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David Leedom Shaul

Linguistic Ideologies  
of Native American  
Language  
Revitalization  
Doing the Lost  
Language Ghost  
Dance

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# Linguistic Ideologies of Native American Language Revitalization

Doing the Lost Language Ghost Dance

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# Foreword

As an anthropologist I have come to know and collaborate with a broad range of anthropologists and other social scientists committed to the study and elucidation of that modicum of diversity that exemplifies the human condition. As an archaeologist, I have had the opportunity to investigate firsthand some of the most pressing questions regarding the evolution of the Amerindian societies of North America. During the course of graduate studies at the University of Arizona (1978–1982; 1986–1992) I was recurrently challenged to reconcile the study of objects and features or material cultures with the anthropological assessment of their meaning and interpretation. It was at this early stage in my graduate studies that a fellow graduate student, John Andresen, introduced me to UC Berkeley graduate student David Leedom Shaul.

At that time, David “Dave” Shaul was working tirelessly on a doctoral dissertation concerning the otherwise complex linguistic diversity inherent in the cultural landscapes of Native California. Because my training in the anthropology program at Arizona was borne of a four-field approach (i.e., cultural anthropology, archaeology, physical anthropology, and linguistics), I was nevertheless inspired by Professors Keith Basso and Richard Diebold to more fully consider the role of language in culture and cognition. Whereas Dr. Keith Basso’s studies of “language play” among the Cibecue or Western Apache opened my eyes to the complexity and diversity of the Amerindian language base writ large, Dr. Diebold’s passion and genius with respect to conveying the historical linguistics of the Indo-European language family in turn permitted me a nuanced understanding of both the formal and informal dimensions of linguistic analysis and its implications for the interpretation of culture and society.

Over the course of those early years at the University of Arizona, I had many an occasion to draw on David’s expertise and insights with respect to Amerindian language and culture in California and the Southwest. In the late 1980s, I had the distinct privilege of interacting with both David Shaul and John Andresen during the course of their pioneering efforts to make the case for Yuman participation in the Hohokam regional system of ancient Arizona. Their ground-breaking efforts to unite “prehistoric” archaeology with ethnolinguistics made clear to me at that time

that despite the separatist orientations of the day, linguistic “prehistory” was not only possible, but decidedly effective in the hands of so able a linguist as Dr. David Shaul.

Since that time David Shaul has undertaken a host of studies devoted to such areas of linguistic adaptation in the Great Basin, Nevome or Tohono O’odham syntax, Hopi and English lexicons, Esselen and other Costanoan or California Indian language revitalization programs, Opata and Eudeve comparative studies, and language and culture studies more generally. Shaul’s studies are borne of an intensity and determination to thoroughly probe and fully comprehend all dimensions of a given language. His analyses are such that his each and every day are devoted to vocalizing and systematically deconstructing language syntax such that Dr. Shaul has mastered such languages as Hopi, Nevome, Esselen, Monegasque, and Mandarin.

Following on his many years of key contributions in comparative linguistics and sociolinguistics within the Amerindian communities of North America, the current study constitutes a departure in that Dr. Shaul explores the role of linguistic ideology in Native American language revitalization. While earlier studies by the author engage linguistic ideology and its role in language learning and acquisition within the context of specialized linguistic constructs, Shaul here challenges current conventions on the aims and outcomes of language revitalization in Native North America more generally. In so doing, he throws down the gauntlet and thereby brings into question existing language learning models whose formal strictures dictate academic and thereby intellectual as opposed to contextual understandings of heritage language use within the context of the Native American speech community. Shaul’s consideration of culturally appropriate linguistic ideologies, language loss, acquisition and preservation within this context underscores Shaul’s four proposed “Laws” of language revitalization.

Dr. Shaul’s stated objectives in this instance are to “give insight into the motivation and realistic outcomes for language revitalization . . . in Native American communities.” In this latter sense, Shaul’s contribution champions the relevance and cogency of an effective model for language acquisition within the context of heritage language preservation and revitalization. That said, it should be noted that Dr. Shaul has long devoted himself to working with both individuals and native communities with the stated objective and practice of heritage language preservation and instruction. Given his many years of service working to document, preserve, revitalize, and bolster the efforts of those committed to Native American speech community language learning, Dr. Shaul’s latest contribution promises to reify the role of linguistic ideologies in Native American language revitalization.

Seaside, CA, USA

Rubén G. Mendoza

## Preface

The idea behind the book is that the paradigm of European national languages (official orthography; language standardization; full use of language in most everyday contexts) is imposed in cookie-cutter fashion on many language revitalization projects of Native American languages. This is the official language model. While this model fits the sovereign status of many Native American groups, it does not meet the linguistic ideology of Native American communities, and creates projects and products that do not engage the communities which they are created to serve.

The official language model has promoted language revitalization practices that keep people occupied (as in doing the Ghost Dance of the 1890s), but which are not very effective, hence the subtitle of this book.

Instead, I propose a model of Native American language revitalization that is different from the national/official language model, one that respects and incorporates language variation, and entertains variable outcomes. This is because it is based on Native American linguistic ideologies.

Languages are used for communication in several ways. One is the transfer of overt information in announcements, conversation, and other discourse. Another major use of language is symbolic, for example, as an ethnic or group marker. A third major use of language serves emotive purposes. Language revitalization must be based on linguistic ideology from the service community that addresses various uses of language.

Language preservation is currently taken to mean creating a dictionary and grammar of a heritage language, with texts illustrating its use. Language documentation goes beyond this to include video and/or audio documentation of a wide variety of language use (genres), to which a lexical database and grammar description are attached. Language documentation is intended to create a richer archival heritage than language preservation.

Languages are lost when the contexts needing or appropriate for their use dwindle in a speech community. Language loss may be addressed by finding out which contexts need or encourage the use of a heritage language, and what new contexts might do the same. In Native American speech communities, some of the useful

contexts of heritage language use match the uses prescribed by the official language model, while others do not.

Language learning is currently distinguished from language acquisition. Language acquisition means actual control of the language being learned for some context(s). Language learning means learning about a language by considering a language intellectually. The official language model dictates formal, classroom language learning, and typically results in language learning. Learning to actually use a (heritage) language in a context means using it in that context, and invokes a different learning style (workshops, mentoring, socially constructed learning contexts).

The goal of language revitalization in the official language model is a heritage language being used on an equal basis as the national language(s): in school, in broadcast and print media; in the courts; in the schools, etc. Such language revitalization in a Native American community is hard to achieve, given limited time, personnel, and funding. Instead, Native American language revitalization could have variable outcomes: actual revitalization in some vital contexts, where participants use the heritage language in a meaningful way; plus fluent second language speakers who curate the language documentation for their speech community, and facilitate language acquisition for other community members. There is a wide range between fluency and ability to use the language in some contexts. Over time, (younger) speech community members can increase the number of contexts where the heritage language is used.

Such community constructed and based language revitalization (and documentation) projects need to take into account what a given Native American speech community thinks about the structure, symbolic value, and communicative purpose of the linguistic varieties in their community (English, one or more heritage languages). These ideas and attitudes constitute the speech community's linguistic ideology. To this end, a survey is made of what has been published on the topic of Native American linguistic ideologies.

As the book unfolds, the reader will be confronted again and again with the idea of linguistic ideology. While the last chapter sums up the entire work, it may be profitable for the reader to read the first section of Chap. 5 (the untitled introduction, up to the section "Native American Languages as Formal Languages and Native American Linguistic Ideologies") after reading and working through Chap. 1.

The Italian social theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century (Gramsci 1991). His main idea was that a ruling and economic elite in a class society was able to retain control without revolts because the middle and working class were allowed to evolve their own culture which yielded the ideology that they (the lower classes) were stakeholders and had actual input into the political process.

As you read this book, you will notice that much Native American language revitalization has taken place with reference to the linguistic ideology of the dominant (American) culture. Whether be intent or accident, some Native American communities have been tricked into following the official language model and its underlying "one nation, one language" ideology not leading complete restoration of the respective heritage language in daily use by the community.

A cynic, following Gramsci, might say that language revitalization following the paradigm and linguistic ideology of the dominant culture was designed to keep concerned Native Americans busy, thinking that they would achieve (complete) restoration of their heritage language, but in fact reap no real benefits. We will return to this cynical view at the end of the book.

This book is organized in the following chapters:

1. Languages and Language Loss
2. Language Preservation Begets Language Documentation
3. Language Acquisition vs. Language Learning
4. Language Revitalization and Revival
5. Linguistic Ideologies of Language Revitalization
6. Four “Laws” of Language Revitalization

The goal of the book is to give insight into the motivation and realistic outcomes for language revitalization, especially in Native American communities. Following each chapter there is a section on *For Thinking and Classroom Discussion* that has two to four items that illuminate the discussion of the text.

Tucson, AZ, USA

David Leedom Shaul

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# Contents

<b>1 Languages and Language Loss</b> .....	1
How Languages Work.....	1
Language and Social Groups .....	3
Language and Culture, Knowledge and Power.....	4
Language Loss .....	5
For Thinking and Classroom Discussion.....	6
References.....	9
<b>2 Language Preservation Begets Language Documentation</b> .....	11
Language Documentation .....	12
Orality and Written Language .....	14
Case Study: From Diglossia to Heritage	
Language (Tohono O’odham).....	14
For Thinking and Classroom Discussion.....	20
References.....	21
<b>3 Language Acquisition vs. Language Learning</b> .....	23
Theories and Methods of Acquiring a Second Language.....	24
Purism in Second Language Acquisition.....	26
Case Study: Monegasque.....	27
For Thinking and Class Discussion .....	28
References.....	30
<b>4 Language Revitalization and Revival</b> .....	31
Five Success Stories.....	34
Other Stories .....	36
Language Revival.....	39
Different Speech Communities, Differing Goals.....	40
Purism and Complexity.....	41
For Thinking and Classroom Discussion.....	42
References.....	43

- 5 Linguistic Ideologies of Language Revitalization** ..... 45
  - Mainstream American Linguistic Ideology ..... 45
  - Native American Languages as Formal Languages  
and Native American Linguistic Ideologies..... 49
    - For Thinking and Classroom Discussion ..... 52
  - References ..... 53
  
- 6 Four “Laws” of Language Revitalization** ..... 55
  - References ..... 57
  
- Appendix: Some Linguistic Conventions**..... 59
  
- Index**..... 61

# Book Abstract

Linguistic revitalization of Native American languages has been guided largely by models derived from official languages. The documentation and teaching methods that follow from the official language model are largely unsuited for Native American languages, the speakers of which stress oral (rather than written) language. The official language model stresses teaching heritage languages as foreign languages, instead of as a part of the local culture. Native American speech communities have had a diglossia of English (Spanish, French) and the native language since about 1900, but media and television have eroded this balance. As the native language becomes valued as the High variety in its speech community, it becomes commodified. All of these factors (written official language, teaching as a foreign language, commodified with monetary value) have made language revitalization and restoration impossible with methods and programs based on the official language model. This book suggests alternatives which may help language revitalization of Native American languages to varying degrees.

# Chapter 1

## Languages and Language Loss

*“Revitalization almost always requires changing community attitudes about a language, while maintenance seeks to protect against the imposition of outside attitudes.”*

(Grenoble and Whaley 2006)

**Abstract** Language as a human tool kit has several parts (sound system, vocabulary, word, and sentence structure). Language, as a tool kit of a community of the people who speak it, has emotional, ethnic marking, as well as informational uses. Language loss occurs when a speech community shifts away from one language to another as the medium of daily usage. In order to evaluate what people think about language in general or a specific language (structure, function/use), we must first understand how a language works and how it fits into context.

This chapter briefly reviews how languages are designed and how they work, their communicative and symbolic use, and the process of language loss. We will also look at how language interacts with culture and the use of language by social groups. Finally, we will discuss how the social use of language (and ideas about language) brings about language loss.

### How Languages Work

A language has two major parts: a sound system and meaning system, and we will briefly look at each of these structural aspects of language. The **sound system** includes the consonants and vowels that are used in a language; how these speech sounds are arranged into **syllables**, and how the possible syllables make up words, and finally how words (which may be single syllables) are distinguished as words in the stream of speech.

The basic sounds of a language include consonants and vowels. **Vowels** are made when one's mouth and throat are held in a fixed position, as in when a physician asks you to "open your mouth and say ahhh." **Consonants** are the opposite: they are produced when your mouth is moving while speaking. No language has every speech sound that can be made with the human vocal apparatus. Instead, each language uses only a portion of the possible speech sounds, and these are called **phonemes** (sound units). (In literate societies that use an alphabet, speech sounds and phonemes may be equated with "letters.")

The phonemes of a language are used to signal differences in meaning. Consider the English words *bit* and *pit*. They are identical except for the initial consonants, and this **minimal pair** shows that /b/ and /p/ are separate phonemes of English. Linguists use minimal pair tests to discover the phonemes of a language and come up with a **practical orthography** for writing it.

The vowels (V) and consonants (C) of a language occur in set patterns. These are called **syllables**. The heart of a syllable is a vowel or combination of vowels. Languages vary in the way syllables are formed. For example, in English three consonants may occur at the beginning of a word as in the word *strong*. The formula for this is CCCVC (the *-ng* is one consonant, though written with two letters). In many of the world's languages, the only possible syllable is CV.

Many languages have words that are only one syllable long, and many have words that are made up of two or more syllables. The thing that distinguishes one word from another in the stream of speech is some prominent feature such as stress which defines English words. Compare the phrase *black bird* (a bird that is black, such as a crow) and the single word *blackbird* (a particular kind of bird that is also black). The phrase *black bird* is made up of two words (each of which has a stress), and the word *blackbird* has only one stress.

The meaning system of a language has two parts: the vocabulary and the way the words are put together into phrases, simple sentences, and complex sentences. The structure of the words of a language is made from roots and other meaningful parts. The English word *elephant* has three syllables, but is only one root. The word *undeniable* has three syllables, but has three parts (*un-*, *deny-*, and *-ble*). The forms *elephant*, *un-*, *deny*, and *-ble* are **morphemes** (smallest meaningful elements) of English, and *un-* is a **prefix** (because it is fixed or put before something else) and *-ble* is a **suffix** (put after something else).

Words are arranged into sentences. Consider the following English data, which increase in order of complexity.

*the black dog* (phrase)

*The black dog is hungry.* (simple sentence)

*The black dog wants to go for a walk.* (complex sentence)

In the complex sentence, there are two (understood) simple sentences: "the black dog wants X" and "the black dog goes for a walk"; "going outside for a walk" is what the dog wants to do. The structure of phrases and sentences is often referred to narrowly as **grammar**, and the vocabulary of a language as its dictionary or **lexicon**.

Many languages also modify words in order to show such categories as plural (more than one) or tense (relative time of action).

