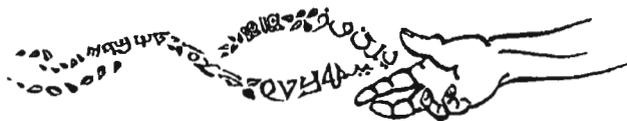
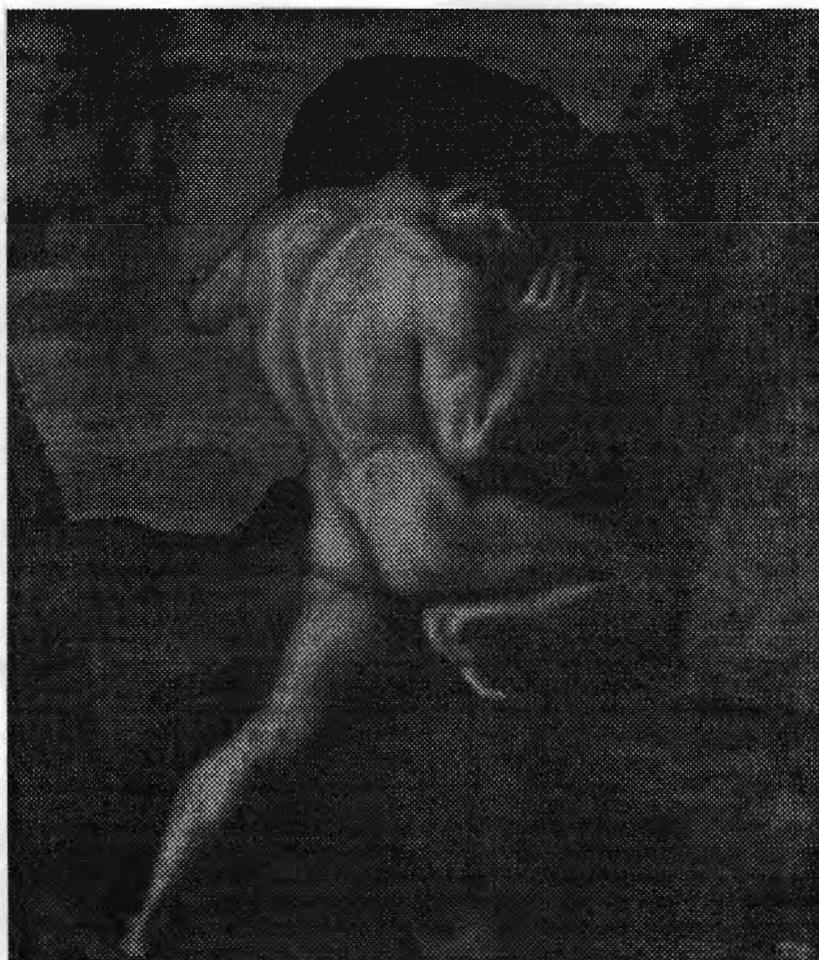


FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES



# OGMIOS



## Sisyphus

by Franz von Stuck (German, 1863-1928): 1920; Oil on canvas; 103 x 89 cm.

Because of his misdeeds, Sisyphus, once king of Corinth, is doomed to push a huge stone up a hill in the underworld; it then rolls back down and he has to start all over again.

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Editor: Nicholas D. M. Ostler

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## 1. Our Sisyphean Task

The last six months have not been easy for the Foundation.

Since the conference at Charlotte, North Carolina, in September last year, we have been in financial limbo: first, because the accounting with the hotel in Charlotte (the Holiday Inn, as it happens) came very late — three months late, in January; and secondly, because when it did come it revealed a massive deficit. This deficit was due to poor attendance at the conference. Sheer bad luck had meant that many attendees (17% of advance bookings!) had faced a last-minute crisis and so had to cancel; but the cost of attending the conference was high (over double the price in previous years); and the meeting was being held in a continent where the academic term had already started. Policies for advance payment to the hotel, and for refunds, which had proved manageable for the previous three years, turned out to be ruinous this time.

We have learnt our lessons, and future conferences will be run at much lower prices, and with a much steadier eye on the break-even point.

The deficit was large enough to make it impossible for us to give any grants this last year. For this, we apologize to all our members. These grants, after all, provide our *raison d'être*, even if with our very tight finances secured almost totally by membership subscriptions, there is usually very little surplus to distribute in this way.

Our sales of the Proceedings for the conference, (FEL IV: *Endangered Languages and Literacy*) have continued to make headway, however, and with this, and the generosity of some donors (including some of the conference attendees), little by little we have clawed our way back out of the pit in which we were sunk. At the time of writing, we are poised to pay back all the debt other than to members of the Committee. We can begin to think about another year, another conference (note the Call for Abstracts for the next Conference in Agadir, Morocco), and, I very much hope, another round of grants.

These grants are the much best way of letting the financial boulder roll away — reducing our hard-won surplus to zero again, but (as we hope and trust) securing some small permanent gain for some language, somewhere.

For a new year of progress to be possible, we are very much dependent on a good response to the call to renew membership which will accompany this issue of Ogmios for many of you. (And if not this time, then next time!)

We are taking the opportunity to move to a simpler framework for membership, which

will be by calendar year; and we are increasing our membership rates. We also feel that members should be given the chance to subscribe in advance for the Proceedings of our conferences. These can provide a significant extra benefit, since they are always extremely interesting books in their own right: and it should be possible to give members, who provide the firm framework that underlies them, a worthwhile discount. I hope as many as possible will take the opportunity to ask for Full Membership this time, especially if you have not yet ordered a copy of the Proceedings.

But for all our attempts to 'turn the penny' fruitfully, and give good value for the charges we make, we remain very much a charity, dependent for our future on the generosity of our members, and all those who care about the future of all the language communities in the human family.

Our cause is becoming better known month by month, and year by year, as "Language Endangerment in the News" shows.

Although there are still all too many moments when the boulder of language revitalization seems to be slipping back down the hill, and the unremitting toil of pushing on it seems to generate more sweat than movement forward and upward, the effort is worthwhile, and the journey up the hill is always a scenic one.

And there is another way of seeing Sisyphus, identifying him with Teshub, the Hittite sun god. Every day the vast orb of the Sun must be pushed on its pre-destined track, all the way to the top of the sky, only to roll down again beneath the horizon. This labour is what makes all life possible, all beauty visible.

Now let's get back to work...

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## 2. Development of the Foundation

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### The Language Challenge

*Announcing an innovative way to raise money for your Charity...*

So runs a recent press release from the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT). And we know, or at least we hope, that your favourite charity is the Foundation.

So, what do you do? Read on.....

2001 is **European Year of Languages** and CILT has come up with a cunning plan. If you are learning, or want to learn, a language, then:

- set yourself a task to be completed in that language by the European Day of Languages (Wednesday 26th September)
- get sponsorship from friends, family work mates — whoever — for completing this.

If you're going to do this, CILT would like you to register by phoning LearnDirect (0800 100 900 in the UK) or visiting <http://www eyl2001.org.uk>

Obviously we hope that FEL will be your chosen charity and I'd like to know what you're doing as well — so please let me know.

We shall cover the challenges people set themselves in future issues of Ogmios. This could be your chance to come to grips with that language that has always tantalized you (sisyphized you?) from afar...

Nigel Birch, 55 Severn Avenue, Greenmeadow, Swindon SN2 3LL, England  
<nigel.birch@epsrc.ac.uk>

**Call for Abstracts: FEL U: "Endangered Languages and the Media", Agadir, Morocco. 21-24 Sept. 2001**

Among the most powerful instruments of the process we have come to know as "globalization" are the mass media. Through the medium of the written and spoken word, the increasingly concentrated ownership of the world's mass media exercises a strong influence on the hearts and minds of all but the very remotest of the world's languages. The pattern of use and control of the world's press and broadcasting has shifted even faster than the speed of shrinkage of the world's minority languages.

What exactly is the relationship between the globalization of the media and increased pressure on minority languages? Is there a hopeful side, as the cost and technology bases of the media are revolutionized? The fifth international conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages aims to pinpoint the processes and seek new tactics for coping with them: hoping, at the very least, to channel some of the power of the media for the good of small languages.

We hope to find answers to many questions, not all of them obvious.

For example:

- what effect does the global availability of satellite broadcasting have on the world's smaller languages?
- what is the meaning of a free press if some languages are denied a voice in it?
- must the Internet inevitably exclude smaller languages from access to the electronic media, or is it ultimately a force for diversity?
- is a big fashionable metropolitan language always the guarantee of

commercial success in the music recording industry?

- how can speakers of minority languages get access to training in journalism?
- is it the states responsibility to subsidize broadcasting in minority languages? Why?
- what happens when emigrant communities abroad are better served by media in their new country than those from their old home?

To seek answers to these and other questions, the Foundation for Endangered Languages hereby calls for papers to be presented at its fifth conference, 'Endangered Languages and the Media', planned for the University of Agadir, Morocco, for 21-24 September 2001.

It is no coincidence that we choose this venue for the conference, at the heart of one of the most promising regions of Morocco in terms of economic activity, but also in terms of intellectual activity trying to come to terms with the identity crisis that faces most North Africans. In Agadir, as in most of Morocco and North Africa, the streets echo with a polyphony of local and foreign languages: Tashelhit (Southern Amazigh, known as Berber), Darija (Moroccan Arabic), as well as Standard Arabic, French, Spanish, English and the occasional note of German, Italian or Japanese.

Agadir, on the Atlantic coast of southern Morocco, has great sweeping beaches but none of the nondescript high rise blocks of the Mediterranean beach resorts. For those interested in wildlife, in September the River Sous can provide a rich variety of migrating seabirds and waders. The river valley itself is one of the most famous ornithological regions in the country. Agadir was first settled by Hanno, a Carthaginian explorer on his way south round Africa in the 5th century BC. 2000 years later, ca 1500, it was re-founded as a Portuguese staging-post for more sustained circumnavigation. It came under Moroccan rule around 1536.

We invite contributions not only from the academic disciplines of linguistics and media studies, but also from active practitioners in the field those with first-hand experience from which we can learn of the worlds threatened languages and their struggle for survival and equal status with those of international communication in the ether and on the printed page. We have much to learn from each other, and we invite you to share your knowledge and experience with us in the beautiful setting of an ancient city that has long been at the crossroads of communication between Europe and Africa. The conference will also provide ample opportunity to explore the surrounding area as well.

The Foundation for Endangered Languages is a registered charity in England and Wales. FEL conferences, besides being

opportunities to discuss the issues from a global viewpoint, are working meetings of the Foundation, defining our overall policy for future years. Participants at the conference therefore, unless offering media coverage, need to be members of the Foundation. There are full facilities to join on arrival, but all proposers are strongly urged to join as soon as possible, and so take full part in the Foundation's activities in the lead-up to the conference.

Presentations will last twenty minutes each, with a further ten minutes for discussion. Authors will be expected to submit a written paper for publication in the Proceedings well in advance of the conference. All presentations should be accessible largely in English, but use of the languages of interest, for quotation or exemplification, may well be appropriate.

#### Organizers:

Hassan Ouzzate	Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco
Nicholas Ostler	FEL, Bath, England
Chris Moseley	BBC Monitoring Service
Nigel Birch	EPSRC, United Kingdom
McKenna Brown	Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

#### Abstract Submission

Abstracts should not exceed 500 words. They can be submitted in either of two ways: (preferably) by electronic submission, but also on paper. They should be in English.

#### A) Electronic submission:

Electronic submission (by 15 April 2001) should be in plain ascii text email message to <Chris.Moseley@mon.bbc.co.uk>, giving details as for the paper submission.

#### B) Paper abstracts:

Three copies should be sent, (again, for delivery by 15 April 2001), to:

Christopher Moseley, 2 Wanbourne Lane, Nettlebed, Oxon RG9 5AH, England (fax +44-1491-641922)

This should have a clear short title, but should not bear anything to identify the author(s).

On a separate sheet, please include the following information:

NAME: Names of the author(s)  
 TITLE: Title of the paper  
 EMAIL: Email address of the first author, if any  
 ADDR: Postal address of the first author  
 TEL: Telephone number of the first author, if any  
 FAX: Fax number of the first author, if any

The name of the first author will be used in all correspondence.

If possible, please also send an e-mail to Christopher Moseley at

<Chris.Moseley@mon.bbc.co.uk> informing him of the hard copy submission. This is in case the hard copy does not reach its destination. This e-mail should contain the information specified in the section below.

#### Important Dates

Abstract submission deadline	April 15
Committee's decision	May 14
Authors submit camera-ready text	July 23
Conference	Sept 21-24

#### Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting on 17th March, 2001, 2 Wanbourne Lane, Nettlebed, UK

#### Present

Nicholas Ostler (President)  
 Chris Moseley (Group Liaison Officer)  
 Nigel Birch (Secretary)

#### 1. Fundraising

Two letters had been received relating to fund raising. Firstly, the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) had sent a circular publicising the European year of Languages 2001 and the Languages Challenge, a way to encourage people to learn a language by setting themselves a goal and getting sponsorship for their favourite charity.

Nigel would reply to CILT, and advance our collaboration with them. Nigel would also write a paragraph summarising this for Ogmios.

Secondly, a letter had been received from Derek Rogers who runs a small software company in Glasgow. As part of the Year Of Languages he was organising a fund-raising event for the autumn where readers would read out Aesop's fable of "The North Wind and the Sun" from phonetic translations, the challenge being that a native speaker would be able to understand the story at first hearing. Proceeds from this event would be donated to the Foundation. He had written to us both to inform us of the event, and to ask for ideas for sponsorship. Nigel would write back with his experiences of trying to raise sponsorship for the recent concert. He would also put him in touch with Alasdair.

#### 2. Ogmios

Although Karen Johnson-Weiner had agreed to take on the editing of this a change in her circumstances at work made this impossible for her for a while. Nick agreed to get out this new issue in the absence of an editor.

It was noted that Ogmios was very important for the Foundation as it kept the members in regular contact, involving them in the activities. Whoever took this on had to be aware of what was involved and be prepared to do it. Louanna Furbee had expressed her willingness to take this on and Nick agreed to contact her to discuss

what was required and to see if she was willing to do it.

### 3. Charlotte Conference Aftermath

The individuals owed money from the event had now been paid and only three creditors remained: the University, the Holiday Inn and Nick. Blair wanted to pay the Holiday Inn next and wanted to commit us to paying a regular amount to do this. It was decided to delay this until this year's subscriptions had been received, which should be by the end of May. Nick would discuss this with Blair.

### 4. Membership

New rates and new classes of membership had been proposed ranging from full, which would include paper copies of Ogmios and the conference proceedings, to subsidised membership, which would be free.

The changes and increases were agreed. In informing members, the letter needed to justify the increase. It should point out the dual role of the Foundation: producing publications and to keep the members informed and involved, and generating funds to support research. This latter was our prime purpose and, currently, the membership was the main source of income. Rising costs of production and distribution were reducing the sums available for grants. Nick would talk to Patrick about the content of the letter and issuing the notification to members.

In the UK, two bank accounts were currently being operated because of the difficulty in the main bank of processing credit card slips. This was giving Chris a lot of extra work as the banks were in different towns. Chris agreed to explore the pros and cons of rationalising this by perhaps transferring the account to a single bank. He would also explore the setting-up of standing orders, etc and ways claiming back tax from individual subscriptions.

### 5. The Foundation as Publisher

There was a need to obtain active promotion of our publications in to the book trade. This would require getting a publisher's agent and a distributor. Chris would investigate this.

### 6. The Agadir Conference

Chris agreed to draft the technical scope for the call for proposals.

Nick would circulate the Call and set a deadline.

There was also a need to reconsider the date of the conference as the present period conflicted with the European Day of Languages which was Wednesday, 26 September. This event offered the Foundation an opportunity for publicity and the clash with the conference should be avoided.

There was also a need to discuss with Hassan when money was needed. Nick would discuss these issues with him.

The European Year Of Languages offered the opportunity to raise the profile of the Foundation and Nigel agreed to think about some kind of "rabble-rousing" event - a seminar with major speakers, for example. He agreed to contact Alasdair and involve him in the planning.

If the conference were not to go ahead then we would need to consider some alternative method of holding the AGM.

## Report on FEL Grant: Documenting the lexicon of Tuahka (Nicaragua).

The Principal Researcher was Prof. Elena Benedicto, of Purdue University. The work was carried out in the period Aug.-Dec. 1999 (not during the period Feb-June 1999, owing to problems with the transfer of money from England to Nicaragua).

The project aimed to document the lexicon of Tuahka, a variant of Mayangna, spoken in Bluefields, Nicaragua. It was carried out over 5 months. Seven indigenous research assistants were selected for the Tuahka Linguistic Team (TUYUWAYABA). Their names are: Alberto Dolores, Modesta Dolores, Gloria Fenly, Neddy Ismael, José de la Cruz Meléndez, Stringham Montiel and Cristina Poveda. The funds were used to pay a monthly supplement of \$18.00 to each of the research assistants.

Two workshops took place: one in the beginning to train the research assistants and organize the work, and one at the end of the period to collect and evaluate the work. These workshops were funded by URACCAN University, the local counterpart.

The previous 1996 vocabulary was revised. A collection of 24 folktales were collected, as well as several pieces of Tuahka oral history. Lexical items for the dictionary were collected from all those sources, as well as from the school materials already produced.

A total of 854 lexical cards (with full grammatical information) were prepared as entries for the dictionary in the period specified above. During the period January-June 2000, those lexical entries were introduced in the computer by Linguistics students at Purdue University (with funds from the Linguistics Program, or as part of an Honors course). The result was printed out and was partially revised during a workshop in July 2000. The process of revision proved to be slow and tedious; the members of TUYUWAYABA did not have relief from their usual duties, so little time could be devoted each day for the revisions. A Purdue student assisted in computers tasks during the workshop. Unfortunately, the

revisions could not be finished. In talks with URACCAN University, it was decided that during my next visit in December 2000, a block of one week will be provided for work exclusively on the revisions for the dictionary. URACCAN will provide funds for that workshop and to publish the dictionary.

Although not finished for publication, the funds provided by FEL were instrumental and decisive in allowing the collection of the bulk of the work for the dictionary. Hopefully, the dictionary will be finished and published as a collective team effort by FEL, local institutions (URACCAN), the Linguistics Program and Linguistics students at Purdue and, above all, the members of the TUYUWAYABA research team.

The amount received was of US \$ 635.23. Aside from US\$15.00 in bank transfer expenses, and \$5.23 on office supplies, the sum paid for 35 researcher months at \$18 per mensem.

West Lafayette, November 2000.

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## 3. Language Endangerment in the News

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### Vanishing tongues: Scientists fight to save disappearing languages - from the Boston Globe

The following story, by Gareth Cook, ran on page A01 of the Boston Globe on 5 November 2000.

© Copyright 2000 Globe Newspaper Company.

This summer, on a high grassy plateau in western Mongolia, framed by the Altai mountains, linguist David Harrison chased yaks with a digital video camera.

All around him were Tuvan yak herders, dressed in high leather boots and multicolored silk robes, urging the beasts to pasture with plaintive "domestication songs." They speak a language called Tsengel Tuvan, which Harrison has been scrambling to document before it vanishes.

We are living, scientists say, in the midst of an unprecedented, worldwide linguistic collapse. Of the 6,700-odd languages now spoken, at least half - and perhaps as many as 90 percent - will be extinct in a century's time, as younger generations reject traditional tongues for a few dominant languages.

With a language dying roughly every two weeks, said Harrison, a visiting lecturer at Yale University, "we are missing an incredible opportunity. You can still go out there and find an entire language that not a

single scientist has documented. It's like adding a new element to the periodic table."

Amid a growing sense of alarm, linguists, archivists, and computer scientists plan to gather at the University of Pennsylvania in December to plot the rebuilding of the Tower of Babel before the bricks turn to dust. Their plan, together with a loose, worldwide collection of institutions, is to convert as many of the world's languages as possible into detailed digital records, including sound files, and then post the results on the Internet in a common, searchable format.

Anthropologists bemoan the language massacre, saying that each language is like a soaring cathedral: a thing of beauty, the product of immense creative effort, filled with rich tapestries of knowledge. Interviews with traditional healers, for example, have identified new drugs. And comparing disparate languages reveals clues to the fundamental building blocks of human thought, as well as echoes of what scientists call our "deep history" - the vast, prehistoric movements of peoples across continents and the relation of one tribe to another.

"All of a sudden, we can have a much more complete picture of the science of language," said Steven Bird, the conference organizer and associate director of the Linguistic Data Consortium, an organization of 850 institutions. "At the present time, there is an amazing convergence, with the ability to store large amounts of data cheaply, and the ability to share it."

Flowing through the digital switches and fiber optic cables of the Internet, many world languages would live on in at least some form, organizers say, available to researchers, or to descendants who want to reconnect with a past they rejected as children.

But many anthropologists and indigenous activists say that such efforts skirt the real issue. Saving a language, they say, requires political and economic muscle. Bird admitted that his efforts would "only be a small part of the solution." For many of these languages, he added, "one has to be fairly cynical about the future."

