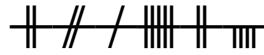


OGMIOS



A couple of stories feature this device, the increasingly famous Phraselator. See more on its use with American Indigenous languages on pages 10 and 11.

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The Alternative Eurovision Song Contest is being held in Östersund, Swedish Sámiland, on 14 October 2006. See page 13 for details



Editorial

First of all, apologies for the late distribution of the recent issues of *Ogmios*. Your new editor has been learning the finer points of the technology of editing, and hopefully the production process is being speeded up for this and future issues. I'm grateful for all the help I've received from our active assistant editors – more power to their elbows!

Because our Foundation is a charity, and not a commercial organisation, we have not been in a position to commission articles for *Ogmios* for payment, and so instead of providing original articles, the editor and assistant editors have been drawing on freely available sources of information about endangered languages from other media – in addition to keeping you up to date with news about the development of the Foundation itself, of course. But in the future we aim to bring you original articles by both members and non-members. Let me encourage you to put pen to paper or paw to keyboard and share with us your own challenges, frustrations and experiences of life in the wonderful world of Endangered Languages. You'll be made welcome. Pictures, too, are welcome, in any form in which you care to send them.

2. Development of the Foundation

FEL X- Vital Voices

The Foundation for Endangered Languages: Tenth Conference; in association with the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, India. 25-27 October 2006. Endangered language & Multilingualism

The Foundation for Endangered Languages, in association with the Central Institute of Indian Languages, will hold its annual 2006 conference in India, a country that claims to be the home of more than a thousand languages and dialects. Although many of these languages enjoy political and economic patronage, and may even be thriving, many others with small number of speakers appear to be struggling for their survival. These strugglers include languages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where communities are not only tiny, but also some of the most anciently independent tribes on the planet.

Like the earth's species, all our languages have inherent vitality and viability to survive and develop and respond to the needs of their communities. Even those put on the list of 'vanishing voices' are vital to the maintenance of the linguistic equilibrium. But our society, oriented to respect capital, generally rejects or

ignores the potential viability of languages, if they seem to lack a critical mass of speakers. Yet the definition of 'critical' here depends crucially on the policy preconceptions of planners. In a multilingual country like India, where languages with many millions of speakers are common, a language community with less than 10,000 speakers may be considered too small to attract any funding support. On the other hand in Papua New Guinea, where all the languages have less than 10,000 speakers, it may be the languages with less than 100 speakers which are disregarded.

What is at stake here is the future of these naturally existing small language communities, which represent 'vital' though 'vanishing voices'. These languages are vital to our understanding of the nature and complexity of human thought processes encoded through the human language and the human brain. We need to recognise that most of the world's language heterogeneity (96% of it) is under the stewardship of a very small number of people (4% of the world's population). And in fact, it is these vital voices to whose historical, cultural and ecological knowledge we may yet belatedly turn, to enrich our own ways of life, our medicine and our understanding of the world. Imagine the loss if Sanskrit had died before transmitting the vital knowledge of the concept of 'zero' to the world, let alone the unmatched intricacy and rigour of Paninian grammar.

A crucial question we shall address at this conference is how ill-conceived and short-sighted language planning policies may ultimately contribute to environmental imbalance and instability, dangers that are often very little understood. When the effort is made to 'revitalize' languages, such as Lakota and Mohawk in the North America, Hawai'ian and Maori in the Pacific, Jaqaru and Mapudungun in South America, it does not mean that these languages lacked vitality. It simply means that their vitality potential has been given legitimate succour and support to develop and meet the new demands on them, including the demands of bi/multilingualism caused by globalization, urbanization and language contact.

'Vital Voices' refers to the growing awareness that the survival and development of endangered languages are necessary for humanity's future, even if they may not look viable against statistics produced by policies guided by globalized economy.

Some Issues for the Conference

Many issues are implicit here, and we hope to discuss them in terms of actual language situations presented by our participants.

- Are minority languages threatened, or strengthened, through bilingualism or multilingualism with other languages?

