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If you’ve got this far, you’d be awfully unobservant to have missed that Ogmios is sporting an exciting new design.

As a freshly sworn-in editor, it’s no secret that one’s first port of call is often a visual overhaul. But a new look is not all we’ve achieved over the last few months.

As a team, the Foundation for Endangered Languages’ Executive Committee has put in a great deal of hard work to reimagining Ogmios as a print newsletter, and ensuring it’s as useful, and engaging, a text as possible for both armchair linguists and academics working in the field alike. I do hope the sentiment is largely that we’ve fulfilled this objective.

As you flick – or scroll – through the newsletter, you’ll notice that we’ve put a greater focus on original content than ever before, having run several interviews with endangered language specialists in this issue.

I was especially excited by the first-hand account we received from Lauren Gawne, co-host of the Lingthusiasm podcast, founder of generalist linguistics website Superlinguo, and David Myers Research Fellow at La Trobe University – on her specialist research in Tibeto-Burman languages.

At the helm of this illustrious newsletter, I will be seeking out even more original content with big names in the field in subsequent issues, and it is my promise to you, the readership, that we will seek to publish as many unique opinions about language revitalisation and documentation as is possible.

You’ll also notice that some of our regular sections have been stripped away – these will be re-inserted in time, and, of course, I’m always open to suggestions for new editorial sections.

I feel it’s relevant to offer our loyal readers some context about my affiliation with the academic field of endangered languages, so as to put your minds to rest that Ogmios is in safe hands.

As a magazine editor, I’ve worked in a variety of contexts, but, like many journalists, my origins were in linguistics, rather than the many commercial subjects about which I have written.

However, my time as a business editor has been extremely rewarding in allowing me to explore avenues that might make an impact in helping people stand up to globalisation and preserve the languages that contribute to the construction of identities distinct from the world’s dominant cultures.

I’m sure that – if you’re a long-time subscriber – you’re also curious about what Christopher Moseley, the newsletter’s dedicated editor for many years, is now doing.

While Chris may have taken a backseat in the publication of Ogmios, this is because his role at the Foundation for Endangered Languages is taking a new direction that will allow us to increase our worldwide impact as a charitable organisation.

Having been fortunate enough to have exposure to many cultures in my formative years, I have seen first-hand how the use of individual languages and dialects is bound up with cultural transmission, and helping communities remember what makes them unique. And while it’s a terrible shame that languages do regularly go out of service due to natural causes, this is an especially burning issue in populations whose languages have been seized by displacement or even use of violent force. My involvement with Ogmios is a personal first step towards making a tangible difference to the cause.

You can read more about the important work that he is carrying out to help us grow our reach on page 2. And, under his careful tutelage over the last year, I have been well-prepared for the task of influencing, and inspiring, linguists – passive and active – in using their skills to make a difference in this underserved field.

Hayley E. Ferguson
Editor, Ogmios
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Usually when human rights issues appear in the media, language is not the focus of the apparent injustice.

Language has to take a back seat when other, more immediate issues of human survival are at stake. A mother tongue seems a luxury when food, clothing, security and shelter can’t be provided.

Cases of dying for the sake of one’s language are quite rare when compared with other causes that people have perished for. These more immediate needs, for example, are the focus of most of the radio and other media appeals on behalf of disadvantaged people around the world.

But deprivation of the right to use one’s mother tongue is pernicious in the longer term. And sometimes the deprivation is deep-rooted and institutional, while in other cases it might be a temporary expedient of war or conflict.

For example, in the conflicts in the nation-states of Iraq and Syria, the Kurds, who have not had a state of their own, have fared variously as regards the right to use their language. Would it be right for FEL to intervene in a case like that? Probably not, as the administration to which we should address ourselves wouldn’t be clear.

What I suggest that FEL can do is to monitor the language policies of multilingual states. When a new government comes to power in one of them, we could assess whether factional interests in the government favour one language over another.

We could look particularly at the provision of mother-tongue education in them – bearing in mind that in really multilingual states, where there are many endangered languages, the government is strapped for cash.

We can at least try to ensure that the situation doesn’t deteriorate for those ethnic groups that are in a weak political position, low in the pecking order and far from the centre of power. And to ensure that such populations are the victims of real political oppression, rather than benign neglect.

