethnicity, post-imperial English, languages in New York, and ethnic, and national efforts to reverse language shift.

His scholarly work with minority groups and with others engaged in the struggle to preserve their languages, cultures, and traditions has been inspired by a deep and heartfelt compassion that is always sustained by the markedly human tone of his most objective scholarly writing.

6. Publications, Book Reviews

The Linguistic Atlas of French Polynesia


The joint work of Jean-Michel Charpentier (LACITO-CNRS; UPF) and Alexandre François (LACITO-CNRS; A.N.U.), this 2562-page volume documents the diversity of dialects and languages of this vast territory of the Pacific.

It is published jointly by the Université de la Polynésie française (UPF) and by deGruyter. The atlas is released in Open access, and can be freely downloaded by anyone.

The vast territory of French Polynesia is home to seven distinct Polynesian languages – Tahitian, Austral, Ra’iavae, Rapa, Mangarevan, Pa’umotu and Marquesan – which in turn show internal variation. The fruit of ten years of collaboration by two linguists of French CNRS, Jean-Michel Charpentier (†) and Alexandre François, the Linguistic Atlas of French Polynesia pays tribute to the rich linguistic landscape of the country by documenting thoroughly twenty different communalaets, in the form of 2253 maps.

The atlas combines data from earlier lexicographic publications, with primary data collected by J-M. Charpentier during numerous field trips to the country’s five archipelagoes. Several languages (particularly Austral, Ra’iavae, Rapa) are here documented in depth for the first time.

Organised by topics (body, life, individual and society, culture and technology, flora and fauna), these lexical maps are supplemented by explanatory notes, as well as 200 pages of indexes in French, English, Tahitian. Text chapters in French and English present the social profile and the historical dynamics of the territory’s languages, which are all endangered to various extents. Published in open access, this multilingual and comparative atlas provides an essential reference to scholars and teachers alike, as well as to a broader audience keen to explore and preserve the linguistic heritage of the Pacific region.

The volume was officially launched by A. François at the Université de la Polynésie française, in Tahiti, on 26 February 2015.

AlexFrançois

Upper Perené Arawak Narratives of History, Landscape & Ritual

By Elena Mihas. Published by University of Nebraska Press, December 2014. 416 pp., hardback, price £41.00. Illustrated with 26 photographs, 18 illustrations, 3 maps. ISBN 9780803245372
Books like this are a feast for linguists and anthropologists alike, and are all too rare. Elena Mihas, a postdoctoral associate in anthropological linguistics at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia (and a past recipient of the FEL grant bounty, if we want to declare an interest) has made a detailed study of the oral tradition of the Ashéninka people of eastern Peru. The main body of the book consists of a set of oral narratives on recurring themes of cultural importance to the speakers, transcribed into English. The translation is not interlinear or literal glosses, but rather a sequential rendering in grammatical English of the numbered sentences. An intriguing challenge to those with an interest in the structure of the language.

This principally oral language is clearly the vehicle of an eloquent tradition of storytelling, and the rhetorical devices used in the narratives – copied down verbatim – are intriguing in themselves. This book can be appreciated on many levels – even aesthetically, with its fine typography and colourful cover with a motif from Ashéninka Arawak embroidery – and deserves an audience wider than specialist anthropologists and linguists. The storytelling alone provides a unique insight into a world that will be unfamiliar to most English speakers.

A comprehensive Introduction presents the individual narrators and their personal histories and kinship relations. This is followed by a chapter on the Arawak concepts of history – a necessary background to the narratives presented here. The greatest advantage of a book like this is its integrated approach to culture and language, which gives the reader a true appreciation of the mental universe inhabited by these speakers of a threatened, but defiant, language of Peru.

The book is published as part of the Recovering Languages and Literacies of the Americas initiative, with funding from the Mellon Foundation.

Christopher Moseley

7. Places to go on the Web

New Endangered Languages Project website

Endangered Languages Project website redesigned to be more accessible and engaging. Published on Wednesday, 22 April 2015 17:18

Written by Endangered Languages Project Media Release. Source: nativetimes.com

Brentwood Bay, B.C. – The Endangered Languages Project is launching a new website today (www.endangeredlanguages.com) to improve access to information and resources on endangered languages for a global audience of Indigenous language speakers and language experts.

“Our goal is to create a collaborative online space where the world’s languages have a voice and where people of all audiences can share language information, resources and connect with one another,” says Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of the First Peoples’ Cultural Council and Chair of the Endangered Languages Project Governance Council.

New website features let users browse resources by category, tag (or topic), format and most viewed. Categories include language education, language revitalization, language and technology, and more. In addition, a new process for submitting materials will make it easier to find a wide range of resources concerning the world’s endangered languages.

“In response to user feedback, our team of global language experts and designers has developed an improved website that will be a more interactive and accessible resource,” says Verónica Grondona, Catalogue of Endangered Languages Manager at Eastern Michigan University. “For example, the website will be available in five additional languages later this spring, making it available to more user communities.”

