

Iatiku

Newsletter of the Foundation for Endangered Languages: # 1
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Iatiku is the mother goddess of the Acoma tribe of New Mexico, who caused people to speak different languages so that it would not be so easy for them to quarrel.¹

This issue of our Newsletter is very much a first stab, resulting from a request at the second meeting of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, held at Bristol University on 20 April. I urge all readers to send in interesting news items relevant to Linguistic Diversity and Language Endangerment, which may appear in future issues.

I feel that, to be worthy of its theme, *Iatiku* should also include controversy and readers' letters; ideally, also, essays and all sorts of compositions in and about non-metropolitan languages, deepening our understanding of what their diversity can mean. For this, it will need the support of its readers.

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

1. Development of the Foundation

The Foundation was first proposed by the editor of this newsletter in a mailshot of 27 November 1994, and has so far held two meetings. Reports of these meetings follow.

Readers will note that the Foundation is now gathering suggestions to select a set of language communities whose survival and progress will form the starting focus for our work. If you have a direct link with such a community, and wish to enlist the Foundation to work on its behalf, please contact the editor for a questionnaire. This will make it possible for us to see its place within the multifarious diversity of Language Endangerment.

Aims of the Foundation

In the last few years there has been a surprising surge of interest in the fates of small human communities, and in the cultures that they maintain. Journalistic interest has tended to focus on the political dimensions of this (as with the Baltic states, with Chiapas in Mexico, or with East Timor on the borders of Indonesia) or the ecological or even pharmacological losses (Yanomami in the Brazilian rain-forest) which may result from greater expansion of large, usually Western-inspired, states at the expense of the small communities. But there is also sometimes a focus on the cultural heritage of these groups as being of interest more widely than to the people themselves. Among other things, some of the moral and spiritual teaching of these groups has found a place in new approaches to fulfilment even within Western societies. And the cultural vitality of smaller communities within nation states (e.g. Wales, the Pais Vasco) makes more and more news.

There has also been some interest, beyond the persistent, but perhaps marginal, community of "Whorfian" linguists, in how other languages may support different world-views and ways of thinking. In the past, the extinction of old ways, as smaller languages make way for the spread of their larger neighbours, had seemed a loss only to those who were giving them up. Now there is a fear that along with the gain in ease of communication there may be serious loss in the long run, not only for the people most closely affected, but even for monolingual English-speakers. The potential for danger lies in loss of diversity, on the analogy of genetic biology, where it can be shown that increasing standardization and uniformity holds dangers for the long-term survival of the population as a whole.

I am currently setting up a Foundation for Endangered Languages, which already has links with UNESCO and CIPL's Committee on Language Endangerment. Its activities will no doubt develop and expand over time, but at the outset the Foundation will provide:

- a Newsletter

- a Means of Contact with field-workers, language support and maintenance initiatives and efforts
- formal links with other appropriate institutions;
 - e.g. university departments, charities, cultural institutes in the UK;
 - literacy programmes world-wide ...

Other functions that would be appropriate in future might include courses in languages, field-methods, conferences, a bibliographic and software database, a library, a journal, a book series. The Foundation will also cast its net much wider, providing links to:

- schools at all levels, and forms of education other than universities;
- film, TV, radio, *multi-media*

Later, it would begin to make sense to think how the Foundation could begin to be a force in its own right, offering support for fieldwork expeditions, scholarships, financial aid for local programmes in support of endangered languages.

If you are interested in such a Foundation, and initially perhaps in becoming a member of an Association, please contact the editor at the address above.

Report on Meeting 1: DTI London, 27 January 1995

The meeting, convened by Dr Nicholas Ostler (independent consultant in linguistics and language technology), was attended also by Prof. R.H. Robins (emeritus, London School of Oriental and African Studies, and President of the Permanent International Committee of Linguists), Mr Allan Wynne Jones (European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, and Menter a Busnes), Dr Andrew Woodfield (Dept of Philosophy, Bristol University, and organizer of April Seminar on Conservation of Endangered Languages), Dr Roger Blench (independent consultant, *inter alia* on Language Survey of Nigeria), Prof. Greville Corbett (Surrey University, and President of the Linguistic Association of Great Britain) and Prof. Dick Hayward (London School of Oriental and African Studies, and Member of the Consultative Project Committee of the UNESCO Endangered Languages Project).