Lately I’ve been inspired to want FEL, or some responsible linguistic organization, to speak out on behalf of the Rohingya Muslims in Burma, who have been forced to flee en masse into Bangladesh.

Now of course they are not being persecuted for their language, which is only incidental to this issue (at least as far as media reports are concerned), but rather for their religion and ethnicity.

But the Arakanese language is the mother tongue of the vast majority of them – Arakan and Rohingya are almost synonyms. Arakanese might not be an endangered language were it not for this persecution; now it is becoming one.

So doesn’t it behove FEL to speak out – who else will if we don’t? – to defend their linguistic rights? A carefully worded and well-researched press release might put further pressure on the Burmese government to take action.

It doesn’t matter in the least whether the majority of Burmese people are also prejudiced against the Rohingya; their government is supposed to lead, not follow, public opinion.

But that is just one salient instance at the present moment. I would like to see our charity set up and ready to ask governments everywhere to step up and be accountable for their linguistic policies.

However, they need to be measured against some impartial and unchanging
minimum standard. International covenants on linguistic rights would be the strongest measure.

The closest that comes to our purposes and interests is probably the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the year of their rights is also coming up in 2019). It is good to have that to fall back on – but what is to stop us from drawing up a Code of Practice of our own?

It would enhance our prestige as an organization, and it would be our own guideline to stepping in to intervene.

Our intervention, I suggest, would be in the form of press releases, distributed to major press and broadcasting organizations, as well, of course, as the government and relevant ministries of the target country.

Interventions will require careful research, so we can back our claims, but they also require some expertise on the countries in question and on language policy generally.

We have that expertise among our membership, and I’d like to appeal here in the pages of Ogmios for members to come forward and help us formulate the code.

I should add that I only floated this idea publicly at the AGM of the Foundation in Alcanena, and that it hasn’t yet been discussed in great detail by the Committee.

This is an attempt to get our membership involved in our future discussions about a new direction for the FEL’s activities. Our own publicity leaflet says that the Foundation exists to:

- Raise awareness of endangered languages
- Support their use in the home, in education, in the media and in social, cultural and economic life
- Monitor linguistic policies and to seek to influence appropriate authorities

On that last point I rest my case.
Lauren Gawne on working with Syuba communities

By Hayley Ferguson

Lauren Gawne – co-host of the Lingthusiasm podcast, founder of generalist linguistics website Superlinguo, and David Myers Research Fellow at La Trobe University – on her specialist research in Tibeto-Burman languages

What first sparked your interest in endangered languages?

I have always been interested in language, and so when a friend suggested that I join her for Introduction to Linguistics in my first semester of an undergraduate arts degree, it sounded like a great way to round out my timetable. Before the semester was over, I was completely hooked, and ended up majoring in a subject I had not even heard of when I enrolled. The linguistics program at The University of Melbourne has a strong focus on Australian languages, in both teaching and research. For me, learning about linguistics and learning about the diversity of the world’s languages are inseparable.

I would say that my interest is in this diversity of human languages, and how speakers use them. The fact that so many of the world’s languages are endangered is not an inherent fact about these languages, or the number of speakers that they have; community-scale languages and local multilingualism has been the norm for so much of humanity across history.

Tell me about the work you’ve done with digital maps! How can map-making projects be helpful to language documentation, preservation and regeneration?

All maps are made to tell a particular story. I couldn’t find any maps that told the stories of the communities that I work with, so in the end I had to make them myself. Luckily, there are a number of platforms for making really beautiful digital maps. I’ve run workshops on TileMill and Carto, both of which use CartoCSS, a mapping code built on CSS. People who use R in their research have told me they like using the packages available in R for mapping.

I think it’s important that we make maps that tell the stories of the world’s languages. I also think it’s important that the maps that we make are as beautiful as the maps that tell the stories of dominant languages. Digital maps are great because they can tell complex and nuanced stories, and can incorporate images, sounds links to other information.

“I think it’s important that we make maps that tell the stories of the world’s languages.”

Why did you choose to focus your academic efforts on Yolmo and Syuba, specifically?

I was hired as a PhD student on a larger Australian Research Council grant to look at how speakers of a Tibeto-Burman language use evidentiality in conversation. Evidentiality is the encoding of source of knowledge in grammar. Although we don’t see much of it in Indo-European or other dominant languages, it is attested in many Amazonian, Papuan and Tibeto-Burman languages.