*the dog* (singular)  
*the dogs* (plural; more than one dog)  
*the dog wants* (singular; present tense)  
*the dogs want* (plural; present tense)

In standard English, the suffix *-s* marks plural on nouns and singular (present) on verbs. This is called **inverse marking** (the same marker marks related categories in different contexts). Although English has this property, most speakers are unaware of it. But the absence of the suffix *-s* would be noticed (as in *the dog want to go outside*), and its absence would identify the speaker (as a nonstandard English speaker) and trigger value judgments (speaker is uneducated, or the speaker is “one of us”).

The use or absence of a feature like *-s* as a group marker (class membership) or situational marker (lack of *-s* equals informal talk with peers of one’s own class or group) shows how language is used in social contexts. The two forms of *-s* (presence of the suffix or its absence) are the variants of a **linguistic variable**. Linguistic variables help to define social groups.

## Language and Social Groups

**Sociolinguistics** is the study of how language relates to social groups and social grouping on two levels: the macrolevel (whole communities) and microlevel (parts of communities). On the macrolevel, there are speech communities. Each **speech community** has at least one language (or variety of a language) that it uses. For example the native people of Easter Island habitually use two languages (Rapa Nui, the native Polynesian language; Spanish). The language(s) of a speech community are called **codes**, and each code has varieties that are appropriate to different contexts such as casual and formal (these are called **registers**). The code(s) and registers of each code make up the **linguistic repertory** of the speech community.

A speech community may be bounded, such as Easter Island. One can view the actual territory of the Rapa Nui speech community from the air. Yet other speech communities are unbounded. Examples include the speech community of American English, the speech community of Canadian English, and even the worldwide community of world English. The concept of speech community is thus a heuristic, but useful concept.

Within a single speech community, there are **networks** of people who interact regularly, in the same context (work place, home, school, club). Members of linguistic networks share **linguistic items** (typically: expressions, slang, or technical words appropriate to the context). In a Native American context, the native language (a macro feature) may be the main shared item.

When a speech community has two main codes that it uses, it is said to have a **diglossia** (meaning “two languages”). In the classic definition of diglossia (Ferguson 1959), a speech community has a linguistic repertory of two codes, originally cast as “High” and “Low.” The High variety (which we will call Formal) is used for formal/public occasions. The Low variety—we will use the term Informal—is used at home, with family and friends. The Formal variety is usually the community’s

written variety, if one exists, and is also the variety which is connected to higher social status. In diglossic communities, there are often—though certainly not always— asymmetries in access to the two varieties, with the Formal variety being less widely mastered than the Informal one.

Before the four-legged babysitter (television and its derivatives), most Native American communities in the United States were diglossic: English, the language of the matrix culture (and the written language learned in school), was the Formal variety, and the Informal variety was a local or regional Native American language. After mass media (among other forces) endangered all Native American languages in North America (except for Greenlandic), the diglossia went through a gradual collapse.

Makihara (2004, 2005a, b) has called the diglossia that happens when dominant (matrix) cultures are foisted on native peoples “colonial diglossia.” **Colonial diglossia** is typical of much of the colonized world, where most of the world’s language loss occurs. The inadequacy and shame felt by Native Americans in the United States is/was felt by linguistic-cultural minorities all over the world.

Even as a Native American speech community’s diglossia collapsed, the diglossia itself did not. A new reservation-centered public diglossia arose in which the native language became the Formal variety, and English became the Informal variety. The number of speakers of the Formal (native) variety declined in most tribes, and the occasions for its use declined as well, with older people using the language in private settings.

Within reservation communities, the native language continues to be used in formal contexts such as ceremony, prayer, speeches, and some school contexts. The use of native languages is increasingly seen in many communities as a self-conscious variety of cultural performance, done by respected and confident elders. As a result, the **cultural capital** associated with native languages has increased in many communities simultaneously with the decline in active speakers. As the cultural capital of a language increases and the number of active speakers decreases, the language comes to be a commodity that can be owned or managed as a cultural resource (but by whom?) and may become an object of political debate and struggle (Hill 2002).

Once a language begins to be commodified, the language itself and the ideology surrounding it become increasingly influenced by the discourse of economic value deriving ultimately from Euro-American domains of power. Once this “reverse diglossia” has happened, the heritage language becomes a commodity with monetary value. **Language ideology** (what the speech community thinks about language and its heritage language specifically) and language revitalization processes in many local communities must take commodification of their heritage language(s) into account, and not just actual language use or context of usage.

## Language and Culture, Knowledge and Power

A **culture** is a lifeway, a way of knowing and perceiving the world. One classic definition of culture includes everything that a person learns as a member of a society. Defining culture as all learned knowledge and resulting behavior is the **holistic**

definition of culture. The commodification of a native language fits with this conception of culture: the heritage language as a single cultural item, with monetary value (Dorian 1994, 1998). To know the language is to have cultural capital, and therefore potential power in one's speech community.

An alternative view of culture is to split it into material culture and nonmaterial culture. This two-way split separates material necessities (the "food, clothing, and shelter" of elementary school social studies) from the world of ideas. The world of ideas, as applied to language use, may be broken out into smaller categories such as how to greet someone, how to make a complaint, how to invite, or the traditional contexts for using numbers.

Both views of culture (holistic and specific) will be useful in the discussion that follows. I will suggest that the linguistic ideology of a given Native American speech community must be considered on a holistic level, but that linguistic ideology must be articulated in specific contexts of language use in order for any realistic language revitalization to take place.

## Language Loss

There are two main factors in language loss: declining number of contexts in which a language is used and declining number of speakers. There are several reasons for both; the following apply to most Native American situations in the United States:

- Increasing reliance on a cash economy, with English as the code of the workplace.
- Marriage into other tribes or with English speakers, with English as the interlanguage.
- Moving away from the native speech community into an English-speaking one.
- Severe punishment at (boarding) schools for speaking a native language.
- Parents want to avoid their (boarding) school experience and help their children succeed, so they teach them only English.
- The increased influence (and prestige) of English language media, especially after 1970.

I will add another crucially important ingredient to this downward spiral:

- The wholesale adoption of institutions (government, school, church) from the dominant culture.

The reason for this last factor (institutions from the matrix culture) will become apparent as the book progresses.

The factors listed above are the impetus for the "reverse diglossia" in Native American speech communities: the Formal code (English) of the early reservation period becomes the Informal code, while the former Informal code (the Native American language) becomes a Formal code used in public and ceremony by few competent speakers, gaining cultural capital that has monetary value and is a matter of possible political contention.

Crystal (2000) gives a mirror-image list, one of factors or thresholds that speech communities with valued and declining heritage languages need to achieve in order to reverse language loss:

- Speakers of the diminishing language need to increase their prestige
- Speakers need to increase their wealth
- Speakers need to increase their political power
- Speakers need to have a strong influence on the education of their children
- Speakers can read and write the language
- Speakers use the language with electronic media

Prestige, wealth, political power, and influence on education are all about the power on money. Yet some tribes in the United State have wealth (from casinos and gaming), and most have political power (having the status of domestic internal nations, if they are federally recognized by the U.S. government), and yet language loss has largely not been reversed as of 2010, so these factors are not sufficient conditions to reverse language loss.

Education, written language, and use of electronic media hint at the **official language model**: a standard form of a language with an accepted written form that is taught in the schools, and is used in its standard (written) form in print, broadcast, and electronic media. This is hardly plausible for a Native American speech community of a few hundred speakers; contexts of language use need to be appropriate and natural for them, instead of imposing the linguistic ideology of the dominant, English-speaking culture.

A partial answer is favoring **orality** over literacy. Many Native Americans will tell you that their heritage language is a spoken language passed down the generations by word of mouth. Such a situation must underscore a very different situation than the ideology behind the official language model. It is the purpose of this book to investigate the alternative of a linguistic ideology and language revitalization favoring orality over literacy.

### *For Thinking and Classroom Discussion*

This first section of items is activities designed to facilitate an appreciation of the different levels of a language (sound system, morphemes, simple sentences, and complex sentences). Each is self-explanatory and should be thought about before they are gone over in class.

1. Toward a Sound Pattern of Ausaima: Ausaima is a Costanoan/Ohlonean language that was spoken to the north of San Juan Bautista in California. The words below have been taken from the only surviving document in Ausaima (Shaul 2013).
  - (a) Your first task is to list the total number of consonants and vowels that are present in the data. Your second task is to see if any of the consonants

contrast at the beginnings of words, like the English words *bit* and *pit*. The data is transcribed into the spelling system explained in the appendix.

inxán,	“how many?”	kapxán,	“three”
wak,	“her/his”	imát,	“only”
ʃarák,	“sky”	aya,	“where?”
púsen,	“reviving”	ʃáres,	“man”
emexeča,	“one”	paʃe,	“priest”
nupakmá	“these”	kečikéma,	“woman”
apa,	“father”	inís,	“son”
ʃaráktak,	“in heaven”	ekwé,	“no/not”
aye,	“other”	amšemák,	“good ones”
ʃarsépis,	“become a man”	ʃaóra,	“be”
ari’ú,	“distinct”	nupa,	“this”
ekeʃemák,	“sins”	’ixi,	“yes”
uʃípa,	“second”	ʃarése,	“man” (as direct object)
pusénis,	“revived”	čukwínis,	“died”
nuxúta,	“there”	yuta,	“or”
muwé,	“body”	šawápin,	“confessing”

- (b) The acute accent is used to mark stress in Ausaima. Stress in English is an increase in volume with an increase in pitch; the stress is marked in the following English words: *ábsent*, *dógwood*, *élephant*, *unáble*. If stress is not marked in a word, assume that stress is on the first syllable. Is stress in Ausaima predictable?
- (c) What is the syllable structure of Ausaima? Does knowing it help to predict stress in Ausaima?

2. Person Markers in Salinan: The Salinan language takes its name from the Salinas River of coastal, central California. There were two dialects, one centered around the mission at San Antonio de Padua and one centered around San Miguel. The data below is from Antoniano. The Salinan speech community was located north of the present town of San Luis Obispo, which is halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The data below is from Turner (1987). The data focuses on how **person marking** is done in Salinan. Person marking in Salinan corresponds to English pronouns such as *I*, *me*, and *my*.

- (a) Segment the following words into morphemes. (The prefix *ʃe-* means something roughly like the English word *the*.) Make a list of the morphemes in the data, along with a gloss of what each means. What role does stress play in the person marking in Salinan?

téka:kel,	“my song”	ʃá:ʃka:kel,	“our song”
ʃméka:kel,	“thy song”	ʃkóka:kel,	“your song”
ʃka:kélo,	“her/his song”	ʃka:kléto,	“their song”

- (b) Now look over the verbs (action words) below. How is person marking done in these words?

kéšem hék'	“I am drinking”
kéšem mó',	“you are drinking”
kéšem xeyó',	“he or she is drinking”
kéštem hák',	“we are drinking”
kéštem móm	“you (plural) are drinking”
kéštem,	“they are drinking”

3. Simple Sentences, Negation, and Questions in Esselen: The Esselen (Huelel) language was the first California language to become dormant. It was spoken in the interior of the Monterey Peninsula and eastward toward Soledad. The data is from Shaul (1995).

- (a) Look through the following Esselen sentences. What is the basic word order? That is, what is the order of the **subject** (doer of the action), **verb** (action word), and **object** (person or thing affected by the action)? Write a formula for the simple sentence in Esselen.

(1)

<i>Dios</i>	hesiha	kominam	hekei	ča'a.
God	made	all	those [things] existing	

“God made ... all things.”

(2)

Ma'ali-lam	čunai-šame	<i>Dios</i>	teipas.
not-he	die-must.have	God	as

“He did not die as God.”

(3)

<i>Dios</i>	ahik	las	ayam.
God	that	honorable	father

“God is the Honored Father.”

(4)

Ca	<i>Dios</i>	las	pam?
Q	God	honorable	son

“Is the Honorable Son God?”

(5)

Lasi-paya		lečis		hučup-mus		ot-no.
honorable-headman		us		bring-will		heaven-to

“The Honorable Headman will bring us to Heaven.”

(6)

Ma'ali	xulef	wa	<i>Dios</i>	aniwa	xulef	<i>personas.</i>
not	three	those	god(s)	these	three	persons

“These three persons are not three gods.”

(7)

Ka	polet	wahik	<i>Dios</i>	aniwa	xulef	<i>personas?</i>
Q	different	these	god(s)	those	three	persons

“Are those three persons different gods?”

- (b) How are simple sentences in Esselen negated (the morpheme for “not” is inserted into the sentence)? How are simple sentences in Esselen turned into questions? Do either of these two **operations** affect the word order?

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## Chapter 2

# Language Preservation Begets Language Documentation

*“Language shift is complicated. Overly simplistic representations don’t give us the insights we need to address the issue.”*

—Daniel H. Hieber

**Abstract** Language preservation is the recording in various media of a language that is losing its speakers. A language is “reduced” to writing, a grammar is written, and a dictionary compiled. A set of texts (usually myths and oral history) is gathered. Such are the efforts of language preservation. Language documentation, in the current sense of the term, goes beyond language preservation to include sociolinguistic data, sound and video recording of texts (illustration sentences, dictionary entries), as well as a variety of genres (conversation, myth, oral history, biography, ethnography, folklore). Language preservation of Native American languages is not enough; we must demand language documentation if there are still speakers willing to cooperate with the effort. Language documentation is needed before actual language revitalization can proceed.

This chapter makes a difference between recording a language expected to die and stay dead (language preservation) and trying to record as much language use as possible (as well a grammar and dictionary)—language documentation. Language documentation is based on the expectation of some future use of the language being documented. Language preservation is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that once a language is gone, it’s gone.

At the outset, it is important to ask why even bother to document hundreds of languages that may be lost? The answer is twofold: they offer insights into what is possible in natural language and human cognition, and they are essential to the positive self-image of their speakers. David Harrison, in his book *When Languages Die* (2007), presents the main reasons for what language loss means for world culture.

His examples are given from a humanistic point of view, and deal with what is ultimately possible in human language and cognition. Examples include calendars and counting systems, botany, and the nature of poetics.

I will give one example: The sterile and reductionistic linguistic theory of Chomsky is biased on the idea that there is a special relation between the direct object and the verb, an artifact inherited from the study of Indo-European grammar. Chomsky holds that the verb and object in human languages form a single unit (the verb phrase), in which the verb and object are adjacent. Yet there are many languages like Welsh and Hawaiian that have VSO (Verb–Subject–Object) order which violates this cornerstone of Chomsky’s. There are many details of how languages are structured and how language codes basic categories that are provided for by a rich documentation of the world’s languages.

Native American language preservation has been a cut-and-dried set of

- A grammar
- A dictionary
- Set of (mythological) texts

These were in their day (most of the 1900s) written records (sometimes printed), and, especially after World War II, were accompanied by some sort of audio recording of vocabulary and texts. This enterprise was called **descriptive** linguistics (as opposed to **theoretical** linguistics).

The traditional language of a Native American community may be spoken of as its **heritage language**. The terms “language death” and “language obsolescence” are negative in connotation, and index the idea that once a language dies, it’s gone, and all that will remain is some sort of linguistic preservation. Therefore, the terms “language loss” is used here.