Yet, even if it is a twilight struggle, other scientists said it will be a crucial one. "A magnificent human creation like the "Mona Lisa" or the Sistine Chapel shouldn't just vanish without being recorded," said Stephen Pinker, a psychology professor at MIT and author of "The Language Instinct." "This is history that is not written as history."

As linguists first trekked through jungles and mountains with tape recorders, they were stunned at the richness of human language. In the endangered Australian

language Guugu Yimithirr, for example, there are no relative spatial words like "left" and "right"; instead, speakers would refer to a person's "north hand" or "west leg," depending on how they are standing in the world. Another Aboriginal language has a class of nouns relating to "women, fire, or dangerous things."

Looking for differences between languages is also one of the only ways scientists have to estimate how long two groups have been apart. Thus, it was a linguist, Sir William Jones, who first suggested that much of India and Europe were colonized by the descendants of one tribe - an ancient band now thought to have originated north of the Caspian Sea.

With enough languages, the same approach can be used to probe tens of thousands of years of human history.

Languages can also contain within them a mass of accumulated knowledge about the natural world, a treasure trove for botanists and even pharmaceutical companies. Paul Allen Cox, an ethnobotanist who heads the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Hawaii and Florida, said that he spent a year living in western Samoa recording the knowledge of Pela Lilo, a traditional healer.

One preparation Lilo described involved peeling bark that smells of menthol from a certain tree, soaking it in water, and drinking the pink suds. Back in a laboratory, researchers found in the liquid a compound that doubled the life of a kind of cell, called a "T-cell," that plays a crucial role in human immune systems. The journal *Cytotechnology* published the result in 1994.

Last month, Cox said, he held Lilo's hand as she died in her bed, the last of her people with such detailed knowledge.

"When we lose the language, we also lose the plant lore," said Cox, who is horrified at how many languages the world loses every month. "I see language as a bottle that holds a precious fluid."

Reacting to the crisis, organizations have sprung up to salvage what they can. Harrison's work was coordinated through the New Haven-based Endangered Language Fund, founded in 1995, and paid for with a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, which began an endangered language program last year. The University of Texas at Austin opened a Web site this year as part of its new Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America. And there are sites across the Web offering everything from detailed grammars of vanishing African languages to dictionaries and language tapes for native North America.

With their conference in December, Bird and his collaborators hope to convince the field to agree on what they call a "metastructure" -

a common electronic language that would ensure that everyone's efforts will be compatible and that would allow whole new kinds of comparative research. An organization called LINGUIST List, one of the oldest linguistic presences on the Web, has applied for funding for a five-year project to try a similar approach with 10 wildly different endangered languages, including Lakota in South Dakota and Ega in the Ivory Coast.

Even among the researchers involved, though, there is a fear that making the data - some of it personal histories, or revered foundation myths - so readily accessible could create additional problems. What can they do, they wonder, to prevent a sacred lament from being used in a new song by Fatboy Slim?

But Tony Woodbury, who is coordinating the Latin-American project and has been vocal in warning of the Web's potential for abuse, said that "there is also an ethical cost to just leaving it in the attic," where it will be forgotten.

If we don't explore these languages, Harrison added, we won't know what we have missed. He explained how Mongolia's nomadic herders have a profusion of names for grass, and how a minor change in the waving fields could be a signal they need to take the grazing animals elsewhere.

"The grass tells them when it's time to move on," said Harrison. "It tells them their time is up."

### Silence as songs are lost for words - from 'The Australian'

(Thanks to Nick Thieberger for noting this.)  
Stuart Rintoul, WED 20 SEP 2000

THE languages are dying, the songlines are vanishing. In a cafe in Melbourne's St Kilda, City Books Cafe Music, where Norman Tindale's Tribal Boundaries in Aboriginal Australia hangs imposingly on a wall, Russell Smith sings of the red earth of his Pitjantjatjara country and the old people.

"Manta-a, tjilpina, manta-a," he chants. "Mother Earth, old people, Mother Earth."

For the young singer-songwriter it is a way of respecting tradition, but it is not a traditional song.

"No, I'm not an initiated man, so I haven't learned those songs," he says. "It's a big whole, but I'm going to learn it. It's important to me. Yeah, I've lost a bit, but I want to go and find it. It's still there. I've got to speak to the elders, proper way. I know they're there, waiting patiently."

When Australia was settled in 1788, there were more than 250 Aboriginal languages,

spoken in more than 500 dialects. Little more than 200 years later, according to linguists, more than 100 languages are gone and only about 20 are being learned by children.

By the middle of this century, they predict, there might be fewer than a handful of languages being spoken and by the end of the century none.

In Aboriginal Australia, and among linguists, the alarm bells are ringing. Asked where Aboriginal languages are heading, one of Australia's most respected linguists replies acidly: "Into extinction." In Canberra, another says: "Towards zero."

In the Pilbara, a linguist working on the ground says there is a "rush to get things done". In Adelaide, another talks of "linguistic genocide".

The loss of indigenous languages here mirrors language death internationally. During the next century, something like two of the world's 6000 languages will die each month. By some counts, only 600 are safe from the threat of extinction.

In Australia, indigenous people are on the verge of losing the last remnants of some of the most ancient languages in the world.

In Aboriginal legend, languages were changed during the battles of the Dreaming. After the arrival of white settlers, there is a more bitter explanation for language loss. It began with the herding of Aborigines on to missions and reserves, the systematic removal of children from their parents, the dormitory systems that closed off traditional cultures, the beatings and humiliation people suffered if they spoke their mother tongues.

It is ending with the cultural dominance of the English language and the impact of globalisation.

At the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra, researcher Patrick McConvell says that with the exception of pockets of strength in northern Australia, Central Australia and the Western Desert, all other Aboriginal languages are "severely threatened".

According to McConvell, of more than 250 original languages, about 120 are still spoken, although that figure includes fragments of languages and last remaining speakers. Census figures show that in 1986, 18 per cent of indigenous people spoke an Aboriginal language at home, 16 per cent in 1991 and 13 per cent in 1996.

"It's a fairly strong decline over the past 10 years or so," McConvell says. "And that would be preceded by 20 or 30 years of sharp decline as well."

In Canada, by comparison, 26 per cent of indigenous people spoke indigenous languages in 1996, although the definition used there was mother-tongue speakers. The figure for indigenous languages spoken at home was thought to be about 21 per cent.

Of the rapid decline of Aboriginal languages in Australia, McConvell says: "If you project those figures -- either the languages or the speaker percentages -- you are looking at no languages by about 2040, although it probably will level off a little bit and I would expect there to be two or three languages left at least in the middle of the century.

"But it is pretty much going towards zero at that point."

At La Trobe University in Melbourne, prominent linguist Bob Dixon, author of *The Rise and Fall of Languages*, is asked where Aboriginal languages are heading.

"Into extinction is where they are heading," Dixon says. "All my life I've been describing languages and they're just gone."

At the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, linguist Gavin Breen, asked if he is optimistic about the future of Aboriginal languages, replies: "I try to not think too far into the future."

Breen started his work in western Queensland in 1967 with languages that were then in decline and have since lost their last speakers.

He is chronicling the dead language of Yandruwandha, from the Innamincka area in the north-east corner of South Australia, for an Aboriginal organisation in Bourke, more than 500 km away. He expects to end with about 1500 words, a fairly full grammar and some good stories, and says it is rewarding to preserve at least that part of the language. But asked whether it could be the basis for language regeneration, Breen says bluntly: "No. People will learn about the language rather than learning the language."

Poignantly balanced at the onset of the 21st century, Aboriginal languages are besieged by the pervasiveness of western culture and high levels of social dysfunction in local communities and the type of cultural intolerance that two years ago resulted in the conservative Northern Territory Government dismantling its bilingual education program.

But they are also handicapped by denials and defensiveness about the extent of the loss so far.

In an environment where the strength of Aboriginal culture has become an issue for legal determination, so sensitive is the issue of language loss that one of Australia's foremost Aboriginal linguists, Luise Hercus, refused to discuss it for fear her

comments could affect native title land claims, where loss of language might be taken to reflect a critical break with traditional laws and customs.

People talk about songlines, but the songlines are being forgotten or blurred in the battle for native title and rich mining rights. What are the consequences of not understanding the songs anymore in adversarial white courts where continuity with the past is the gateway to the future?

At the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre in Western Australia, at the sharp end of language loss, linguist Albert Burgman is coming to terms with 32 languages ranging from dead to strong and growing, among them Kartujarra, Nyangumarta, Walmajarri, Martuwangka, Yindjibarndi, Yulparija, Juwalinyi and Manyjilyjarra.

Burgman describes the endeavour as fairly well under-resourced. "We're busily just trying to record as much as we can, certainly of the dying languages and the languages in danger, but we're also trying to collect oral histories and dreamings and stuff like that," Burgman says. "But it's just a rush to try and get things done."

At the Kimberley Language Resource Centre at Halls Creek, co-ordinator Catherine Rouse says: "What will happen depends on what we do now."

With the exception of Kukatja, all Kimberley languages are endangered, she says.

In Halls Creek recently, a public meeting was called amid fears there were plans to teach Indonesian as a second language rather than Aboriginal languages.

During the past 20 years, local linguists have produced something like 60 indigenous grammars, but asked how much work is being done to stem the tide of language loss, Dixon says: "There is not a lot of work being done, there is a lot of talk being done."

With systemic failure in Aboriginal education and English literacy levels in the Northern Territory falling, the commonwealth's strong focus is the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2000-04.

The last serious government inquiry was the House of Representatives 1992 report, *Language and Culture -- A Matter of Survival*.

A Senate report in March this year into the effectiveness of education and training programs for indigenous Australians, titled *Katu Kalpa*, meaning "reaching to go higher and further" in the Pintubi-Luritja language, did not make any recommendations about language.

An issues paper at the South Australian education department, one of the pacesetters in indigenous education, has listed more than 20 impediments to indigenous language education -- twice the number of positive innovations they could cite.

These include teachers' lack of language or linguistic knowledge, difficulties finding and funding Aboriginal language and cultural specialists, and student absenteeism, transience and poverty.

The department's curriculum policy officer Greg Wilson told The Australian that Aboriginal languages are "critically poised", but that strong efforts are being made to ensure that language isn't lost any more.

At Oodnadatta, where the eastern-most Western Desert language, Antikirinya, is being revitalised in school programs, Wilson was recently told that language was an integral part of the trilogy *wangka ngura tjukur* -- language, place and traditions -- "crudely said otherwise as Dreaming".

What do we lose when we lose a language?

In Australia, the answer may be ways of looking at the world that we have not grasped in our ignorance of Aboriginal culture and that threaten now to come to us as ghosts -- expressions such as the Dyirbal verbs *ngilbin*, to look longingly at one's betrothed, or *burrnginyu*, to be excitedly in love, or *walnga-bundanyu*, an expression that means broken-hearted, but which translates as breath broke.

*"Of more than 250 languages, about 120 are still spoken, although that includes fragments and last remaining speakers"*

Patrick McConvell

## UN Environment Programme calls for support of Indigenous Languages and Cultures

Luisa Maffi <maffi@terralingua.org>, Pres. of Terralingua writes (10 Feb. 2001): People on these lists may not have seen this press release that has been circulating mostly on environmental ones. The UN Environment Programme is calling for supporting indigenous languages and cultures as an integral part of protecting the environment. The UNEP executive director's words on the world's languages reflect closely the content of the chapter on linguistic diversity written by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and myself for Darrell Posey's edited book *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, published by UNEP in 1999. It is an amazing turn of events for us in Terralingua who started promoting that very idea six years ago when it still looked odd and quaint. In fact, it's an idea that makes perfect sense because it corresponds to something real, but as with most

common sense ideas, it takes time before it becomes apparent. But recognition of an idea is only the first step, an indication of a lot more work to come. What we can hope now, though, is that there will be more and more people coming along for the ride.

David.Duthie@unep.org  
Cultural, linguistic and biodiversity  
UNEP News Release For information only  
Not an official record

### Globalization Threat to World's Cultural, Linguistic and Biological Diversity

Nairobi, 8 February 2001- Nature's secrets, locked away in the songs, stories, art and handicrafts of indigenous people, may be lost forever as a result of growing globalization, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is warning.

Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP, said yesterday: "The freeing up of markets around the world may well be the key to economic growth in rich and poor countries alike. But this must not happen at the expense of the thousands of indigenous cultures and their traditions".

"Indigenous peoples not only have a right to preserve their way of life. But they also hold vital knowledge on the animals and plants with which they live. Enshrined in their cultures and customs are also secrets of how to manage habitats and the land in environmentally friendly, sustainable ways," he said.

Much of this knowledge is passed down from generation to generation orally, in art works or in the designs of handicrafts such as baskets, rather than being written down.

So losing a language and its cultural context is like burning a unique reference book of the natural world.

"If these cultures disappear they and their intimate relationship with nature will be lost forever. We must do all we can to protect these people. If they disappear the world will be a poorer place," Mr Toepfer said during the 21st session of UNEP's Governing Council which is taking place in Nairobi, Kenya, this week.

Research, carried out on behalf of UNEP and drawing on work by hundreds of academics, highlights the way native farmers in parts of West and East Africa, such as the Fulbe of Benin and tribes in Tanzania, find and encourage termite mounds to boost the fertility and moisture content of the soil.

Meanwhile the Turkana tribe of Kenya plan crop planting around an intimate knowledge of the behaviour of frogs and birds, such as the ground hornbill, green wood hoopoe, spotted eagle owl and nightjar, which are revered as "prophets of rain".

The research, edited by Professor Darrell Addison Posey of the Federal University of Maranhao, Sao Luis, Brazil, and the Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society at Mansfield College, University of Oxford, in Britain, claims many indigenous languages and cultures are already teetering on the brink of extinction in the face of globalization.

Studies estimate that there are 5,000 to 7,000 spoken languages in the world with 4,000 to 5,000 of these classed as indigenous. More than 2,500 are in danger of immediate extinction and many more are losing their link with the natural world. Around a third, or 32 per cent of the world's spoken languages, are found in Asia; 30 per cent in Africa; 19 per cent in the Pacific; 15 per cent in the Americas and 3 per cent in Europe.

The report also links a profusion of languages with a wealth of wildlife underscoring how native peoples have thrived on a rich natural environment and managed it for the benefit of animals and plants.

The most languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea, where 847 different tongues are used. This is followed by Indonesia, 655; Nigeria, 376; India, 309; Australia, 261; Mexico, 230; Cameroon, 201; Brazil, 185; Zaire, 158 and the Philippines, 153.

The main ones under threat are those with 1,000 speakers or less with the mother tongue only spoken by older members of the tribe and increasingly shunned by the young.

Over 1,000 languages are spoken by between 101 and 1,000 individuals. A further 553 are spoken by only up to 100 people.

Two hundred and thirty four have already died out. Some researchers estimate that over the next 100 years 90 per cent of the world's languages will have become extinct or virtually extinct.

Many native people have a vested interest in maintaining a wide variety of animals and plants in their area so they are not reliant on just one source of food.

But encroachment by western-style civilization and its farming methods mean that many of these varieties, encouraged by tribal and native people, are fast disappearing along with their genetic diversity.

It is increasing the threat of crop failures across the globe as a result of genetic uniformity in the world's major crops.

The report cites work by UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, England, and other researchers

on the disappearance of diversity in common crops.

- In 1903 there were 13 known varieties of asparagus. By 1983 there was just one, or a decline of 97.8 per cent.
- There were 287 varieties of carrot in 1903 but this has fallen to just 21 or a fall of 92.7 per cent.
- Over 460 varieties of radish were known in 1903 but this has dropped to 27 or a decline of 94.2 per cent.
- Nearly 500 varieties of lettuce were catalogued at the turn of the century but this has fallen to 36.

New sources of medicines may also be being lost as a result of the decline of indigenous languages, cultures and traditions.

Many indigenous peoples have intimate, local, knowledge of plants, such as herbs, trees and flowers and parts of animals, and their use as medicines which in turn could give clues to new drugs for the west.

They also know the right part, such as the root, leaf, seed or flower, to pick and season in which to harvest these "natural medicines" so they contain the maximum amount of health-giving compounds.

This knowledge is often enshrined in ritual, ceremony and magic underlining how culture, language, religion, psychology and spiritual beliefs can often not be separated from their understanding of the natural world.

The Aka pygmies of the Central African Republic mix magic, ritual and ceremony with herbalism for curing the sick.

"The Aka use plant species to cure the majority of the most common illnesses and diseases. Several plants are known and used to treat the same disease. Because they grow in different types of forest, they allow the pygmies to cure themselves when travelling," says the study.

News of the academics' study comes at the beginning of the United Nations International Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations. Part of its aim is to highlight the plight of indigenous cultures.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, which is managed by UNEP and which grew out of the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, makes specific reference to the need to protect the world's indigenous cultures and traditions.

Article eight of the convention states: "subject to its national legislation, (to) respect, preserve, and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional life styles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity."

Other initiatives include one by UNESCO, a sister UN body which lists world cultural and heritage sites. UNESCO is developing its role to help local communities conserve and protect sacred sites such as groves.

UNESCO also recognizes the "complex interrelationship between man and nature in the construction, formation and evolution of landscapes".

The first cultural landscape World Heritage site was Tongariro National Park in New Zealand which is a sacred site for the Maori people.

The World Trade Organization has provisions that allow countries to develop Intellectual Property Rights which may give indigenous peoples new avenues for protecting plant species they have nurtured from exploitation by "bio prospectors".

The CBD has recently developed a mechanism called "an intersessional process" which allows signatory nations to address inadequacies in the area of Intellectual Property Rights and will help develop guidelines on how to create better laws to protect indigenous communities.

But UNEP believes that more urgent action is needed to safeguard indigenous cultures and their knowledge.

Its report cites *four key reasons* why conserving native cultures should be urgently addressed.

"(They) have traditional economic systems that have a relatively low impact on biological diversity because they tend to utilize a great diversity of species, harvesting small numbers of each of them. By comparison settlers and commercial harvesters target far fewer species and collect or breed them in vast numbers, changing the structure of ecosystems," it argues.

"Indigenous peoples try to increase the biological diversity of the territories in which they live, as a strategy for increasing the variety of resources at their disposal and, in particular, reducing the risk associated with fluctuations in the abundance of individual species".

"Indigenous people customarily leave a large 'margin of error' in their seasonal forecasts for the abundance of plants and animals. By underestimating the harvestable surplus of each target species, they minimize the risk of compromising their food supplies".

"Since indigenous knowledge of ecosystems is learned and updated through direct observations on the land, removing the people from the land breaks the generation-to-generation cycle of empirical study. Maintaining the full empirical richness and detail of traditional knowledge depends on

continued use of the land as a classroom and laboratory".

Contact: Graham Dutfield, Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society on home tel +44-118-9871722 or work +44-1865-282904.

*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: A Complementary Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Assessment.* Edited by Darrell Addison Posey. UNEP and Intermediate Technology. Available from SMI books  
E-mail: anthony @smibooks.com

## Finding Our Talk: TV series on Canada's Aboriginal languages

Mushkeg Media Inc., a native-owned production company is currently broadcasting a 13 part series on APTN (Aboriginal People's Television Network) on the state of Aboriginal languages in Canada.

They are also planning season two of the series and are looking for any interesting and unique language revitalization programs or initiatives by individuals, communities or organizations across the land.

*Meegwetch.*

Paul M. Rickard, Mushkeg Media Inc.  
103 Villeneuve West Montreal, Quebec H2T 1 R6 mushkeg@videotron.ca, rickbell@sympatico.ca  
Check out: <http://www.aptn.ca> for schedule and tv channel on cable in different parts of the Canada. Can also be picked up on Bell-Express Vu and StarChoice satellite dish for those in remote areas.

Tapes of the programs can be purchased -- either individual episodes or the entire series as a box set. If interested, telephone +1-514-279-3507 (Sylvie Condo), who is taking care of purchase requests, or e-mail <mushkeg@videotron.ca>.

**APTN: episodes at 2:30pm & 11:30pm EST**

Episode 1 - Feb.1: Language Among the Skywalkers: **Mohawk**: This is the story of the legendary Mohawk ironworkers, and of new approaches to language instruction for both adults and children within the contemporary community of Kahnawake.

Episode 2 - Feb. 8: Language Immersion: **Cree**: This episode will trace the history of the very successful Cree Language Immersion Program, developed and implemented in schools in the Cree communities of Northern Québec.

Episode 3 - Feb. 15: The Trees are Talking: **Algonquin**: George and Maggie Wabanonick take a group of teens to the woods to initiate them in their traditional

culture and language. In the classroom, the kids and teachers struggle with their Algonquin lessons, while the pop group Anishnabe give the language new life.

Episode 4 - Feb 22: The Power of Words: **Inuktitut**: At a language conference in Puvirnituq, we witness efforts to keep Inuktitut alive and up-to-date, largely through the knowledge and commitment of elders.

Episode 5 - March 1: Words Travel On Air: **Attikamekw, Innu**: Karin Awashish, a young radio journalist working at SOCAM, makes a trip to her home community to tape interviews and legends told by elders in Attikamekw, as part of the network's language initiative.