Although they could not attend, Professors Suzanne Romaine (Oxford University), Ian Roberts (University of Wales at Bangor) and Dr Marilyn Martin-Jones (Lancaster University) had asked to be kept informed of proceedings.

One emphasis of the meeting was the need for more fieldwork to be organized. Here the main requirement seemed to be for finance, and a thumbnail calculation suggested that a budget of £35,000 per language was needed to provide a basic ("A-level") grammar and dictionary of an undocumented language, assuming two years of work on the language by an individual linguist.

Since data gathering was a much faster process than the subsequent analysis and publication, it should have priority where languages were really on their last tongues.

Another emphasis was the need to **raise the profile** of Language Endangerment as an issue with the general public. In principle, there was no reason why this issue, which touched many people's identity so closely, indeed perhaps touched a majority of the world's people, should be less emotive than many others which had achieved mass appeal. In the developed West, however, there did seem to be particular problems in gaining sympathy. One difficulty in reaching the English-speaking public in particular was their general **inexperience of bilingualism**; another, which was more widely a problem in characterizing the effects of language loss, was the intrinsic **abstractness** of language itself: where exactly should one locate the subjective, and the objective, value in the diverse features which were giving way to uniformity? a third, which militated against an effective unity of approach, was the **diversity in predicament** of language shift itself: different languages were endangered in different ways, and called out for different means of help, even as different communities had quite different aspirations for their languages' future.

Often international bodies (the World Bank was cited) show surprising unawareness as to the importance of languages in human development, even among other cultural items. It was suggested that a convenient way of coping with this was to include languages under some general blanket-term, which would include more familiar goals of the funders -- e.g. a request to study the "national treasures" of a people.

In some cases, the threat came more from the increased access to consumer society than through any material danger to the speakers themselves. Techniques of marketing could be useful; however, as a means of sensitising language planners and those who would develop new materials in a language to the variety of issues which might need to be addressed.

Some encouraging, if isolated, facts and events were recalled. Some governments even of vulnerable and developing states took a positive attitude to their citizens' linguistic diversity (Cameroon and Eritrea were quoted here). Sometimes, even where the government was less helpful, private enterprise might step in with assistance: a group of businessmen in Lagos, Nigeria, had commissioned a dictionary of the Isekiri language. Academic interest in a language devoted to recording it could have useful social side-effects in increasing the speaker-community's self-confidence. Prof. Hayward mentioned that language planners in Eritrea seemed anxious to receive help in their Herculean task of establishing literacy programmes for all its nine indigenous languages.

On the other hand, even positive developments were not always what they seemed. A linguist had

taken an interest in the last two speakers of Gafat in Ethiopia, and was recording their language; but taking them out of their own environment had made them catch cold and they died. High prices could mean that materials produced to describe and document a language were not available to the home community. Recent positive census figures for Welsh, recording an increase in the numbers who knew the language, might be disguising an actual fall in the frequency of the actual use of Welsh. The USA probably leads the world at the moment in academic interest and effort devoted to arresting language loss: however, it may be just there that the rate of language loss is currently at its highest.

The meeting's conclusions were general ones. There was a crying need for more publicity of the problem in the developed world, to arrest complacency and awake concern, especially among the young and in international fund-holders. Direct action on behalf of endangered language communities required extreme caution, since the political balance between communities was often delicate. More concrete aims were deferred until the second meeting.