A language that is no longer spoken (even if there are still fluent speakers) is said to be a **sleeping** or **dormant** language, in preference to (nearly) **extinct** language. In this book, I use dormant language when I need to make a neutral statement about language status, but will prefer the term heritage language to refer to the language’s cultural importance.

## Language Documentation

This trio of works was the documentation of what were expected to be extinct languages. At the very end of the 1900s, after an about of formalism in linguistics that looked down on descriptive linguistics, documenting languages that were being lost once again became acceptable, even fashionable.

With the revolution in computing—with processing and storage taking less and less space—descriptive linguistics gave way to a fuller range of formats. Not only are written records produced, but the primary work is audio and/or video recording of native speakers using the language. In fact, the written documents are mainly transcripts of the spoken and visual records.

At the same time, different kinds of language are targeted for capture: oratory, songs, jokes, riddles, traditional stories, language games, sayings and proverbs, oral history,

autobiography, biography, descriptions of important material items and events or ceremonies, conversation, etc. That's quite a list, and it makes one realize the extent of the use of language in culture, both public and private in daily life and ceremonial life.

The goal is to get as much information as possible to document a wealth of use of a heritage language, from as many speakers as possible. Transcripts of the collected speech events and conversations are going to be helpful for future use, and it is obvious that it is easier to make these while the materials are collected than at some future time.

The issue of intellectual property rights is at the very heart of language documentation. The material *as performed* belongs to the individual who performed it. The individual must grant permission to contribute each of their performances to the archive. The actual story or tradition is a part of the speech community's culture, and so is community property. The documents of the project are in the public domain, with possible restrictions in use. Privacy must be maintained, and gossip and esoteric material excluded. If esoteric material is gathered, it must be protected and some provision made for access to it.

But who is going to administer the archive? Who is going to grant permission where appropriate, and who is going to decide how the archive is used in language revitalization? All of these issues must be decided before a language documentation project gets under way.

The old-fashioned projects of making a grammar and dictionary of the heritage language are also part of a language documentation project, since they will be of use to speech community members of the future who use their linguistic patrimony in various ways. These documents need to be presented in a way that nonlinguists can use them.

The literature on Native American language revitalization outlines concern over language loss; there is a good review in Hinton and Hale (2001). Early on, there are efforts at documentation (grammar, often a teaching grammar; bilingual dictionary; sound recordings in the language of relevant texts). Following this are varying experiments with language teaching. As the number of active speakers (native or fluent second language learners) decreases, the cultural capital of the language increases.

There is another issue that must be addressed is the subject of language description and documentation: understandability. The persons who describe a Native American language have the moral obligation to do so in such a way that members of the community can understand it. Using standard linguistic lingo is another form of cultural oppression. It is necessary to bridge the gap of academia and the real world of native persons, and it is possible. The following is from a Native American student writing on a final essay I gave in an introductory course in linguistics.

I felt very apprehensive in the beginning of this class because the linguists who come to my house make it seem so difficult to study languages let alone mine which is difficult and very discouraging in the first place to speak my language but to hear them throw around English words I didn't understand either, well not anymore. I totally loved this class and it opened my eyes a whole lot more than I expected and found out about my own language which is totally AWESOME! THANKS!!

It is this sort of service that academics can provide to Native American communities.

## Orality and Written Language

“Reducing a language to writing” needs a comment here. If a language is written down, all of the expression of the spoken word is reduced. The melody and nuance of the human voice, the tools of artistic delivery, and everyday expression are lost. Native American cultures value spoken language over written. Writing a heritage language is useful, but not the ultimate goal in documenting and using a Native American heritage language.

Having a written system for a language to be revitalized is helpful for practical use, to reinforce learning, and to serve for notation. Yet it can ignore the essentially oral value and use of the language, and, worse, it can create the basis for heraldic use (strengthening the tendency to reduce the language’s context of use to a single domain, that of public display of the language’s cultural capital) and/or increase the language’s commodification (by licensing who is qualified to write the standard language and/or teach the language). Valuing written language over oral language is, of course, the hallmark of the official language model.

It is noteworthy that a book billed in the back cover blurb as “a definitive guide to language revitalization” (Grenoble and Whaley 2006) devotes two of the seven chapters (27.94 % of the actual text) to writing systems and establishing an orthography. Clearly, one must distinguish between the theory and method of language documentation, with developing a writing system being a large part of method. Whether a help or a hinderance, writing adds a dimension to considering linguistic ideologies of language revitalization.

Grenoble and Whaley claim that “even small-scale local literacy can have profound effects on how a language is viewed, and even programs that are relatively unsuccessful in creating domains for the use of literacy can be effective in destigmatizing a local language” (2006: 117). Heraldic, emblematic use of heritage languages is likely in any event, but the prestige effect of its being written may not play out in local matrix or Native American communities. However, in cases where the local linguistic ideology does not value writing, it might be possible to favor orality by using audio and video as the primary media.

### Case Study: From Diglossia to Heritage Language (Tohono O’odham)

With “reverse diglossia” and the urgency for richer documentation of Native American languages in mind, let’s look at an actual situation. It shows the typical “natural history” of language loss (decline, concern, documentation, teaching and public awareness, commodification).

Tohono O’odham (hereafter in this chapter, O’odham), spoken in southern Arizona, had a colonial diglossia before 1980; there was a diglossia of O’odham at

**Table 2.1** Age by language spoken at home, 2000 census

	O’odham reservation and off-reservation trust lands			
	English	Spanish	Other (O’odham)	Total
5–17 years	2,344	60	644	3,048
18–64 years	2,250	283	3,398	5,946
65+	156	70	534	743
	4,750	413	4,576	9,737

home (or informal situations) and English usage at school, work, and for writing. O’odham is in many respects typical of the sorts of challenges faced by Native American languages at the beginning of the twenty-first century. O’odham remains mostly a spoken language in some public contexts, and to some extent as a home language. Statistics show a steady decline in both people who can speak the language, but also occasions when they do so.

The reference resources available on the O’odham language are good. There is a readily available teaching grammar (Zepeda 1982). The dictionaries (Saxton and Saxton 1969; Saxton et al. 1982; Mathiot n.d.) are adequate, but none are in the official orthography. There is an excellent set of readers in O’odham developed by the San Simon School, as well as multimedia developed by the Venito Garcia Library and Archives. In addition, there are the unpublished materials of a dialect survey (Zepeda and Hill 1985–1986), as well as numerous audio recordings in the Venito Garcia Library and Archives and elsewhere.

The current long-range education plan (Papago Tribe of Arizona 1982) states that Tohono O’odham Nation “should establish a policy of supporting and encouraging bilingual education in O’odham schools” (1982:83). This concern and mandate for education was not followed through during the 1980s and 1990s, prompting a second Tohono O’odham Educational Summit (November 18–19, 2004).

There was language loss of a 20-year period, according to the U.S. Census of 2000 and 1990 (<http://www.itcaonline.com/Tribes/tohono.htm>). Census 2000 (DP-2, Profile of Selected Social Characteristics, Summary File 3) shows that for the 9,737 people in the population 5 years and older 4,750 or 48.5 % speak English only, 4,987 or 51.2 % of the population speak a language other than English, and 2,580 or 26.5 % speak English less than “very well” (<http://factfinder.census.gov>). Age ranges best see the language loss over the census decades. The information for 2000 is in Table 2.1.

In Table 2.1, 21 % of the children on the main reserve spoke O’odham at home in 2000, with 57 % of the middle age range speaking O’odham at home. About 71 % of the elders spoke O’odham at home in 2000.

In Table 2.2, 49.7 % of the children spoke O’odham at home in 1990, with 79.5 % of the middle age range speaking O’odham at home. About 95 % of the elders spoke O’odham at home in 1990.

In Table 2.3, 75.5 % of the children spoke O’odham at home in 1990, with 92.5 % of the middle age range speaking O’odham at home.

The overall loss can now be seen in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.2** Age by language spoken at home, 1990 census

Papago Reservation				
Age	Speak only English	Spanish	Other (O'odham)	Total
5–17	1,287	0	1,274	2,561
18–64	877	51	3,612	4,540
65+	21	8	549	578
Total	2,185	59	5,435	7,101

**Table 2.3** Age by language spoken at home, 1980 census

Papago Reservation				
Age	Speak only English	Spanish	Other (O'odham)	Total
5–17	543	0	1,675	2,218
18 and over	288	11	3,717	4,016
Total	831	11	5,392	6,234

**Table 2.4** Language Used at Home (Papago Reserve), 1980 to 2000 in Percents

	1980	1990	2000
5–17	75.5 %	49.7 %	21 %
18–64	92.5 %	79.5 %	57 %

**Table 2.5** Reported home use of O'odham (VGLA Survey 2003)

	Used 75 % or more	About half the time	Little/no use
18 years old and less	40 %	42 %	16 %
18–50 years old	18 %	39 %	43 %
50 or more years old	36 %	47 %	17 %

There is an overall decline, but the most alarming factor is the rapid loss in the younger age range.

In the 1990 census, about 95 % people of the age of 65 and over spoke O'odham. This means the older people were born from around 1925 into the 1930s. In 1980, 75 % of people aged 18 years and below could speak the language. This means that during the 1980s, the diglossia (O'odham at home and in informal situations; English for school, on the job, and writing) eroded rapidly.

A survey (2003) by the Venito Garcia Library and Archives (VGLA) on O'odham language and technology gave the following comparable figures (Table 2.5).

These figures are within the range specified by the U.S. 2000 Census (range of 40–47 %). The same VGLA survey of 2003 provides a more specific breakdown of the structure of the O'odham-speaking community on the main reserve (Table 2.6).

In general, females tend to retain O'odham more than males, and, as expected, older people tend to speak better and be native speakers. The number of speakers in the lower two age brackets is about the same (56 %), but the number of native speakers and self-reporting fluent speakers declines with age.

**Table 2.6** Age and gender of O'odham speakers (VGLA Survey 2003)

	Can speak O'odham	Native speaker	Fluent	Average	Not very fluent
Female (18/less)	57.5 %	27 %	12 %	22 %	66 %
Male (18/less)	50 %	29 %	0 %	14 %	88 %
Total	56 %	27 %	10 %	21 %	69 %
Female (18–49)	60 %	47.5 %	27.5 %	25 %	47.5 %
Male (18–49)	34 %	67 %	34 %	0 %	66 %
Total	56 %	50 %	28 %	22 %	50 %
Female (50+)	80 %	20 %	20 %	40 %	40 %
Male (50+)	66 %	33 %	33 %	0 %	66 %
Total	83 %	58 %	58 %	25 %	17 %
No gender given	55 %	44 %	11 %	22 %	66 %
Total	58 %	37.6 %	20 %	21 %	59 %

**Table 2.7** Should O'odham be taught in schools serving the nation? (VGLA Survey 2003)

	Yes	No
18 years old and less	98 %	2 %
18–50 years old	97 %	3 %
50 or more years old	100 %	0 %

**Table 2.8** Methods suggested for teaching O'odham (VGLA Survey 2003)

	Technology	Classroom teachers	Elders
18 years old and less	11 %	35 %	54 %
18–50 years old	24 %	35 %	41 %
50 or more years old	11 %	37 %	52 %

**Table 2.9** Would/do you talk to your children in O'odham? (VGLA Survey 2003)

	Yes	No	Seldom
	71 %	22 %	7 %

The VGLA survey of 2003 asked whether O'odham should be taught in the schools serving the Tohono O'odham Nation (Table 2.7).

There is general agreement that O'odham should be taught in schools serving the Tohono O'odham Nation. The majority of respondents agreed that elders should be involved with this process, and about a third agreed that classroom teachers should be involved (Table 2.8).

Of all the answers given (all three could be indicated by a respondent), technology was the least preferred method. However, it is possible to utilize technology in combination with the other methods; about 25 % of respondents indicated technology with some other method.

The desire to maintain O'odham as a spoken language is shown in a number of contexts, such as the importance of speaking to children in O'odham, a frequently volunteered comment on the VGLA survey (Table 2.9).

**Table 2.10** Where did you learn O’odham? (VGLA Survey 2003)

Grandparents	Parents/ grandparents	Other relatives	School	Other
21 %	32 %	22 %	18 %	7 %

**Table 2.11** Should they speak O’odham on the new radio station, regardless of the music played? (VGLA Survey 2003)

Yes	No	Not sure
56 %	6 %	38 %

The importance of the younger age range learning O’odham is clear. Yet it seems that there are multiple contexts for learning O’odham (Table 2.10).

The importance of grandparents as caregivers is clear, as is the overall traditional role of the family in language maintenance. However, the schools are seen as having an impact on O’odham maintenance by nearly a quarter of respondents. The significance of schools in O’odham language maintenance is also evident in Tables 2.6 and 2.7.

A new context for maintaining O’odham is the new radio station (KOHN) (Table 2.11).

This is clearly an outlet for teaching O’odham; its role remains to be defined by the station manager and his staff. Yet as a spoken language medium, it clearly fits into an overall O’odham language maintenance program.

In the past 20-odd years (1980–2004), O’odham has been taught at several levels, and research has progressed somewhat, taking advantage of recent technological developments in multimedia authoring. The results have been to encourage the use of language, but the overall impact of these programs is not known.

Language classes at Tohono O’odham Community College (TOCC) have been patterned after O’odham 101–102, a college level course offered over the past 20 years at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. The course goal is to teach the pronunciation of O’odham, the official orthography, and basic grammar. All of the O’odham 101–102 classes are usually organized around a teaching grammar (Zepeda 1982). The goal of O’odham 101–102 is to give the student the ability to read and pronounce O’odham, understand the grammar of simple sentences, but not necessarily to be able to speak O’odham as a second language.

In addition, TOCC has developed an introductory course, O’odham 106 (“Conversational O’odham”). The goal of this course is language introduction (pronunciation, greetings and some basic conversation, some grammar) and cultural sensitivity training (for non-O’odham people taking the course).

There has been language and culture instruction in the Indian Oasis—Baboquivari School District for the past 10 years. The goal of the program is to teach the spelling and pronunciation of O’odham, foster respect for the language, and impart certain basics of O’odham culture. The students (K-3) at Indian Oasis Primary School receive one hour of language and culture per week for 4 years. A primary pupil will

thus have about 144 contact hours total. Not aimed at producing fluency, this program gives students a positive self-identity.

The Children's Songs project was developed over from 2000 to 2002 jointly by staff of the Early Childhood Division and the Venito Garcia Library and Archives of the Tohono O'odham Education Department. The goal is to involve preschool children (ages 3 and 4) in oral O'odham (comprehension and vocalization) by using a body of nursery rhymes and common preschool songs with multimodal learning (hearing, visual, motion). The product (Robinson et al. 2003) is a booklet with CD of the music sung by Elders. (Songs are not traditionally O'odham, and include such songs as "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Twinkle, Twinkle," and Mother Goose rhymes).

About 60 children participate each year, making a total of 180 students that have been served over a 3-year period (2000–2002). By the end of the school year, most students understand the 20 core songs, and many are able to sing them as well. The core songs incorporate the basics of O'odham pronunciation and language structure. This program connects with the language and culture program of the Indian Oasis Primary School, but only about half of the entering kindergarten population will have had the preschool program.