Episode 6 - March 8: Language in the City: **Ojibwe/Anishnabe**: This episode will focus on Isadore Toulouse's weekly trajectory to four different urban-based schools, where we witness first-hand, and with raw immediacy, his efforts to pass on his own enthusiasm and passion for the Ojibwe language.

Episode 7 - March 15: Getting Into Michif: **Michif**: We meet some of the movers and shakers working politically and through the education system, to have Michif recognized as the official language of the Métis, as well as those whose passion and dedication are evidenced at the grass-roots level.

Episode 8 - March 22: Plains Talk: **Saulteaux**: This episode follows the work of a virtually self-taught, highly motivated language teacher. Stella Ketchemonia has devoted her life to teaching the Saulteaux language. She is now a member of the dynamic staff of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

Episode 9 - March 29: Breaking New Ground: **Mi'kmaw**: This episode looks at two projects; a pilot to have Mi'kmaw adopted as an official second language in high school curriculum and Mi'kmaw as the language of instruction for a university level science program.

Episode 10 - April 5: A Silent Language: **Huron/Wendat**: This episode looks at the historical roots of a language's demise, and at present-day efforts to re-ignite it in spoken form. It also explores the cultural significance and implications of language as a ceremonial artefact.

Episode 11 - April 12: The Power of One: **Innu**: In his home community of Maliotenam, we follow performer Florent Vollant, formerly a member of the musical duo Kashtin, on his musical campaign to inspire Innu youth with the passion and concern he feels for his language

Episode 12 - April 19: Syllabics: Capturing Language: **Cree**: In this episode, we look

at the historical development and contemporary applications of syllabic writing systems in some of Canada's native languages.

Episode 13 - April 26: A Remarkable Legacy: **Saanich**: This episode tells the story of Dave Elliott, a Saanich fisherman who almost single-handedly resurrected the dying language of his people - **Sencofen** - by creating an alphabet system, recording the elders and developing a language curriculum for local schools.

## Brazil seeks out Indigenous Tribes

*BBC News Online Tuesday, 27 March, 2001*

The Brazilian Indian agency, Funai, has launched an expedition to search for isolated tribes living in the Amazon jungle and map their territory. The team is to travel along several tributaries of the Amazon river, near the border with Colombia and Peru, where monitoring planes have detected indigenous communities in recent years. They will try to identify roads and huts to demarcate their land and find out if there is any threat of invaders.

An official of the agency said the expedition would try to avoid direct contact with any of the isolated groups. "This is not about entering into contact with them," Funai official Manoela Mescia Costa said. "The idea is to find them and then demarcate the territory they occupy. They have been isolated and should remain that way." He added that the expedition would also try to find out if illegal loggers or miners had been active in the area.

The expedition consists of 20 researchers who will spend about eight weeks travelling some 4,000km through areas of the Amazon basin accessible only by boat. Funai estimates that 53 Indian tribes live in isolation in Brazil, most in the Amazon forest.

The BBC's Tom Gibb in Sao Paulo says the launch of the expedition coincides with a growing debate in Brazil about official policy towards the country's Indians.

## Mineral exploitation

Some senior army officers have criticised plans by Funai and the government to set up new Indian reservations, saying that the policy could limit Brazilian sovereignty. The army has drawn up ambitious plans to deploy troops along Brazil's Amazon borders, a move it says is necessary to fight drugs and to stop a spillover of the war in Colombia.

A BBC correspondent says several powerful local politicians, who want to exploit mineral wealth in the Amazon, are also opposed to the reservations. About 4,000

of the country's 350,000 Indians are thought to live in the area, which is known as the Javari valley.

## Britain ratifies European Charter

*Brussels, Galway & Bangor 27/3/01*, by John Walsh, Alex Hijmans & Dafydd Meirion

The British government has ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, thereby granting additional protection to Irish, Gaelic, Welsh, Scots and Ulster Scots.

The Charter, which is the responsibility of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, will come into effect on July 1, committing the UK government to protecting and preserving indigenous minority languages on its territory.

Welsh, Gaelic and Irish (spoken in Northern Ireland) will be granted protection under Part 3 of the Charter, the highest level of protection available.

This section of the Charter obliges the government to outline concrete measures to promote the languages in the areas of education, the courts, public services, media, cultural activity, economic and social life and cross-border activities.

Scots and Ulster-Scots (spoken in Northern Ireland) will be protected under Part 2, which offers a lower level of protection and recognition and also functions as an anti-discrimination clause.

Cornish, spoken by a small number of people in Cornwall, is not specified at all. This will come as a great disappointment to Cornish language activists who had hoped that the language was about to gain a significant boost through its inclusion in the Charter.

In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, there's been a broad welcome for the ratification.

'We are absolutely delighted,' Alan Campbell, of Comunn na Gàidhlig (The Gaelic Association) told Eurolang.

'We have been waiting for this for a long time, and it is an important, significant step for Gaelic, but also for the other languages specified,' Mr Campbell said.

One of the major issues for Gaelic over the past year has been the quest for secure status for the language in Scotland.

While the UK's ratification of the Charter does not provide the desired secure status, Mr Campbell believes it is nonetheless an important step.

'There will now be some modest provision for Gaelic in some designated courts, for

example. This is the only significant change, but ratification of the Charter will strengthen the profile of Gaelic in the public sector, and therefore help the attitudinal change which is needed to make secure status into law,' Mr Campbell said.

Scots has also been included in the Charter, but will be protected only under Part 2.

'We are pleased that Scots has at least had the recognition,' Tom Band of the Scots Language Resource Centre told Eurolang.

'We do hope that in the future Scots will be elevated to Level 3 protection, and we will be working towards that. Under the current Level 2 protection, the UK Government will be required to promote and assist Scots, and they will have to issue a yearly report to show how they have done so, so at least this will make politicians focus on the subject once a year.'

'We welcome the UK Government's decision to ratify the Charter, this is news we have been waiting for for a long time,' Janet Muller, of POBAL, the umbrella body for Irish language groups in Northern Ireland, told Eurolang.

'However, the Charter is only a guide. The British Government has a lot of steps to take now to show that it is serious about providing protection for Irish in Northern Ireland, and I advise Irish speakers in Northern Ireland to read through the Charter carefully and continuously assess the British Government's policies towards Irish,' Janet Muller said.

'Good news for the resurgent Ulster Scots movement,' is how Lord Laird of Artigarvan, Chairman of the Ulster Scots Agency described the announcement.

'This is a further major step forward which commits the Government to helping and supporting with resources the Ulster Scots language alongside the Ulster Scots Agency. This is a very timely announcement which will help to further stimulate the vast interest in Ulster Scots generated in Northern Ireland and further afield,' explained Lord Laird.

'It is greatly welcomed,' said Rhodri Williams of the Welsh Language Board (Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg).

'It confirms the UK government's continuing commitment to safeguarding and maintaining indigenous languages as an essential part of our cultural heritage.'

Mr Williams said that many of the paragraphs of the Charter which the UK government has committed itself to implementing are already in place in Wales.

However, he said that this represented a good basis for planning for the future and that the Welsh Language Board would

continue to work 'to ensure that the Charter is a positive step towards fulfilling the aim of creating a bilingual Wales.'

States which ratify the Charter must submit detailed reports on implementation to the Council of Europe every three years.

A committee of independent experts may also visit countries which have ratified and issue reports which may subsequently be made public. (EL)

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#### 4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

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##### Attitudes to and within Brittany

*From Paul Kerisit, we received the following note of dissent, or perhaps rather, protest:*

6 Plasenn ar Rouzigid, F-29980 Enez Tudi  
Île de Tudy, France; Wed, 21 Feb 2001

Dear Sir,

... je me permets de protester contre la phrase de la Libre Belgique reproduite en page 9 de votre bulletin Ogmios, automne 2000: "[la Bretagne] s'est toujours montrée fière de ses traditions sans pour cela remettre fondamentalement en question le modèle républicain - à quelques exceptions près bien sûr."

Pas du tout: moi-même et d'autres Bretons rejetons fondamentalement le modèle républicain français fanatique, un et indivisible et revendiquons une République bretonne indépendante qui pourrait faire partie de l'union Européenne comme l'Islande ou le Danemark. D'après un sondage d'opinion dans les 5 départements bretons par le Télégramme de Brest et Press-Océan (Nantes) 23% des Bretons sont indépendantistes, surtout les jeunes dans le Loire-Atlantique. On peut seulement regretter que ces deux journaux aient confondu volontairement le régionalisme, l'autonomisme et l'indépendantisme, appelés tous les trois "indépendantisme". Cela n'empêche pas les Français d'être très fiers de leur langage, la plus précise du monde, permit-il.

##### Many songs, one tune: response on behalf of the Tofa(lar)

*On Wed, 17 Jan 2001, K. David Harrison <kdh2@linc.cis.upenn.edu> of the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project (ASLEP) wrote to us:*

*... Thanks for giving me a copy of the article on the Tofa(lar) in your recent newsletter. I showed it to the other members of my Tofa documentation project. We felt it was overly negative in tone (though not untrue!). I guess one makes a conscious decision to like and admire the people among whom one is doing*

*fieldwork. Therefore we may have simply chosen to ignore the less pleasant aspects of Tofa life (drunkenness, violence, poverty, etc.). Of course, it didn't make it any easier to have those things revealed to us (and the rest of the world) by the cold gaze of a journalist! Nor did it help that the article was full of misspellings of proper names and factual mistakes.*

*As a kind of response, we'd like to offer a slightly different, more charitable view of the Tofa, based on the premise that members of the Tofa community have devoted many hours to talking to us in their native tongue (NOT merely in Russian, as they did to the journalist). A further premise is that the Tofa have something to say about themselves that may be worth hearing. We also note that when speakers of minority/indigenous communities of Russia do talk to 'outsiders', they tend towards extreme self-deprecation. This arises out of many decades of (post-)Soviet cultural dialogue (or perhaps one should say monologue), in which the cultural inferiority of such peoples was tacitly assumed by all and openly asserted by the indigenous peoples themselves. A journalist does have the responsibility, if s/he is going to simply repeat such remarks verbatim, to acknowledge the bias that underlies them.*

*I'm attaching for your consideration a rather informal 'field report' based on our recent expedition to the Tofa(lar). In the report, entitled "Many songs, one tune: A field report from Tofalaria", we assess the current state of Tofa language, reindeer herding culture, and the possible relation between these. We also discuss Tofa music and attempts at cultural revitalization. If you feel that any part of the report might be appropriate for your newsletter, please let me know. Many thanks for providing through your newsletter an important forum and for allowing us to participate in the discussion.*



##### The Tofa community

The Tofa (or Karagas) nation numbers about 600 persons, inhabiting three remote villages in the Sayan mountains of southern Siberia. For ten months of each year, these villages can be reached only by helicopter or by small, 1940's vintage bi-planes. In the dead of winter, one can drive along frozen rivers in an all-terrain truck to reach Tofa villages. Their extreme isolation has proved to be both a hardship and a benefit, as the Tofa struggle with the collapse of their traditional hunting and reindeer herding lifestyle and the impending loss of their language and cultural traditions.

### Expedition Goals

In November 2000, four members of the Altai-Sayan Language and Ethnography Project (ASLEP) undertook a two week expedition to Tofalaria. Our team consisted of linguist David Harrison, anthropologist Brian Donahoe, musicologist Sven Grawunder, and native Tuvan scholar Afanassij Myldyk. We flew into the largest Tofa village *Aligdzer* (population about 500, of which 278 are officially registered as Tofa), where we were hospitably received by community leaders.

We set for ourselves the following tasks: First, find out exactly what remains of (a) Tofa language, (b) Tofa music and (c) the traditional reindeer herding ecology. Second, begin a comprehensive documentation of these in digital video, photographs, and field notes. Thirdly, lay the groundwork for future field visits and community assistance in preservation or revitalization of Tofa.

#### a. Language

Tofa is clearly moribund in *Aligdzer* village. In the other two Tofa villages, *Nerkha* and *Gutara*, there reportedly remain households where the youngest members speak Tofa. These more remote villages also retain a population of Tofa in their 30s who are still fluent and frequent speakers. On our next expedition, planned for March 2001, we will visit these more remote villages to record these speakers. Still, it seems likely that Tofa is moribund. The village schools have recently been closed due to lack of resources and school-aged children sent to Russian boarding schools hundreds of miles away from their native communities. Boarding schools have typically constituted the final step in the loss of prestige and subsequent destruction of small Siberian languages under Soviet (now Russian) governance.

Nonetheless, Tofa still shows dialect diversity (even with so few speakers!), an archaic lexicon, and grammatical structures that set it apart from its closest relatives (e.g. Tuha, Tuvan, Tozhu) with which it is largely mutually comprehensible. The Tofa lexicon contains many words that attest to an animistic world-view, as evidenced in a profusion of taboo names for the bear. The Bear is called *iresang*, rendered euphemistically as *ulug ang* 'great animal', *kulaktyg ang* 'animal with ears', *tuktug ang* 'furry animal', *kara chume* 'black thing', etc. But such euphemisms and other specialized semantic structures are undergoing collapse under influence of Russian language shift. For example, we found the formerly rich systems of kinship terms to be greatly reduced.

Though many Tofa still claim Tofa as their "native tongue" a far smaller number report knowledge of it. Fluent speakers make up a tiny number: about 8 persons in *Aligdzer*, all aged 50 or older. A number of passive bilinguals or semi-speakers claims to

understand the language, but these people are 40 or older. No persons under 30 reported any knowledge of the language.

#### b. Song and sound mimesis

Herders and hunters of the Altai-Sayan region, including the Tofa, exhibit highly specialized abilities for mimicking and stylizing the natural acoustic environment. Together, these phenomena may confer an adaptive advantage by offering herders another tool to manage scarce resources. Musicologist Ted Levin, who advises our project, has encouraged us to document *sound mimesis* as manifested in hunting calls, animal sound imitation, and more structured song and spoken forms.

Some of the elder members of the Tofa community can perform various animal calls and a few still remember an ancient singing tradition. Employing a special vocal register, a seemingly frail and soft-spoken 85-year old Tofa lady—Varvara Adamova—surprised us with the power and resonance of her singing voice. She, along with her 75-year old sister Galina Adamova, were the only remaining inhabitants of *Aligdzer* who still sing in Tofa. The sisters sang dozens of songs for us during a week of recording sessions. Many of the songs describe daily activities (milking and herding reindeer) that the sisters had practiced in their youth. Some songs had more metaphysical themes—the bear cult, Tofa deities and spirits, love and friendship, etc. Curiously, we found that all the songs were set to a single, unvarying melody (motif). Other community members assured us that this was true of all Tofa songs. Distinctive song styles of the three villages vary slightly in tempo or pitch, but all conform rigidly to the canonical motif.

#### c. Reindeer Ecology

The Tofa, like neighboring peoples the *Tuha* and *Tozhu*, were once reindeer-herders relying on deer for transport and on hunting and gathering activities for food. But south Siberian reindeer herding is in steep decline, and has been for the last century. The *Tuha* are down to about 700 deer, the *Tozhu* have perhaps 1,000 deer, and the Tofa now keep only 200 to 300 head of deer. Decline in deer stocks is due to in-breeding, disease, predation (wolves), and the collapse of the Soviet planned economy. The decline has reached such a nadir that it is not clear whether these people, faced with a complete disappearance of deer, can maintain their traditional economic livelihoods in any meaningful way at all. Sable (fur) hunting, for example—an activity that provides much of the community's cash income—requires intensive use of reindeer.

The decline of the Tofa language has gone hand in hand with the decline in reindeer ecology. Specialized herding technologies encoded in the language (for example elaborate systems for naming deer, complex animal domestication songs, and hunting calls) vanish as Tofa youth shift to

exclusive use of Russian. Much of the intricate knowledge needed to manage resources and animals may be lost to the younger generation.

#### Linguistic attitudes and traditional culture

Is Tofa language loss directly linked with the decline of the Tofa reindeer ecology? To address this issue, we administered a comprehensive survey covering about one quarter of the Tofa population of *Aligdzer* (72 persons representing 50 households). People responded to questions about their ethnic affiliation, ancestry, language use, and involvement in 'traditional' economic activities such as hunting, deer herding, and gathering of medicinal plants and berries.

At this point it remains impossible to establish a causal relationship between language loss and the decline of reindeer herding as the principal economic activity of the area and the basis of 'Tofa' culture and identity. We can only state as fact that the language is in severe decline, and reindeer herding has been reduced to the activity of a single family with a herd of around 200 head of deer, down from 1,100 deer in 1977 and several thousand in the 1960s.

Our survey results show that 24 of 72 respondents (33%) have been at some time personally involved in reindeer herding. Of those, 14 (58%) claim some degree of knowledge and occasional use the Tofa language. Of the 48 who have never been involved in reindeer herding, only 16 (33%) report knowledge and occasional use of the Tofa language. It remains an open question whether the loss of language and semantic domains associated with reindeer ecology and the herding lifestyle can be said to lead to a decline in the activities themselves, or whether, conversely, the decline of reindeer herding has led to the loss of the linguistic domains and to a loss of language viability more generally as these domains fall into disuse.

#### Community assistance

We consulted with community elders and leaders to determine how we might transfer resources to assist them in their efforts at preservation or revitalization of Tofa. After talking with community members, we arrived at a plan to sponsor activities currently planned or envisioned by the existing Tofa cultural center. Proposed allocations include: purchase of school textbooks; purchase of a video player and television; production and distribution of video materials we have filmed; sponsorship for the annual cultural festival *Argamchy Yry*; and publishing subvention for materials already collected by community members. As an example of the latter, a local scholar has compiled over 3,000 Tofa hydronyms and toponyms (with accompanying maps), representing an set of language data highly valued by the community but forgotten by most people. We have sent a proposal to the Tofa

community outlining the assistance we expect to be able to provide and soliciting a concrete proposal and budget from them.

#### About ASLEP

We formally initiated ASLEP in June 2000 with fieldwork on a complex of closely languages within the Altai-Sayan region: these are Tofa, Tuba, Tsengel Tuvan and Tozhu. Project members Harrison and Grawunder continue to make frequent trips to the Altai-Sayan language communities spread out across a large but contiguous region of Siberia and Mongolia. Anthropologist Brian Donahoe has been in the field continuously since the project began, living with Tozhu reindeer herders and documenting their ecology, culture and language. For a more detailed account of Brian's work, please access our website, and download his draft report:

Adaptive Responses to Institutional Collapse Among the Reindeer Herders of Tyva.

ALTAI-SAYAN

LANGUAGE AND ETHNOGRAPHY PROJECT  
funded by Volkswagen-Stiftung

<http://sapir.ling.yale.edu/~ASLEP/ASLEP.htm>

*Our project is affiliated in the U.S. with the Endangered Language Fund (ELF) at the Department of Linguistics, Yale University. In Germany, we are formally affiliated with MPI-EVA.*

#### Campaigners Delighted at Welsh Medium School Victory

Bernard Moffatt  
<b.moffatt@advsys.co.im>, Secretary  
General, Celtic League, wrote on 23/02/01:

Campaigning parents are reported to be "delighted" after winning their campaign for a Welsh-medium primary school in one of the most predominantly English-speaking counties in Wales.

The struggle to establish the unit began two years ago in south Monmouthshire because children had to endure a one-hour journey to Welsh schools in either the north of the county or in neighbouring Newport.

There appears to have been initial opposition within the local Council however the issue was resolved when Labour councillors who had previously opposed the plan reversed their decision.

Campaigner Rhiannon Edwards said: "It is a victory for Wales, its culture and its heritage. We can now look forward to children getting the education they want, and without having to travel so far."

This latest good news for the Celtic languages comes hard on the heels of positive language education initiatives in Scotland and the Isle of Man.

*The Celtic League has branches in the six Celtic Countries of the western British Isles and Brittany. It works to promote cooperation between these countries and campaigns on a broad range of political, cultural and environmental matters. It targets human rights abuse and monitors all military activity within these areas*

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<http://www.manxman.co.im/cleague/index.html>

**ABC Amazigh: journal qui  
demande notre aide. Azul  
fellowen d fellakwent!**

*On 17 September 2000 the following was received by Hassan Ouzzate <hasouzz@casanet.net.ma>, local organizer of our next conference (in Morocco). It comes from the would-be editor of a an Berber magazine in Algeria. Hassan writes: This is the case of an Amazigh (Berber) language militant, but it could be anybody, anywhere.*

Aidez-moi!, Aidez-moi! Ainsi peut être résumé le cri de détresse (ci-dessous) du militant de la première heure, Smaïl Medjber, suite aux graves difficultés financières menaçant la revue "ABC Amazigh", qu'il dirige depuis quelques années, de disparition faute de lectorat conséquent. Smaïl appelle les militants et militantes de la cause amazighe à l'aider à faire vivre cette publication en s'abonnant et en faisant abonner ses proches et amis(es) ou en achetant 1 exemplaire pour lire et 2 pour soutenir.

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Chers (ères) amis(es) lecteurs, lectrices,

Vous savez tous comment j'ai créé cette modeste publication. Après ma longue et pénible incarcération, j'ai voulu de nouveau servir cette noble cause qu'est l'écriture et la promotion de notre langue.