Report on Meeting 2: Bristol University, 20 April 1995

The meeting was attended by Dr Nicholas Ostler, Prof. R.H. Robins, Mr Allan Wynne Jones, Dr Andrew Woodfield and Prof. Dick Hayward, all of whom had been at Meeting 1. Two new members were Mr Christopher Moseley (BBC monitor of Latvian broadcasting and co-editor of the Routledge's Atlas of the World's Languages) and Howard Webkamigad (Algonia University College, Ontario).

Robins updated the meeting on the UNESCO supported CIPSH/CIPL initiative and his meeting with Prof. van Sterkenburg of Leiden University: the Tokyo Clearing House due to hold its first meeting in November. He emphasized the need for effective exchange of information between all the various activities being set up world-wide.

Ostler mentioned a number of suggestions about **potential alliances** for the Foundation. Prof. Ian Roberts, who again could not be present, had suggested the possibility of a link with GLOW (Generative Linguists of the Old World), a predominantly European theoretical linguistic society which he himself currently chaired. Ostler had also highlighted the Foundation at a recent business meeting of the Linguistic Association of Great Britain (held at Newcastle on April 11) at the invitation of its president, Prof. Greville Corbett. On a different tack, Ostler had contacted the Minority Rights Group (MRG) and Survival International (for Tribal Peoples), both based in London. Both had been positive, but stressed that they had little experience still in-house of the initial phases of setting up a group like this. They would prefer to wait until our Foundation had defined its own identity, aims and methods further before discussing co-operation. Survival International had suggested a particular avenue to

explore would be to provide messages for inclusion in "Radio Survival": this distributed news about tribal peoples in the medium of cassettes, often for later broadcast by radio.

Ostler had examined material from the Charities Commission, but thought it better to leave the necessary process of defining the Foundation's legal identity until its goals and preferred mode of operation had been made clearer.

Wynne Jones, as part of a proposal to reconcile differences between the concerns of documenting moribund languages and the concerns of taking action to preserve and promote languages that were threatened, proposed an acronym for the Foundation: **FIRST**. This would stress the importance of first languages, i.e. mother tongues, which might not be those most widely understood in a community, but were likely to be the ones in danger of loss. I.R.S.T.: Indigenous and Regional Spoken (or Stateless?) Tongues. The letter F is usefully ambiguous, standing for any of "Foundation for", "Federation of" or "Friends of", representing the different roles of the organization as research institute, a solidarity body for communities, and a charity for support of the communities in the wider world. The proposal was left on the table; no decision has yet been taken on it.

Crowning a discussion of what the primary role for the Foundation should be, agreement was reached on Woodfield's recommendation that it should be a **fund-raising organization**. However, this required more clarity of purpose on where the funds should be directed. It was vain to characterize the body as a co-ordinating group when it was unclear what activities could be co-ordinated, or as a public relations group dedicated to raising awareness, if it was unclear what activities needed the oxygen of publicity.

Members spoke briefly on languages in danger known to them: Hayward on the Wozzaqa project in Ethiopia (involving Gats'ame, Harro, Hararo, and Mosiye spoken around the Rift Valley Lakes), and elementary level Literacy Programmes in Eritrea; Moseley on Latvian and Livonian; Wynne Jones on Welsh.

The main decision of the meeting was a procedure to gather a **representative set of concrete language issues** which would define the central activities of the Foundation. The key point is to enlist the experience that experts in our area have of particular language problems. It should then be possible to mobilize around these.

Ostler was requested to send out a questionnaire to all those who had expressed an interest in the Foundation, to get a characterization of language issues known personally to them, and in particular to get a frank statement of what help an umbrella organization such as the Foundation could offer. The questionnaire was to be distributed by the beginning of May, with responses to be returned by the end of May, and a discussion of the results at

the next meeting, which is to take place in the last three weeks of June.

2. Appeals

Aragonese

Received on the web:

Subject: Re: Aragonese problem
From: ROMANCE BURGOS CHORCHE
<chroman@mest.unizar.es>
Date: Tue, 4 Apr 95 19:56:11 +0100

Do you know the difficult situation of Aragonese Language?

The Aragonese language is disappearing because our government is not making it possible to legalize it.