- Does a language's vitality benefit if it is not closely related, or structurally similar, to its neighbours?
- Can languages differ, and do they, in their degree of vitality potential?
- Is 'documentation' sufficient, or even useful, as a response to the needs of vital but vanishing voices?
- Is a core of fluent speakers essential for the survival of a statistically small language group?
- Is bilingual language planning important for families based on cross-cultural/linguistic marriages?
- How significant are 'social networks' for insulating the 'vital voices' from the forces of globalization and dominant languages without closing the door on bi/multilingualism?
- Is recognition by language planners essential for a 'small' language/dialect to develop its vitality?
- Are there factors beside the prospect of competitive economic benefits that can encourage a community (and indeed the language planners)?
- Does the context of a consciously multilingual society make it easier or harder to support the smallest languages?
- Are there ways that modern - often cheap - technology can benefit the use and prospects of the smallest languages?
- Is code-switching as common in small minority communities and tribes as in the elites? What factors trigger code-switching? Is it damaging or positive for the survival of less widely used languages?
- Can bilingual or multilingual education find a place for the smallest languages? Is western-style formal education compatible with traditional language use? Are there other models for transmission?
- Does multilingual competence allow the value of minority-language cultures to be more widely appreciated?
- Are the prospects of minority languages affected by the metropolitan languages through which they may be known to a wider world?
- Is language survival helped or hindered by a flexible policy on language identification?

The Conference Venue

The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, (CIIL) was set up by the Government of India in July 1969. It is a large institute with seven regional centers spread all over India, and is engaged in research and training in Indian languages other than English and Hindi. It helps to evolve and implement India's language policy and coordinate the development of Indian languages. Mysore is a city in the Southern Indian state of Karnataka. The former capital of the princely state of Mysore, ruled by the Wodeyar dynasty since the 14th century, it is now the administrative seat of Mysore District, the second largest in Karnataka, 135 km from Bangalore, the state capital. The city is known for its palaces and many other attractions. One of these is the

Brindavan Gardens laid out beside the Krishnarajasagar dam (19km), particularly beautiful at night. There are also the Royal Palace, the Chamundi Hills, Srirangapatnam Temple, Ranganthittu Bird Sanctuary, Oriental Research Institute, and Museums of Folklore, and of Art and Archeology. The conference dates (25-27 October) will allow participants, if they wish, to witness Diwali (the festival of lights) on 23 October before coming to Mysore.

Transport

Inter-city: Mysore has inter-city and sub-urban public bus transportation. The system operates from the 'City Bus Stand' connecting to most major sections of the city. Traditional means of transport available in other Indian cities like auto-rickshaws and taxis are also available. Tongas (horse drawn carriages) are rare nowadays.

Rail: Mysore is the railway junction for the district, and rail lines connect Mysore city to Bangalore to the northeast via Mandya, and to the rail junction at Hassan to the northwest, to Chamarajanagar via Nanjangud to the south east.

Air: The nearest accessible airport is at Bangalore.

past five years at a time when the number of pupils is rising after many years of decline: 92,301 children began Grade One in 2006, compared to 90,576 last year. Official figures from the Ministry of Education reveal that only 20.5% of students receive instruction in the Belarusian language. To protest against this situation, the new Russian version of the history of Belarus for Grade 10 students was symbolically destroyed in Minsk's Yakub Kolas Square by young protesters on September 1.

The same lamentable situation is reflected in the circulation of books, magazines, and newspapers. In 1999, 63.3% of books were published in Belarusian; by 2003 the figure was 48.4%. Only 10.5% of all single-circulation newspapers appear in the native language, and, from the perspective of Belarusian speakers, the situation deteriorates each year.

Language has long been seen as a political issue by the Lukashenka regime, which now appears ready to delve into the complex area of orthography. A new edition of the *Regulations on Belarusian Orthography and Punctuation* is in preparation. It is supported by Alexander A. Lukashanets, director of the Yakub Kolas Institute of Linguistics, who maintains that new rules are needed to reflect changes that have occurred over the past 50 years and to bring Belarusian orthography closer to the main principles of the language. Critics are in no doubt that this is a new move introduced by the regime to curtail further the use of the native language in Belarus.