Première déception: un prétendu associé fortuné, me laissa au milieu de la route. Seul, démuné, dans une situation précaire, je me suis lancé dans l'aventure. Grâce au

soutien de quelques amis et à des sponsors, cette publication a survécu.

Deuxième déception: il n'y a pas de lectorat amazigh. Le lectorat potentiel est, il faut le reconnaître, exclusivement francophone. Cependant, ce lectorat ne maîtrise point la transcription usuelle amazighe. Malgré sa bonne volonté, il ne suit pas. (Les très rares exceptions confirment cette réalité) Ce qui me place entre le marteau et l'enclume, entre mon désir de promouvoir l'écriture et la diffusion de notre langue et l'inexistence d'un lectorat régulier et suffisant. Les associations culturelles ou les militants -ou ceux qui se donnent ce titre- sont absorbés par les courants politiques, ou les valse folkloriques, et, restent sourds au discours culturel, de cette même culture qu'ils prétendent défendre.

Sans publication, il ne peut y avoir de langue ou de culture, au sens moderne du terme. Notre langue et notre culture souffrent précisément de désert éditorial. Une publication, c'est une réalité incontournable, ne peut survivre sans lecteurs ou sans subvention (aucune institution culturelle nationale ou internationale n'apporte son soutien à cette publication même par un abonnement symbolique). C'est pour cette raison qu'ABC Amazigh risque de disparaître.

La solution? Cependant, il reste une seule solution pour sa survie. Cette unique et dernière solution, elle est entre vos mains: achetez, chaque mois, un exemplaire pour lire et deux pour soutenir. Les deux exemplaires supplémentaires, nécessaires pour la survie d'ABC Amazigh, combleront le vide en lectorat (et en déficit), vous les offrirez, à chaque fois, à des personnes différentes, afin de les inciter à lire, afin de créer un lectorat amazigh.

Cette solution de crise, cet effort de guerre reste la dernière chance. Je me suis coupé en quatre pour créer et tenir ABC Amazigh. A vous de vous multiplier en trois pour faire survivre cette publication, la vôtre.

En achetant un exemplaire pour lire et deux autres pour soutenir. De précaire, ayant tout sacrifié, tout investi dans cette publication, ma propre situation est devenue, pour ne rien vous cacher, préoccupante, à la limite du dénouement. <<Tewwed' tfidi ar yighes!>>. J'ose espérer que je ne suis plus seul à présent. Aidez-moi! Aidez-moi! Aidez-moi! <<Afus deg fus akken taakem ad tifsus!>>

Sinon... <<aqerruy iw d aferd'as>>. Humblement, désespérément, amzigement vôtre.

Mohand Ousmail Medjber.

Win iran ad yessali Tamazight deg Marikan Ad yughal d amasl'ad n Tiddukla Tadelsant Tamazight deg Marikan - Amazigh Cultural Association in America:

e-mail: [ACAA@Tamazgha.org](mailto:ACAA@Tamazgha.org)

## News of the Nju languages, and an Appeal

On Fri, 17 Nov 200, Nigel Crawhall <crawhall@mweb.co.za> of the South African San Institute, wrote:

It is a while since I have written to you. I have many exciting things to tell you. We have so far located 24 speakers of the ancient Nju languages, the last of the Southern San !Ui languages. Sadly three have died this year alone, including one this week.

Last month we taught the first Nju course to young people from the San community who asked to be part of the research and training programme. We are about to embark on a second round of teaching. The elders are very excited as are the young people. A major hurdle has been passed by getting the stigma of the language and identity set aside.

I am writing to you today in connection with one of the researchers who has played a very important role in this project. Levi Namaseb is an L1 speaker of Khoekhoegowap, a Central Khoesan language. He is from Namibia and has successfully learned the Nju language and developed teaching materials for the young people here in South Africa.

He has just accepted a PhD candidature at the University of Toronto. They are paying a substantial part of his fees, but not enough to cover his living costs, and he will also have no money to come back to Southern Africa to help us with further research and teaching.

I am hoping you can advise Levi on where he can find grant support for his valuable work. His email is <lnamaseb@unam.na>, and that of our project partner in the UK, Dr Hugh Brody, <hbrody@compuserve.com>.

...  
Nigel Crawhall, South African San Institute, PO Box 790, Rondebosch, 7700 South Africa  
Tel: +27-21-686-0795<sasi@iafrica.com>

## Euclidean elder's death damages bid to keep history alive. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Irene Delpino <Sea\_Nest@excite.com> sent us this, a story she found in *Dallas Morning News*, Sat. Feb. 10, 2001. She comments:

I note a knowledge gap between what the grassroots preservationists seem to know and what linguists, anthropologists, and archaeologists know. The Yuchi (modern "Euclidean") did not "originate" in Alabama and Georgia. They were living there as a refugee tribe within the Creek Confederation at the time of forced removal, but the Oklahoma

descendants don't seem to know that sixteenth-century Spanish explorers first encountered the Yuchi in east Tennessee living in Mississippian-style villages, and that they wandered quite a bit during European colonization and the fur-trade wars. The language is not just "different," it is an isolate of great interest to linguists. Wonder why the academic publications have stayed ivory-tower? But to the story...

The death of an elderly tribesman has complicated efforts to save the dying Euclidean Indian language and record the tribe's fading history.

Last month, 82-year-old Mose Cahwee died. Mr. Cahwee had provided volumes on Euclidean history on hundreds of families that once lived near Bristow, Sapulpa and Liberty Mounds, near Tulsa.

"Mose was very active in the language and culture," said University of Tulsa anthropology professor Richard Grounds, himself an Euclidean descendant. "He was kind of a walking encyclopedia. He knew the history and Euclidean medicine plants. Now, only about five Euclidean speakers are left," Dr. Grounds said. "That is out of about 2,400 people who say they are Euclidean descendants."

Dr. Grounds is working on the Euclidean Language Preservation Project, which is sponsored by a \$297,300 federal grant. The three-year-grant has enabled Dr. Grounds and Euclidean speakers to gather weekly at the Sapulpa Indian Community Center to record the language and history. Dr. Grounds isn't fluent in the language, but he's learning.

Euclidean is sometimes spelled Yuchi. The tribe originated in Alabama and Georgia, but their language was different from neighboring tribes. The Euclidean population shrank in northeast Oklahoma over the years, and use of the language dwindled as well. Dr. Grounds said the language is not dead, although it is close to extinction.

Remembering the language isn't easy for native speakers. Euclidean elder Maggie Cumsey Marsey, 82, squints one eye, cocks her head and stares into space as she tries to remember the Euclidean word for corn soup. She hasn't spoken the word in decades. Sometimes she recalls a Creek word instead because Creeks and Euclidean often intermarried and learned parts of each other's language. Ms. Marsey said she was discouraged from speaking her native tongue when she attended Lone Star school in the 1930's. "I can speak it, but I struggle sometimes because I haven't said some of these words in 30 or 40 years," she said.

Dr. Grounds said he hopes the project helps develop a curriculum, based on phonetics in the absence of a native alphabet, to teach

Euclidean to future generations. Dr. Grounds and project assistants Wanda A. Greene and Linda Littlebear Harjo are also working with elders to create new Euclidean words to keep the language current. The new words would be for *bicycle*, *telephone* and *computer*.

The preservation project is to be completed in 2003, Dr. Grounds said. The work and artifacts are to be housed at the University of Tulsa.

## Time for a literature in Rapa Nui, a potentially endangered language?

Date: Tue, 20 Feb 2001

From: Grant McCall <g.mccall@unsw.edu.au>

I have your e-mail from the appendix of David Crystal's book, "Language Death" which I purchased to use in my introductory anthropology lectures last year and brought with me for my fieldwork on Rapanui (Easter Island), which is run from January 2001 to June 2002.

When I did my first fieldwork, between 1972-4, Rapanui was a vigorous language, spoken widely in the community and within earshot where ever one went in the small village of Hangaroa on the island. It is one of the 1,782 languages with between 1,000 and 9,999 speakers (Crystal 2000: 15). The current population of Rapanui world-wide according to my genealogies is probably around 3,500, with most of those living on the island itself and the rest scattered around Chile, Tahiti, with smaller numbers in the USA and Europe.

I use the term in the subject of this e-mail "potentially endangered" from the quoted Wurm classification on p. 21 of Crystal.

With the incursion of direct satellite broadcast television from Santiago (Rapanui has been a part of Chile since 1888), radio and the influence of the many Chileans who reside here, the language is under threat of extinction. When a Rapanui marries a Chilean, and that accounts for most of the marriages today, the language of the household becomes Chilean Spanish. The child often can understand Rapanui, but cannot speak it and it soon lapses.

In spite of this, people are proud of their language, its distinctiveness amongst Pacific language and avidly purchase and listen to the many recordings of the island's traditional and modern music available on cassette and CD.

All the characteristics of language death described by Crystal are in force, and I will not go into them just now. But there is some hope that I derive from his "six postulates" for survival (pp. 130-143):

- 1) An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community;
- 2) An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community;
- 3) An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community;
- 4) An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system;
- 5) An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down; and,
- 6) An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology.

Chilean officialdom has a tender spot for Rapanui and for most things Rapanui. Officially, Rapanui language and culture is supported and encouraged by the Chilean state. This tender spot, though, is more of a romantic, even touristic interest: no one makes a living on the island by knowing Rapanui. As people often remark, "the Rapanui language goes as far as the airport". I have heard this phrase so often during my three weeks (so far for a total of 18 months) stay that I think it might have come from some sort of well-known speech or other source. Usually the exact words are used and by a variety of young and old speakers to me. Next time I must ask its origin, since I did not hear it during my previous fieldwork.

The dominant community on Easter Island are the Islanders themselves. Chileans marry into Rapanui families and, in that way, get residence on a piece of land. Chilean small-businesspeople rent their shops from Rapanui landlords. The local tourism, including accommodation, entertainment, tours and support services is in the hands of the Rapanui themselves. There is one non-Rapanui hotel. It is the largest and the one with the most prestige. It used to be government run, but was bought out during the Pinochet term when so many things were privatised. But very rich Rapanui there are not, although one does own (just) a large hotel and a cargo ship that brings goods to the island.

The Governor of Easter Island, who is appointed in the French inspired Chilean system, has been a Rapanui since 1983. The third governor since then, appointed just last year, continues the tradition. The Mayor of the municipality and all the councilors are Rapanui, occasionally a Chilean married to a Rapanui being elected. The high prestige staff in the public services, such as the bank, are all Chilean as are the professional and technical staff. The television station, whilst owned by the Municipality, is staffed by Chileans. The Naval Marines, National Police and Air Force personnel all are from Chile, sent here to "guard" the island against takeover (by whom, all ask).

Most of the School teachers in the local primary and secondary ("Liceo") school are Chileans; there are a few helpers who are Rapanui who give special Rapanui classes encouraged by the Chilean system. Rapanui no longer is forbidden within the School as it once was about 30 years ago. Promising children are sent with government and family aid to Chile for further education, all by Chileans of course.

Rapanui only recently has been part of the weekly Mass, Tahitian texts being used since 1866. There is a move to have more of the Mass in Rapanui and the Chilean priest in charge encourages this, although he does not speak the language. There were some roughly cyclostyled ("mimeographed") booklets produced by a couple (Robert & Nancy Weber) from the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the 1980s in Rapanui. They are not widely used or known. No other literature in Rapanui exists. The language has been written since the 1860s and some Rapanui actually correspond in Rapanui. There is a biweekly language studies group consisting of senior men who meet to discuss language matters with an eye to producing a dictionary. They are paid for this by the Municipality and meet in the culture centre. Jesus Conte, originally from Spain, but living on Rapanui for a decade or more, is the director of this group. He has translated a 19th century missionary dictionary from the French (of Father Roussell) and a "structural grammar" that I have not seen.

Finally, there are a number of e-mail addresses on the island and one Internet centre, all run by Rapanui who speak Rapanui and who have training in Chile in programming and computer design. The e-mail addresses are used mostly for tourism businesses, but some occupy them for personal contact with distant family members.

So, why this long e-mail?

It seems to me that the existence of a viable literature is at least one factor in the potential for a rejuvenation of Rapanui as a language. No such literature exists at the moment.

Equally since I have been here, a number of people have expressed to me the desire to "write a book". One woman wants to write a study of female dress and as a start put on a two hour show earlier this month with models (her family members) and old photographs and engravings projected to an audience of most of the island. Another woman wants to write her autobiography as she was the first town council member in 1966 and was involved in the modernisation of Rapanui from that date in various paid and volunteer roles. A young man has as a grandfather a Marquesan who came here in the 1930s and he wants to write a family history telling this story. Finally, just yesterday, there is a young man who is keen

to detail land issues in the island's recent history.

I am not encouraging such commentary; I am a social anthropologist and not a linguist. My work revolves around genealogies, land use and relations with the Chilean state.

What interests me is that people themselves want to write about these topics (they didn't during my two previous visits in 1972-4 and 1985-6) and to do so in Rapanui.

There are no facilities here on Rapanui at the moment to do such a task and I write to your organisations in this general way because I hope that there might be an organisation - even an interested linguist - who might be willing to carrying out such a project: to assist Islanders in the production of contemporary literature in the Rapanui language creating at once the status of author and the literary material so needed if the language itself is to survive.

Any suggestions or comments would be most gratefully received. I do this as a researcher on the island, from the University of New South Wales, in Sydney, Australia, and not representing any group or individual on the island other than myself.

If there is someone who is interested in pursuing a project of language survival and literature production, I would be pleased to put such a project to local authorities, such as the Mayor and the Governor, both of whom I know...

*Grant McCall,  
Centre for South Pacific Studies  
Univ. NSW, Sydney NSW 2052 Australia.*

*Bob and Nancy Weber replied (22 Mar 2001):*

Since 1977, the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile and SIL International have collaborated in a joint project of Rapa Nui linguistic research, textbook and literature development, teacher training, literacy, and translation of the Christian scriptures. My wife, Nancy, and I reside on Easter Island and are the principal linguists for this project, known as the "Programa Lengua Rapa Nui". Sociolinguist, Luis Gmez Macker, and others of the university on the mainland have at times also been involved. Although there still remains much to do, much has been accomplished during the past twenty-four years.

I must add that we are by no means the only linguists who have studied Rapa Nui, nor the only ones with current interest in the language. We are, however, about the only linguists who are doing anything of an applied nature, in addition to language analysis and description.

If we can be of assistance to anyone interested in the Rapa Nui language, please feel free to get in touch with us.

Sincerely yours,

Roberto/Nancy Weber  
both B.A., M.A. Linguistics  
Bob-Nancy\_Weber@sil.org  
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WEBER"

## Scots Gaelic Broadcasting Examined

Saturday, March 31, 2001

The Scots Gaelic broadcasting group - Comataidh Craolaidh Gaidhlig (CCG) - is to have its progress evaluated by the Scottish Parliaments Education, Sport and Culture Committee. The parliamentary committee will look into the activities of CCG and how it effects its audience and the Gaelic speaking community; its effect on the language, the arts, education and the legal and financial framework. The inquiry will mark the 10th anniversary of CCG which was established to fund and broaden the range of Gaelic programmes.

Mike Russell MSP, Committee Reporter, has said; "With the arrival of digital television, however, the broadcasting task force headed by Alasdair Milne has proposed a move towards a full digital channel. The committee therefore feels it is in Scotland's social and cultural interest to examine the implications of that proposal and the achievements of the Gaelic television committee to date".

The committee is seeking written evidence from individuals and organisations with an interest in, and knowledge of, Gaelic broadcasting. Written comments can be sent to;

Peter Reid, Room 2.7 Committee Chambers, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP  
< peter.reid@scottish.parliament.uk >

Submissions must be sent in by May 18th, be no more than 5 pages in length, and contributors must state if they do not want their evidence published.

## 5. Allied Societies and Activities

### New Gaelic Speakers call for Gaelic Park Policy

Invergordon 6.4.01

CLI, a leading Gaelic development agency focused on the needs of new learners, has called for the establishment of a Gaelic policy for the proposed Cairngorms National Park. In its submission to Scottish Natural Heritage's park consultation paper, CLI has pointed out the importance of Gaelic to the Cairngorms area due both to its strong local connections and to its status as

a national language. The national organisation for new Gaelic speakers has recommended that a Gaelic policy for the park include the following measures:

- that the park should adopt an official bilingual title: The Cairngorm National Park & Pàirce Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh.
- that Gaelic educational and interpretative facilities, and materials in Gaelic, be made available for Gaelic-speaking users of the Park.
- that the field of language development be one of the areas of knowledge and expertise represented on the park board.
- that an inter-park Advisory Group for Gaelic be established.
- that bilingual signage be promoted in the Park area.

CLI have also recommended the creation of a park Gaelic Officer to help implement this policy.

Said CLI director Peadar Morgan, who has close personal ties to parts of the proposed park [Badenoch, and Strathspey]: "Virtually all of the areas suggested for possible inclusion in the Park contained local native Gaelic speakers well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gaelic is evident in place names throughout the whole Cairngorm area, demonstrating the local historical and heritage relevancy of the language. It should also be stressed that Gaelic is one of Scotland's national languages. For these reasons, it is vital that the Cairngorms National Park should have a Gaelic policy of the type we recommend.

"Gaelic medium education and Gaelic subject teaching both take place within the proposed National Park area. Highland Council has Gaelic Language and Gaelic Education policies, Perth & Kinross Council has an authority-wide Gaelic Community Learning Plan, and both Council's have a Gaelic Officer (in addition to teaching staff). It is to be hoped that the Cairngorm National Park will build on this progress for the good of the language within the Cairngorms area".

cli@gaelic.net ;  
http://www.gaelic.net/cli

### Humboldt University officially endorses retention of Chair of Celtic Studies.

The Celtic League has learned that a decision has been taken by University authorities at the Humboldt University, Berlin, which will secure the future of the Chair of Celtic Studies.

The League have campaigned for some years against proposals to discontinue the Chair and the campaign received a boost last year when the closure was put on hold. At the

time although some at the university were actively campaigning for its retention and support from governments and politicians in the Celtic countries had emerged the university authorities were still ambivalent about the future of the Celtic Studies Department.

However, following a meeting this week we understand that a decision has now been taken at Presidential level within the University and a programme of financial assistance from the governments in the Celtic countries will now be formally sought. The Irish government have already pledged a considerable funding commitment and this is luckily to be matched by others. Prospects now look much brighter for the continuation of Celtic studies at Humboldt. Coincidentally the future of the Chair is being secured as the University celebrates a centenary of academic work on the languages and culture of the Celtic peoples.

J B Moffat Secretary General  
Celtic League 26/10/00

## Threat to Scots Gaelic Education in Perth Lifted

Fri, 16 Feb 2001

A chairdean,

Yesterday was budget day in Perth and Kinross. Gaelic medium education and, I understand, Gaelic peripatetic teaching, have been saved. Leader of the administration, Jimmy Doig, stated that the hundreds of letters received from Gaelic speakers, learners and supporters locally, nationally and internationally had been an important factor in leading to their decision. Radio also suggested that the national profile given to the issue through national papers and the Scottish Parliament had been a key factor.

le deagh dhurachd,

Alasdair MacCaluim  
(FEL's Campaign Co-ordinator)

Dear Friends,

Re. Perth GM School.

The Council did not even discuss cutting the Gaelic medium primary school they said because of the 100's of letters of support that they received from Scotland and abroad. I think the most distant support came from Breton Jakez in Vietnam.

Comann Ceilteach would like to send our most sincere thanks to everyone that wrote in and below I have included a message of thanks from the Perth parents.

However unanswered questions remain. Firstly the school should not have been up for a cut in the first place. In a Council questionnaire Gaelic medium education was listed alongside maintaining flower beds and cutting grass on roundabouts as options

for cuts, giving some indication by certain individuals at the Council as to how much they value Gaelic.

Furthermore it underlines the need for legislation for Gaelic to give it official status ( or 'secure' status ) so that the Perth situation never happens again. In addition it illustrates that the 'Standards in Schools' legislation and 'National Priority' status given to Gaelic last year, is inadequate. If people would like to write further letters calling for secure status for Gaelic these can be addressed to Alasdair Morrisson and Peter Peacock in the Scottish Parliament and write to your MSP asking them to support the Russell/ Munro Gaelic Language Bill.

Moran taing / meur ras bras/ mersi bras/  
diolch yn fawr iawn.

Davyth Hicks

Comann Ceilteach Oilthigh Dhun Eideann.

PS. The Highland Annual is on Saturday 17th (tomorrow) at Teviot S.U., Univ. of Edinburgh. Funds are used for numerous Gaelic projects.

A chairdean

As you may be aware by now, at yesterday's budget meeting Perth & Kinross Council removed the threat to cut funding to Gaelic education. In the first minutes of his budget speech, the leader of the administration referred to the strong support that Gaelic had received from across Scotland and beyond.

I would therefore like to thank you all for your help in recent weeks. Some of you copied me on your emails to the council and others were forwarded on to me. Parents here were very worried and your efforts in persuading the council to think again have been much appreciated.