The teaching grammar that has been used for the last 20 years (Zepeda 1982) was intended to teach O'odham speakers how to read and write, although it had a secondary goal of teaching O'odham to nonspeakers. Until recently, there was no O'odham conversational method for adults. VGLA has developed such a course (Dena Thomas et al., *A:cim ac Neneok O'odhamkaj*, 2002) using the MaxAuthor courseware software developed at the University of Arizona. This program has 180 lessons, most of which are everyday conversation. The courseware allows the student to use an independent or networked CD, and can play and/or repeat at the text, sentence, or word level; pronunciation, flashcard, and fill-the-blank exercises are generated automatically.

There was a highly successful program at San Simon School (western part of the main reserve) when O'odham students began their formal education (K-2) in O'odham (1978 to mid-1980s). During the course of this program, a substantial number of O'odham language arts books were produced, along with a generation of skilled bilinguals in O'odham and English. This effort, funded through Title VII, ended in the 1980s when the funding ran out. However, it was so influential that the Tohono O'odham Nation education plan currently in effect (Papago Tribe of Arizona 1982), made at the time of the San Simon School O'odham language project, provides for mandatory instruction in O'odham as a long-range educational goal.

Although the use of O'odham as a spoken language has declined, the language is still seen mainly as a language spoken in the home, at work, and in public meetings. Schools are also indicated as a context for speaking O'odham, and there is overwhelming agreement that O'odham should be part of the curriculums of schools serving the Tohono O'odham Nation. Elders are seen as the most important source of O'odham instruction, while about 25 % of VGLA survey respondents mentioned technology (such as multimedia) in conjunction with elders and classroom teachers as teaching resources. Multimedia promotes O'odham as a spoken language. The formal O'odham instruction for the last 10 years has concentrated on written O'odham and formal grammar.

The language programs currently available on the main reserve are for adults, and emphasize written O'odham. The population served has been small. A small amount of O'odham instruction has been available to preschool and primary school children, with no instruction in the middle grades or high school, despite the officially stated long-range goal of providing effective O'odham language instruction in the Nation's schools.

In summary, there has been language loss in the O'odham speech community. The language is relatively well documented, and many recordings and texts exist. There have been experiments with language teaching and conservation during the past 20 years that must have been fueled at least in part by a concern over language loss.

There is also evidence of increased cultural capital of O'odham, especially as a written language. Mottos in O'odham have become required on letterheads, posters for programs sponsored by the O'odham government, and one finds similar texts on tee shirts, bumper stickers, personalized license plates, coffee mugs, and awards. This kind of text (short, on a public-oriented object) indicates that O'odham has acquired a cultural capital and a public presence it did not have 30 years ago.

### *For Thinking and Classroom Discussion*

1. Try to Develop a Writing System: Go back to the work on item (1) in Chap. 1. Using only ordinary letters and combinations of letters, propose a practical orthography (spelling system) for Ausaima.
2. In this book, for the sake of simplicity, we are assuming that a Native American speech community has a heritage language and a matrix language (English, French, or Spanish). Consider a Native American community has two heritage languages, like the Fort Hall reserve in southern Idaho (Shoshone, Bannock). How could one plan to include both heritage languages in a language documentation project? A related, and more common issue, is the existence of more than one variety (dialect) of a language, such as the Wind River Reservation in central Wyoming, where at least four different dialects are still spoken, one of them having a radically different pronunciation than the others. How can a language documentation project proceed in such a situation?
3. Walter Ong: The noted scholar Walter Ong brought the issue of **orality** (possessing an oral culture that values oral tradition over writing) to the fore of American thought. He argued that speech communities without writing had a limited ability to store information, and that such cultures tended to be less abstract than cultures with a tradition of writing. These claims could suggest that speech communities with an oral culture are less intellectually advanced than speech communities that privilege the written word. Find resources on Ong's thought and discuss. Are there counterexamples to his claims? How strong are his claims?

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## Chapter 3

# Language Acquisition vs. Language Learning

*“If you talk to a man in a language he understands,  
that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language,  
that goes to his heart.”*

—Nelson Mandela

**Abstract** Language learning is the teaching about a language (its use, its speaker, its structure), with the hope that the student will learn enough to actually be able to speak the target language. Language acquisition, in its current sense, tries to expose the student to the target language in meaningful ways so that he or she acquires the language’s structure through actual use. Language learning follows from the official language model, whereas Native American languages are taught as foreign language in their own native community. This helps to commodify the heritage language; makes studying it an artificial exercise; and occupies the time, money, and effort of the population that could be better spent in doing language acquisition and achieving real results of the revitalization of their heritage language.

This chapter reviews the distinction between learning about a language (language learning) and actually gaining some control of a second language (language acquisition). Following from the language preservation paradigm, most Native American language revival efforts have followed from the grammar and dictionary, teaching the target language as if it were Latin—talking about the language and concocting artificial sentences like those of the traditional grammar-translation method the follows from the official language model.

## Theories and Methods of Acquiring a Second Language

**Language Learning** refers to learning about a language, its sound system, its structure. It is largely an intellectual exercise. **Language acquisition** means somehow absorbing a target language's sound system and structure, ideally without ever thinking explicitly about the language's actual structure. Language learning follows from the official language model: one learns how to pronounce and write the **target language** correctly, how to make nouns plural (if the target language does that), how to mark person of subject (doer of the action) on verbs (if the target language does that), and so on.

The typical outcome of this sort of classroom exercise is the ability to pronounce the language from a written text, say a few greetings, count to ten, to understand how a simple sentence is constructed, and may be able to read and understand simple prose in the target language. Such an approach fittingly and amply conforms to the linguistic ideology of the United States, which also comes logically out of the official language model: one nation, one language.

This was the first sort of language learning that was tried in Native American communities where reverse diglossia had set in. A grammar, dictionary, and set of texts may have already existed, and so with a **teaching grammar** one could offer courses in the language, and everything would be hunky-dory. The approach didn't work, and it only fed into the status quo, the goal of which is the total extinction of Native American languages and their replacement with English.

The institutions that tribes took over also help to fan the flames of language loss. The school systems where heritage languages might be/are offered are often off-reservation, and controlled by the matrix culture. If the tribe is large enough to have its own schools, they are inherited in hierarchy, curriculum, and method from the educational model of the matrix culture. The educational system of the reservation simply reproduces what was already in place, a plan that feeds into "one nation, one language."

Bilingual (and multilingual!) people in mainstream American culture are freaks; in Europe and most of the rest of the world, such people are typical, everyday folks. Clearly whatever strategy and planning a Native American speech community takes in documenting and encouraging their heritage language(s), they must deal explicitly with the linguistic ideology of the matrix culture.

A different tactic emerged in the 1800s that was opposed to the classroom method of intellectualizing about a target language. The method was best known as the Berlitz Method, after the firm that used it from the late 1800s and on. This method is now usually called **immersion**. This was simply to have native speakers teach selective bits of conversational language and language structure to learners and then drill them and review; all of this without any resort to the learner's language (say, English), except for a dire emergency. This intensive method depends on **curriculum** (what parts of conversation and structure to teach, and in what order), but the learner never is explicitly taught the content of the curriculum, as in the classroom method that emerged from the official language model.

A third approach combines the **grammar method** of teaching second languages with the **immersion method**. During and after World War II, the U.S. military (and later, the diplomatic corps and Peace Corps) needed to acquire target languages rapidly. The immersion method predominated, but included some explicit grammar instruction.

One might call this tactic the **hybrid method**. The most efficient way to use the hybrid method is to teach only the target language grammar that a learner becomes aware of out of their own experience. An example is in order. Below are four sentences in Tohono O’odham. Read the word-by-word glosses and compare these to the whole sentence translations.

(1)

Mistol	'o	huhu'id	g	nahagio.
cat	?	be.chasing	the	mouse

“The cat is chasing the mouse.”

(2)

Hëgai	'o	huhu'id	g	gogs.
s/he	?	be.chasing	the	dog

“He/she is chasing the dog.”

(3)

Ma:liya	'o	s-na:k	g	lulsi.
Mary	?	likes	the	candy

“Mary likes candy.”

(4)

Hëgam	'o	pi	na:k	g	lulsi.
they	?	not	like	the	candy

“They don't like candy.”

What is the function of the particle 'o? Learners of Tohono O’odham will encounter it frequently; eventually, they will wonder, “what does 'o mean?” At that point where they notice and wonder what the particle means or does, the teacher can tell them that when “he,” “she,” “it,” or “they” is the subject of a sentence that indicates an ongoing action, the particle 'o is always second in the sentence.

This satisfies the learners, and the time required for the explicit explanation of structure is not great. Grammatical explanation comes out of learner experience and target language use.

Grammar instruction may also alleviate some learner frustration by alerting them in advance of how the target language does things. For example, say a target language has present and past tense (relative time of action) like English, but two future tenses. When tense marking is first met (present tense, most likely), the system can be outlined (but not drilled).

Experience in teaching Native American languages and other heritage languages has developed the following methods of language instruction:

- Total immersion
- Partial immersion
- Master–apprentice format

The gamut of needs, motivations, and methods of Native American language teaching and learning as a part of language revitalization is explored in Austin and Sallabank (2011).

Total immersion has been described above. Usually total immersion (or simply immersion) is used with very young children, so that they absorb the language as a native language. Parents and other caregivers may attend adult classes in the heritage language, and may visit their child's classroom regularly to learn what their children are learning, and reinforce that learning at home.

Partial immersion is using total immersion with very specific contexts, much like a phrase book for travelers. It is suited for adults and probably lapses into a hybrid method when the adults have questions about the heritage language that emerge from their learning experience. Typical language use contexts might include greetings, leave-taking, "excuse me," telling the time, telling about one's self (age, marital status, occupation, domicile, children, spouse), and other everyday exchanges where language is used. As the learner becomes competent at the repertory on the first level, other contexts/topics can be added until a functional knowledge of the language is reached.

The master–apprentice format is partial immersion, with only a fluent speaker and an apprentice learner. This adaptation of partial immersion was invented by Leanne Hinton (2002, 2013) for people wanting to learn and preserve Native American languages in California, where the number of fluents of the state's many languages is typically few.

## Purism in Second Language Acquisition

When a language is restored or used in the face of language loss, three things inevitably pop up:

- The need for new words ("airplane," "computer," etc.)
- Switching between the heritage language and the matrix language while speaking (**code-switching**)
- Simplification of some aspects of the heritage language by persons who are dominant in the matrix language but part of the heritage language speech community

The need for words that didn't exist in the heritage language (**neologisms**) may be criticized by fluents and/or elders. The need for communication about modern/new concepts may be alleviated by simply switching to the matrix language or making up a description on the spot. A vocabulary of words for new things formed on the principles of the heritage language is probably more acceptable to conservative speakers than code-switching.

Code-switching leads to **language mixing**. This is using words from the matrix language in heritage language output, but adding grammatical features of the heritage language to matrix language words. Language mixing is also called **syncretic**

language use. An example might be adding tense or person markers to matrix verbs, as in the Hopi example below.

Ya    ëm    as                    pët                    *digitize*-ta-ni?  
 Q    you    intend/want   that (object)   digitize-do-future

“Do you want to digitize that?”

This utterance wouldn’t make it with many Hopi speakers, but illustrates speech that is typical of many speakers.

Linguistic purism is to be expected in the teaching of heritage languages, and their emerging use. However, it stifles attempts to use the language, because it feeds into the official language model (“if you can’t speak correct [heritage language], don’t speak it at all”). It also ignores the fact the heritage language learners, as adults, are going to go through intermediate stages of language production (**inter-language**) just like children learning their native language.

Children learning English learn past verb forms piecemeal, producing *go* and *went*. Then they learn that the suffix *-ed* is added, and then they productively use forms like *goed* and *wented*. Grammars leak (have irregular forms), and language learner-users are going to make mistakes. This needs to be pointed out gently to critics.

What if a revitalized heritage language is totally regular in terms of grammar, the result of imperfect learning of older irregularities? How might a Native American speech community feel about the death of their heritage language instead the fluent use of a revised form of it? Linguistic ideology is an issue for each Native American speech community, but clearly such a decision should not be made under the influence of the official language model’s corollary of “one nation, one language” (which view of Native American language follows from the racist slogan of the 1800s that “the only good Indian [language] is a dead Indian [language]”).

The field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a fairly recent field, growing out of applied linguistics, psychology, and education (Gass and Mackey 2012; Saville-Troike 2012; Brown and Larson-Hall 2012). It offers insights into how to plan (materials, teaching methods, and overall program design) the language acquisition portion of a language revitalization or revival project.

## Case Study: Monegasque

The precarious position of Monegasque, traditional language of the Principality of Monaco, is surveyed in Magosci (1989, 1991) and Shaul (2001). The linguistic situation in Monaco changed after the Casino opened; by 1870, the Monegasques had become a minority in their own country. French and Italians became the majority of the population, as they are today. In 1991, Magosci (1991:191) reported that of some 4,500 citizens only about 1,000 understood Monegasque and that only about 200 could hold a conversation in the language.

The process of language loss with Monegasque is identical to that of Native American communities. Here is an example of the “natural history” of language revitalization (decline, concern, documentation, teaching and public awareness, commodification), one that pertains to a situation that is separated in time, space, and culture from Native American languages. The Monegasque story thus corroborates the Native American experience.

This language loss was already bemoaned by Arveiller (1967) for the situation in the 1950s when he did research. Concern was manifested as early as 1927 when Louis Notari published the first literary work in Monegasque, but came to the fore with a grammar in 1960, and then a Monegasque-French dictionary (1963; the reverse dictionary was first issued in 1983). Prose and poetry followed, allowing for a specialization in Monegasque in secondary education to be possible today. There are even folk operas in Monegasque.

In order to strengthen the already existing feeling of Monegasque nationality based on historical independence, in 1976 Monegasque became a required subject in the primary schools of the Principality (although for only 1 h per week). In 1983 a Commission on the Monegasque Language was founded as an autonomous agency of the National Education department to coordinate and standardize the language efforts. Since 1981, there has been a *Concours de Langue Monegasque* held on 23 June, the evening before one of the traditional holidays (and at the end of the school year) in which students show proficiency in Monegasque.

The use of Monegasque in the services of the Catholic Church, as well as print media, may be noted. Missing seem to be the print and audio media for sale to the general public, as well as broadcasting in Monegasque. In addition, after 30 years of language promotion and instruction, one wonders if more (and younger) people are speaking Monegasque in various contexts; data on this is absent. In some respects, the structure and vocabulary of Monegasque is parallel to the dominant French which would make learning easier than, say, going from Danish or English to proficiency in a radically different language structure such as Greenlandic.

In summary, the situation of Monegasque parallels the situation of the typical Native American language: decline of active speakers to an age-set of older people which stimulates concern and consequent documentation of the language, followed by efforts to maintain the language in schools. There is no data to compare on the actual results to date. Certainly, the language's cultural capital has increased, and its heraldic use is present, and the fact that there are experts and teachers of the standardized language indicates the presence of commodification.