If you're interested mail me and I'll send you more information

NO DEIXEZ MORIR A NUESTRA BOZ
don't let our voice die.

PS. There will be soon an Aragonese language page on the Web

CHORCHE ROMANCE BURGOS
chroman@mest.unizar.es
Universida de Zaragoza - Aragon

Salu, tierra y liberta - Sla/inte, tir, agus saoirse

Hawaiian

I enclose a recent message in full that appeared on the Endangered-Languages-L electronic list. Readers may wish to act on it:

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 1995 14:00:28 -1000
From: Rose Mary Henze <henze@uhunix.uhcc.hawaii.edu>
To: Endangered-Languages-L@postbox.anu.edu.au
Subject: support for Hawaiian
Sender: owner-endangered-languages-l@coombs.anu.edu.au

I am writing to ask people on this list for support in a time that is yet another turning point for the survival of the Hawaiian language. Here is a thumbnail sketch of the situation:

As some of you may already know, Hawaiian is currently experiencing a renaissance of sorts after coming very close to extinction. Except for the island of Ni'ihau, which has a very small population, there were virtually no native speakers left under the age of 70. Now, after a great deal of effort by community members, support from university and community college programs which teach Hawaiian, and the Department of Education, Hawaiian is being learned as a second language by approximately 800 students pre-school through 8th grade in an immersion program. Teachers for this program are drawn from among those who have studied Hawaiian in the university. The State of Hawai'i also now recognizes Hawaiian as one of the "official" languages of Hawai'i. Though the language is not being spoken widely in communities, and intergenerational transmission of it as a home language is still a long way off for most families, there has been clear progress in terms of creating many new speakers (both adults and children) and extending Hawaiian into new domains (e.g. all school subjects through 8th grade are taught through Hawaiian; a lexicon committee meets regularly to coin new words for these school and other uses). Some of the recent literature on language revitalization cites the Hawaiian case as an example of success (e.g. Leanne Hinton's *Flutes of Fire*). Enthusiasm is demonstrated locally in long waiting lists for Hawaiian language classes at the adult level and similarly long waiting lists for space in the immersion program itself. The program is actively recruiting new teachers who are proficient speakers of Hawaiian, but there are far too few to fill the need.

The problem currently is that the governor is doing some serious budget cutting and higher education is one of the targets. Within higher Ed., the Hawaiian language program stands to lose about two-thirds of its current operating

budget. If this happens, it will have a tremendous ripple effect on the revitalization of Hawaiian in general. Hawaiian language classes at the university would be cut back drastically, and as a result there could be no further hiring for the immersion program, despite waiting lists, "official" language status, Native American Languages Act, etc.

I think that support from a national and international community concerned with endangered languages might make an impression on decision-makers. I don't think they realize the extent to which this is a global issue, nor are they aware that other people are looking to Hawai'i as one of the examples of strong revitalization efforts.

If you are willing, please write letters expressing your concern, outrage, etc. to the following people:

Kenneth Mortimer, President
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Bach 202, Honolulu, HI 96822
FAX: (808) 956-5286

Governor Ben Cayetano
Office of the Governor
State Office Towers
Honolulu, HI 96813

Please cc any correspondence to:

No'eau Warner, Coordinator
Hawaiian Language Program
Spaulding 459, 2540 Maile Way
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822

Thank you,

Rosemary Henze

Natural Language Processing

Received on the web:

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 1995 12:03:40 +0200
From: T M Ellison (marke@softy.inesc.pt)
Subject: Can NLP help maintaining language diversity?

This request is particularly addressed to those linguists working with languages in danger of extinction, but I would welcome responses from any interested party. I suggest that responders reply directly to me, and I'll summarise for the list --- the usual request. And, in advance, let me thank you for your help with these queries.

I would like to make a case for the proposition (call it P).

P="Natural language processing (NLP) tools can assist in slowing, if not halting, the slide of individual languages towards extinction."