Please pass this message of thanks to anyone else who helped - I know that I saw only a fraction of the letters, faxes and emails sent to the council.

Moran taing

David MacDonald, Comann nam Parant  
(Peairt), 1 Hillside, Perth PH2 7BA Scotland  
Tel 01738 442231 Fax 01738 622467

**New Journal: Revista LIAMES -  
Línguas Indígenas da América do  
Sul**

*Primeiro convite para o envio de artigos  
para publicação*

LIAMES é uma nova revista de lingüística, a ser publicada pelo Departamento de Lingüística do Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem - UNICAMP. É especificamente dedicada às línguas indígenas da América do Sul. Sua criação visa atender a uma necessidade da área de Lingüística Indígena, que não dispõe de um veículo de publicação próprio, de amplo alcance, que permitisse a

divulgação dos resultados obtidos por nossos pesquisadores no trabalho com as línguas indígenas sul-americanas e servisse como ponto de referência para o que se faz na área. A existência desse novo espaço, espera-se, contribuirá para congregar os estudiosos, para um maior fluxo de informações, para um melhor conhecimento de nossa realidade e para apoio mútuo e crescimento.

A revista destina-se à publicação de artigos de pesquisa e reflexão acadêmicas, estudos analíticos e resenhas que por sua temática versem sobre a investigação e documentação de línguas indígenas da América do Sul, não havendo restrições quanto a distintas abordagens teóricas.

Convidamos os colegas a enviarem trabalhos para serem apreciados com vistas à publicação do primeiro número da revista, previsto para março de 2001, e para o segundo número, previsto para março de 2002.

As línguas da revista são o Português e o Espanhol. Os trabalhos devem ser digitados no Editor de Textos Word 6.0 ou superior, em fonte tamanho 12, letra Times New Roman, espaço 1.5. Nas transcrições de exemplos e textos em línguas indígenas devem ser usados os símbolos do Alfabeto Fonético Internacional. Os artigos devem ter no máximo 25 páginas e as resenhas, no máximo 05 páginas.

Maiores informações sobre as normas de publicação podem ser obtidas através dos endereços indicados ao final deste informe.

Solicitamos aos interessados que nos enviem os trabalhos via *e-mail*, como *attachment*, formato rtf. Caso não tenham ainda o trabalho pronto, pedimos que enviem, desde logo, o título e um resumo de até 150 palavras.

Data limite para a submissão de trabalhos:

Vol. I - 1º de janeiro de 2001.

Vol. II - 1º de setembro de 2002

Esperamos contar com a colaboração de todos na divulgação deste e-mail e no envio de artigos para a revista. Um abraço a todos.

Dra. Lucy Seki / Dr. Angel Corbera Mori

Depto. de Lingüística, IEL, UNICAMP

Cidade Universitária Prof. Zeferino Vaz

Distrito de Barão Geraldo

Caixa Postal 6045

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<lseki@bestway.com.br>

## Linguistic Human Rights and Democracy in Communication

*To Non-Governmental Organizations  
New York, October, 15th, 2000*

Dear Friends,

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms ...,"

without distinction of any kind, such as ...language ..."

That means that people should not be discriminated against on account of their language. However, discrimination of this type is common practice all over the world and also at the UN.

When representative of different countries meet either at UN or outside, the strong impose their own language while the others have to adapt.

But who cares about that or about dying languages, not to mention the loss of cultural values and knowledge linked linked to the death of any language?

We care. We are UEA, Universal Esperanto Association, one of the NGOs which work with UN.

We think that the International Community, and in particular the UN, has the obligation to: a) Develop and promote equitable approaches to global communication based on Linguistic Human Rights and b) Establish global minimum standards of linguistic and cultural rights.

With this aim in mind, we are a in partner of an NGO Coalition for an International Auxiliary Language (CIAL), whose main goal is to raise public awareness of, and support for, linguistic diversity, linguistic rights, and democratic communication among the peoples of the world.

And now we are inviting other associations to join us in creating a new world where Linguistic Human Rights and Democracy in Communication will be effectively practiced.

During the 1999 Seoul International NGO Conference held in October 1999, the Working Group for Language and Human Rights, recommended that "...UN/ECOSOC should place the subject of 'Language and Human Rights' on its agenda".

We now call on international NGOs to express their support for the recommendation made in Seoul.

...

A meeting of all the NGOs of CIAL will be held in May next year in New York, during which we will visit the UN Secretary General to present our recommendation.

...

Kep Enderby

Universal Esperanto Association, President

*The Foundation's Campaign Co-ordinator,  
Alasdair MacCaluim is considering our  
response. If you are actively interested,  
contact him on <staran@icscotland.net>.*

## The Endangered Language Fund's Projects, 2000

The Endangered Language Fund, a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of endangered languages, is pleased to announce our grant awardees for the year 2000. Eleven projects were funded to provide help with languages across the globe, and with techniques ranging from traditional dictionary work to the videotaping of interactions of native speakers and their audiences.

The Endangered Language Fund is able to provide this support thanks to the generosity of its members. Please contact us about how you can help (<http://www.ling.yale.edu/~elf>).

We would also like to thank, in particular, the Kerr Foundation of Oklahoma for making it possible to provide additional support for work done in Oklahoma.

### Alice J. Anderton--Ponca Culture in Our Own Words

The Ponca language, of the Siouan linguistic family, is spoken in the White Eagle tribal community, just south of Ponca City, Oklahoma. Only about thirty fluent speakers remain, all in their 60s or older. The Ponca Language Arts Council (PLAC) has received repeated comments by Ponca students and teachers that they lack good materials for teaching the Ponca language, and that the traditional culture is being lost; the Intertribal Wordpath Society (IWS) has been granted an award to help improve this situation. IWS will produce five videotaped texts describing Ponca culture in the Ponca language. These video projects will be aired on its television show Wordpath, a public access cable program it produces on Cox Cable about Oklahoma Indian languages and those who preserve them. Researcher Alice Anderton will tape the texts in the Ponca/White Eagle area. Each VHS tape will be two hours long and contain 10-15 minutes of text in Ponca only, Ponca text with English subtitles, and Ponca text with Ponca subtitles. A translator, in consultation with the native speakers, will then produce a transcription and a literal and fluent translation. These will be in the form of five booklets to be distributed with the tapes. IWS will provide copies of the tapes to PLAC, Frontier High School, the Ponca City Public Library and the Endangered Language Fund. The research will provide samples of fully fluent conversational texts, a rarity for almost any Native American language, and make them available to students of Ponca and to the linguistic community for study. The tapes will document Ponca culture, teach and popularize the new official Ponca alphabet, and educate the general public about Ponca language and culture.

Mark J. Awakuni-Swetland--  
ELF Omaha Language

### Curriculum Development Project

In 1994, the Omaha Tribe stated that less than 1% of its total enrollment were identified as fluent speakers of Omaha, a Siouan language. It is reported that less than seventy elderly speakers of the language remain and that of these, only thirty use the language on a daily basis in the Macy area of Nebraska. There are several facilities that teach Omaha, namely the Macy Public school (recently renamed Omaha Nation Public School) and Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC). However, all suffer from the lack of a systematic curriculum and classroom materials. The present project is part of a larger collaborative effort to combat this problem. It will support the development of language and culture lesson plans, immersion situations, and language exercises, drawing upon existing materials from NICC and Omaha Nation. The materials will be examined for linguistic and cultural content, placed into a larger four semester framework, and edited for content and consistency. New lessons will be generated to link and augment existing lessons. Funds will be shared equally with the NICC and Omaha Nation, so as to bring direct benefit to the larger Omaha community at the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

### Melissa Axelrod, Jule Gomez de Garcia, and Jordan Lachler-- Plains Apache Language Documentation

The Plains Apaches, formally known as the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, are centered in Anadarko, Oklahoma. Plains Apache is one of the Apachean group of Athabaskan languages, and is part of the Na Dene family. Today, there are only three elderly people who still speak it. Tribal leaders formed a committee in 1993 to help preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. The primary aim of the project was to produce documentation of the language, chiefly in the form of an interactive CD ROM dictionary. Axelrod, Garcia, and Lachler will act as consultants in completing the dictionary. In addition, they will continue research to aid the Plains Apache in language documentation. Their project will include a dictionary, a grammar, the videotaping of elders, and the publication of oral history and folklore. However, timing is urgent. Since their last visit, two of the most fluent Plains Apache speakers have passed away.

### Frank Bechter and Stephen Hibbard--Apsaalooke Textual And Gestural Form: Videorecording Crow and Plains Sign Talk Narratives

The Crow language is spoken by roughly 4,000 people in southeastern Montana (about half the registered Crow population), while only 10% of the Crow children are acquiring the language today. Traditionally, most Crow speakers would also be fluent in "Plains Sign Talk" (PST), a manual semiotic

code that was once a lingua franca among the Plains Indian nations. It is clearly moribund, with probably fewer than 100 proficient speakers, all elderly. We now have one last chance to see how conventions in PST may have affected storytelling and other techniques in spoken Crow. Bechter and Hibbard will collect traditional and non-traditional narratives in Crow and PST, recorded in front of Crow-speaking audiences. Gestural forms (if not PST forms) will be seen in informal discourse as well. Crow consultants will aid in producing Crow transcriptions and English translations of narratives. The project will not only benefit researchers, but will aid in language preservation and revitalization projects. Copies will be available at the Crow Agency Bilingual Education Program, the Language Archives at the University of Chicago, and the Endangered Language Fund.

### Barry F. Carlson and Suzanne Cook--Lacandon Text Collection

Lacandon is currently spoken by a dwindling population of Mayas. Their ancestry has been obscured by the absence of a written tradition, and their primary source of culture, the Lacandon story-teller, has been threatened by the influence of modern media such as television. As the remaining story-tellers grow older and fewer, the state of the Lacandon traditional culture is in increasing jeopardy. Carlson and Cook will record traditional narratives, songs, and ceremonies in the northern community of Naja in Mexico. Personal narratives and conversations will also be recorded to document the full range of Lacandon use. The audio and video recordings will help preserve the Lacandon oral culture against further loss and provide materials for possible future language renewal projects. The research will augment earlier grammatical information, while adding the new dimension of audio/video analysis of oral performance previously unstudied by linguists. In addition, the oral performances may be compiled into a collection of Lacandon texts. These performances will add to the growing body of research on Native American ethnopoetics.

### G. Tucker Childs and M Djibril Batchily--Fieldwork on Mmani (Atlantic, Niger-Congo), a dying language of coastal Guinea-Conakry

Mmani is the northernmost language of the Bullom family of the Mel sub-group of languages, belonging to the Atlantic Group Niger-Congo. Its speakers are located on the southernmost coast of Guinea near the Sierra Leone border. Investigation has revealed that there are several villages of speakers on the islands off the coast, as well, one of which is now accessible by ferry. Mmani is geographically surrounded by Susu (a distantly related language) and interpenetrated with Temne (a related

language). There are very few speakers left, none under 60 years old. Childs believes that Mmani is at least a widely divergent dialect of Bullom, if not a separate language. Currently there is no work being done on the language, and previous research has yielded little documentation and no sound recordings. Childs and Batchily plan to make recordings, digitizing the speech for archiving, accumulating a word list and different discourse types, and sketching a grammar. The investigation of Mmani will chronicle a once distinct language and culture, and it will contribute to a greater understanding of the Atlantic group of languages as a whole.

#### **Terry Crowley--Moribund languages of northern Malakula**

The island of Malakula, the second largest island in the Republic of Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific, currently holds over two dozen separate Oceanic languages spoken by a population of under 30,000 in total. In spite of this linguistic diversity, the original number of languages is thought to have been much higher. Crowley recently discovered that the Langalanga and Marakhus languages, assumed to be extinct, do in fact have a small number of speakers remaining. In addition, a previously unreported language originally spoken in the Khabtol area of central Malakula also has a small number of speakers. These languages are only spoken by older members of the community, who speak other local vernaculars as their primary languages; they are not being passed on to younger generations. This is our last chance to record them so that descendants may appreciate, in part, what has been lost.

#### **Linda A. Cumberland--A Grammar of Assiniboine**

Cumberland plans to develop a descriptive grammar of Assiniboine, a Siouan language of the northern plains, now only spoken by a small number of elders in Saskatchewan and Montana. The grammar will focus on phonology, morphology, syntax, and usage, including gendered speech, register, and generational and regional variation. The goal of the project is to provide a broad description of the major grammatical processes of Assiniboine that will serve as a resource for the Assiniboine communities in Canada and the U.S. in their language revitalization programs. Currently only 130 out of a total population of 3500 are fluent speakers, and most are over the age of seventy. There are at least three centers actively attempting to revitalize the language. However, no systematic description of the grammar exists.

#### **Theodore -- Isham Language Immersion Camps in Mvskoke (Creek)**

Immersion in a language environment is one of the most successful techniques in language learning. Isham, of the Mvskoke Language Institute in Oklahoma, used a grant from the ELF to start a program with

current members of the Muscogee Nation. Workshops were held in the summer of 2000, involving language learners at all levels and ages. The immersion program used as many media as were available--audio recordings, videotapes, written material and cultural material. It is hoped that the immersion camps will create a better environment for the use of the language by a larger number of casual users, and eventually the acquisition of the language by young children. Further, videotapes of the older generation speaking in the heritage language will be treasured by their descendants for even more generations.

#### **Linda Jordan and Leslie D. Hannah--Cherokee Storytelling Project**

The Cherokees comprise the largest Native American group in North America. It is estimated that there are between 10,000 and 15,000 native speakers of Cherokee, mostly in Oklahoma. Cherokee is not considered in imminent danger of extinction, but it is threatened, as the majority of speakers are elders. There is pressure on children who do possess the language to acquire primary fluency in English. There is a need for sophisticated, text-based materials for both older children and adults who are striving to recover their language. Ideally, these texts will be grounded within the history and culture of the Cherokee community. Jordan and Hannah will address this need through the recording of storytelling in Cherokee. The researchers plan to provide materials that incorporate recordings, a substantial text in both the Syllabary and Cherokee phonetics, an artful translation into English, word-by-word translation into English, close morphological analysis, minimal discourse analysis, and separate grammars specific to each story. The materials will be compiled with frequent consultation with the Cherokee community. Copies will be made of all materials for deposit in the Vaughan library of Northeastern State University, other public facilities in Eastern Oklahoma, and the offices of the Endangered Languages Fund at Yale University.

#### **Eva Toulouze and Kaur Maegi--Recording and Analyzing Forest Nenets Language Materials**

The Forest Nenets are a semi-nomadic group of people inhabiting northern Russia. They have no written language and little linguistic description, and although clearly related to their more northern neighbors, the Tundra Nenets, their language differs enough to deny mutual understanding. The Forest Nenets are not recognized officially as a single ethnic group, and their territory has been occupied by the oil industry. As a result, the language and culture are seriously threatened. Only a few elders have a rich knowledge of both everyday language and traditional oral folklore. The middle-aged population uses Nenets at home, but little is passed on to the young. Since Forest

Nenets is only marginally known in the academic community, Toulouze and Maegi plan to concentrate on collection of language materials and establishment of a scientifically based orthography. The latter will be used in the community in hopes of stimulating more interest in the language and culture. They will record folklore, as well as spontaneous daily conversation, in two regions of Russia: the Agan and Num-to regions.

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270 Crown St.  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-865-6163, ext. 234  
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#### **Whatever Happened to the Money Promised by UNESCO?**

*Reply to a query from the Linguistic Society of America, through their Committee for Endangered Languages and their Preservation (chair Megan Crowhurst).*

[received before 22 Nov 2000]

Thank you very much for your letter date Sept. 12, 2000, to which I respond in agreement with Prof. Bingen, to whom I succeeded to the post of Secretary-General of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies in November 1998.

Concerning the situation and the facts that you mention in your letter, I perfectly understand your concerns. Let me try to clarify the situation. The ICPHS program Endangered language consisted until 1996/97 of several activities and field researches funded (or otherwise supported) by ICPHS. In 1996/97 eleven projects were funded through this program. At that moment Mr. Federico Mayor, then Director-General of UNESCO, asked us to develop and expand this program, which was particularly fitting the main guidelines and actions of UNESCO. ICPHS was asked to mobilize its international research network, gathering applications and selecting the most urgent projects. UNESCO would fund most of the Program, both through its "Participation Program" and through direct involvement of the concerned Sectors.

A selection of 38 projects, among the over 200 application received, was retained for supporting by ICPHS. This selection, carried out essentially in consultation with professor Wurm, was inspired to two basic criteria: the grade of endangerment of the concerned language and the needs for immediate financial support and sponsoring to continue the work. In consideration of the financial limits of this program, different categories of support were defined for the retained projects: in some cases it was [possible to give both funding and

Patronage of the ICPHS; in other cases, support must be limited to the Patronage (which reveals often quite useful to obtain indirect financial help by local scientific centres and institutions and foundations). In all cases, it was stated that any financial attribution was submitted to financial approval by UNESCO.

Now, a part of this financing (viz., Participation programs) was received through 1998, and immediately transferred to the most urgent projects (according to Prof. Wurm's selection), several of them in the Americas. We were, then, waiting for the second part of this money from UNESCO. We never received this amount.

We had, then, both Professor Bingen and myself, several meetings with Mr. Joseph Poth, responsible for the language Division at Unesco, who assured us about the fact that the money would be transferred to ICPHS. I regret to say that these were just vain words. We did never receive a formal communication that this amount was cancelled or even refused. Simply, we had to constate that it was no more obtainable. No further granting was since possible.

We had no more contacts with them. We understand that this was due to internal discrepancies at UNESCO. Now, we understand that UNESCO is providing some small help to a few projects and activities, through a sector other than Mr. Poth's; but for the moment, they do not go through ICPHS.

As you mention in your letter, we understand that a new call for applications has been launched for 2000-2001. It does not come directly from us. In consideration of the unfortunate situation of 1998-99, we asked Professor Wurm to postpone further initiatives, but it seems that his efforts did not entirely succeed. The ICPHS being a professional federation of scientific societies, whose members are scholars, we understand the very inconvenient situation that may be caused by expectations that cannot be fulfilled. That is why we decided to suspend this program until a more positive and defined attitude be adopted by UNESCO. We strongly urge UNESCO in this sense, and I hope our efforts and recommendations will produce some effect, so that it will be possible to resume the program in a short future.

Most sincerely yours,  
Maurice Aymard, Secretary-General  
International Council for Philosophy and  
Humanistic Studies (ICPHS)

*This was followed by another letter from "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization", UNESCO itself.*

I reply to your enquiry of September 12, 2000 sent to Mr. Poth, now retired from UNESCO [emphasis mine - Ed.],

concerning the Endangered Languages Grants.

I have been contacted by the secretariat Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS) recently about this question and they consider that there must have been some confusion. To explain to you in few words, let me say that the Council does administer the grant scheme, but it depends on UNESCO's funding for the implementation. They say that a reply had already been sent to you informing you that no funds were available for grants in the biennium 2000-2001. This is a consequence of financial constraints imposed on the Organization. Of course I do not understand why your researchers were not duly informed by the end of the period 1998-1999.

On the other hand, I may add that the ongoing restructuring of UNESCO's Secretariat has seriously affected the linguistic activities in the biennium, since, to begin with, the Languages Division does not exist anymore, and the resources assigned for linguistic purposes were drastically cut for this biennium.

I regret not to be able to give you a more encouraging reply and I apologize for the tardiness.

Sincerely yours,  
Ricardo Bolivar-Velez  
Programme Specialist

### Results of the Volkswagen-Stiftung's Call for Pilot Projects (ann. 8 Jan 2001)

The multimedia databank project is at the heart of the program. For this the Foundation awarded a grant to:

- TIDEL (Tools and Infrastructure for the Documentation of Endangered Languages): Prof. Dr. Stephen Levinson/Peter Wittenburg, MPI for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen/NL

The pilot projects in the area of language documentation are:

- Tofa (Central Siberia): Dr. K. David Harrison, Yale University/USA
- Salar, Monguor (China): Prof. Dr. Lars Johanson, Universität Mainz
- Ega (Ivory Coast): Prof. Dr. Dafydd Gibbon, Universität Bielefeld
- Teop (Papua New Guinea): Prof. Dr. Ulrike Mosel, Universität Kiel
- Wichita (USA): Prof. Dr. David Rood, University of Colorado/USA
- A selection of indigenous languages (Brazil): A cooperative project is currently being set up.

Further information can be obtained from the office of the Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover:

Dr. Vera Szöllösi-Brenig  
+49-511-8381-218  
szoelloesi@volkswagenstiftung.de.

The new "Information for Applicants" for documentation projects of the main phase will be available by mid April 2001. It can be called for at the Foundation

VolkswagenStiftung  
Kastanienallee 35,  
D-30519 Hannover Germany  
Postanschrift:

Postfach 81 05 09, D-30505 Hannover

or via:

<http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/english/h/merkblatt/merkdoku.htm>

Proposals for symposia, workshops, or summer schools on program related issues may be submitted at any time.

*Note:* Applications from abroad will be given equal consideration. They must, however, provide detailed information on a defined cooperation with academic institutions or academics in Germany.