### *For Thinking and Class Discussion*

1. In many Native American speech communities, there are many individuals who can understand their heritage language perfectly. They are “passive fluents” (**passives** for short, as opposed to **fluents** who are active speakers). Passives in a

Native American speech community are a potential resource. How might one get passives to become fluent users of the language? Why do you think passives are reluctant to speak? What sort of **language planning** could use the linguistic abilities of passives as a positive contribution to language revitalization?

2. How effective do you think the Monegasque language program is? What results do you think it achieves, and what results do you think it is meant to achieve? How does the official language model fit into the Monegasque situation? What do you think that Monegasques themselves might think about their heritage language and its use? What strategies could help increase the number of people learning Monegasque, and increase the use and visibility of the heritage language?
3. Are cultures that are welcoming to outsiders, having an **inclusive** linguistic ideology, more likely to retain their own language by actively sharing it with outsiders? Is a speech community that actively expects outsider living in their midst necessarily welcoming? For example, persons marrying into the Crow tribe were traditionally expected to at least learn to understand Crow, because no one would speak English for their benefit. English people who move to Wales are expected to learn Welsh, with many people speaking to them in Welsh and expecting Welsh in reply.

Some people who are connected to a native community (as teachers, spouses, health services personnel, for example) may come into contact with the heritage language; should they be included in the speech community emerging from a revitalization project? Consider the following quote from a Native American college student about teaching the local heritage language.

... we have a male culture language instructor for the boys and we a female language instructor for the girls in our school. We also have a culture crafts teacher for boys and girls in a classroom. What makes learning the language easier to learn and remember is *when the non native teachers are learning the language as well and applying it in there classrooms* (Native American college student; italics in original).

How inclusive should a Native American revitalization project be? Should a Native American language be taught to complete outsiders at the high school and college level? What are possible advantages and disadvantages of this?

4. Languages can have an emotive effect on its users. This may be when a heritage language is used in a song, such as a lullaby or a ceremonial song, or a work song. It might be in hearing or telling a traditional story. Native American songs and stories do not have nearly the same value in English. The emotional effects that a heritage language has for members of its speech community are the **esthetic** value the language has for them. Because every Native American language has an oral tradition with story and song, each Native American language has an esthetic ideology. Would the “Star-Spangled Banner” sound the same or feel the same way if it were sung in Swedish or French? Think of examples that illustrate the esthetic value of American English; for example, the language used must be English in order for the piece or situation to have emotive power. Pool examples in the class to construct a statement of the esthetic ideology of American English.

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## Chapter 4

# Language Revitalization and Revival

*“The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions  
and without becoming disillusioned.”*

—Antonio Gramsci

**Abstract** This chapter points out that assumptions about teaching an official language in school (standardized form, correct usage and spelling, formal genres and contexts) do not meet the more immediate needs of Native American communities: language as a bond between kin and community; informal and formal language use in a variety of contexts; dialect variation. Instructing a Native American language as a foreign language following a grammar-and-dictionary standard must be replaced with meaningful language acquisition in existing cultural contexts, if any language revitalization or revival is to actually happen.

It is important at this point to distinguish between **language revitalization**, which assumes that there are actual speakers of a language, and **language revival**, which assumes that there are no speakers of a heritage language. Revitalization is often used as a cover term for revival, but the distinction has important consequences for how a heritage language is approached. Allocations of resources and time must be guided by careful planning and thought about how the heritage language is to fit into the contemporary speech community. All the while, a new linguistic ideology must be actively cultivated by leaders and stakeholders (this is the subject of the final chapter).

Why revitalize or revive a language? Wouldn't it be better if “we all spoke a single language?” This arises from the official language model's “one nation, one language” point of view. The main counterargument to this is that the theory is simply wrong.

In the 1990s, the world was shocked by ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and genocide in Rwanda. It happens that in Yugoslavia all of the belligerents spoke the same language, and so did the groups fighting each other in Rwanda.

Both groups had a single nation state with an official language spoken by most of the people. This factor did not stop them from brutally killing each other.

There is another counterexample to the “one nation, one language” school of thought about language that pervades American culture, and one that stares Americans in the face: the American Civil War. This bloody conflict arose out of a single nation that had a single predominant language. Monolingualism did not prevent the Civil War; it was completely irrelevant as an issue.

Language as a commodity, especially as the basis for political stances over the cultural capital a heritage language represents, “turns languages into object which seem better suited for museum showcases than for everyday use” by people (Austin and Sallabank 2011:18). For revitalization to occur, a community must not only count the number of speakers of the traditional language, document that language, and teach that language but also think about and cultivate new ways of thinking about the language and its values and functions in the contemporary community. Cultural change is not mere imitation (for example, publishing a newspaper in a traditional language, because newspapers exist in the matrix culture). Culture change is not pro forma (for example, producing grammars and dictionaries of Native American languages). Culture change is a response to novel situations and circumstances, whereby existing cultural practices or patterns are extended to new uses, or revalued. A culture’s linguistic ideology should predict what innovations about language are likely to actualize as culture change. This is the approach taken here.

In order to do language revitalization work, planners must take a number of things into account:

- First and foremost, the linguistic ideology of the Native American speech community involved: how they think about the purpose and value of their heritage language and the matrix language (probably English)
- Locust and method of revitalization
- Funding, available personnel, and other resources
- The state of their speech community at the outset

Depending on these variables, Native American speech communities need to think about the role(s) their heritage language can have in their community. They need to think about outcome. Here are some possible outcomes that can possibly overlap.

- Linguistic appreciation
- The local school as a speech community (focus)
- School–home interaction as the basis of a speech community
- Limited use of heritage language throughout the community
- Metropolitan use of heritage language (use of heritage language in public media)
- Latin-like revitalization
- Complete restoration

Based on the resources available and commitment-motivation of the participants, there are three likely constellations of outcomes: Type A, Type B, and Type C (full restoration).

**Type A**, the first possible outcome array is a combination of linguistic appreciation, metropolitan use of the heritage language, and Latin-like revitalization.

**Linguistic appreciation** is a very limited understanding of and about the language on the part of the general membership: how to read and pronounce the language; ability to perform set texts like prayers, greetings, and other **phatic** phrases (bits of formulaic language that are mainly intended to facilitate social interaction like “how are you?”); respect for the language and the fluent speakers. **Metropolitan revitalization** means public, symbolic use of the heritage language in banners, mottoes and slogans, public signage, and other conspicuous, emblematic uses of the heritage language—and even extensions to print and broadcast media. Latin-like revitalization is a sustained corps of fluent (second) language speakers of the heritage language who function as the language’s professionals (teaching, curating, creating new texts and discourses). Type A revitalizations will be/are typical of smaller sized populations with limited resources.

**Type B** has a larger number of fluents as opposed to passives, but is not full restoration. New active speakers might come from programs that successfully get passives to start speaking the heritage language on a regular basis. Language acquisition in preschools (through total immersion) followed by partial immersion (K-8) will produce a corps of speakers who may eventually raise children who speak the language natively. Another aspect is school–home collaboration: parents and caregivers attend the immersion preschool each week to keep up with the curriculum and reinforce it at home; better yet, they also attend classes to learn selective domains of the heritage language to use with each other and their children. Linguistic appreciation and metropolitan uses of the heritage language are present. This sort of outcome is predicated on a corps of active, motivated teachers who can speak the language, gaining fluency as they teach and use the language on a daily basis.

**Classes for adults** need to select some basic vocabulary-use **domains** such as greetings, counting, the weather, days of the week, daily routine, the seasons, etc. Instruction needs to be mostly oral, respecting the orality of the heritage language, and must welcome any dialect variation within the heritage language community. Each domain is limited in vocabulary and the needed grammatical structures. The units of language that are taught are phrases and simple sentences needed to effectively communicate on each domain’s topic. Where there is gender differences in speech, there need to be separate classes for each gender. The idea is to master perhaps as many as ten domains per term, adding others with successive terms until students can communicate in a variety of daily situations where the heritage language is/can be used.

**Type C**, complete restoration, occurs when most of the speech community (75 %? 80 %? 90 %?) can and do use the language on a daily basis. The other threshold of Type C is when children are being raised with the heritage language as their native language. Another aspect of Type C is the expanding of the heritage language’s use, such as the phone apps for Mohawk or the need of Hawaiian speakers for teenage slang.

All of these outcomes center around some sort of school or classroom. There is no escaping this: children cannot learn a heritage language in a home where no one can or does use it. This means the school is the initial threshold of the active speech community. Adult classes and school–home cooperation are keys to expanding the number of speakers and active use of the language. Finding a way of recruiting passives into the active speech community is also a challenge, but probably is not

school oriented (because the passives may have been punished for trying to speak at school as children).

What if there is no school? The answer is become your own school through master–apprentice programs (Hinton 2002) or in single families (Hinton 2013). These approaches can also be useful in a Type A or Type B situation.

Orality needs to be privileged, with writing (the potent symbol of the linguistic ideology of the matrix culture) taking second place as a useful tool. Technology (audio, video) is useful, too; we know that it can't take the place of grandmother, and we wouldn't want it to do so. Audio and video can reflect more orality than the written word.

## Five Success Stories

There have been some successful language revitalizations. Most of these have had consistent funding for the effort, and all of them involved have some active, fluent speakers (even second language learners). All the successful speech communities had compact local communities where the heritage language could be learned and used.

**Hebrew** is perhaps the most frequently mentioned example of language revitalization. The seed for this lay in the settlement (with British sponsorship) of Jews in Palestine in the 1930s; the movement to revive the classical Hebrew began then. It was well-developed by the time the State of Israel was declared, with native speakers and a modernized language. There was a long tradition of fluent speakers of the language, due to the language's religious and identity-conferring role in the lives of Jews worldwide. Hebrew is one of the two official languages of Israel (the other is standard literary Arabic).

**Greenlandic** is an Inuit (Eskimoan) language spoken in Greenland. There are actually three varieties, of which West Greenlandic is the official standard. The situation of Greenlandic language revitalization is reported by Berthelsen (1990), Eriksen (1992), and Langgard (2003).

Eriksen remarks that “only a generation ago, however, Greenlandic seemed doomed” (1992:321). From 1950 to 1978 all schooling was in Danish, with Berthelsen remarking that the “goal was to make Greenland Danish speaking in the long run” (1990:335). Since Home Rule in 1979, Greenlandic has become the dominant language, although not without such problems as teachers prepared to teach all subjects in Greenlandic and an essentializing linguistic ideology that only the Greenlandic language is needed (Langgard 2003).

The relative isolation of Greenland, with Greenlanders being the overwhelming majority, along with Home Rule are all important for the successful revitalization of Greenlandic. Yet the first reason that Eriksen gives is that “the colonial power [Denmark] was relatively benevolent and permitted the use of the minority language in most sectors” (1992:321). So, the linguistic ideology of the Danes (multilingual individuals are not weirdos, as they are in the United States) must have had something to do with the success of revitalization. Although Langgard notes increased cultural capital of Greenlandic after 1978, there seems to be less commodification of the language.

**Mohawk** is one of the six Northern Iroquoian languages. It has had a school with immersion programs in Mohawk for children over 20 years (established 1978), eventually funded by the Quebec government. This school was the result of the Mohawk community mobilizing in response to a bill that would have essentially given their heritage language immigrant status (the infamous Bill 101). Like Greenlandic, there is a middle generation that is largely not fluent in Mohawk. “The connection between Mohawk identity and the language is clearly a central component of reversing language shift”, with many highly motivated individuals working for the cause. The Mohawk linguistic ideology chose (or was ready) to embrace written Mohawk as a central part of their revitalization. This extends to electronic media; an Internet search will reveal a number of eproducts for the language.

The revitalization of **Hawaiian** is well known. The language had a standard written form, with use in schools, churches, and national government after 1820. After the American sugar barons seized power as the Republic of Hawaii, English became the official language, but Hawaiian newspapers persisted until after 1900. During the 1970s, there was a Hawaiian renaissance, and in 1984 and 1985, “language nests” were started to provide young children with immersion programs in Hawaiian, with 11 language nests on five islands. As the children reached kindergarten and first grade age, parents and teachers had to actively fight for continuation of Hawaiian immersion. They were successful: the first class of Hawaiian medium high school students graduated in 1999; today there are four charter Hawaiian immersion high schools, with about 1,500 students. Funding is a continuing problem, with private and U.S. Federal funding providing most of the funds. Like the Mohawk program, Hawaiian immersion was really a movement with highly motivated and dedicated individuals.

The **Maori** language of New Zealand, like Hawaiian, had a written form that was in use by the general Maori population, after 1818. By 1830, the Maori population of New Zealand had a higher literacy rate than the Anglo population. So, in 1967 the Native Schools Act made English the only language to be learned, used, and tolerated in Maori schools; after 50 years of successful use in native schools, Maori was outlawed. By the 1970s, there were still about 70,000 speakers, an enormous advantage (like the case of Greenlandic). The concept of “language nests” began in Maori country in the 1980s: fluent elders would work with preschool children to produce fluent individuals. As in Hawaii, parents and students wanted to continue Maori as the language of education, with English being learned as a second language. The momentum of this movement was quick: in 1987, Maori obtained status as an official language of New Zealand, along with English.

All of these success stories successfully follow the official language model, with a written standard (Mohawk admits dialect spellings). All had a tradition of being used as an official spoken and written language, and all had populations of fluent speakers at the time that revitalization began. All had motivated leaders, who made language revitalization a movement in their speech communities. All eventually received government funding. Perhaps these major success stories, with actual use as an official language in their respective pasts, made up a model of how language revitalization should proceed.

These success stories point up the prevalent “one nation, one language” linguistic ideology of the official language model. Grenoble and Whaley observe that “historically, a number of regions (e.g., the United States, Australia, Canada, and the Soviet Union/Russia) have held negative attitudes towards multilingualism and so maintained negative policies toward local [heritage] languages” (2006:30). The Danish government not only tolerated the minority language but also provided funding to restore it. This can be attributed to a different linguistic ideology on the part of mainstream Danish culture. Meeks (2009) reports that during the 1980s, the government of Yukon Territory, scholars, and Aboriginal people worked together to teach eight heritage languages in the Territory’s schools, in step with other indigenous language movements in Canada.

## Other Stories

Language revitalization in minority ethnic groups is motivated by a desire for positive self-identity, for esthetics, and even for spiritual reasons. This is true of the cases of Hebrew, Greenlandic, Mohawk, Hawaiian, and Maori. Yet these cases had large numbers of people who spoke the language (relative to size of population), and a recognized form of the heritage language as the obvious choice for restoring. In much smaller communities, the emotional and esthetic reasons for revitalization are the same, but there is no written tradition, very little funding, and a linguistic ideology of orality. Most potential candidate Native American speech communities and heritage languages have only meager resources to provide language revitalization. In this section, we look at several selected examples.