By NLP tools, I include most computer programs designed to manipulate language for the production/analysis/checking of speech or text: spelling checkers, morphological analysers, syntactic parsers, on-line dictionaries, speech recognition and generation software, machine-assisted translation tools. For the purposes of this discussion, I would prefer to exclude computer-aided learning (CALL), and other didactic tools (for the purposes of this discussion).

Now for the questions. These are aimed at identifying (a) your evaluation of proposition P, and (b) possible evidence for it.

Q1. Is P true? Can (any, some or all) NLP tools help keep languages alive? If not, is there any role for technology in maintaining language diversity?

Questions 2 and 3 are predicated on P being true.

Q2. Are there any NLP tools which have had a positive impact on the survival of a language?

Q3. Which new tools (feel free to make them up, within reason) would be of greatest assistance? This includes tools of a well-known kind being instantiated for a particular language. Specific examples, such as 'Normalised spelling in Zamzyra would be easier to enforce if we had spelling checkers using morphological analysers, because of the complex morphophonemics in the language. Normalised spelling conventions would help maintain sufficient literature in Zamzyra to counteract the association of education and literature with language Zobzob.'

Thank you for your answers to these questions.

Mark Ellison marke@speech.inesc.pt

3. Recent Meetings

I have attended a number of meetings in the UK and USA over the last two months, on which I give brief reports here.

MIT Seminars

This was a series of small workshops, held weekly at MIT in January 1995, on the major regions of America, Australia, Ireland and the Far North. I was only able to attend the final one, which focused on the Far North (expounded by Jonathan Bobaljik and Michael Krauss), minority, and especially immigrant, languages in the UK (by Mahendra Verma of the University of York) and remedial policy issues (by Ken Hale and Colette Craig).

The Far North presentations laid a heavy emphasis on absolute numbers, and the demographic difficulties in forming a reliable picture largely in areas of the ex-Soviet Union. Verma's presentation led to some correspondence in Endangered-Languages-L on the Internet, as to the level of concern due for immigrant languages which may not survive in the context of their new homes: the linguistic response to a unique social situation is endangered, but the variety developed is of very recent origin, and usually the linguistic roots in the home country are not at risk.

The presentations by Hale and Craig focused on the language documentation and rehabilitation projects they had undertaken in Nicaragua, on the Sumu and Rama languages respectively. They emphasized the innovative thinking which might be required to get new generations interested in continuing a linguistic tradition, the limited expectations of what could be achieved, even in trying to give effect to a community's own wished programmes (where the linguist's own evaluation of what s/he has achieved must take second place), and above all on the crucial dependence of everything on the particular circumstances of particular communities. There would be analogies between policies that worked in different places, but no common remedy.

Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

This was a two-day seminar organized by the Program in Linguistics and Cognitive Science. It provide an exceedingly rich feast of presentations on the Endangered Languages problem in the Americas, Siberia and Africa.

Michael Krauss, again amid many statistics, emphasised how unnecessary was the loss of the languages of the North (particularly advanced in Alaska -- as against Siberia, Scandinavia, Canada and Greenland) given the possibility of stable

bilingualism, seen to best effect in Greenland, where 99% were bilingual in Inuit and Danish. **Leanne Hinton** spoke of her successes and frustrations in trying, through organized tuition, to bring the languages of California back from near death. Modern theoretically-oriented linguistics proved much less helpful for this than earlier, more wide-ranging, linguistic descriptions. She also discussed the tensions that a language programme could create in the Native American communities. **Marianne Mithun** gave an extended example of the kind of semantic diversity that a different language could preserve, looking at action classification in central Pomo. She also emphasised some of the diversity of motive, even among the children of a single peer group, and the crucial role of local administrative power (at least in the context of American schools). **Ofelia Zepeda** described a cultural experiment in the Tohono O'odham (formerly Papago) community, introducing unsung poetry recitals. This led to useful discussion on the role of writing in language preservations: it was a *sine qua non* of expanding a language use into modern contexts, but could inhibit language learning if over-used in the classroom.