### Malawi Language Policy: Publication

Joachim Pfaffe <pfaffe@t-online.de> wrote on Thursday, 23 Nov 2000:

At the beginning of this year, you have received information on the Malawi Language Policy and the efforts made regarding the introduction of mother tongue instruction in the first years of primary school.

I have just returned from Malawi from another consultancy in this matter, and there is clear progress to be seen! It is now intended to pilot mother tongue instruction in Chiyao and Chitumbuka in selected primary schools by January 2003, and GIZ is highly interested to support mother tongue education development within the framework of their education support to the education sector in Malawi.

Within the context of my consultancy, I have now also completed the editing of our newest publication, the Proceedings of the Second Language Symposium: Local Languages in Education, Science and Technology, comprising 20 papers (including keynote speakers Neville Alexander, Herman Batibo, Okoth Okombo and Ekkehard Wolff). The whole publication contains 284 pages and is now going into print - if you would like to have it, I can mail it to you in MSWord format (about 1 MB). Just let me know!

You can also receive a copy of my new consultancy report with all the latest developments (about 200 kB).

Looking forward to ongoing exchange with you!

Kind regards

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## 6. Reports on Meetings

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### Multimedia and Minority Languages, San Sebastian-Donostia, Spain, 8-9 Nov. 2000

Bojan Petek, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia  
<Bojan.Petek@Uni-Lj.si>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Multimedia and Minority Languages International Congress was held in San Sebastian-Donostia, Basque Country, Spain, on 8-9 Nov. 2000 (<http://www.gaia.es/multilinguae>). It was organized by GAIA - the Association of Electronics and Information Technology Industries of the Basque Country, with the sponsorship of the European Commission. The two days programme included 18 lectures and a round table discussion on topics addressing the cross-section of multimedia and minority languages.

In the context of endangered languages several authors presented their experience in employing the information and communication technologies to preserve the language and/or culture. Tapani Salminen, Department of Finno-Ugrian Studies, University of Helsinki, presented an insightful talk entitled "The current status of European minority and regional languages". First, he stressed that cooperation among specialists in many different disciplines is a necessity for preservation of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world. Second, he argued that the Europe is much wider than the European Union and third, that the number of regional and minority languages in all areas of Europe is larger than it is usually assumed (<http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/endangered.html>).

Guido Mensching, Free University of Berlin, reported on a successful project supporting the Sardinian language on the Internet. The project's web site (<http://www.spinfor.uni-koeln.de/mensch/sardengl.html>) has recently evolved into one of the largest information resources on the Sardinian. His

talk positioned Sardinian as a European minority language, reported the aims of the project that applied the Internet as a rescue tool for the endangered language and discussed some very interesting experiences obtained during the project. The latter included remarks on novel opportunities brought by the interactive digital media, e.g., he presented an example of a Sardinian living in France who did not even speak the Sardinian before and now begins to write it. Another successful Internet project was reported by Sara Scardoni, Museo Etnografico dei Cimbri, Giazza, who spoke about activities initiated for the survival of the Cimbrian language and culture.

Donncha O'Croinin, the Linguistic Institute of Ireland, presented his insights into how the World Wide Web could be considered as the save-net for the endangered languages. Peter Wiens, Plautdietsch-Freunde e.V. (a non-profit organization in Germany), presented a talk "Plautdietsch - Russian German Mennonites Around the World Join Efforts in the Web to Save their Mother Tongue". He discussed the web-site on the Plautdietsch, <http://www.plautdietschfreunde.de/>, that provides invaluable information to promote and cultivate this endangered language.

Several presentations did not address the endangered languages explicitly but could be considered as highly relevant in view of the research experience transfer to any language. Xabier Artola, IXA Research Group on Natural Language Processing, University of the Basque ([ixa.si.ehu.es/ingeles/dokument/ixakinag.html](http://ixa.si.ehu.es/ingeles/dokument/ixakinag.html)) presented an overview of twelve years of research experience of the IXA group working on the Basque language. His talk also included recommendations on good practice in developing the human language technologies (<http://www.ub.es/ling/euskara.htm>).

Alastair Macphail presented funding issues and the role of European Commission in support of the European regional and minority languages (RMLs). His talk outlined the past, present, and future EC activities, including an overview of the other sources of funding for the RMLs (<http://www.eblul.org/ia/funding.htm>).

In summary, excellent organization skills of the organizers provided a forum where formal lecture presentations naturally blended with lively discussions and exchange of ideas between the congress participants.

### International Conference on Endangered Languages, Kyoto, Nov 24-25, 2000

The Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim, with the support of the Japanese Ministry of Education, held a International

Conference on Endangered Languages at the Kyoto International Kaikan from November 24-25. The goal of the conference was to twofold. First, it sought to bring together leading linguists and fieldworkers dealing with endangered languages to give an overall picture of current situation. Second, it sought to bring these people to Japan to help strengthen ties between Japanese researchers and students and people working in endangered languages.

The entire program was efficiently moderated by Akira Yamamoto (University of Kansas) who began the proceedings by emphasizing the sometimes tenuous linkage between linguist and native community with a poem entitled 'Ten Little Linguists'.

Professor Osahito Miyaoka (Osaka Gakuin University), main organizer of the conference, opened the proceedings by first noting that all of the presenters had been asked to make presentations aimed at both general audiences and scholars based in Japan. He noted that the Japanese budget for official overseas development assistance was more than \$10 billion and Japan paid \$13 billion in support of UN forces in the Gulf War and expressed his hope that the Japanese government's support of this research project, which not only provided funding for "Urgent Investigation and Research on the Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim", but also included designating this project as a Specific Research on Priority Areas, was the foundation for a future in which Japanese linguists hoped to contribute to the international community. However, Professor Miyaoka also noted wryly that Japanese linguists dealing with minority languages often have a reputation as 'lone wolves' and he expressed his hope that this project would work to erase that image.

Because of a delayed flight, Michael Krauss was unable to be there on the first day and so, the schedule was rearranged, with Stephen Wurm (Australian National University) giving his presentation on "Ways and Methods for Maintaining and Reinvigorating Endangered Languages", which first discussed the role of the linguist in the endangered language community and then gave a Baedeker's tour of the endangered language situations in various parts of the world. It was surprisingly effective and clearly demonstrated that the problem of language endangerment would not receive a unitary solution, but a wide range of solutions, each adapted to local conditions. His paper was followed by Oscar Aguilera (Universidad de Chile), who discussed in more detail the work he and others had done with endangered Fuegian languages, Kawesqar and Yaghan, and by Midori Osumi (Tokyo Women's Christian University) who gave an overview of some of the problems facing the communities trying to preserve their language.

Next, Barbara Grimes (Summer Institute of Linguistics) presented a talk filled with verbal 'snapshots' of different language endangerment situations, entitled "Global Language Viability". Barbara and her husband Joseph are the guiding force behind the Ethnologue (<http://www.sil.org/ethnologue>) which is the most wide ranging resource for data on the world's languages, but the discussion was not simply of numbers but also of human situations, which gave a context to the numbers. Her paper was followed by Darrell Tryon's (Australian National University) comments, noting that a higher profile for work with language preservation depends on accurate information and that this higher profile will necessarily entail more co-ordination among those working with endangered languages. His paper had a stunning quote from the Australian Financial Review, indicating the amount of work that had to be done in shifting public opinion.

"campaigners for linguistic diversity portray themselves as liberal defenders of minority rights, protecting the vulnerable against the forces of global capitalism. But their campaign has much more in common with reactionary, backward-looking visions. All seek to preserve the unpreservable, and all are possessed with an impossibly nostalgic view of what constitutes culture."

The second discussant, Sueyoshi Toba (Serampore College, India) presented insights from his own experiences in Nepal.

Next was Willem Adelaar (Leiden University), whose talk, entitled "Descriptive Linguistics and the Standardization of Newly Described Languages" discussed the conflict that exists in describing the language and standardizing it. He gave a number of examples from South American language communities showing the varied forms this type of conflict could take. He was followed by Cecilia Odé (Leiden University), who discussed the often hidden dimension of prosody, a dimension often ignored when dealing with language documentation and preservation. Kazuto Matsumura (University of Tokyo) noted that field linguists are sometimes 'brainwashed' into thinking that the only linguistic work is descriptive and showed a number of examples from Estonian to show that the field linguist must be aware of a wide range of factors.

Matthias Brenzinger (University of Cologne) viewed endangered languages through the lens of Africa in his talk "Language Endangerment through Marginalization and Globalization". He pointed out that other situations in the world could not simply be applied in toto to

Africa, in that globalization had bypassed Africa in many ways. This leads to cases where the endangered languages are actually 'safer' precisely because they are marginalized and neglected. This also makes applications of policies that appear to favor endangered languages actually work against them. For example, 'mother tongue education' is often held up as a way of protecting minority languages from the incursions of the majority languages. But in Africa, 'mother tongue education' often means an African language of wider communication such as Yoruba or Swahili, endangering smaller locally-based languages. George Broadwell (State University of New York, Albany) filled in a lacuna in the paper, which was an absence of a definition for globalization and offered the following: 'globalization is the process by which national political and economic systems are increasingly integrated into an international capitalist system'. With that definition in place, he proposed that in order to understand language endangerment, it is necessary to examine the rewards and the punishments such a system places on speakers of endangered languages. This was followed by Shigeki Kaji (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) gave more detail on the situation in Africa, drawn from his own experiences.

Victor Golla (Humboldt State University) was unable to attend and his paper, entitled "What does It Mean for a Language to Survive?: Some Thoughts on the (not-so-simple) Future of Languages" was read by Kumiko Ichihashi (Montclair State University, New Jersey). This paper is the continuation and an amplification of his editorial in the SSILA newsletter concerning the future of endangered languages, which assumes that many of the languages that are now endangered will not survive as vernacular vehicles of communication and more importantly, that nothing can be done. This extremely depressing thought is counterbalanced by the notion that as we move into the 21st century, we will see the rise of secondary speech communities. He identifies three main types which he terms revitalizers (those often characterized as 'new speakers' who are relearning the language), avocational communities (who represent people drawn to particular language for purposes of "enrichment") and finally, scholarly communities, in which linguists seek to train students. He notes that these communities have the potential to flourish with the rise of the Internet and of market based incentives. Colette Grinevald noted that what he is presenting is an unpalatable truth, but one that we must become accustomed to. She also noted that the typology that is set up should take its place along with the other typologies used in discussing endangered languages, those of language vitality/death, language communities and of individual speakers. While a bit pessimistic on the idea of high tech supporting these efforts, she argued that this paper represents an

important call to the field. The final discussant was Honoré Watanabe, who first noted that within Salish languages, the private nature of the language limits possibilities for Golla's avocational communities. He further notes that 'emblematic' uses of the language may result in languages that differ dramatically from the 'pure' form of the language, yet still retain important features to allow them to be used by revitalizers. He also discussed some of the difficulties that can arise when we talk about making endangered languages more widely available to these secondary language communities. Finally, he noted that, in regards to the scholarly community, linguists who had not passed on their notes, materials, and archives to their students were, in a very real sense, 'endangered' themselves.

To wrap up the day's presentations, Nicholas Ostler (Foundation for Endangered Languages) spoke on a number of general points. He noted that interest in the subject had increased by leaps and bounds in recent years, and one of the problems that we now face is that we have a realization of the problem. Yet when asked by young people what they can do, he is at a loss to give them concrete suggestions. This absence of a channel for energy and effort is vexing and one he felt that should be most definitely tackled in the future. At any rate, young people would be crucial, in three ways: in learning or not learning their own ancestral languages; as linguistics students in taking up language documentation; and as concerned members of the public forming the essential background of public concern.

On the second day, Yukio Uemura presented "Endangered Languages in Japan", discussing the situation of Ryukyuan in-depth, and also discussing work with Ainu. He gave a historical summary of the history of the Ryukyu Islands and argued persuasively for its importance in cultural, historical and linguistics research. He also presented a short summary of the situation with Ainu. Michael Krauss noted the significance that this work had to discussing the relationship of Japanese to other languages in the region while Zendo Ueno (University of Tokyo) spoke of the necessity to record and preserve mainland Japanese dialects.

Next, David Bradley (La Trobe University) underlined a key point in his talk, entitled "Language Attitudes: The Key Factor in Language Maintenance." Drawing on his extensive work linguistic communities in Thailand and China, he spoke on how linguistic survival hinges on the groups attitude towards the language, making the linguist's first question 'how do we change speakers' attitudes?' He noted that a related question is whether we should strive to change attitudes, or whether this is best left up to the community and illustrated this with examples from his own research. He

showed how appearances can be deceiving, and that the way languages are passed down, sometimes with demotic texts or where multiple oral literary traditions are fused into a written standard, can give the appearance of a language that is robust, but is not taken to heart by the community. Toshihide **Nakayama** discussed this paper and emphasized the notion that negative attitudes represent a severe threat to any program of language revitalization and many language revitalization programs, installed into Western schooling, are easily manipulated and are often quite distant from the actual sources of attitudes towards the language. Restoration of the language, often the final goal of the linguist, does not go far enough. Takumi **Ikeda** (Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University) spoke from his own experiences with Tibetan languages and language communities

Finally, Michael **Krauss**, who was scheduled for the opening talk, closed with his talk entitled "Mass Language Extinction, and Documentation: The Race against Time" which highlighted both the progress that had been made and the work that still needed to be done. While many of the examples and figures are now very familiar to those discussing language endangerment, the discussion has been filled out and elaborated to show that seeming exceptions that have been raised to his figures do not alter the general statement that of the world's languages, 90% may not see the end of the next century. Matthias **Brenzinger** (University of Cologne) chose to highlight three portions of Krauss' discussion, which were to argue for making the case, continue to document and continue to support maintenance. He reiterated some of the examples he had made in the case of Africa and urged that we continue to work to chart as accurately as possible, the extent of language endangerment around the globe. Megumi **Kurebito** (Toyama University) discussed her own personal journey, where contact with Koryak made her shift her research focus and noted that preservation and support are inextricably linked.

Bernard **Comrie** (Max Planck Institute) summarized the two days of presentations by first noting that there is a set of problems that arise when dealing with language endangerment and language preservation. Often, the false dichotomy of preservation vs. documentation is raised. He noted the case of Welsh, which has made a comeback in recent years. Yet he notes that Welsh is becoming simplified, with grammatical gender and consonant mutation disappearing, in large part because children of non-native speakers are learning the language and as they use it, these simplifications and innovations are picked up by the children of native speakers. So too, the process of standardization functions to reduce dialect variation. The linguist who only documents, without

working toward preservation, is really only getting part of the story.

He also articulated the troubling question that hangs over these sorts of meetings and that is 'why waste time talking about these problems when we should be out doing something?' He answered this by noting that these problems do not exist as isolated entities and it becomes necessary to see the full picture.

Osamu **Sakiyama** (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka) closed the meeting by announcing that a domestic conference on endangered languages would be held later this year and an international conference would be held at this same time next year.

#### An Observer's overview

A number of very important points were articulated in this conference. There are two which I believe will become assume more importance within the field in the coming years. The first is Matthias Brenzinger's discussion of the current state of African languages. The situation is, because of number of reasons, not as gloomy as it might be if we were to extrapolate from other areas of the world. This is because of the interplay between languages of wider communication and languages assumed to be endangered, the lack of participation of Africa within the global economy, and the lack of more accurate surveys of languages and language speakers. He also pointed out that simply transferring the concepts and terms that we use with endangered languages will result in a distorted impression of the true situation.

The second point was Victor Golla's assertion that there is little to be done to restore most endangered languages to their previous state, and therefore, communities of 'secondary' language speakers will assume more importance and he went on to present a typology of such speakers. As Collette Grinevald noted, this typology represents, in Fishman's terms, the 'intellectualization' of the field. By expanding the audiences that we address in terms of endangered languages, we offer ourselves more options and opportunities to work with these languages. While keeping a realistic image of what actually may be accomplished, these groups of secondary speakers may offer a way of bridging the gap between the communities and the academy.

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## 7. Overheard on the Web

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### Linux and Ethnodiversity

by Martin Vermeer

21st Jan 2001, 00:08:35

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(webmaster@linuxtoday.com)

Linux is a trademark of Linus Torvalds.

*Martin Vermeer is a research professor and dept head at the Finnish Geodetic Institute, as well as docent at Helsinki University, Department of Geophysics...*

Linus Torvalds is one of the six per cent or so of Finns who have Swedish as their mother tongue. One is tempted to ask if this is a coincidence; I want to argue that it is not.

Throughout world history, contributions to the things that make our society worth being called civilization -- literature, science, art, music, social innovation -- seem to have come in a vastly disproportionate measure from people who were not at home in one national culture only, but in several, or that belonged to another culture than the mainstream one in their country. Think only of the contribution the Jews made to European art, science, architecture, and social innovation; or the influence of the African slaves and their descendants on North American -- and thus Western -- musical culture. An alien entity tuning in only to Earth's music radio stations could easily conclude that the dominant continent on this planet is Africa!

There is ample real life proof for this, and considering multi-ethnicity a problem rather than a great opportunity is such a sad shortsightedness. (Consider this next time you go out eating Thai :-)

Also, Finland is a case in point; ask people in the street what famous Finns they know and see what comes up. Sibelius, of course, and Mannerheim; Kekkonen will be mentioned and the runner Paavo Nurmi; and, of course, Torvalds. Few will mention the Nobel prize winning writer Sillanpää, and even fewer the chemist Gadolin; he lived before Finland had attained statehood. But did you notice that half of the "famous Finns" have Swedish family names? Not bad for a 6% minority...!

Numbers don't mean that much.

It is important to understand that a nation is more than a piece of real estate. Sure, the real estate is needed to anchor a nation's existence -- but nationhood is about language, culture, and way of life. And the language is the gateway into a nation's culture and way of life. Heck, it is even a gateway into a way of thinking!

Knowing only one language -- English, let's say -- tends to impose certain patterns on one's ways of thinking. Knowing one more language inevitably widens one's perspective, especially if the language does not belong to the same family. I know from experience: When I moved from The Netherlands up North to Sunny Suomi, I was confronted with the need to learn this weird, alien, Finno-Ugric tongue. Ah well, at least the alphabet was Latin, and the spelling phonetic and utterly predictable. I learned to read Finnish texts aloud so that my listeners understood them even if I didn't.

Hard work it was, but well worth it. Finnish is so entirely different from Western languages -- no articles, for instance, and no real propositions -- the fourteen-odd cases fulfill that function -- and almost everything is done with prefixes and suffixes: possession, negation, diminution, etcetera. And the "verb of negation": I not, you not, he/she not, ... weird! And the partitive case playing the role of the "partitive article" in French (and in fact in English, where it is represented by a missing article).

Compared to learning Finnish, Swedish was easy, being so close to Dutch. Regularly reading the daily paper "Hufvudstadsbladet" was enough. But not as useful for shaping the brain as Finnish was. It's a bit like learning programming languages: after knowing Pascal, other procedural languages hold few secrets; but Lisp is a different cup of tea.

Finnish is not a small language; world wide, it belongs to the 200 largest amongst a total of 5000 currently existing languages. Small languages -- those threatened with extinction -- count on average 6000 speakers. It is expected that 2000 such small languages will become extinct during the coming century. Such extinction represents an irretrievable loss of part of the common heritage of mankind, a loss not unlike that of a biological species.

#### Extinction is forever.

Finnish, and Finnish-Swedish, the variety of Swedish spoken in Finland, are established national languages with a firm legal status, so one would think that they are not under threat. Well, think again. According to an article appearing last summer

([http://www.seattletimes.com/news/technology/html98/icel\\_063098.html](http://www.seattletimes.com/news/technology/html98/icel_063098.html))

Microsoft is not prepared to translate, or localize, Windows into the Icelandic language. Too small a market. And all Icelanders know English anyway. They are not prepared to let the Icelanders do it, either; no way they are going to let some banana republic play with their precious source code!

What makes this all the more painful is that Iceland is an exceptionally literate nation and Icelandic an established national language enjoying massive official support. If this can happen to Icelandic, how can one expect any support for even smaller languages such as Faerisk (the Faeroe islands' language), Saame (the Laplanders' language) and Greenlandic/Inuit? There exists a common term bank project of the Nordic countries, nordterm; one wonders why a corresponding initiative for software localization has not been talked about more, also in the European context; fear of technical complexity?

It must be clear from this that no small nation can afford to be dependent on a large commercial software company for the preservation of its national heritage. Heck, Microsoft's turnover is bigger than Iceland's GNP! Literacy today means also computer or IT literacy and becomes an impossibility if not even the operating system that runs all computers is available in localized form.

The Icelandic minister of culture has tried, apparently without success, to turn Microsoft's corporate head, threatening to investigate "alternatives" in case they don't listen. Apropos, the KDE graphic desktop environment for Linux, has been partially "Icelandized" ([www.kde.org/118n.html](http://www.kde.org/118n.html)). Perhaps Iceland should investigate this alternative anyway, even if Microsoft would chance to reluctantly give in to the pressure. It's way better to be master of one's own fate. Open source offers an easy and attractive way to localize all software, not least due to the foresight and lack of cultural prejudice of the Free Software Foundation providing such an excellent tool as `gettext`. Having myself been involved in localization efforts for the LyX document processor, I believe this alternative to be a fully realistic one.