**Navajo** has a large population base, with a large number of speakers in its speech community, as well as fame as the language of most of the Code Talkers during World War II. After the New Deal of the 1930s, the official spelling for Navajo was created, with some experiments made in teaching Navajo with this written form. Prior to this time, Navajo, like all Athapaskan languages, tended to be linguistically isolationist, while borrowing heavily in other areas of culture (both material and nonmaterial). House (2002) reports that the Navajos came to see the school system, which teaches this written Navajo, as the answer to declining numbers of younger speakers after 1970, a shift in linguistic ideology away from isolationism to adopting the official language model for their own language. House noted that the system failed to produce the younger speakers (see also Shaul 2004).

Field (2009) points out that there are other factors in the Navajo speech community that contribute to the decline of Navajo, the main one being that there are class differences among the Navajo. The families with large herds are the upper (economic) class, and they are largely Navajo speaking, tend to follow the native religion, and can afford the large public ceremonies the religion requires. Poorer Navajos gravitate toward Anglo culture, Christianity, and the English language. Thus, there are at least two potentially opposing main linguistic ideologies in the Navajo speech community.

The **Northern Arapahos** also developed a language policy that follows the official language model (Cowell 2008; Anderson 1998). Arapaho is no longer tied to economic production and exchange. Following World War II, there was a rapid decline in the use of Arapaho. By the 1970s, there was concern over language loss. The following timeline shows the milestones in the development of official Arapaho language:

- 1983: Zdenek Salzman completes a grammar, set of texts, and dictionary in the official spelling system.
- 1980s: lots of bilingual education materials made.
- 1980s: a formal Language and Culture Commission formed to certify materials and license teachers of the language.
- 1980s: lots of applications for federal grant funding.
- 2001: Wind River Tribal College founded, with a Council of Elders to advise on the flagship of the curriculum: Arapaho language and culture.

The Council of Elders has moved to claim ownership of the language, creating a potential conflict with the Language and Culture Commission (and maybe even the Arapaho Business Council, the tribal council). The language has become an object, a thing removed from meaningful social interaction, following the “natural history” of language loss (decline, concern, documentation, teaching and public awareness, commodification):

- Reification of the language as an object.
- Compartmentalized use (narrow range of contexts).
- Institutionalization.
- Language becomes a commodity with different entities claiming ownership and control.

The proof of this development is that the Council of Elders run their meetings in English (speaking Arapaho before and after), and some fluent speakers even charge relatives money for time spent in teaching them (Andrew Cowell, p.c.). The official language model fostered a commodification of the heritage language, creating another kind of elder knowledge which is politically controlled. Anderson (1998) speaks of “multiple strands of language ideology” in the Northern Arapaho speech community; recently some parents have moved to extend the preschool immersion classes to K-8 (Cowell 2008).

Meeks (2009) reports a similar process in the **Kaska** speech community of the Yukon Territory, where official versions of eight heritage languages were given government funding and developed with a written, standard form for teaching in the schools. As in the Northern Arapaho case, the heritage language has become a commodity, another form of elder knowledge. Use of Kaska is reserved for elders, who use English with youth outside of the classroom.

**Eastern (Wind River) Shoshone** is also spoken on the Wind River Reservation in central Wyoming. There are actually four rather different dialects that reflect four different speech communities that came together. One of the dialects (Green River) is very divergent in pronunciation. Because Shoshone speech communities in

general have a linguistic ideology of valuing variation, there is no interest in the official language model or applying the “one nation, one language” ideology to create a unified, official Eastern Shoshone written language. So, there are several loosely related spelling systems for Eastern Shoshone that are based on the spelling of English, called “Phonetics.” The notorious irregularity in English spelling thus mimics the spoken variation of Shoshone on the reservation iconically.

The approach that teachers take in the Fort Washakie School and elsewhere is individualistic. Different methods are used, and each teacher creates their own materials or adapts materials. There are four things that almost everyone agrees on (based on my fieldwork in 2012):

1. Writing Shoshone is an individual preference, and one should use whatever system that is helpful to them, because
2. Writing Shoshone is only a useful tool, not an end in itself.
3. There should be separate classes for boys and girls, taught by teachers of the same gender.
4. Language is a tool for social interaction and exchange of information.

The linguistic ideology of valuing difference in speech and accommodating individual language use is shared by the related Mono (Kroskrity 2009) and Northern Shoshone (Loether 2009).

Kroskrity and Loether refer to the “one nation, one language” ideology that relates to the official language model as **nationalistic** linguistic ideology, and the value of variation as **variationism**, with Kroskrity noting the view of language as a tool or technology (2009:193). Loether (2009), writing of Northern Shoshone at the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho, speaks of band-centered and even family-centered dialects. Wick Miller, a longtime student of the Shoshone language, noted that “the prevailing attitude toward language is casual and pedestrian. Language is a tool to be used for communication. Differences in verbal skills are recognized, but not highly valued” (1970:32). Miller also noted that at the time (late 1960s) some Shoshone people thought that language shift to English was inevitable and useful.

“Loether notes that the Shoshoni belief in the importance of family autonomy in areas such as language usage has been an important factor in determining what measures are attainable in language revitalization efforts among the [Northern] Shoshoni” (2009:242). The Shoshone linguistic ideology of variationism came from a long-term arid lands adaptation (Shaul 1986), in which language is a key adaptive strategy in extremely arid lands. In the event of food failure, a local group (an extended patrilineal family) can be dispersed to neighboring groups who are allied through marriage and speak essentially the same language.

There is another possible reaction to the nationalistic linguistic ideology. That is the possibility of coming up with a linguistic ideology that takes no position on linguistic nationalism, instead coming up with a linguistic ideology that grows out the situation of language contact.

**Rapa Nui** is a Polynesian language native to Easter Island. Since 1888, the native population have been dominated and exploited by the Republic of Chile, which used most of the island as a sheep ranch that only indirectly benefited the

native population. Indeed, it was only in the year 1966 that islanders were citizens of a country, could leave the island without permission of the military governor, and could venture into most of the island without express permission of the military authorities. The situation of Rapa Nui is reported by Errington (2003) and Makihara (2005a, b, 2007).

Easter Island was annexed by Chile in 1888, and was run as a ranch by the Chilean Navy from 1953 to 1966 when civil disobedience forced the end of naval administration. Since 1989, with the return of democratic government in Chile, the people of Rapa Nui have experienced an influx of 400 Spanish speakers, along with heritage tourism as an economic base. Because the local culture and its language have high cultural capital that drives the economy, the Rapa Nui language has come to have a stable, syncretic relationship with Spanish that is likely to continue. The linguistic ideology of the Rapa Nui people is that their language is vital and viable, and that it is part of the local linguistic economy.

Rapa Nui speakers use either a syncretic Rapa Nui (Rapa Nui mixed with Spanish) or a Rapa Nui Spanish as their everyday language, with puristic Rapa Nui used as a Formal language in public contexts. Thus, they have a colonial diglossia of their own making: their own versions of Spanish (syncretic Rapa Nui; Rapa Nui-zed Spanish) as the Informal code, and pure, nonsyncretic Rapa Nui as the Formal code.

## Language Revival

In some cases revitalization is more of a reclamation project than anything else. In such cases, revitalizing an extinct language such as the Costanoan variety Chochenyo/Muwekma (Blevins and Arellano 2004), or the Costanoan/Ohlonian variety Mutsun (Warner et al. 2007), or the Australian language Karuna (Amery 2000), the language has cultural capital but no native speakers to commodify the heritage language. Cultural capital is the only real context for the revitalized/reclaimed language's existence. Linguistic reclamation probably requires making new words by various means (at least initially), and involves (at least initially) largely artificial contexts of language use (greetings, short introductions to public addresses, short prayers, songs in the language, signage and other heraldic uses).

Reviving a language that has some documentation (but probably not audio, or limited audio that is hard to hear clearly) amounts to collecting and assessing the materials, and then producing a systematic description of the language's grammar. This work must have the technical help of a linguist, or be done by a linguist. The results (especially with the lack of audio documentation) must be presented in written format, for which an alphabet must be developed.

This creates a written standard by default (there is nothing else that can be done). Novel texts must be composed or translated by the expert(s) in the heritage language, and learning materials must also be constructed and facilitated by the expert(s). The nature of the situation (limited information, mostly written) means that the result will follow the official language model.

The linguistic ideology that accompanies revival, especially of small potential speech communities, is up to the group. In the case of Muwekma and Mutsun, there is a definite insider/outsider distinction with a password-protected dictionary and other materials online for the scattered native community. There is a linguistic ideology of exclusivity.

My own experience with Esselen, which included two Breath of Life Workshops and subsequent meetings at the Esselen annual summer meeting, was that Esselen descendants were on the whole mildly interested in their heritage language. A few persons compose short speeches and prayers in the language for public use. A few more learned to use greetings, leave-taking, thanks, and other phatic expressions in the language. A lot of Esselen people take Esselen names. The language has been used emblematically on several items. One Esselen descendent in particular, who was trained by Native California shaman, makes special use of prayers and songs in Esselen. On the whole, the Esselen people that I met and dealt with were welcoming and not overly protective of the language. This situation might change if the tribe were recognized by the State of California or federally, in which case casino income might commodify the language, with an insider/outsider rhetoric (exclusive linguistic ideology) quickly emerging.

The role of technology in language revitalization is helpful, but not a replacement for an elder/speaker. Technology provides the following:

- It adds dimension to language documentation and learning materials (video, audio).
- It simulates and privileges oral language.
- It can connect dispersed groups and learner-users with mentors, eventually creating virtual and actual speech communities.

In the case of language revival, technology can play a substantial role.

## Different Speech Communities, Differing Goals

In Native American speech communities with a large number of active speakers (relative to the total group size) or smaller number of speakers, the outcome of language revitalization depends on the linguistic ideologies that guide the projects. Recall the "natural history" of language loss (decline, concern, documentation, teaching and public awareness, commodification). The official language model is the default model for language revitalization, but it can be a starting point.

Speech communities with really large numbers of speakers (Maori, Greenlandic, perhaps Hawaiian—Type A revitalizations) successfully followed the official language model, while abandoning its language ideology. Smaller sized groups like the Northern Arapaho and Kaska speech communities, by blindly adhering to the official language model, brought about commodification of the heritage language, thus contributing to continuing language loss. Other speech communities like Rapa Nui accepted heritage language decline, integrating it with syncretic (mixed) use of their heritage language in a revised colonial diglossia.

Language revival projects must by default use the official language model, but the guiding linguistic ideology is up to the group guiding the revival. Metropolitan and limited phatic use, and perhaps some conversational ability (weather, occupation, daily routine, telling about one’s self), are reasonable outcomes. A scattered speech community can meet online, and the Internet can be used to create a virtual speech community. The linguistic ideology of revival projects is realistic and utilitarian, as in the case of Rapa Nui, Shoshone, or Esselen. However, it may be an exclusive linguistic ideology, as in the case of Muwekma and Mutsun.

## Purism and Complexity

There is another important factor in language revitalization: degree of complexity. Below is a famous example cited from Sapir’s classic work *Language* (Sapir 1921); it is an example of how complicated languages can be at the word level. It is from the Chinook language of Oregon.

i-	n-	i-	a-	l-	u-	<b>d</b>	-am
past	I	it	her	to	away	<b>give</b>	go.to

The whole word means a sentence in English: “I went to give it to her.” The center of this complex word is the root **-d-**, “give” which is in bold in the example.

A trade language, Chinook Jargon (Mithun 1999:587–589), based on words from Chinook (and other languages), presents the same information as a sentence, something like this:

Nika	kuli	potlach	yaka	kopa	yaka.
I	go/went	give	it	to	her

The word order of Chinook Jargon is SVO (Subject–Verb–Object), just like English. There is no way of marking past time, unless by using a word like “yesterday.” Also, *yaka* can mean “he,” “she,” or “it” (or “him” and “her” as well).

Some languages package information on the word level (like Chinook). Some package information on the sentence level (like English and Chinook Jargon). Imagine how hard it would be for English speakers to learn and productively use a language like Chinook. It is completely different from the strategy for packaging information in English.

Revitalization or revival of a language like Chinook, where the speech community has shifted to English, clearly would be very difficult. Here the issue of purity comes into play in a different way: the only authentic target is structurally so different from the current productive language of the speech community as to make revitalization/ revival nearly impossible. Purism is the only authentic target that is available. Otherwise, the heritage language must develop a daughter language more like English (or other matrix language) in pattern (but keeping heritage vocabulary).

### *For Thinking and Classroom Discussion*

1. The following Native American speech communities had large numbers of speakers during the 1900s:

- Cherokee
- Osage
- Creek/Muskogee
- Lakhota
- Ojibwe/Chippewa

What is the situation of these speech communities today? What is the number of speakers, and how does this number break down in terms of age-sets and gender? Do the tribes concerned have a language policy and official writing system? Are the linguistic ideologies of the speech community explicitly stated? If not, what ideologies seem to be implied. This is a good group project, with teams investigating one of the speech communities named above. The American Factfinder (U.S. Census Bureau; <http://factfinder2.census.gov>) can be used as well as tribal Web pages. When using Factfinder, it is possible to get results for persons speaking a language other than English by sampling towns or census-designated places.

2. Imagine that you are in charge of a tribe's language revival. The documentation of the heritage language involved has the following parameters:

- Only written documents; some are in systematic, known phonetic alphabets, while others reflect the spelling habits of their collectors (English, Spanish, French).
- There are 257 phrases and simple sentences attested in the heritage language.
- In all, there are about 850 morphemes attested.
- There are only four short texts in the language (The Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, Apostles' Creed, Ten Commandments).
- There are a few comments about language use from early travelers in the region where the language was spoken.

Now, here are the parameters of the potential speech community of this heritage language:

- The tribe has a formal organization that has a federal recognition application pending.
- There are about 600 registered tribal members scattered across the United States.
- There is very little funding for a revitalization project, but interest shown in such a project at the last four annual meetings.
- No definite goals have been established for the project (metropolitan use, phatic use, Internet connection to create a virtual community, some interest in learning to speak the language on a limited basis).

Outline the steps you would take in planning this project, and what linguistic ideology or ideologies you would refer to. This could easily be another team project.

3. Different cultures have different learning styles. Even if a native person is English dominant, their learning style may be radically different from the ones expected in classrooms that reflect the dominant culture. Consider the following statement by a Native American college student.

Before I started going to college, I had to conduct myself in a respectful listening manner. If an elder talked in any manner, whether it is a story, a demand, or a glimpse of knowledge, it was my job was to listen, with my eyes aimed down. Yet in a classroom, a non native teacher would get upset if we didn't stare him or her in the eyes as he or she gave the daily assignments. If we had questions for the teacher, which is abnormal in our culture, to question anything, we are to raise our hands and wait to be called on. We had to think of questions as students because if we didn't, the teacher would feel insulted, and then pack on more and more assignments as a consequence for what was thought of as not listening (Native American college student, p.c.).

How might language acquisition in a Native American language revitalization project deal with this learning style?