Turning from North to Central and South America, **Colette Craig** reviewed the variety to be found there, from the state use of Guaraní in Paraguay, even by those of pure Spanish descent, to the uncharted but diminishing profusion of languages in the Brazilian jungle. She picked out the Colombian Centre for Study of Indigenous Languages (CECLA) at the University of the Andes in Bogotá, and Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi in Belém, Brazil, as shining examples of the recent determination by local elites to start to value their indigenous languages, stressing the futility of "gringo imperialism" in this field. **Nora C. England** took us through the enterprise of the Mayan peoples to document and officialize their twenty languages, noting that they were profiting from the current lull in human rights violations by their states' governments, and also from funds from EU, Norway, Austria and Germany. (They had drawn the line though at a proffered grant from Spain in connexion with the Quincentenario!) **Ken Hale** gave more details on his exertions to give the Ulwa back their language, pointing out the linguistic hierarchization of the local peoples, command of more languages being correlated with a lower position in the pecking order: the Twahka people at the bottom of the pile needed to get by in five languages.

Back in the Far North, **Nikolai Vakhtin** gave an interesting overview of the Copper Island Aleut creole language, which combined Aleutian lexemes with Russian morphology: another strategy, as he put it, beyond mortality and immortality. **Tony Woodbury** showed how affective affixes in Yup'ik, played a distinctive role even as a substrate influence on the first generation to lose the language, but could not be expected to survive longer: he quoted this as a clear case of how language use in discourse might be the intrinsic feature of a language's diversity.

Turning to Africa, **Matthias Brenzinger** reassured us that language replacement by metropolitan European languages was not widespread, though the voluntary spread of trade-based *lingue franche* was. He concentrated on the situation in Ethiopia, pointing out how various the position of a language close to death could be: Yaku surviving in its plant names only, Ge'ez surviving as a written language of liturgy, Yen seen as having a thousand speakers in 1976, but now given half a million. **André Kapanga** documented the effects of French and Arabic on Shabu Swahili; **Carol Myers-Scotton** expounded her theory of code-switching (the Matrix Language Frame Model), essentially claiming that units of one language are always embedded in another, which provides the underlying grammar.

The final session was in some ways the most moving, when various American Indians confronted the impending death of their languages. **Richard and Nora Dauenhauer** (an American and Tlingit husband and wife) told of their struggles to document and teach the Tlingit language of south Alaska, lamenting in particular that it was phonologically so difficult. What could they offer to motivate consumerist young students? Perhaps an exchange with the Tohono O'odham people, a romance of boats for a romance of horses! **Annette Jacobs** described her work teaching Mohawk up to B.A. level, in a cultural situation somewhat reminiscent of the Welsh: reprimands delivered in Mohawk, she remarked, seemed to be of greater effect than English ones. Then it was the turn of those whose languages had died, **Melissa Fawcett** of the Mohegan, whose last fluent speaker died in 1958, **Helen Manning**, education director of the Wampanoag tribe, whose language died well before living memory. Could these languages be revived, they wondered. **Leanne Hinton** ended on a note of muted hope, quoting single speakers of the Californian languages Toluwa and Ohlone, who seemed to keep themselves going by sheer will-power: perhaps Ohlone could come back, resurrected from the field-notes of J.P. Harrington. Anyway there would be a workshop in it this summer for twenty or so at UC Berkeley.

American Association for the Advancement of Science

I did not attend the Endangered Languages session of this conference, which was held on 18 February in Atlanta, Georgia, but it seems that a number of British journalists did. There were reports of the general issues of Language Endangerment in *The Observer* and *Independent on Sunday* for 19 February. Krauss, Hinton, Hale and Kimbrough Oller of Miami University were all mentioned.

Bristol - Conservation of Endangered Languages

Andrew Woodfield and Dan Brickley (of the Centre for Theories of Language and Learning at the University of Bristol's Department of Philosophy)

organized this event which took place on 21 April. Since most who read this will have been there, I make this report very brief.