In exploring the literature, I came across Kagate, which was described in only two small publications from the 1970s, but appeared to have an interesting system of evidentiality. I contacted one of the original researchers, who put me in touch with one of the Kagate speakers from Ramechhap district she originally worked with. In the interim I also went to Kathmandu, and a friend there said he knew someone who spoke Kagate. This was quite surprising, given that earlier reports said there were probably only around a thousand speakers!

I met Asa, the woman my friend knew, and after a couple of sessions working with her it was clear that the language she spoke was not dissimilar to what was in those earlier publications – however she was not from Ramechhap, but Lamjung! There are five villages in Lamjung district, near the start of the Annapurna Circuit, that speak a variety of Yolmo, which is very similar to Kagate. Speakers of this dialect were also called Kagate at some point in history, and it’s likely that they migrated from the main Yolmo areas of the Helambu and Melamchi valleys around the same time. My PhD thesis then became the first description of the Lamjung variety of Yolmo.

Meanwhile I had got to know the members of the Kagate community. They were keen to develop an orthography and literacy...
materials in their language. This was part of a larger community change that saw them begin to use their preferred language name Syuba in discussion with outsiders, rather than the somewhat pejorative Nepali term Kagate. Both are from the word for ‘paper’ in the respective languages, in reference to their historical labor as papermakers for the Tibetan and Nepali market.

I’ve worked with Syuba speakers over the last few years to document traditional stories, songs and oral histories. We also recorded the stories of over 30 people who experienced the earthquakes of April and May 2015. There were few fatalities in Ramechhap, but many people’s houses were destroyed or damaged.

Although it was linguistic curiosity that lead me to work on these languages, I now enjoy that the work that I do is also useful for their own language maintenance goals. I have now been around for long enough that it’s also about working on mutually-interesting projects with people who are my friends.

**What sort of work have you done in Tibeto-Burman languages?**

The focus of my work with Lamjung Yolmo was evidentiality and related features of grammar, like reported speech and questions. I also published a sketch grammar and a dictionary of Lamjung Yolmo. My work on Syuba has focused on developing the corpus, and now I’m looking at some parts of the grammar as well as the gestures people use when they speak.

I love the opportunity to work with other linguists and researchers to learn new things. I’ve teamed up with Amos Too to figure out the tone systems of Yolmo and Syuba, and then I teamed up with Suzy Styles at NTU in Singapore to see how speakers perceive those tones.

While I worked in Singapore I also teamed up with staff in the School of Art, Design and Media to work with students on the development of picture books for Syuba and Yolmo. Drawing on the corpus of traditional stories, and the images from my fieldwork, the students created illustrated picture books. English and Nepali versions are available for a general audience and these fund the printing of Syuba and Yolmo versions for the local communities.

I have also worked with other researchers on archiving materials in Syuba and related languages. I teamed up with the Mother Tongue Centre Nepal to archive their 2013 documentation of Syuba. This organisation trained Syuba speakers to record and transcribe audio, and they collected more than 25 hours of materials in less than a week!
Those materials were used by the MTCN and Syuba speakers in the development of an orthography and a dictionary in 2014 and 2015. I've also helped archive recordings from Langang, and the Yolmo variety spoken in Melamchi. The most meaningful archive work I did was working with Monika Hohelig last year to digitise and archive those original recordings from the 1970s that were the basis of the first work on Syuba.

It was profoundly gratifying to return to the documentation, and the researcher, behind those original 1970s publications, which started my journey into this part of the world.

Tell me about gesture in Syuba! How does gesture relate to speech more generally?

If you focus only on what people say, and not how they gesture, you miss out on so much of what's happening in human communication.

We have not yet come across a linguistic or cultural group that do not have gestures accompanying speech, even with signed languages there are features of communication that are more gestural than linguistic.

While co-speech gesture is a commonality of human communication, the specifics of gesture show cultural and linguistic variation. Gesture can give us insight into features of cognition or language that aren't immediately apparent in the grammatical choices people make.

At the moment, I'm looking at features of gesture that Syuba speakers use when they're asking questions, and when using grammatical negation.