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## Chapter 5

# Linguistic Ideologies of Language Revitalization

*“The most terrifying words in the English language are: I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.”*

—Ronald Reagan

*“Political language ... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to the wind.”*

George Orwell

**Abstract** This chapter sums up the argument that Native American language revitalization has been shaped (and misguided) by the official model of language standardization, resulting in a grammar and dictionary (often recognized by a tribal council) from which foreign language teaching materials are derived and neglected after they prove to be of little interest and impetus for them in the classroom. Along the way, we have talked about alternatives, and factors influencing the possible outcomes of revitalization and revival projects. These factors, cast here as “Laws” of Language Revitalization, are summed up in Chap. 6.

## Mainstream American Linguistic Ideology

The linguistic ideology of a group may be complex, made up of several different beliefs. For example, the linguistic ideology found in U.S. culture takes the following positions:

- The nationalist main line: “one nation, one language.”
- A view language as controlling both thought and culture (relativism).
- A literature ideology that holds that learning a foreign language is a worthwhile, humanistic activity that opens the world of comparative literature to the student.
- Academic ideology which treats language as separate from culture and an end unto itself, and something that helps linguistic practitioners get tenure.

The last three each have something to do with the nationalist line. Relativism is an intellectual exercise that has titillated western academics for centuries. Language learning in order to read fine literature is merely learning another official language after you have studied your own in school. Linguistics is a worthy enterprise which treats any language or dialect as if it were a standard language.

All four of the lines of thought have a common core: they look on a language as a single thing, a sort of macro-artifact that relates to other mega artifacts like culture. A speech community linguistic ideology of shared code(s) and rules for language use follows from the academic study of sociolinguistics, and the one advocated here.

This official language ideology is not new, but is closely tied to the rise of nationalism and came from Europe: the Pilgrims who came to Plymouth had previously lived in Holland with fellow Calvinists, but returned to England in part because their children came home speaking Dutch. In the 1750s, Benjamin Franklin opposed German settlers in Pennsylvania teaching German to their children (Crawford 2000).

In the last few decades, with national languages securely established and linguistic minorities largely disempowered, this same ideology has begun to be willing to accept the teaching of local indigenous languages in principle, but in fact, numerous fiscal and legal obstacles remain to prevent effective revitalization, and most importantly, the laws make little or no provision for the *use* of the languages in daily life, politics, or administration, limiting them to the status of school subjects.

The French “Law of Deixonne” (1951), which allowed local languages to be used on the national baccalaureate exam as supplementary subjects, is an early example. The Native American Languages Act (1991) guarantees the right to education in and development of Native American languages, which is theoretically a very important step, but the scant funding insures little actual results, although allowing for much media hoopla and emotional satisfaction, the situation predicted by Gramsci. A decade later, the No Child Left Behind (2001) practically negated the intent of the Native American Languages Act.

A corollary of the nationalist ideology is the idea of a “foreign” language—meaning any language other than the national one. Languages must be put into one of two such categories, within this ideology. And as the term “foreign” suggests, these other languages are always from across the political border—in political and ideological terms, if not in terms of actual usage—and are furthermore virtually always other national languages. Thus Spanish is firmly entrenched as a “foreign” language in American curricular circles. Indigenous languages, not being “national,” have been recognized in universities, with languages such as Lakhota or Ojibwe or Navajo being taken to meet the “foreign language requirement.” Thus not only are indigenous languages not perceived ideologically as suitable for actual *use*, but even when taught, they are branded as *foreign*, and thus de-indigenized in a powerful way.

The ideology of monolingualism in an official language is reflected in mainstream American folk theories about language. American English itself contains phrases such as:

- “the Queen’s English”
- “Legalese”
- “Psycho-Babble (therapeutic jargon)”

which encourage us to consider the variety in question as a unitary whole, complete with a proper name.

On a more microlevel, Silverstein observed that people are most aware of their own language (or that of others) as being made up of words.

“I only know a few words of Spanish”

“We don’t have a word for ‘thank you’ in our language”

The view of language as an independent, separable entity and language as a vehicle of sociopolitical (national) unity powerfully reinforce each other through the mechanism of writing. Writing both allows the creation of national written standards around which communities coalesce, and reinforces the “thing-like” view of language. Statements such as:

“Spanish is an easy language”

“English is a difficult language”

are largely statements about the respective writing systems, with which “the language” is largely conflated. This view is typical of languages having long written traditions. When I was doing field work in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on Tibetan, my consultant disparaged my use of a phonetic roman alphabet; if I wanted to “learn Tibetan,” I should simply learn the difficult traditional writing (with diacritics for diacritics).

Another obvious part of a set of linguistic ideologies about language is language as a means of interaction within a social group.

“make small talk”

“chit-chat”

“talk man-to-man” (vs. “girl talk”)

“blow off steam”

“s/he is not talking to me”

Language use is clearly a social cement in any ongoing social group. This must take on differing emotional tones: “man-to-man” is serious; can there be “woman-to-woman” speech events? To “blow off steam,” one must have an audience (if not, one is “talking to the walls,” a substitute audience).

The idea is that there must be some way of communicating with people who can’t speak one’s own language.

“to know another language is to know one’s own”

“tourist French”

“just enough Spanish”

The ideal of learning another language (codified in the traditional requirement of 2 years’ foreign language instruction in high school and liberal arts curriculums) may often come down to learning “just enough” to get by on tourist jaunts. There is, for the average American, a corollary.

“I haven’t mastered English yet”

is a way of saying “I’m monolingual”.

“Everyone over there speaks English”

is a way of saying, “it doesn’t matter if I’m monolingual.” Broadening one’s horizons really doesn’t matter.

Language may also distinguish a speech community. This may range from language being an ethnic marker:

“have an English accent”  
 “It’s Greek to me”

to a linguistic variety being used as a secret code:

“my (grand)parents used German when they didn’t want ...”  
 “my parents wanted us to be good Americans”.

To speak a dialect of English (“have an \_\_\_\_\_ accent”) is acceptable to the monolingual ideal of mainstream America.

Leaving mainstream Americans without a secret code of their own leaves them paranoid if anyone else does have a potential secret language.

“They might be talking about me.”

This typical remark codifies the insecurity a mainstreamer is supposed to have when another language is used in their presence. This link to the immigrant experience is elaborated in the following folk talk that must have started in the American Midwest.

Way back in the 1880s, a stranger stopped at a family farm in Iowa [or wherever] homesteaded by Bohemians [Czechs, or other immigrant ethnic group]. It was about lunch time, so he was invited to stay and eat. The household then talked in Czech about the poorly appearance of the stranger, his horse, etc. Toward the end of the meal, stranger said in Czech, “please pass the potatoes.”

In this rural legend, the constants are the stranger, the immigrant family (of whatever European extraction and language), and the potatoes. The story is told to reinforce the historicity of the premium placed on monolingualism in America, especially with reference to “one nation, one language” and immigrants.

Although incomplete and having contradictions, this data shows the following beliefs about language on the part of mainstream America:

- Language exists as an independent entity.
- A real language is written.
- One must master the official, national language before fiddling with a second language.
- Language is a social cement for interacting with others.
- Language is a subject of study in school.
- Language can be owned or acquired as a thing.
- Any language other the official, national one is “foreign.”

Native American languages fit into the mold of mainstream ideology as “foreign” languages.

For example, in a study of loss of Navajo language, House (2002) notes that Navajos hold that their traditional language should be taught in schools, but yet the schools are failing to produce new speakers. House retreats to the dictum that the “language should be learned in the home.” In a review (Shaul 2004), I note that this

just feeds the mainstream ideology because a child cannot learn her/his heritage language in a home where no one can speak the language; it's a catch-22, you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. House effectively offers no solution, only a valid critique linking the official language/nationalist linguistic ideology with the failure of Navajo students to learn their heritage language fluently by studying it as a foreign language.

## **Native American Languages as Formal Languages and Native American Linguistic Ideologies**

Linguistic ideology of Native Americans likely includes valuing traditional languages as symbols with strong, emotional links to family and possibly the supernatural. Other reasonable components of Native American linguistic ideologies include valuing traditional languages as a private language, as well as enjoying them esthetically. The loss of active speakers of a traditional language increases a language's cultural capital, which promotes formal and public use of the language, as well as **heraldic** uses such as mottos on various media, slogans, signs with street names, formal prayers at the start of meetings, and so on.

To review: the Informal variety (heritage language) becomes a Formal variety; the Formal/written variety (English) takes over in many Informal and family contexts where the native language was used, while retaining some Formal uses. In the diglossic period on many reservations in the United State and Canada, most members of the local speech community and its various social networks used both the Informal and Formal varieties. With the rapid loss of active speakers, the linguistic economy of the diglossia was lost. Here, linguistic ideology could include varying levels of proficiency as acceptable, creating a continuum of speakers and understanders.

When a Native American language becomes a heritage language with increased cultural capital and Formal and/or written use, active users of the language may become potential specialists, as keepers of the traditional language and culture. People become more self-conscious about using the language, especially in public. Not speaking "correctly" or being laughed at when trying to learn to speak silences many community members who have a fluent comprehension of their language. Idealized perfection in use of the traditional language can even result in further undermining its strength (Hill and Hill 1986).

In many reservation classrooms and elsewhere, language classes are often more culture classes. The Navajos, for example, believe that the schools are an adequate measure for reversing language shift to English, yet the Navajo schools have failed miserably (House 2002). Effective language instruction is possible, though; witness the revitalization of Hawaiian and the hundreds of Europeans who speak English, which they learned in school but have never lived for any length of time in an English-speaking environment.

The ideal goal of current American Indian and other language revitalization is as near a complete restoration of indigenous languages as possible. This is hard to do with limited by numbers of speakers as teachers and language professionals, limited funding (tribal or grants), the time span needed for revitalization, existing language resources, and so on. Revitalization success stories like Hebrew and Hawaiian may not be immediate possibilities for many American Indian communities.

If a Native American language is not revitalized (though it may be in the future), there are other possible, positive outcomes. One possible outcome is the heritage language becoming a prestige code, a sort of “classical” language like Latin, Greek, or Sanskrit—but with the possibility of a small, but continuous speech community of native and near-native speakers. If enough literature (in any medium) is curated and/or created in rich detail, this literature (in the broadest sense of the term) will encode the culture and enable community members directly or indirectly.

Another possible, positive outcome—not mutually exclusive with a heritage language becoming a “classical” language is what I term the “metropolitanization” of language. In this situation, usages and contexts from the former Formal variety are imported into the Native American language: videos; electronic media; rock (country-western, punk) music and lyrics; ads, posters and other print media as appropriate, radio (and TV?); computer games. Yet these must fit into already existing communication needs, or they won’t catch on.

One major advantage that American Indian and other indigenous languages have is that second language learners of them differ from most second language learners in many respects. First of all, their target language (a traditional language) is respected and is a key part of their ongoing culture. They may live in a community where the language is still spoken and used for writing. They come to their learning with more motivation and perhaps a passive understanding of the traditional language. They probably have better accents in the traditional language than outsiders who learn it. All of this should encourage American Indian communities to take stock of their local linguistic ideology and plan for language continuity.

One of the biggest problems in maintaining a Native American language in the twenty-first century is coming up with new speakers. Despite sympathy for the plea for “learning the language at home in the family,” it is clear that no one is going to learn Indian in a household that is monolingual in English, from parents who can’t speak the language. This means that education, in or out of classrooms, is the only logical way to go if a significant increase is to be made in the number of active speakers. Technology has an important role here, just as in documentation and curation.

Whatever the role heritage languages have for Native American in this new century, using a traditional language will have to be comfortable for Native American users. It has to feel normal, whether in learning or using the language. This **habitus** must be confident to counter the labels “language loss” and “language death.”

It is not enough to document a heritage language—the users and consumers of the language must construct a novel identity for their traditional language that fosters a healthy feeling of language use and allegiance. This calls for nothing less than deliberately developing their existing linguistic ideology to situate their heritage languages as a logical and positive outgrowth of contemporary Native American cultures.

The key to positive culture response and change is to keep in mind the linguistic ideology of the indigenous community. How do Native Americans fit with the linguistic ideologies of the mainstreamers? Although the existence of their traditional languages contradicts the monolingual ideal, the fact that they are more originally American might make them more American than most Americans. Such “value-added” Americana, unlike opera in Italian, is not the case. They are just foreign languages to mainstreamers.

Native American languages are very symbolic for Native Americans, often are linked to kin, and may have supernatural values, even as such languages are losing speakers. There are beliefs about languages in American Indian cultures that don't exist in mainstream America. One is that language is a direct attachment to family and culture.

“Our language is our culture.”

“Teaching the language is supposed to be in the family.”

In these statements, many Native Americans emphasize an important link for them between traditional language and kin. Language is for them an emotional link to kin. Such a belief could only arise from a multilingual situation in which people were aware of different languages and respected all of them. This sort of linguistic ideology is weakly reflected in mainstream culture.

“My parents could speak Danish, but I only know a little” [real meaning: “but I'm only supposed to know a little”].

For monolinguals to know “just a little” (like “just enough” Spanish when visiting Mexico) is okay. In this weak link with the past, the speaker can say the words for colors, the days of the week, some common greetings, count to ten, and maybe muster a short text like the Lord's Prayer.

Another linguistic ideology that touches Native Americans more than mainstream Americans is language as a way of interacting with the supernatural. In this view, an actual utterance of language may effect real outcomes in the real world, especially if belief is strong.

“Words are real.”

“the power of prayer”

By “words are real,” Native Americans mean that an utterance is the same as any other action—to speak (or sing) words is to cause the action or circumstances portrayed in the words. This metaphysic is paralleled by the Christian belief that God hears any earnest prayer, and somehow answered. Countering this view is the belief that words are only words.

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”

“lip service”

In English common law, assault must be actual; verbal threats do not count. “Lip service” is just “going through the motions,” divorcing or devaluing belief from some required task or ritual.

It will be up to language planners, teachers, educators, parents, et al. to realize how greatly mainstream linguistic ideology may have affected the generations raised

on television and mass media in their particular community. The language belief system of those generations may be similar to mainstream idea(s) about language.

Yet these generations are Native American, and so many hold a deep allegiance to their tribes and cultures. It is from this dichotomy of linguistic ideology (mainstream linguistic ideology and local/traditional linguistic ideology) that American Indians in the twenty-first century must construct and negotiate their identities in reversed diglossias, using their heritage languages in ways that grow out of their culture in order for their traditional languages to continue as revitalized languages, or as Formal varieties with a limited number of speakers.

Revitalization almost always requires changing community attitudes about a language, while maintenance seeks to protect against the imposition of outside attitudes (Grenoble and Whaley 2006:13).

Cultivating a positive attitude toward the language to be revitalized and actively excluding the language attitudes of a dominant society are what we are talking about here, but I have argued beyond this; namely, that language revitalization projects tend to operate within the economics and strictures of a dominant society and therefore in step with the linguistic ideology of the matrix culture, creatively venting their concern for the heritage language in projects that may take decades and not significantly raise the number of speakers or contexts in which the language is used.