Christopher Moseley emphasised the political motivation of governments to distort the statistics distributed about the population of minority language speakers. Two clear desiderata were a mechanism to monitor the actual state of languages, and a general programme to gather corpora of material, not just grammars and dictionaries, in languages world-wide. Apparently Routledge the publishers currently engaged in a first attempt at such a programme. Chris also described some of the problems, but illustrated the excellences, of his new Atlas of the World's Languages: what a tragedy that its price is set so high!

Mark Pagel began by estimating the upper and lower bounds of the number of languages ever spoken, using current hypotheses of the rate of language change and the age of the language faculty in man. His middle estimate was 140,000 - with a low figure of 31,000 and a maximum of 600,000, which puts into some sort of perspective the 5-8,000 we reckon with now. He went on to compare the statistics of language incidence with other biological phenomena, most interestingly for me pointing out that, in North America, languages, like all biological species, get thicker on the ground as you approach the equator. He also had some suggestive results with neural nets, arguing (by implicit analogy) that if learning different phonological systems can affect the development of our brains, just think of the variety that different grammar and semantics may make: and what the human race will lose, in terms of knowledge of its potential, if the diversity of languages available is markedly reduced.

Dick Hayward gave an orbiter's eye view of the babble of languages to be found in Ethiopia, as well as a historical account of how the situation got to be so complicated. Most interestingly, he talked of the strange variety of socio-linguistic arrangements that could be seen, how the macho dynamics of the Oromo cowboy culture had left those on highlands safely away from the routes of their truculent expansion, how the Elmolo fishermen assimilate their language to their neighbours as they pass over the centuries. It is important to realize how impoverished is the set of the linguistic norms that we naturally become aware of, even if quite knowledge of the sweep of European expansion over the millennia.

In the afternoon, things were brought very much closer to home, with **Allan Wynne Jones** pointing out how marketing concepts could help in organizing modern society to make a place for Welsh (and implicitly other minority languages in the Western world), and **Siân Wyn Siencyn** standing up proudly for the role of women in choosing which language(s) will be transmitted to the next generation. Andrew Woodfield inspired us all by holding his ground when his recce came under her sustained attack. Stirring stuff, but reassuring to know that they are both on our side.

In the final discussion, a little of the potential for conflict in this field came to the surface, with strong differences even over terminology ("Are we endangered or are we marginalised?"), tactics ("Is it effective in the long run to up the ante, and use shock and scandal to make a point?"), and long-term goals ("Can there ever be a stable bilingual relationship with a juggernaut language like English?")

A stimulating day all round, but without any new snap answers to the philosophical questions of value and justification that Andrew Woodfield set us all when he invited us to the seminar.

4. Endangered Languages in the Media

The Bristol Seminar on the Conservation of Endangered languages was trailed in a full page article in the Times Higher (21 April). It also stimulated both the following broadcasts.

BBC World Service Radio: "Outlook" 17 April 1995

John Tidmarsh interviewed Michael Krauss by telephone from Alaska and me in the World Service Studio at Bush house, after an introductory sequence in Shilluk.

BBC World TV: "Newsday" 21 April 1995

Nick Tarry interviewed a number of SOAS academics in London, and me in the Bristol studio, combining this with some footage of Livonia being spoken (provided by Christopher Moseley).

5. Forthcoming Meetings

Coming up soon are the following:

Canadian Centre For Linguistic Rights, Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Centre For Linguistic Rights: Towards a Language Agenda: Futurist Outlook on the United Nations. Conference: 25-27 May 1995. This is primarily about the rights of languages in International Fora such as the United Nations, and has sessions with the following headings:

Language Policies: United Nations and Alternative Visions
Linguistic and Cultural Standards
Languages: an Important Issue for Development
Language Policies: Looking to the Future.

There also appears, at first sight, to be a heavy emphasis on Canadian linguistic issues.