The Endangered Languages Project is a collaborative initiative designed to facilitate the documentation and revitalization of at-risk languages around the world. Languages included on the website and the information displayed about them are provided by the Catalogue of Endangered Languages (ELCat), a project by the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and Eastern Michigan University, which aims to have the most up-to-date and accurate data about the endangered languages of the world. Language communities and speakers can play an active role in putting their languages online by submitting resources in the form of text, audio, links, images or video files.

The Endangered Languages Project website URL:


8. Forthcoming events

Languages of Indigenous Australia


It is estimated that in the late 18th century there were about 350 languages spoken on mainland Australia. At the start of the 21st century, fewer than 150 indigenous languages remain in use, and almost all are highly endangered. Peter K. Austin, SOAS, examines whether indigenous Australian languages have elements in common, and how concepts of ‘country’ and ‘Dreamtime’ are represented in the languages, songs and oral literature of the continent. Sign interpreted.

Fifth Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment

The Fifth Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment will take place on Friday July 31st 2015 at the Alison Richard Building, Sidgwick Site, University of Cambridge and Peterhouse.

The theme will be:
Language Endangerment and the Speaker.

Alternative identities, new speech communities and changing linguistic norms.

Ensuring an increase in speaker numbers is a crucial part of the successful revitalisation of an endangered language. These efforts often target schoolchildren, in the hope of re-establishing communication between generations in the endangered language, and other age-groups, who identify with the cultural context of the endangered language but who may have been denied the opportunity of acquiring it via inter-generational transmission. The recruitment of ‘new’ speakers can therefore often have a marked effect on the existing endangered language speech community in terms of its social make-up, its identity and its language practices.

This conference invites papers that reflect on these issues:

To what extent should reversing language shift incorporate identity planning?

How do the actors of revitalization persuade members of the ‘dominant’ speech community that their current identity would be enhanced by its repackaging to include the endangered language?

How successful has formal education actually been in both increasing speaker numbers and, crucially, in transmitting the endangered language in an effective way?

Do ‘new’ speakers use the endangered languages in different ways from ‘traditional’ speakers and to what extent do these two groups in fact interact with each other?

Do the linguistic norms and practices of ‘new’ speakers vary from those of the ‘traditional’ speakers?

Does the speech of ‘new’ speakers reveal evidence of innovative linguistic features?

For further details, please see the conference website: http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/news/fifth-cambridge-conference-language-endangerment

A Cornish Requiem

A Cornish Requiem is a new collaborative choral work for professional, amateur and community choirs, baritone solo, organ and brass quintet, being developed by The Language and Music Network composer Jamie Brown and celebrated Cornish poet Pol Hodge with invaluable support from The Cornish Language Partnership. This project has been made possible by a generous commission from The Voices of London Festival, at which the work will be premiered on Saturday, 27 June 2015 at St. James’ Church, Sussex Gardens.

Jamie’s strong family links to Cornwall and fascination with sociolinguistics combined to plant the first seeds of A Cornish Requiem, and a generous commission from Festival has allowed this ambitious work to blossom.

Cornish was widely spoken throughout Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly until the pressure of English language began to erode its use during the Reformation in the 16th century. By the early 17th century, the only Cornish speakers were to be found west of Truro, and even these had learnt English as well. By the 19th century, Cornish had died as a spoken community language – but the 20th century saw a revival of the language, as the combination of strong regional support, academic interest and political will led to the adoption of a Standard Written Form. Today, Cornish is classed as a living language, used across the county, and the first bilingual English–Cornish speakers for centuries are growing up learning the language at home and at school.

This is in stark contrast to Latin – a language with a much stronger history and wider usage that is heard on a daily basis throughout much of the world, but which is almost completely dead in terms of conversational use. In this sense, Cornish is more alive, more vibrant and more creative – it has successfully risen from the dead to live again.

Hence A Cornish Requiem – celebrating the triumph of a dead language while commemorating the proud history of Cornwall and the elements, landscape and folklore that built a culture and a language. The piece opens with the performance of a traditional Latin Requiem somewhere in Cornwall, but very soon the elements – sea waves crashing on the rocks, howling winds and dramatic sky – drown out the Latin and a second choir is heard singing Pol Hodge’s evocative new Cornish text ‘Merrans ha Remembrans’ (Death and Remembrance), honouring all the giants, saints, kings and other protagonists of Cornish folklore. The Latin attempts to compete but is soon overwhelmed completely, although the Latin choir join in the uplifting final movement ‘Remembrans’.

You can also read an interview with Jamie Brown about A Cornish Requiem at the Voices of London Festival website: www.voicesoflondonfestival.com

9. FEL Aims and Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More information about the Foundation, and its specific projects, and how you can join, can be found at www.ogmios.org