With questions, Syuba speakers will often twist their forearm and hand outwards, leaving the thumb and index finger extended. This gesture is found across the Indian subcontinent, it's even been grammaticalised into Indo-Pakistani sign language.

We have very little idea of how widespread it is. For gestures with negation, when people use words like 'nothing' or 'no one', they often accompany them with a quick flick of their hands down and away.

Cross-cultural work on gesture shows that negation is often linked to 'away' movements, but this particular function had not yet been attested. What all of this work shows is that we need to do a better job of documenting the world's grammatical diversity, as well as its linguistic diversity. It's for this reason I always encourage colleagues to take a video camera on documentation projects!

What do you think is most important in language documentation? How do you ensure you're documenting the components of a language that are important to the community in question?

The most important things I've learnt to do for any documentation project are talk to people and plan.

I try and spend as much time as possible talking to people about what they think they might want documented, suggest what has worked in my experience, and try and reach a consensus on what would be of interest to members of the community, and useful in other ways too.

Sometimes it is a challenge to balance the aims of a particular academic research project with the needs of community language use, particular with the reality that so much work with endangered languages has to fit within an academic research project to be funded, but that's all part of the negotiation process.

Sometimes I'll have some experiment or elicitation data that I will be aiming to collect, but my main priority is that the majority data collected is as useful to Syuba speakers as it is to me. For the documentation of Syuba, I had great success training a few of the young men to use the recording equipment, and then let them drive the documentation effort, particularly when it came to the earthquake stories.

I also spend a lot of time talking to colleagues about how they work, what equipment or processes have worked for them, and how they manage different situations. I also talk to archives, policy makers and researchers from related disciplines, like anthropology, to see how we can do better.

In language documentation we don't have a great tradition of sharing our research methods, in a survey I did with Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Barbara Kelly and Tyler Heston, we looked at 100 descriptive grammars, and found that many did not include discussion of basic methods, like recording equipment used, time spent on documentation or archiving of data.

We know that people are doing this amazing and thoughtful work, but it isn't being talked about. Sharing how we do documentation work helps everyone build good practice.
Aboriginal singing practices and culture

James Wafer, co-editor of *Recirculating Songs: Revitalising the singing practices of Indigenous Australia*, sat down to discuss the issue of ancestral indigenous singing practices in Australia, and its association with cultural revitalisation, with the Ogmios readership.

Ancestral indigenous singing practices are at risk of extinction in many parts of Australia – the book investigates the strategies currently being implemented to reverse this damage. Many of its contributors are linguists as well as ethnomusicologists, and have a strong interest in language revitalisation.

**Give us some context for how ancestral indigenous singing practices are bound up with Aboriginal culture and language. What piqued your interest in this issue?**

The idea that prompted me to propose the book to my co-authors originally came from Carlo Severi’s work on “mnemotechnical anthropology”.

It has been slowly dawning on those of us who work with Australian languages that Aboriginal songs function as mnemonic devices for memorising placenames and/or their associated networks of stories, geographical features and people.

In other words, they contain both the organising principles of the Aboriginal knowledge base and the medium through which that knowledge base is accessed and activated in practice.

**How does the book contribute towards preservation of ancestral singing practices?**

In the past, those of us who work in relevant scholarly fields (in particular, Aboriginal studies, ethnomusicology, anthropology and linguistics) have tended to follow the Boasian principle of collecting and analysing songs and related cultural data as artefacts (texts, images, recordings).

But if these representative fragments are not to become just museum pieces, the present situation requires more than this.

We also need to recognise the importance of the practices that ensure the active passing on of the “sonic keys” that open the cultural storehouse.

Without the transmission of these practices, the knowledge of how to “animate” this body of information is at risk of being lost to the rising generation of Aboriginal people, and could cease to play a constitutive role in their contemporary lived reality.

**How broad a range of geographical locations does the book cover?**

The contributors to the book have worked in a variety of locations that cover a wide geographical spread. Clint’s chapter, for example, is focused on south-western Australia, and there are a number of other contributors who have written about similar situations south of the Tropic of Capricorn.

But the book also includes contributions from authors who have worked in the north and centre, in places where the song traditions have not suffered the same level of disruption.

**Where do you see your research going next?**

The next step could well be to devote some attention to the possibility of cultural exchanges between those communities that have maintained a fairly unbroken continuity of singing practices and those where song revitalisation projects are based largely on archival material.