### *For Thinking and Classroom Discussion*

1. Below are a number of linguistic ideologies that were brought up during the course of the book:
  - Nationalistic linguistic ideology (official language model)
  - Variationism
  - Inclusive linguistic ideology
  - Exclusive linguistic ideology
  - Utilitarian linguistic ideology
  - Esthetic linguistic ideology
  - Language as a cultural heritage
  - Language as a connection to spirituality
  - Language as an ethnic marker

Some of these overlap. Write out your own definition of each, and include an example. Then, indicate which you think are most likely to overlap; perhaps you can arrange them in clusters or constellations.

2. A novel interpretation of the Italian social theorist Gramsci is that the official language model and associated nationalistic linguistic ideology, taken as the basis for Native American language revitalization, merely gave motivated, concerned Native Americans busy work to keep them occupied, while at the same time thinking that something real (the restoration of their heritage language to

daily use by most speech community members) would result. It's like the Ghost Dance of the 1890s in the western United States: if Native Americans did this dance, the dead would be restored and the world cleansed of the invading Anglo marauders. This millenistic movement can be compared to official language model revitalization: "like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy but you don't go anywhere."

Such a cynical view is a strong statement, but one appropriate to a critique of Native American language revitalization. If this thesis is true, the underlying motivation could be intended or merely accidental; the effect is the same. But to what extent is it true?

Pick an anthology on Native American language revitalization such as Cantoni (1996) or Hinton and Hale (2001). Go through the entire book, skimming each chapter for the following information:

- What is the model for language revitalization (official language, metropolitan, school, school–home partnership, etc.)?
  - What is the stated (or assumed) linguistic ideology of the project?
  - What are the reported results of the project?
3. The danger of commodification in retarding or nullifying language revitalization is a limiting factor on any project of language revitalization or revival. How did successful language revitalizations (Hawaiian, Maori, Greenlandic, Mohawk) manage to avoid turning their respective heritage language into a commodity? In each case of successful revitalization, was commodification of the heritage language a factor that needed to be overcome, or did the speech community never make commodification an issue? Try to outline the relation of commodification and language revitalization.

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## Chapter 6

# Four “Laws” of Language Revitalization

**Abstract** Language revitalization of Native American languages requires going beyond the worldview, methods, and expectations of the official language model. Successful language revitalization takes into account a more or less limited role of the heritage language in the speech community, as well as how to reach varying levels of revitalization. The revitalization of a Native American heritage language has to fit into the speech community’s linguistic ideology and outlook in order to have value as a revitalized language that community members actually use. The linguistic ideology of the official language model must be rejected.

In social sciences and humanities, it is notoriously difficult to come up with general principles that explain human behavior, because of the many variables that influence it. In 1900s, scholars in these fields envied the simplistic, reductionistic explanations of the natural sciences, trying to emulate the same reductionism that made theory in chemistry and physics “elegant” (termed “physics envy” by the astronomer Carl Sagan).

Certain principles, however, emerge from thinking about language revitalization and revival. These have variability built into them, and are hopefully explanatory in a way that is helpful. Below is a summary of the first three “Laws” of Language Revitalization:

1. **First “Law” of Language Revitalization:** Language revitalization and revival is directly proportional to resources (funding, personnel, time available, motivation), of which motivation is the overriding factor.
2. **Second “Law” of Language Revitalization:** Although purism is always an issue in language revitalization or revival, purism in language revitalization and revival is directly proportional to the design of the heritage target language.
3. **Third “Law” of Language Revitalization:** Language revitalization and revival is directly proportional to ease of learning.
4. **Fourth “Law” of Language Revitalization:** Linguistic ideology of a potential heritage language speech community directly affects the outcome of any possible language revitalization or revival.

Let’s unpack each of these in turn.

The **First “Law”** states that language revitalization and revival is directly proportional to resources, of which motivation is foremost. Clearly, a project of the magnitude of language revitalization requires time and effort by dedicated individuals who need training in language documentation, analysis, and acquisition. All of this requires funding, especially for a dispersed population (which may not be a functioning speech community in the first place). In cases like Mutsun, Esselen, or Salinan with meager resources (no native or active speakers, dispersed community of descendants, little funding), the chance of full revitalization is not promising, but perhaps more modest goals than full-scale revitalization can be achieved.

Yet it is possible to achieve fluency in the face of resource odds, as in the case of Cornish (located in Great Britain) where a dispersed speech community was created from the ground up, with several hundred fluent speakers and an emerging generation of native speakers. The Cornish case (McKinnon 2000; Gillingham 2011) shows that motivation is the overriding factor. The case of Manx (Isle of Man, between Scotland and Ireland in the Irish Sea) is a similar story of few resources, but results through sustained effort fuelled by intense motivation (Alger 2009; Clague 2009).

The **Second “Law”** states that although purism is a perennial issue in language revitalization or revival, it is directly proportional to the design of the heritage language. The design of a heritage language like Chinook is completely opposite of the design of a matrix language like English, French, or Spanish. In such a case, purism (adhering to the heritage language’s design) is inherent to the project, and directly limits the effectiveness of revitalization. Languages vary between packaging information on the word and sentence level, and the more a heritage packages or can package information on the sentence level, the greater the chance of success (however defined), which contributes to **ease of learning**.

In cases where a heritage language is more like a matrix language in design, ease of learning (**Third “Law”**) is constrained by language design, but there are other factors. One is the way learner-users of a heritage language are exposed to the target (heritage) language. Another is length of time to absorb the heritage language. There must also be opportunity for review and use of the heritage language.

One key element of ease of learning is careful planning as to what is to be achieved. On an elemental way, a basic knowledge might consist of:

- Respect for and positive awareness of the heritage language
- Ability to pronounce and read the heritage language
- Greetings, leave-taking, and other phatic language use
- Ability to meaningfully perform set pieces (prayers, songs)
- Understanding of pieces of heritage language used emblematically (mottoes, proverbs, inside jokes, etc.)
- Basic conversation (weather, seasons, numbers for age and time of day, daily routine, personal situation and background, etc.)

From such a modest base, of course, it is always possible to expand (areas of basic conversation, for example).

Language acquisition not only involves knowing beforehand what is intended to be taught, but also the order in which the material is to be presented (and reviewed), and how the material is to be presented. This is the outcome of language documentation and language planning. In particular, language lessons and practice need to be “bite-sized” so that the learner-user is not overwhelmed.

Technology (audio and visual records of the heritage language and its use in specific contexts) can add to ease of learning: language lessons (bite-sized) and practice are clear and always accessible, multidimensional (written, video, audio) to appeal to different learning styles, and can be repeated without tiring an elder. Lessons and practice can be put on the Internet and CDs/DVDs to make the material available over a wide area. Password protection may limit the possible audience for heritage language acquisition, if desired. Technology is not meant to replace elders or speakers. In the case of no speakers, technology must assume a major role.

Another factor of ease of learning is human interaction. Learner-users must have meaningful exchanges in the heritage language with other people right from the start. This interaction must be sustained on a regular basis. Out of this activity, a speech community will emerge (even if on the Internet). Technology may play a decisive role here by connecting learner-users with elders/speakers in real time (Internet chat, video conferencing such as Skype) or delayed (email, wikis). Learning materials (lessons, practices) and reference materials (dictionary, easy to understand outline of language structure) can be available on the same site that hosts interaction.

The **Fourth “Law” of Language Revitalization**, of course, is that the linguistic ideology of a potential heritage language speech community directly affects the outcome of any possible language revitalization or revival. The potential learner-users must have some reason for engaging in the activity, which will require some (or a great deal of) time. The heritage language must have some real use(s) and emotional value to motivate them to learn to use it in some actual contexts.

The goal here is to enliven the potential heritage language speech community with the sincere belief that using their heritage language is worthwhile, even on a limited basis. The self-fulfilling prophecy (in this case: “once a language is dead, it’s nearly impossible to revive it”) must be gradually worn down by proving otherwise, starting with baby steps and progressing gradually into limited contexts of language use and then possibly onto fuller, near-fluent use of the language. The cynical view of Gramsci (in this case: “government sponsored language revitalization projects based on the official language model engage and occupy earnest people, without really achieving very much”) by deliberately outlining a linguistic ideology that fits the (potential) heritage language speech community’s needs and views.

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## Appendix: Some Linguistic Conventions

Following are the linguistic conventions for writing and citing examples in languages other than English that are used in the text. Suggested pronunciation is approximate.

Symbol	Comment
“ ... ”	Indicates the literal meaning of a cited word; ex. <i>šawa</i> , “to cry” (Esselen)
[ ... ]	Used to show the pronunciation of a word; e.g., <i>enough</i> , [eněf] (English)
< ... >	Used to cite the spelling of a word; e.g., <enough>
/ ... /	Used to indicate that the spelling of a word is in the phonemes of its language; e.g., /eněf/
'	The apostrophe is used to represent a glottal stop; e.g., the catch in the English word <i>oh-oh</i>
:	The colon is used to indicate vowel length; compare the English words <i>wrote</i> and <i>rode</i> : they both have the same vowels, but the vowel in the first is shorter; phonetically, they are: [rot] and [ro:d]
a	A in the English word father
b	b in the English word bet
č	ch in the English word chat
d	d in the English word dog
e	e in the English word met
ë	e in the English word pert, but without the [r]
f	f in the English word fat
g	g in the English word get
h	h in the English word hat
i	ee in the English word meet
j	j in the English word join
k	k in the English word skip
l	l in the English word lap
m	m in the English word mom
n	n in the English word no
o	o in the English word wrote
p	p in the English word spot
r	r in the English word rode
s	s in the English word sip

(continued)

(continued)

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Symbol	Comment
ʃ	sh in the English word ship
t	t in the English word stop
ʈ	d in the English word udder
u	u in the English word rule
v	v in the English word van
w	w in the English word win
x	like h in the English word hat, but made farther back in the throat
y	in the English word yes

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# Index

## A

Anderson, J.D., 37  
Arapaho language, 37, 40  
Arveiller, R., 28  
Ausaima language, 6, 7, 20  
Austin, P.K., 26

## B

Berthelsen, C., 34

## C

Cantoni, G., 53  
Code, 3, 5, 12, 39, 46, 48, 50  
Code-switching, 26  
Colonial diglossia, 4, 14, 39, 40  
Consonant, 1, 2, 6  
Crystal, D., 6  
Cultural capital, 4, 5, 13, 14, 20, 28, 32, 34, 39, 49  
Culture, 4–6, 11, 13, 14, 18–20, 24, 28, 29, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 43, 45, 46, 49–52

## D

Descriptive linguistics, 12  
Diglossia, 3–5, 14–20, 24, 49, 52  
Domain (vocabulary), 33  
Dormant language, 8, 12

## E

Ease of learning, 55–57  
Eriksen, T.H., 34

Errington, J., 39

Esselen language, 8, 9, 40, 41, 56, 59  
Exclusive linguistic ideology, 40, 41, 52

## F

Fluent speaker, 12, 16, 26, 33–35, 37, 56  
Franklin, B., 46

## G

Grammar, 2, 11–13, 15, 18, 19, 23–25, 27, 28, 32, 37, 39  
Grammar method, 24  
Gramsci, A., 31–43, 46  
Greenlandic language, 4, 28, 34–36, 40, 53  
Grenoble, L.A., 1–9, 14, 36

## H

Habitus, 42, 50  
Hale, K.L., 13, 53  
Harrison, D., 11  
Hawaiian language, 12, 33, 35, 36, 40, 49, 50, 53  
Hebrew language, 34, 36, 50  
Heraldic (language use), 14, 28, 39, 49  
Heritage language, 4–6, 12–20, 24–29, 31–37, 39–42, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55–57  
Hieber, D.H., 11–20  
Hinton, L., 13, 26  
Holistic, 4–5  
House, D., 36, 48, 49  
Hybrid method, 25, 26

**I**

Immersion method, 24–26  
 Inclusive linguistic ideology, 29, 52  
 Interlanguage, 5, 27  
 Inverse marking, 3

**K**

Karuna language, 39  
 Kroskrity, P.V., 38

**L**

Langgard, K., 34  
 Language  
   acquisition, 23–29, 33, 43, 56, 57  
   ideology, 4, 6, 37, 40, 46  
   learning, 23–29, 42, 45–47, 50, 55–57  
   loss, 1–9, 11–15, 20, 24, 26, 28, 37,  
     40, 49, 50  
   mixing, 26  
   planning, 29, 31, 57  
   revitalization, 4–6, 13, 14, 26–29,  
     31–43, 45–53, 55–57  
   revival, 23, 27, 31–43, 53, 55–57  
 Lexicon, 2  
 Linguistic appreciation, 32, 33  
 Linguistic ideology, 5, 6, 14, 24, 27, 29, 31,  
   32, 34–36, 38–42, 45–53, 55, 57  
 Linguistic item, 3  
 Linguistic repertory, 3  
 Linguistic variable, 3  
 Loether, C., 38

**M**

Magosci, P.R., 27  
 Makihara, M., 4, 39  
 Mandela, N., 23–29  
 Maori language, 35, 36, 40, 53  
 Meeks, B.A., 37  
 Metropolitan language revitalization,  
   32, 33, 53  
 Miller, W., 38  
 Minimal pair, 2  
 Mohawk language, 33, 35, 36, 53  
 Monegasque language, 27–29  
 Morpheme, 2, 6, 7, 9, 42  
 Mutsun language, 39–41, 56  
 Muwekma language, 39–41

**N**

Nationalistic linguistic ideology, 38, 52  
 Neologism, 26  
 Network, 3, 19, 49

**O**

Official language model, 6, 14, 23, 24, 27, 29,  
   31, 35–41, 52, 53, 57  
 Ong, W., 20  
 Orality, 6, 14, 20, 33, 34, 36  
 Orwell, G., 45–53

**P**

Passive speaker, 28, 29, 33, 34  
 Person marking, 7, 8, 27  
 Phatic communication, 33, 40–42, 56  
 Phoneme, 2, 59  
 Practical orthography, 2, 20  
 Prefix, 2, 7

**R**

Rapa Nui language (Easter Island), 3, 38–39  
 Reagan, R., 45–53  
 Register, 3

**S**

Salinan language, 7, 56  
 Sallabank, J., 26  
 Shaul, D.L., 8, 27  
 Shoshone language (Eastern), 20, 37–38, 41  
 Sleeping language, 12  
 Sociolinguistics, 3, 46  
 Sound system, 1, 6, 24  
 Speech community, 3–7, 13, 20, 24, 26, 27,  
   29, 31–33, 36, 37, 41, 42, 46, 48–50,  
   53, 55–57  
 Suffix, 2, 3, 27  
 Syllable, 1, 2, 7  
 Syncretic, 26, 39, 40

**T**

Target language, 23–25, 50, 55, 56  
 Theoretical linguistics, 12  
 Tohono O'odham language, 14–20, 25  
 Turner, K., 7  
 Type A (language revitalization), 32–34, 40  
 Type B (language revitalization), 32–34  
 Type C (language revitalization), 32, 33

**V**

Variationism (linguistic ideology), 38, 52  
 Vowel, 1, 2, 6, 59

**W**

Whaley, L.J., 1–9, 14, 36