#### Computer sovereignty?

Talking about diversity in the context of free software, it's not just about ethnodiversity. The notion of diversity as freedom lives and prospers in Linux. Let a hundred desktops blossom! People are different, so why shouldn't software be. Besides, freedom works. Funny to think of Linux and freedom as manifest destiny, as illustrated by the emerging binary compatibility standard for Unix -- something the big vendors with their expensive consortia never achieved. Now, for the first time in history, it's being done, courtesy of a "bunch of hackers", thank you very much. Freedom works for hatching world-class software, but just as well for evolving mature, workable standards.

If you're content to just have the trains run on time, you won't even achieve as much as that. Freedom is no luxury. And freedom breeds diversity, which is not a sign of weakness -- quite the opposite. That's just the same error that all dictators make, to

mistake the rough-and-tumble of democratic discourse for a display of weakness.

In conclusion, I want to quote the Finnish, ethnic Swedish computer linguistics professor Fred Karlsson, who was interviewed in *Hufvudstadsbladet* on the occasion of his election as "professor of the year" (and yes, you can finger him :-):

"We have in fact started to use certain concepts analogous to those in biology -- we talk of linguistic habitats, diversity and so on. The small, indigenous peoples' languages are perfectly adapted to their needs, local environment, way of life. Reflecting upon the value of diversity, we should also realize that a language is a crystallization of many hundreds of generations of labor and of understanding the world around us. It is like asking whether the work and world view of our ancestors have any value. Of course, they have."

#### Asuilaak, the online Inuktitut Living Dictionary, is launched

Source: *PR Newswire*

OTTAWA, ON, Nov. 9 /PRNewswire/ - Macadamian Technologies Inc., a provider of Web and eBusiness solutions, the Department of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth (CLEY) of the Government of Nunavut, and Multilingual E-Data Solutions (Multedata), specialists in multilingual computing applications, are proud to announce the launch of the Web-based Inuktitut Living Dictionary.

The dictionary has been named *Asuilaak* - an Inuktitut word that means "that which was expected has arrived". *Asuilaak* will be the world's first online collaborative dictionary in Inuktitut, English, and French.

*Asuilaak* was developed using Macadamian's *Syndeo*, an Enterprise JavaBeans Framework for rapidly developing data-driven Web and eBusiness applications, and Multedata's expertise in multilingual electronic dictionaries. This Web-based online dictionary invites Inuktitut speakers and language experts worldwide to contribute their knowledge of Inuktitut words and definitions, as well as translations to English and French. *Syndeo*'s multilingual capabilities and data modeling flexibility met the unique challenges involved in developing the dictionary, including the support of both the Roman and Syllabic representation of Inuktitut.

The Department of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth (CLEY) of the Government of Nunavut funded the project, and are hosting the dictionary. *Asuilaak* will be fully searchable in Inuktitut, English, and French, and will serve as a translation reference and a repository of information on the Inuktitut language. It will also be a

valuable tool for teaching Inuktitut to current and future generations.

Jim Howse, President of Multedata, comments, "The inherent power of Syndeo to provide rapid development of multilingual Web sites in any combination of languages opens up exciting possibilities, not only for the Government of Nunavut, but other multilingual countries or organizations worldwide. We were impressed by the speed with which this complex Web site was developed and brought to production."

"We're very excited to have been chosen with Multedata to work on this project," said Matthew Hatley, Director of Syndeo Solutions for Macadamian. "The Inuktitut Living Dictionary could not have existed before the Web - anyone with Internet access from anywhere in Nunavut can contribute their knowledge of the Inuktitut language, and learn from others to help preserve and develop Inuktitut as a living, vibrant language."

"This project has revolutionized the way the world looks at the Inuktitut language," said Carmen Levi, Deputy Minister of CLEY. "The Living Dictionary is something that all Nunavummiut can be proud of."

For more information about Multedata and Macadamian services, visit [www.multedata.ca](http://www.multedata.ca), and [www.macadamian.com](http://www.macadamian.com)

### Work to Save Odawa in Wisconsin

By Amanda Heyman, *Badger Herald U. Wisconsin*

November 28, 2000  
(U-WIRE) MADISON, Wis. -- A University of Wisconsin-Madison professor struggling to save the American Indian dialect Odawa from possible extinction is working to create an updated and improved Odawa dictionary. Assistant professor of linguistics Rand Valentine, along with professor Mary Ann Corbiere, of the University of Sudbury in Ontario, Canada, is revising an Odawa dictionary compiled in 1985.

The professors are also adding a computer database component. Valentine said the dictionary will help people trying to learn the language outside of an Odawa community and, additionally, aid in preserving the language. "It's estimated that by the end of the century 80 percent of presently spoken languages will be extinct," Valentine said. "We're on the verge of a massive extinction of languages because of globalization. And as a result globalization and historical attempts to eradicate Native American languages, many Native American languages have become greatly endangered."

Odawa, a dialect of the Ojibwe language, is primarily spoken by people living along the shores of Lake Huron. Odawa has the

basic properties of the Ojibwe language but is vastly different, Valentine said. "It's like comparing English in England to English in America," he said.

Valentine and Corbiere began compiling the dictionary two years ago and Valentine estimates it will be complete in the next few years. In addition, Valentine recently finished writing a grammar of the Odawa language, which will be published by the University of Toronto Press. "A grammar shows how words are used to make sentences, lays out the internal structure of words and helps with pronunciation," Valentine said. "It's basically a schema of how the language works."

The dictionary is being compiled with the help of a steering committee. The committee consists of eight to 12 elderly members of Lake Huron communities who give the authors advice and react to the dictionary. "They tell us, 'We say this differently,' or, 'This means something else in our community,'" Valentine said. "They come from communities up and down Lake Huron and have many different ways of speaking Odawa. They help us represent as many interpretations as we can."

Valentine said the dictionary will help keep the language alive for conscious language learners who do not have the benefit of living in an Odawa community. "The best way to keep a language alive is to speak it," he said. "But there are lots of people trying to learn the language outside of a community and the dictionary will be helpful to the people who take the book-learning route."

Also, Valentine said the dictionary can serve as a historical marker. "A dictionary is a nice record of the beauty of a language and how people see the world," he said. "It's a snapshot of one way of being in the world of human beings. Odawa as it's spoken today encodes all the ideas important to the Odawa people today."

Besides his work on the new dictionary, Valentine will participate in a 2001 language preservation conference to be held at University of Wisconsin from Feb. 15-17, 2001. "We're just getting it together," said Ada Deer, director of the UW American Indian Studies Program. "We're in the process of contacting some very dynamic people."

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

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### Words and Images: a Portrait of Languages

<http://www.hollowear.com/gallery/word-image.html>

Artist Elly Sherman has been collecting the voices of the world for a number of years via a unique artistic presentation called "Words and Images." In this series, she has taken one of her own poems and had it translated into over 80 languages, both ancient and contemporary, common and nearly lost.

This presentation is a sample of some of those translations. It consists of her original poem and translations into other languages.

The first is a translation of the poem into the Saami language of northern Scandinavia (sometimes known as Lapland), an audio reading of the poem in the Saami language, some music from the region and some links to other Saami sites.

The second is a translation of the poem into the Guarani language of Brazil, an audio reading of the poem in the Guarani language and some links to other Guarani sites.

More information about the artist and this collection can be obtained via e-mail to [ellys@earthlink.net](mailto:ellys@earthlink.net)

### (American) Indigenous Languages 2000

Prezados Companheiros,  
Gostaria de apresentar meu site  
[http://geocities.com/indianlanguages\\_2000](http://geocities.com/indianlanguages_2000)

0  
resultado da pesquisa de várias décadas com línguas indígenas vivas e extintas. Tenho como proposta a divulgação da maior quantidade possível de pequenos e médios vocabulários das línguas indígenas das três Américas. No momento são 314 listas de todos os grupos.

Antecipo que sou apenas um "linguista" amador.

Um abraço

Victor A. Petrucci <[vicpetru@hotmail.com](mailto:vicpetru@hotmail.com)>

On this site we offer 13,000 words of 430 different Native American languages alive and extinct. All words are translated into Portuguese, Spanish and English. We appreciate having your opinion and contribution. If you wish some words of a specific language, please e-mail me.

### Grupo de Trabalho de Línguas Indígenas (ANPOLL)

<http://www.gtli.locaweb.com.br/>

Esta home-page foi concebida como meio para divulgar as atividades de pesquisa científica dos linguistas que integram o Grupo de Trabalho de Línguas Indígenas (GTLI) da Associação Nacional de Programas de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Letras e Linguística (ANPOLL). Esta é uma associação

cujos membros são os programas de pós-graduação das universidades e os institutos de pesquisa a ela filiados. O GTLI tem como aderentes pesquisadores de tais instituições, assim como alguns pesquisadores estrangeiros que com elas têm colaborado na pesquisa e na formação de novos pesquisadores.

**ANA SUELLY ARRUDA CÂMARA CABRAL**  
Coordenadora do GTLI

Departamentos del homepage:  
Histórico, Membros, Textos, Mural, Línguas Indígenas Brasileiras, Produção Científica, Educação Indígena, Guia De Sites, Agenda.

### On-line Course in Aymara

*M. J. Hardman <hardman@ufl.edu> wrote on Tues, 28 Nov 2000:*

I am thinking of putting my two-year Aymara course on my website. The print material consists of Vol. i STUDENT MANUAL 477 pp and Vol. ii TEACHERS' GUIDE 429 pp plus 70 Hours of Pedagogical Tapes to accompany Pedagogical Materials. Clearly we will be doing reformulation.

We are doing a sample at this point with the idea of putting the entire course on-line. The first unit, only just barely adapted from the paper/classroom materials has just been put up on my website <http://grove.ufl.edu/~hardman/>.

If this passes muster the Center for Latin American Studies will support us to put up the whole course -- 13 units, previously taught in a two-year 5 credit a semester course.

For the sample we had limited time and support, so some of the obvious will be carefully redone for the 'real thing' -- like rewriting the presentation specifically for the web!

Any comments on the sample would be much appreciated.

MJ Hardman

### Native students' Lushootseed website

*Editor's note: this relates to the extreme North-Western corner of the "Lower 48" states' of the USA.*

I would like to direct your attention to a unique website maintained by the Native and non-Native students of Tulalip Elementary School on the Tulalip Indian Reservation. In this site students share their learning about the Native language and culture of the Puget Sound. The site includes an extensive selection of bilingual literature from the Puget Sound (including elders' narration in some cases), as well as numerous Lushootseed language pages. Other topics

include Native constellations, lunar calendar, art and math of the Puget Sound. <http://www.msvl.wednet.edu/elementary/tulalip/home.html>

If you think our site would be an appropriate link, then please link us to your site. The students are very proud of their work promoting their Native language, and love to share their work with others.

David Cort, teacher, Tulalip-based Classroom  
Tulalip Elementary School  
Tulalip Indian Reservation  
Washington State, USA  
[David\\_Cort@msvl.wednet.edu](mailto:David_Cort@msvl.wednet.edu)

### Cornish Website: Agan Tavas

This is to be found at <http://www.clas.demon.co.uk/>

It contains :

- Beunans yn Kernow Keltek - Life in Celtic Cornwall
- Everything you need to know about the Cornish Language
- KERNUAK ES Teach yourself course
- This way to find out about Cornish
- Learning Cornish / Desky Kernuak
- What's new / Newodhow

as well as

- What is AGAN TAVAS and the Status of Cornish Today
- Sounds and Phrases of Cornish
- List of Basic Cornish words
- Reference Materials

Feedback: [<andrew@clas.demon.co.uk>](mailto:andrew@clas.demon.co.uk)

### Direct your own movie - in Welsh

Go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cymru/pobolycwm/english/hello.shtml>

and send a friend an animated greeting with the pobol Movie Maker.

Gareth Morlais

cynhyrhydd ar-lein; online producer  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/pobolycwm/>>

### Database of Proposed Linguistic Universals

<http://ling.uni-konstanz.de/pages/proj/sprachbau.htm>

### Open Languages Archive Community

The Open Language Archives Community (OLAC) is a network of language archives conforming with the Open Archives Initiative, founded at the Workshop on Web-Based Language Documentation and Description, Philadelphia, December 2000. The OLAC has a website under construction

at: <http://www.language-archives.org/>

"Open Archives Initiative" (OAI) is organized by a worldwide group of archivists and information managers. This Initiative is concerned with establishing general standards to facilitate the efficient on-line dissemination of content between archives and service providers.

Further information on the OAI is available at:

<http://www.openarchives.org>

### Online grammar of Udi [SE Caucasian] or 'Lezgian'

This is now available at

<http://www.lrz-muenchen.de/~wschulze/udinhalt.htm>

It comprises a comprehensive description of the Udi grammar from a typological (in parts cognitive) perspective, offers additional (though limited) information on the sociolinguistic and historical background as well as a sample text with full interlinear glosses. The objectives of this grammar are to provide an interactive tool for the analysis of Udi which means that readers are invited to comment upon single sections or to ask for additional data etc. which would then be entered in this grammar.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schulze  
Inst. Allg. u. Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft  
Univ München, Geschwister-Scholl-Pl. 1, D-80539

Tel.: +49-89-2180-2486 (sec) +49-89-2180-5343 (office) Fax: ++49-(0)89-2180 5345

Email: [W.Schulze@lrz.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:W.Schulze@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

Web: <http://www.lrz-muenchen.de/~wschulze/>

### Zapotec grammar

*Albert Bickford (albert\_bickford@sil.org) wrote, on 16 March 2001:*

I am happy to announce the electronic publication of the following item on the SIL-Mexico website:

Pickett, Velma B., Cheryl Black, y Vicente Marcial Cerqueda. Gramatica popular del zapoteco del istmo, segunda edicion (electronica). Juchitan, Oax.: Centro de Investigacion y Desarrollo Binniza y Mexico DF: Inst. Linguistico de Verano. x, 125.

<http://www.sil.org/mexico/zapoteca/istmo/G023a-GramaticaZaplstm-ZAI.htm>

## Inuktitut magazine

For 40 years *Inuktitut* has been a journal of Inuit language, culture and tradition, serving Inuit in Canada, Greenland, Russia, Alaska and Denmark. It is published three times a year with three translations: English, French, and Inuktitut. *Inuktitut* is extremely valuable to the Inuit of Canada, who, until last century, kept their histories alive mainly through oral storytelling and example. With the advent of modern technology, the art of storytelling is not as widely used. Part of the magazine's mandate is to keep the history and tradition alive by publishing the stories of Inuit elders, including personal experiences, legends, and traditional family values.

Current and past issues may be viewed at:  
[http://www.magomania.com/search/show\\_issue.epl?id=458](http://www.magomania.com/search/show_issue.epl?id=458)

You can subscribe online at the publisher's website: <http://www.tapirisat.ca>  
 e-mail inquiries to: [itc@tapirisat.ca](mailto:itc@tapirisat.ca)  
 --Paani Lecompte, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada  
[plecompte@tapirisat.ca](mailto:plecompte@tapirisat.ca)

## Latin American web archive (pilot)

Joel F. Sherzer  
 (jsherzer@mail.utexas.edu) wrote on 3 Mar 2001:

The Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America/El Archivo de los Idiomas Indígenas de Latinoamérica (AILLA/AILLA) has recently launched a pilot site from which you can download, listen to, and view forms of discourse from the indigenous languages of Latin America. The purpose of this pilot site is to elicit comments from potential users of the full AILLA site that is being developed. The URL is:

<http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~ailla>

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## 9. Forthcoming Meetings

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### Archiving Language Materials in Web-Accessible DBs - Ethical Challenges: 22 April 2001, U. Texas at Austin.

In recent years, the emergence of new technology and standards has made it possible to easily access electronic versions of textual and audio materials stored in digital databases, using web browsers and free internet-downloadable software. This has created an opportunity for applying this new technology to the archiving, dissemination, and analysis of linguistic materials. Language archives using this web-based technology are now

being launched, and it is necessary to consider the ethical implications of these new preservation and dissemination centers.

The purpose of this colloquium is to advance the discussion of the ethical issues raised by these new language archives. The organizers are especially interested in the ethical challenges raised by the use of web-accessible archives for indigenous and endangered languages, but presentations focused on other languages are also welcome.

This, a parasession of the 9th annual Symposium About Language and Society - Austin (SALSA). Sunday, April 22nd, 2001, will be held at 1 pm - 5 pm at the University of Texas at Austin. For further information, email [ailla@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:ailla@uts.cc.utexas.edu). (Abstracts were due by Friday, March 23, 2001.)

Registration for SALSA is required of colloquium participants; for more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/students/salsa>.

### Deictic Systems & Quantification In Languages Spoken In Europe & North & Central Asia, May 22-25, 2001

The international symposium will take place at the Udmurt State University, in Izhevsk, Russia, on May 22-25, 2001. Izhevsk is the capital of the Udmurt Republic in Russia.

Invited Speakers:

- Prof. Dr. William Croft, University of Manchester, Manchester
- Prof. Dr. Östen Dahl, Stockholm University, Stockholm
- Prof. Dr. Martin Haspelmath, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig
- Prof. Dr. Alexandr E. Kibrik, Philological faculty, Moscow State University, Moscow
- Prof. Dr. Ulrike Mosel, Seminar fuer Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Kiel, Kiel
- Prof. Dr. J.-L. Moro, Paris

The languages spoken in Europe and North and Central Asia belong to several major language families. The Indo-European, Uralic and Turkic languages are the largest language families in Europe and North and Central Asia. In addition, Tungusic languages and the Palaeo-Siberian languages belong to the indigenous languages of the area. In Central Asia, the area overlaps with the area of the Mongolic languages, and in the Southeast, the Sinitic languages. In the South, the area also borders on the languages spoken in the Caucasus, and the western part of the main area of the Semitic languages is located on the border of the languages spoken in Southern Europe. During the course of history, this area has been a meeting place of numerous cultural and linguistic strands. In

most cases, this large area is multi-cultural and multilingual, and many people living in the area know, in addition to their native language, some other languages spoken in the area.

The most important goal of the symposium is to gather information on the deictic systems and quantification in languages spoken in the area. Among these languages, the Indo-European languages are best known, but most of the languages spoken in the eastern part of this large area are poorly known even among linguists. The new research work would provide material for research work on the contacts among these languages and on the study of the universals of language. One of the goals of the symposium is understanding the areal distribution of deictic systems and quantification. For that reason, papers on the languages bordering on the area are also welcome in the symposium. When collecting new information about these languages, it also is possible to gather new information for cross-linguistic studies.

The elements of the deictic systems of language are located in several sub-systems of languages. The most typical elements belonging to the deictic systems can be found in the following groups:

- The pronominal systems: personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, adverbs and adjectives; anaphoric elements;
- The temporal systems: tense and the elements denoting temporal aspects;
- Social deixis: polite forms and expressions concerning different kinds of social relationships.

URL:

<http://www.ling.helsinki.fi/uhlcs/symposium-izhevsk/symposium-announcement.html>

E-mail [symposium-izhevsk@eva.mpg.de](mailto:symposium-izhevsk@eva.mpg.de)

Pirkko Suikonen

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Dept. of Linguistics  
 Inselstrasse 22, D-04103 Leipzig, Germany  
 Phone: +49-(0)341-9952 328, Fax: +49-(0)341-9952 119

### Conference on Indigenous Bilingual Education: Guatemala, July 25-27, 2001

The First Hemispheric Conference on Indigenous Bilingual Education will be held in Guatemala City, Guatemala, July 25-27, 2001. The Conference is intended to create a dialogue among policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers from countries throughout the Americas where multi-cultural and multilingual issues impact upon society and the education system. Its primary purpose is to promote a sustainable exchange of pedagogical experiences, methodologies, and policies that yield the

structures, programs, and materials needed to support effective bilingual and intercultural education in our hemisphere.

Sponsored by World Learning, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, the Conference will facilitate a sustainable exchange of ideas, information, and approaches relating to the development of bilingual and intercultural education throughout the Americas. Among the core areas of dialogue will be:

- The educational context of indigenous people of the hemisphere
- Pedagogical studies and innovative techniques in bilingual and
- intercultural education
- Community-based approaches to indigenous education
- Effective policies for supporting bilingual and intercultural education

The conference will include various programs designed to inaugurate regional collaboration and partnerships among individuals and organizations in North, Central, and South America. Additional highlights of the conference will be a meeting of the Indigenous Parliament of America and a marketplace offering indigenous and bilingual education materials and resources from each of the participating countries.