The book is available for review by any readers who might wish to contribute to the upcoming issue. Write to hayley@ogmios.org to register your interest.
Focus on Faroese

Faroese, the official language of the Faroe Islands, is spoken by between 60-80 thousand individuals worldwide; reports on the exact number of speakers are conflicting.

Aside from its official status in the Faroe Islands, it is also a recognised as a minority in Denmark – with 25,000 speakers – and is used by an additional 5,000 in Iceland.

It is classed as vulnerable, though many Faroese speakers, and the Faroese government, are reported to be prioritising its preservation in recent decades, following the establishment of the Language Committee of the Faroe Islands in 1985.

Faroese is a Germanic language which is descended from Old Norse and is one of the smallest of the Germanic languages.

Faroese is similar in grammar to Icelandic and Old Norse, but closer in pronunciation to Norwegian. In the twentieth century Faroese became the official language and, because the Faroe Islands are a self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark, Danish is taught in Faroese schools.

The first recorded settlers of the Faroe Islands were Irish monks (papar), so it is possible to assume, that one of the first languages in the islands was some form of Old Irish. Neighbouring Shetland was inhabited from the Stone Age, and was Pictish speaking when the Norse arrived.

Written Faroese (grammar and vocabulary) is most similar to Icelandic and to their ancestor Old Norse, though the spoken language is closer to Norwegian dialects of Western Norway. Faroese is the first official language of the island while Danish, the second, is taught in schools and can be used by the Faroese government in public relations.

Interestingly, Faroese language policy provides for the active creation of new terms in Faroese suitable for modern life.

Klaksvík, on the island of Borðoy, is the Faroe Islands’ second-largest town.
Faroe volunteers run online translation service

With a growing tourism market, some Faroe Islanders wish to help visitors who would like learn a few phrases in Faroese.

“Faroe Islands Translate” will provide a free online service for those visiting the islands or anyone around the world curious to learn a little of the language.

By visiting the project’s website, anyone can write a word or phrase that they would like to be translated from their language into Faroese. The text is immediately forwarded to Faroese volunteers who will open the video camera function on their mobile phone and record a video of the translation. This is then uploaded to the site to be viewed by the person who requested it.

Each video is also preserved in a database so that, if the same word or phrase is requested again, the stored translation will automatically be shown.

The Faroese volunteer who translates is picked at random. Everyone who speaks Faroese can help translate and local people have been encouraged to get involved in the campaign.

All translations are reviewed to make sure that they are appropriate.

Faro Islands Translate Project Manager, Levi Hanssen explains why the islanders took matters into their own hands,

“Whilst most Faroese people speak good English, we have a beautiful language of our own that we would love to share with those who visit, and with the wider world in general.

When travelling in most countries, tourists can use Google Translate to help them to communicate with local people and to feel as if they are a true part of the destination that they’re visiting. Sadly, in the Faroe Islands, this isn’t currently possible – and we want to change that.

“We’re taking matters into our own hands and enlisting a whole host of local Faroese people to allow us to help those who want to learn a little Faroese.

“In doing so, we will also build up a video database that visually and audibly logs the Faroese language, something that’s never been done before. Our dream is to have Google Translate but, in the meantime, we will have our self-made Faroe Islands Translate.

Lisa, one local person who volunteered to help. A student by day, Lisa will be on hand to help translate words and phrases sent in by people all around the world. Lisa’s favourite Faroese phrase is “um tær ikki dámar veðrið, bíða so bara í 5 minuttir” which means “if you don’t like the weather, just wait five minutes”.

Find out more by visiting the project website at: www.faroeislandstranslate.com

Bilingual Faroese-English publication has home at its heart

Award-winning Faroese author Sissal Kampman recently published the first-ever bilingual Faroese–English publication of a work of Faroese literature: Darkening/Myrking: Poems in Faroese.

The concept of home is at the heart of its tale of love and longing, finding a place in people and time in a world of contrasts – looming mountains and wide horizons, outfields and streetlights, island isolation and urban anonymity.”