Further details can be obtained from Helene Laporte, Canadian Centre for Linguistic Rights, Faculty of Law (Common Law), University of Ottawa, 57 Louis-Pasteur Street, P.O. Box 450, Station A, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

Bilingualism in Wales, Cardiff, Wales

Comhluadar Chaerdydd, 10 June 1995, a one-day conference at the Central Library, Cardiff, entitled: 'Le Visage Linguistique' - Bilingualism in Wales.

This will give an Irish perspective on the positive changes in use and status of Welsh that have been achieved since the 1960s: "The Welsh language has emerged from its dungeon into the light of day." Most of the speakers listed are Welsh, but there will also be a presentation by the Irish Language Board (Bord na Gaeilge). Speakers from Wales will address the conference in Welsh and those from Ireland will use Irish. Simultaneous translation facilities (to English) will be available. Questions and an "Open Forum" will be in English.

Further details can be obtained from Comhluadar Chaerdydd, 116 Stryd Brunswick, Treganna, Caerdydd Wales CF5 1LN (tel. 01222-343251).

LSA Linguistic Institute Events, Albuquerque, New Mexico

This summer, the Linguistic Society of America's annual **Linguistic Institute** (i.e. six-week-long movable festival of tutorial courses and conferences) is being hosted by the University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque. The Institute itself runs from 26 June to 4 August. It includes courses on such topics relevant to Language Endangerment as:

- Research in L2 Learning at School
- Linguistic Techniques for Native Americans
- Language Processing in Bilinguals
- Intercultural Communication
- Societal Bilingualism
- Ethnicity as a Social Category in Language

as well as a host of courses on particular languages, particularly Native American ones of the region (Hopi, Athabaskan, Navajo, Kiowa-Tanoan). There are 56 courses in all. There are also over a dozen attached conferences, again mostly on branches of American Indian linguistics (Uto-Aztecan, Hokan-Penutian, Muskogean-Oklahoma, Siouan-Caddoan, Andean, and most generally Indigenous Languages of the Americas 8-9 July).

Further details can be obtained from University of New Mexico, Dept Linguistics, 1995 Linguistic Institute, Humanities Building #526, Albuquerque NM 87131-1196, USA (tel +1-505-277-2032 *fax* -6355 *e-mail* linginst@carina.unm.edu (Joan Bybee, Director; Barbara Curran, Program Coordinator).

The above is a gathering of academics; but other related events are more community-oriented:

16th AILDI, Tucson, Arizona

The 16th Annual **American Indian Linguistic Language Development Institute (AILDI)** will be held at the University of Arizona at Tucson on 5-30 June, with special theme "Tradition and Technology: Weaving the Future of Indigenous Languages". It offers four weeks of American Indian linguistics, bilingual-bicultural education and culture-based curriculum development, followed by local projects implemented in participants' home schools and communities.

Further details can be obtained from Karen Francis-Begay, AILDI Coordinator, College of Education, Room 517, Dept. Language, Reading and Culture, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ 85721 (tel +1-520-621-1068/1311)

SILNA, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The **Summer Institute of Linguistics for Native Americans (SILNA)** will run from 19 June to 7 July at the University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque, overlapping and partly integrated with the Linguistic Institute. It is a course taught by Rebecca Benjamin, intended to provide assistance to native language communities as they explore, discuss and formulate approaches in order to meet the language needs of their communities.

Further details can be obtained from Christine Sims, Chair, Linguistic Institute for Native Americans, Inc., PO Box 11339, Albuquerque NM 87192, USA (tel +1-505-552-9218).

Inauguration of International Clearing House, Tokyo

Putting together reports from Willem Adelaar at Leiden University and Prof. R.H. Robins, I infer that the UNESCO-sponsored CIPSH-CIPL initiative on Endangered Languages will inaugurate its **International Clearing House for Endangered Languages** at a meeting in Tokyo on 17-21 November 1995. The organization is led by Prof. Tasaku Tsunoda at the Dept Asian and Pacific Linguistics, Institute for Cross-Cultural Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113.