For additional information or to register for the conference, visit the website at:

[www.worldlearning.org](http://www.worldlearning.org)

To participate in the workshops as a presenter of innovative methods, materials, or policies, contact:

In the United States:

Naoko Kamioko, World Learning  
tel: +1-202/408-5420  
([feria@worldlearning.org](mailto:feria@worldlearning.org))

In Guatemala:

Jose' Angel Zapeta, World Learning/PAEBI  
tel: +1-502/366-2356 or 366-5451  
([feria@worldlearning.org](mailto:feria@worldlearning.org))

### Linguistic Perspectives on Endangered Languages: Univ. Helsinki, Aug 29 - Sept 1, 2001.

This symposium of The Linguistic Association of Finland will bring together linguists interested in questions relating to endangered languages. We invite papers addressing general linguistic questions as well as papers taking the viewpoint of one (or more) particular language(s). Themes include documentation of endangered languages, standardization of language corpora, and the possible effects of endangerment on the grammar of a

language. Other topics relating to language endangerment are also welcome.

#### Invited speakers:

- David Harrison (Univ. Pennsylvania), Nomads on the internet: documentation, endangered languages and technologies
- William McGregor (Aarhus Univ.), Structural changes in language shift/obsolescence: a Kimberley (Australia) perspective
- Marja-Liisa Olthuis (Sámi Assizes, Finland): The Inarisaami language as an endangered language
- Tapani Salminen (Univ. Helsinki), Linguists and language endangerment in north-western Siberia
- Stephen A. Wurm (Australian National Univ.), Languages of the world and language endangerment

#### Activities:

- lectures by invited speakers
- presentations by participants (20 min + 10 min for discussion)
- demonstrations by participants

#### Abstracts:

The deadline for submission of abstracts was 30 March, 2001. Accepted abstracts are published on the webpage of the symposium <<http://www.ling.helsinki.fi/sky/el.html>>

#### Registration deadline and fees:

For all participants this is June 21, 2001. Register by e-mail to the address above.

Registration fees:

- general: FIM 200
- members of the association: FIM 100
- undergraduate and MA students free

For participants coming from abroad we recommend payment in cash upon arrival. The organizers will provide a list of hotels later.

E-mail: <[el-organizers@ling.helsinki.fi](mailto:el-organizers@ling.helsinki.fi)>

URL:

<<http://www.ling.helsinki.fi/sky/el.html>>.

### Language and Society on the Threshold of a New Millennium: Moscow, 23-26 Oct. 2001

International conference organized by Research Center of Ethnic and Language Relations

of the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences, and Institute of Foreign Languages

The President of the Organizing Committee is Prof. Vida Mikhail'chenko. Topics will include:

- Social linguistics: theory, methods and basic notions
- Language situation and language politics throughout the world
- Language legislation: concepts, implementation and change
- Language contacts, bilingualism and code-switching

- Functioning of languages; functional classification of languages of the world

#### • Endangered languages

- Modern methods of sociolinguistics
- Language conflicts and their causes
- Language and culture
- Sociolinguistic prognostication
- Sociolinguistic aspect of education
- International languages: social requirements, teaching and functioning
- The sociolinguistic aspects of terminology

Working languages: Russian, English.

Contact Information:

Postal Address: 1/12 Bolshoy Kislovsky Lane, Moscow 103009, Russia

E-mail: [socioling@mail.ru](mailto:socioling@mail.ru)

Web page: <http://socioling.narod.ru>

Fax: +7-(095) 290-0528

Tel: +7-(095) 290-5268, 290-4611

Costs: Registration \$120; Hotel \$60-\$100 per n't

### Des langues collatérales - problèmes de la proximité linguistique: Amiens, 21-24 nov. 2001

#### Des objets spécifiques

Les variétés ou idiomes - « langues » dans un sens général - que nous visons ont été longtemps décrites (anciennement de façon consensuelle) comme « dialectes », « patois », mais non « langues ». Elles sont appréhendées aujourd'hui de façon non consensuelle : « dialectes » ou « langues ». Elles sont senties comme proches - « trop proches » - de la langue dominante ou standard (« toit »), à laquelle elles sont historiquement associées dans leur genèse même. Elles sont pour la plupart déclarées en déclin ou en danger - mais certaines depuis 2 siècles ! Ces images brouillées n'empêchent pas qu'elles sont porteuses d'attachements et de démarches d'identité culturelle, et objets de revendications « de langues » (linguification ?) au sens de la Charte européenne.

Ces objets suscitent une sorte d'embarras des politiques et des contradictions même chez les linguistes. Nous proposons de discuter des cas, en les comparant, et des concepts descriptifs, sous la désignation - à mettre à l'épreuve - de « langues collatérales ».

#### Derrière la terminologie

D'innombrables travaux sur les « dialectes » ont produit de nombreuses propositions de classification d'objets : langue/dialecte, langue nationale/langue régionale, di-, tri-, tétra-, poly-glossie, variétés H, M, B, colinguisme, badume-standard-norme, ...

Le point sur des questions théoriques précises

- comment objectiver-évaluer la distance-proximité (ressemblance-dissemblance) linguistique  
 - quelle est la part de la « parenté » historique dans la « proximité »  
 - quels sont les enjeux de l'érection des « parlars » en « langues »  
 - comment décrire le rôle des auto- et hétéroreprésentations dans le status de ces variétés, dans les pratiques et politiques linguistiques  
 - comment opère l'institutionnalisation dans le paysage linguistique, et quel est le rôle actuel de l'Union européenne dans l'institutionnalisation.

#### Des implications pratiques

- les promoteurs de ces langues ont-ils, doivent-ils avoir des revendications spécifiques ?  
 - quelles politiques sont appliquées à ces langues, au niveau national et européen ?  
 - quelle position d'expertise adoptent/doivent adopter les linguistes à leur égard ?  
 - quelle articulation entre les politiques concernant ces langues collatérales et les autres langues régionales et minoritaires ?  
 - quelle articulation entre la gestion politique de ces langues et l'ouverture au plurilinguisme ?  
 - quel avenir pour ces langues, articulé avec l'avenir des langues « toit » ?

#### Présidence du colloque

- Bernard CERQUIGLINI, Directeur de l'Institut National de la Langue Française, Vice-président du Conseil supérieur de la langue française
- Jean-Luc FAUCONNIER, Président du Conseil des Langues Régionales Endogènes de la Communauté française de Belgique

Organisation: Olivier ENGELAERE, Agence Régionale du Patrimoine, de la Langue et de la Culture de Picardie

#### Programme culturel

- visites : Cathédrale d'Amiens, Musée de Picardie  
 - conférences grand public : Henriette WALTER, Claude HAGEGE  
 - spectacle de variétés : Musiques d'aujourd'hui en wallon et en picard  
 - spectacle de théâtre en picard

#### Inscription - Communication

##### A adresser le plus tôt possible

- Auteur de la communication et institution, avec adresses postale et électronique  
 - Titre de la communication envisagée  
 - Langue(s) et pays concernés (éventuellement)  
 - dans quelle langue sera donnée la communication (voir ci-dessous : Choix de la langue de travail)

##### A adresser AVANT le 15 juin 2001

Le Résumé de votre projet de communication (200 mots maximum) devra être adressé, de préférence par courrier électronique, au

Comité scientifique, à l'adresse suivante : cep@u-picardie.fr

Le Comité scientifique indiquera vers la mi-juillet les communications retenues.

Choix de la langue de travail: entre allemand, anglais, espagnol, français, italien.

## 10. Publications of Interest

*Ogmios is very happy to have any items that appear in this section reviewed by readers. As per usual practice, the reviewer keeps the review copy. Please contact the editor if you are interested: naturally this depends whether the publishers are willing to send us a review copy. Titles marked with an asterisk (\*) have already been assigned to a reviewer.*

### Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective, edited by Joshua A. Fishman

\*  
 There is a review (by Ken Decker of SIL) at <<http://linguistlist.org/issues/12/12-927.html>>

Defenders of threatened languages all over the world, from advocates of biodiversity to dedicated defenders of their own cultural authenticity, are often humbled by the dimensity of the task that they are faced with when the weak and the few seek to find a safe-harbour against the ravages of the strong and the many. This book provides both practical case studies and theoretical directions from all five continents and advances thereby the collective pursuit of "reversing language shift" for the greater benefit of cultural democracy everywhere.

#### Contents

PREFACE: Reversing Language Shift; 1. Why is it so hard to save a threatened language? Joshua A. Fishman  
 THE AMERICAS: 2. Reversing Navajo Language Shift, Revisited Tiffany Lee (Stanford Univ) & Daniel McLaughlin (Dine College) 3. How Threatened is the Spanish of New York Puerto Ricans? Ofelia Garcia (Long Island Univ) Jose Luis Morin (City Univ of New York) & Klaudia Rivera (Long Island Univ); 4. A Decade in the Life of a Two-in-One Language - Yiddish in New York City Joshua A. Fishman; 5. Reversing Language Shift in Quebec Richard Y. Bourhis (Université du Québec à Montréal); 6. Otomi language shift and some recent efforts to reverse it Yolanda Lastra (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México); 7. Reversing Quechua language shift in South America Nancy H. Horner (Univ of Pennsylvania) & Kendall A. King (New York Univ).  
 EUROPE: 8. Irish Language Production and Reproduction 1981-1996 Pádraig Ó Riagáin (Institiuid Teangeolaíochta Éireann); 9. A Frisian Update of Reversing Language Shift

Durk Gorter (Fryske Academy); 10. Reversing Language Shift: The Case of Basque Maria-Jose Azurmendi (Univ of the Basque Country), Erramun Bachoc (Basque Cultural Institute), Francisca Zabeleta (Public University of Navarre); 11. Catalan A Decade Later Miquel Strubell (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya).

AFRICA AND ASIA: 12. Saving Threatened Languages in Africa: A Case Study of Oko Efurosibina Adegbiya (Univ of Ilorin, Nigeria); 13. Andamanese: Biological Challenge for Language Reversal E. Annamalai & V. Gnanasundaram (C.I.I.L, Mysore); 14. "Akor Itak" Our Language, Your Language - Ainu in Japan John C. Maher (International Christian Univ, Tokyo); 15. Hebrew After a Century of RLS Efforts Bernard Spolsky (Bar-Illan Univ) & Elana Shohamy (Tel Aviv Univ).

THE PACIFIC: 16. Can the Shift from Immigrant Languages be Reversed in Australia? Michael Clyne (Monash Univ); 17. Is the Extinction of Australia's Indigenous Languages Inevitable? Joseph Lo Bianco & Mari Rhydwen (National Language and Literacy Institute of Australia); 18: RLS in Aotearoa/New Zealand 1989-1999 Richard & Nena Benton (Waikato University). CONCLUSIONS: 19: From Theory to Practice (and Vice Versa): Review, Reconsideration and Reiteration Joshua A. Fishman

#### EDITOR INFORMATION

Joshua A. Fishman, a leading sociolinguist, is Distinguished University Research Professor, Social Sciences, Emeritus, at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Yeshiva University, and Visiting Professor at Stanford University, New York University, City University of New York Graduate Center and Long Island University. He is the author/editor of 38 books including Reversing Language Shift (Multilingual Matters, 1991) and the General Editor (and founder) of the International Journal of the Sociology of Language and of the book series Contributions to the Sociology of Language.

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 £24.95/ US\$39.95/ CAN\$49.95

### The Other Languages of Europe: Demographic, Sociolinguistic and Educational Perspectives, edited by Guus Extra and Durk Gorter

The book offers demographic, sociolinguistic, and educational perspectives on the status of both regional and immigrant languages in Europe and in a wider international context. From a cross-national point of view, empirical evidence on the status of these other languages of multicultural Europe is brought together in a combined frame of reference.

**Contents**

Preface R. Stephan; Comparative perspectives on regional and immigrant languages in multicultural Europe G. Extra & D. Gorter. Part I Regional Language in Europe 1. Basque in Spain and France J. Cenoz; 2. Welsh in Great Britain C. Williams; 3. Gaelic in Scotland B. Robertson; 4. Frisian in the Netherlands D. Gorter, A. Riermersma & J. Ytsma; 5. Slovenian in Carinthia B. Busch; 6. Swedish in Finland A-L stern; 7. National Minority Languages in Sweden L. Huss. Part II Immigrant Languages in Europe 8. Immigrant Languages in Sweden S. Boyd; 9. Immigrant Languages in federal Germany I. Gogolin & H. Reich; 10. Immigrant languages in the Netherlands T. van der Avoird, P. Broeder & G. Extra; 11. Community Languages in Great Britain V. Edwards; 12. Maghrebine Arabic in France D. Caubet; 13. Moroccan children and Arabic in Spanish schools B. Lopez Garcia & L. Mijares Molina; 14. Romani in Europe P. Bakker. Part III Outlook from Abroad 15. Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Canada J. Edwards; 16. Minority languages in the United States, with a focus on Spanish in California R. Macias; 17. Majority and Minority Languages in South Africa N. Alexander; 18. Immigration and Language Policy in Australia U. Ozolins & M. Clyne; 19. Linguistic Minorities in India A. Choudhry; 20. Languages in Turkey K. Yamur; 21. Berber and Arabic in Morocco J. Saib Appendixes

**EDITOR INFORMATION**

Durk Gorter is head of the Department of Social Sciences at the Fryske Akademy in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden (the Netherlands) and professor of Frisian sociolinguistics of the University of Amsterdam. Guus Extra is director of Babylon, Center for Studies of Multilingualism in the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University (the Netherlands) and professor of language and minorities at the same university.

Multilingual Matters No. 118 (MM118)  
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156mm 360 pp  
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US\$28.95/ CAN\$34.95

**Mercator Media Forum no. 4**

This is the annual journal of Mercator, dedicated to minority-language media, edited by George Jones <zyw@aber.ac.uk>. This issue has a particular emphasis on the languages of minorities within the Spanish state. Another, more deliberate, common theme is the role of media in expressing, and indeed bringing to consciousness and sustaining, the identity of a minority language community. As it turns out, it also provides a variety of interesting food for thought in the run-up to this year's FEL conference on Endangered Languages and the Media.

**Contents**

(titles in the languages of the articles):

- Editorial - George Jones;
- Minority Language Media in a Global Age - Mike Cormack;
- Politics, Language and Identity in the Basque Media - J. Amezaga, E. Arana, J.I. Basterretxea, A. Iturriotz;
- Die Printmedien in den Autonomen Gemeinschaften mit eigener Sprache Spaniens - Auf dem Weg der Normalisierung - Sascha Leisen;
- Broadcasting in the Basque Country: Problems and Limits of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in a Social and Political Context of National Construction - Patxi Azpillaga;
- La Lengua Gallega en la Prensa Infantil y Escolar en Galicia - Xosé A. Neira Cruz;
- La televisión regional y local en Europa: Posibilidades para la diversidad? - Jaume Risquete;
- Les informations télévisés en langue bretonne: Réflexions et expérience d'une journaliste bilingue - Muriel Le Mor Van.

If not in English, items have brief abstracts in English. The editor has also included his own review (in English) of a book that centres on the advent of Slovenian broadcasting in Austria:

- Der virtuelle Dorfplatz: Minderheitsmedien, Globalisierung und Kulturelle Identität - Brigitte Busch.

E-mail for orders, enquiries:  
mercator@aber.ac.uk  
Web-site: <http://www.wales.ac.uk/press>

**Grammar and dictionary of Crimean Tatar (in Russian)**

*Dr Vadim Mireyev* <alashuly@chat.ru> writes:

I am glad to inform you that a manual of Crimean Tatar language for Russian-speaking beginners (40 lessons, two volumes) and Russian-Crimean Tatar Dictionary are available for mailing to any country at very moderate price. I am a co-author of these books and will be pleased to answer your questions by email.  
P.O.Box 1232, Simferopol, 95050, Crimea, UKRAINE

**11. Valedictory****Lino de la Rosa**

*Dennis Holt* <dionisio77@yahoo.com> sent us this:

Yes, I am the one you were looking for,  
the only one who truly speaks the language  
of our people,  
that once so many more had as their daily  
tongue.

That young show-off Isidro  
acts like he knows how to speak,  
but all he ever says  
are those trite little phrases  
he picked up from his uncle.  
His uncle did speak the language quite well,  
and in fact was the one who told Juan Alden  
Mason  
everything he came to know about our  
tongue  
when he came here to visit so many years  
ago,  
as you have now done.

I remember Juan Alden Mason very well:  
He used to take that little table he had  
brought  
and set it up  
way up there  
in different places on the canyonside  
and draw maps and pictures of our canyon.  
He came a number of times  
when I was still in my teens  
and then he didn't come anymore.  
It is true that I have no one to talk with  
anymore,  
but there still are many for me to talk to.  
Do you remember  
when I was called away from my little candy-  
stand

to visit that gentleman's sister?  
Then I was able to again use my language  
as few men ever knew how it was done.

Perhaps some day  
I will tell you of some of that too,  
and show you more  
than merely those two special feathers  
that I ran down over you,  
shoulders to hips,  
and then let you hold,  
that night when we met in my kitchen.  
If you come back again,  
perhaps I will tell you of some of those  
things.

As my wife told you once,  
it takes at least three visits  
for someone to see what is happening here.  
When I am gone,  
there will be no one else  
who will speak the language of our people,  
no one who can name the birds and the trees.

*Dennis comments:* Lino de la Rosa was the last speaker of Tepecano, a divergent dialect of the Uto-Aztecan language Southern Tepehuán. I found him in Atzqueltlán, Jalisco, Mexico -- the traditional home of the Tepecano people -- first in 1965, while I was still an undergraduate at Berkeley, and then again when I returned to visit with him and gather data about his language in 1979-80.

He was born in 1895, so it is unlikely that he or the language/dialect are still alive. But I have received no actual report about his having passed on.

# Foundation for Endangered Languages

## Manifesto

### 1. Preamble

#### 1.1. The Present Situation

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

The most authoritative source on the languages of the world (Ethnologue, Grimes 1996) lists just over 6,500 living languages. Population figures are available for just over 6,000 of them (or 92%). Of these 6,000, it may be noted that:

- 52% are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people;
- 28% by fewer than 1,000; and
- 83% are restricted to single countries, and so are particularly exposed to the policies of a single government.

At the other end of the scale, 10 major languages, each spoken by over 109 million people, are the mother tongues of almost half (49%) of the world's population.

More important than this snapshot of proportions and populations is the outlook for survival of the languages we have. Hard comparable data here are scarce or absent, often because of the sheer variety of the human condition: a small community, isolated or bilingual, may continue for centuries to speak a unique language, while in another place a populous language may for social or political reasons die out in little more than a generation. Another reason is that the period in which records have been kept is too short to document a trend: e.g. the Ethnologue has been issued only since 1951. However, it is difficult to imagine many communities sustaining serious daily use of a language for even a generation with fewer than 100 speakers: yet at least 10% of the world's living languages are now in this position.

Some of the forces which make for language loss are clear: the impacts of urbanization, Westernization and global communications grow daily, all serving to diminish the self-sufficiency and self-confidence of small and traditional communities. Discriminatory policies, and population movements also take their toll of languages.

In our era, the preponderance of tiny language communities means that the majority of the world's languages are vulnerable not just to decline but to extinction.

#### 1.2. The Likely Prospect

There is agreement among linguists who have considered the situation that over half of the world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation. We and our children, then, are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out.

This mass extinction of languages may not appear immediately life-threatening. Some will feel that a reduction in numbers of languages will ease communication, and perhaps help build nations, even global solidarity. But it has been well pointed out that the success of humanity in colonizing the planet has been due to our ability to develop cultures suited for survival in a variety of environments. These cultures have everywhere been transmitted by languages, in oral traditions and latterly in written literatures. So when language transmission itself breaks down, especially before the advent of literacy in a culture, there is always a large loss of inherited knowledge.

Valued or not, that knowledge is lost, and humanity is the poorer. Along with it may go a large part of the pride and self-identity of the community of former speakers.

And there is another kind of loss, of a different type of knowledge. As each language dies, science, in linguistics, anthropology, prehistory and psychology, loses one more precious source of data, one more of the

diverse and unique ways that the human mind can express itself through a language's structure and vocabulary.

We cannot now assess the full effect of the massive simplification of the world's linguistic diversity now occurring. But language loss, when it occurs, is sheer loss, irreversible and not in itself creative. Speakers of an endangered language may well resist the extinction of their traditions, and of their linguistic identity. They have every right to do so. And we, as scientists, or concerned human beings, will applaud them in trying to preserve part of the diversity which is one of our greatest strengths and treasures.

### 1.3. The Need for an Organization

We cannot stem the global forces which are at the root of language decline and loss.

But we can work to lessen the ignorance which sees language loss as inevitable when it is not, and does not properly value all that will go when a language itself vanishes.

We can work to see technological developments, such as computing and telecommunications, used to support small communities and their traditions rather than to supplant them.

And we can work to lessen the damage:

- by recording as much as possible of the languages of communities which seem to be in terminal decline;
- by emphasizing particular benefits of the diversity still remaining; and
- by promoting literacy and language maintenance programmes, to increase the strength and morale of the users of languages in danger.

In order to further these aims, there is a need for an autonomous international organization which is not constrained or influenced by matters of race, politics, gender or religion. This organization will recognise in language issues the principles of self-determination, and group and individual rights. It will pay due regard to economic, social, cultural, community and humanitarian considerations. Although it may work with any international, regional or local Authority, it will retain its independence throughout. Membership will be open to those in all walks of life.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

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

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