Kampmann earned her MA in Nordic Literature and Modern Culture from the University of Copenhagen. Since her debut in 2011 with the poetry collection Ravnar á ljóðleysum flög – Yrkingar úr uppgongdini (Ravens in silent flights – Poems from the Stairway) she has released another four poetry collections which all circle around the theme “home”; home as a physical, emotional and spiritual place, home as a residence in this world and as a means of finding peace in a world of conflict. She won the Klaus Ribbjerg Debutant Prize for poetry in 2012. Darkening/Myrking is her sixth collection of poems.

The book was translated into English by Marita Thomsen.

Paperback: 107 pages
Publisher: Francis Boutle Publishers
ISBN-10: 0995747334
Following its most recent publication, we spoke to Alessandro Michelucci about La causa dei popoli (The cause of the peoples), an Italian-language e-journal that covers indigenous issues.

An Italian journalist-translator based in Florence, Michelucci has translated several books on indigenous and minority issues. He is the founder of the Documentation Centre on Threatened Peoples, the only Italian public library devoted to indigenous peoples, minorities and stateless nations. The journal’s upcoming issue, dealing with Canada’s 150th anniversary, will also touch on the work of the Foundation for Endangered Languages.

What is the journal’s background?

Our journal is not a new one. In 2001, we first launched it as a sequel to the Italian edition of Pogrom (1994-1996), the print magazine published by the German-based Society for Threatened Peoples. Our association was born as the Italian branch of it, but we severed this link in 2000 due to different viewpoints on the invasion of Serbia. The journal went on line and was renamed La causa dei popoli (The cause of peoples). It had two short series, one in 2001 and another in 2005, totalling four issues. The current series started in 2016 with a double issue on Turkey’s minorities; the second issue was devoted to some genocides predating the Shoah; the third deals with Biafra. This series will last long!

What need does it fulfil in the field?

There is no such publication in Italy. Minority and indigenous issues appear in the news from time to time, but they use to be dealt confusedly. For instance, even terms such as autonomy and independence are often mistaken for each other. This prevents people from understanding crucial issues.

Who are the core audience, and the writers involved in the journal’s production?

It is not easy to say, but I think that readers are scholars, students and ordinary people who need to have a clear idea of such issues. Also, we are contacted by people writing theses and dissertations and organise public events. The writers are mainly academics and journalists. We contact the former depending on the topics we want to deal with. Sometimes we translate foreign articles.

Is the subject matter generalised, or regionally-specific?

We try to cover all parts of the world. We also devote a regular room to cinema and comics, as we think they play a leading role in shaping and showing indigenous/minority identities.

Tell us about some of the most interesting case studies in the most recent issue!

The next issue is mainly devoted to Canada’s 150 anniversary, with articles on the three indigenous peoples (Indians, Inuit and Métis). But we are already working on the following one, dealing with the recent developments of Corsican autonomism.

You can read the most recent issue on issuu at www.issuu.com/lacausadeipopoli. More information about the Documentation Centre.

Fall School on Documentary Linguistics in the MENA region

A one week fall school on theory and methods in modern language documentation focusing on the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) will be held at the Zentrum fuer Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Berlin 10-17 October 2018.

As part of its Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, the school will provide training in theory and methods of modern language documentation to students and scholars who are working on endangered languages and are living in the MENA region.

There are 25 places available and all costs will be covered by the EDLP.

Topics to be covered include:

- introduction to documentary linguistics
- the MENA context
- language use and multimodality
- semantics and lexicography
- ethnography
- recording techniques
- data collection methods

To be eligible, applicants must fulfil all of the criteria below:

- reside and study/work in a MENA region country.
- minimum of BA or its equivalent involving linguistic training.
- some fieldwork experience or have concrete plans for doing documentation work on an endangered language spoken in the MENA region
- be committed to and have a plan for transferring the knowledge they acquire to others in their universities and countries

To apply complete the online application form below by 1 April 2018. Applicants will be notified of the outcome no later than 1 May 2018.

Fall School Application Form
Send questions to info@iseil.org
**Around the web...**

**Lost language: how Macau gambled away its past**

The Guardian’s Matthew Keegan examines the regeneration movement in Macau for Patuá, a creole language that is closely related to Kristang (see Ogmios April 2017).

Patuá developed in Malacca in the 16th century, and spread to Macau with its Portuguese settlers. An amalgamation of Portuguese, Cantonese, Malay, the language began to decline in use, and was estimated in the year 2000 to have only 50 speakers left.

“I think the casinos definitely could have tried harder to represent something local in Macau – something that will make tourists wonder and think about and discover Macau [. . .] Out of nowhere you have an Eiffel tower in Macau, a Venetian [hotel] in Macau and now they are building a mini-London. From our perspective, as culturally aware citizens, this is all rubbish – it says absolutely nothing about what Macau is.”


**Keep Talking: the healing power of language targets Kodiak Alutiiq**

Chicago-based film critic and podcaster Clint Worthington featured an interview on the Alcohollywood website with Lynn Weinberg, director and producer of Keep Talking.

The documentary, made by Kartemquin Films, follows the language regeneration work of a group of Alaskan Native elders and educators for the Kodiak Alutiiq language.

“There was definitely deliberation; when I submitted the proposal, I had met one of the language counselors, Kari Sherod, and had a sense that they wanted to do something. So I just flew out a proposal to her. Many months later, I assumed it was a no go, but suddenly [I learned] she succeeded in getting it past the elders. She worked for a while to convince people that this was a worthwhile endeavor. Because, you know, Alaska has a ton of reality shows, like Ice Road Truckers, so Alaskans have become wary of camera crews.

“It was a process of winning trust, and explaining why we were there, that we weren’t there to sensationalize, or do anything like that. It’s a different beast, and they really worked with us on that.”

http://www.alcohollywood.com/keep-talking-karen-lynn-weinberg-interview/

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Newfound pride in Guaraní, a language long disdained in Paraguay

Myles McCormick of The New York Times covers the Guaraní language’s rebranding by Paraguayan ofﬁcials and intellectuals, who are working to put Guaraní in an equal position to the country’s dominant language, Spanish, as per the 1992 Constitution.

The government is hoping to shift the public perception of the language by bringing it into ofﬁcial communication – currently, less than one per cent of government public relations are conducted in Guaraní. And while civil servants are being taught to speak the language, and citizens now have the right to trial in either language, the movement to bring Guaraní into the curriculum has been met with pushback by Guaraní-speaking parents.

“There is a stigma, a prejudice, associated with Guaraní,” said Ladislaa Alcaraz, the government’s Minister for Language Policy. “It is associated with poverty, rurality, ignorance, with people who are illiterate.”

Many still hold negative stereotypes of their language, and have pushed back against their children being taught in Guaraní, with its high-pitched, nasal and guttural sounds. They say that an emphasis on Spanish, or a foreign language, would make their children more competitive in the job market.

“It’s a human rights issue,” Ms. Alcaraz said. “People who use Guaraní deserve to be tended to in Guaraní.”


Luxembourg’s culture minister, told the Guardian. “I am not one of those who believes our language is on the point of dying or disappearing. Emails, SMS and social networks have made Luxembourgish, in its written form, more used than ever before.”


The language was only recognised as a national language in 1984.
Elfdalian language gets double coverage

Continental Europe-based English-language digital news publisher The Local has shown a particular interest in endangered languages over recent months, with two articles published about Sweden’s ancient Elfdalian (also known as Övdalian, Övdalsk, Övdalska, Älvdalska, or Älvdalsmål).

The North Germanic language is spoken by 3,000 individuals in Western Sweden, and was written using runes until the early 20th century. In the first article, Sweden’s lost forest language now has international speakers, Lee Roden discusses Elfdalian with its new, foreign learners, who were enrolled on an introductory course over summer 2017.

“I have a Masters in linguistics and studied in both Copenhagen and Iceland, and learned Icelandic. I already had an interest in Nordic languages, and that gave me a nice insight into western

Nordic languages.

“I’ve been going around the Nordics since I started studying and studied some Faroese at a summer course, so I got a feel for all the different Nordic languages but the last Nordic language I didn’t understand was Elfdalian, so that was kind of frustrating. That led me to wanting to know more about it,” he explained about his motivation to learn the tongue.

“When foreigners come to Denmark a lot of Danish people ask ‘why would you learn Danish when you can speak English?’, but I didn’t feel that in Älvdalen. The older generation want to preserve the language, they think it’s a shame it’s disappearing. I’m not sure the younger generation feels the same way yet.”

https://www.thelocal.se/20170901/swedens-lost-forest-language-now-has-international-speakers

The second feature, How Sweden’s rare Viking forest language Elfdalian is being saved by Minecraft – written by Björn Rehnström and translated and adapted for The Local by Catherine Edwards – investigates to what extent the language’s resurrection is due to its use in sandbox video game Minecraft. Rehnström writes that Minecraft users are building the village of Älvdalen in the game, and are conducting all communications in Elfdalian. The language’s use in popular culture can only bode well, especially in light of its alleged branding as near-extinct.

“We want to make it interesting and fun for children to learn Elfdalian grammar and the history and culture of the area, by using a medium which children are already familiar with – millions of children across the world play Minecraft.”

https://www.thelocal.se/20171011/how-swedens-rare-viking-forest-language-elfdalian-is-being-saved-by-minecraft

Tlingit project explores the tensions between tradition and innovation

In a feature by Emily Pothast, Seattle newspaper The Stranger examines “a collaboration between artist Alison Marks and her husband, Paul, a Tlingit language teacher and culture keeper whose father is one of the endangered language’s last fluent speakers Tlingit artist.”

As part of the project, Marks and her husband are giving stars Tlingit names using a free star-naming website

“Symbolically, I am sending the language into space so that it may survive there if we don’t save it on Earth,” she tells Pothast.

“One Gray Hair is the first solo museum exhibition by Marks, a contemporary Tlingit artist known for using futuristic materials to create objects that highlight the tensions arising between tradition and innovation in the context of colonization.”


Marks’ work was recently on show in the Frye Art Museum.
Thousands of Taushiro people once spoke his language in the Amazon. Now, he’s the only one

In a long-form feature for the New York Times, Nicholas Casey profiles the last living speaker of Peruvian language Taushiro, Amadeo García García.

With limited opportunity for revitalisation, government linguists from the Ministry of Culture in Peru have worked to document the language in cooperation with García García, who unfortunately has no children that speak the language.

“The Taushiro and other indigenous groups had long harvested a sticky white substance that leaked from certain trees and coated their clothes, making them waterproof.

But by the 19th century, Europeans had discovered the utility of rubber as well, setting off a boom. European and American companies descended into the jungles, forcing indigenous populations into slavery to tap the rubber while building huge palaces on the lands left behind.

The deadly Age of Rubber had begun in the Amazon. In many areas, as much as 90 percent of the indigenous population died from disease and forced labor, researchers say. Thousands moved into newly settled cities. But the Taushiro, along with many other tribes, took another route: They decided to disappear. Amadeo’s early memories from the hidden Taushiro settlement of Aucayacu remain in the haze of a place where writing was unknown and no records were kept, not even of his birth, which he thinks was sometime in the 1940s.

His first memory was walking naked through the forest in a storm, the rain trickling down his body. Contact with the outside world was rare, and often violent.”


New Zealand broadcasters refuse to stop using Maori words

Eleanor Ainge Roy reports in The Guardian on the prominent New Zealand media representatives who are pushing back in the face of hundreds of English speakers who say they feel “excluded” by the use of the Te Reo Māori dialect in primetime broadcasting.

Countless complaints have been aimed at Newshub presenter Kanoa Lloyd, of Maori-descent, for her continued use of Te Reo in her weather reports since 2015 – especially in referring to New Zealand by its Te Reo name, Aotearoa.

Despite this, Lloyd, who co-hosts The Project NZ, has refused to stop using Te Reo in her broadcasts.

“In 2016, Radio New Zealand journalists began signing off their reports in Te Reo. TVNZ presenter Jack Tame uses it regularly on his Breakfast show, as does Morning Report presenter Guyon Espiner. But the trend has sparked anger among some viewers.

Morning Report state they receive around half a dozen complaints on an average day.”

Espiner of Morning Report said he received daily messages from New Zealanders telling him to “stop speaking gibberish”, but has committed to normalising and encouraging the use of Te Reo through his programme, which is listened to by nearly half a million New Zealanders every day.

On Monday night Lloyd recorded a passionate two-minute video rebuttal to her detractors, saying: “I actually felt a bit sorry for these guys, sorry the world is moving too fast for you my bros. The change has already happened. The Earth isn’t flat, climate change is real, the treaty was signed, we’re speaking Māori!”