At the core of the problem is the *Belaruskaya hramatyka* authored by Branislau Taraskievich in the late 1920s, which sought to systematize Belarusian orthography. The Belarusian Popular Front, for example, has always adhered to the Taraskievich orthography. Lukashanets argues that it is impossible to return to it as the "living language constantly changes and develops." In 1933, the Stalin regime began its repression of Belarusian intellectuals and introduced an academic, but Sovietized, version. The new rules were systematized in 1957 and a new publication, *Rules of Belarusian Orthography and Punctuation*, appeared in 1959. In January 1990 Belarusian was adopted as the state language of the republic, but progress was curtailed abruptly by the Lukashenka regime, which advanced Russian to the status of second state language through a referendum of May 1995, with 83.1% support among voters.

The latest draft on orthography appears to be the priority of the Ministry of Education, which is being advised by Viktor Ivchankau. There has been no public discussion of the amended version and the new rules have never been published. The head of the Belarusian Language Society, Aleh Trusau, for example, has not seen the new draft. Linguist Zmitser Sauka commented that the decision is absolutely unique, because

previous reforms did not interfere with punctuation. In his view, the changes are political and they are being rushed through. Earlier discussion among linguists, led by former director of the Kolas Institute Alexander Padluzhny, had not reached a satisfactory conclusion. Ivchankau did not participate in this discussion, yet the new draft is being presented as part of the "Padluzhny Project."

Sauka notes that the more changes are introduced to language rules, the less such rules are used by the people, and the lower the number of students who will select Belarusian for their language examinations. Much of the Belarusian population speaks the mixed language --trasyanka-- of Belarusian, Russian, and words derived from Polish and Ukrainian. Without publication of the draft version it is impossible to discern precisely the import of the proposed changes. But Lukashenka has consistently elevated the Russian language, derided those who advocate linguistic purity as encapsulated in the Taraskievich Orthography, and embraced the changes to the orthography introduced in the Soviet period.

Thus the new draft appears to be the latest stage in the regime's assault on Belarusian language and culture, an integral part of nation building for any newly independent state. It highlights the irony of one of the new textbooks issued to first-year pupils on September 1: the third edition of *Belarus: Our Motherland: A Gift from the President of the Republic of Belarus*. According to the text, the word "president" must always be capitalized.

(*Belarusy i rynok*, September 4; *Narodnaya volya*, September 2; *Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik* 2004 [Minsk, 2004], p. 215; *Nationalities Papers*, December 1999)

How the Irish Invented Slang: The Bunkum of Bunkum (for Dizzy Gillespie)

By Daniel Cassidy

BUNKUM, *al.* **bunk**: Empty oratory; humbug, nonsense, tall tales. (OED)

Buanchumadh, (*pron.* buan'cumah), perpetual invention, endless composition (of a story, poem, or song), a long made-up story, *fig.* a shaggy dog tale.

Buan-, *prefix*, long-lasting, enduring, perpetual, endless.

Cumadh (*pron.* cumah), *Vn.*, (act of) contriving, composing, inventing, making-up; a made-up story.

3. Endangered Languages in the News

Changes proposed to Belarusian language

By David Marples
Monday, September 11, 2006

The newspaper *Belarusy i rynok* recently ran a series of articles on education, devoted first to the new school year, but second to proposed changes to orthography and punctuation in the Belarusian language. These new rules are anticipated to move from draft to law in short order, with little discussion among the public or among specialists in the Belarusian language.

The new school year began with a fanfare. President Alexander Lukashenka opened Palesky University in Pinsk and announced the future Belarusian State University of Information and Electronics -- a research and education complex that he maintained would be a Belarusian version of Harvard University. Meanwhile Belarusian students received instruction in their first lesson: "I live in Belarus and I am proud of it!" A new methodological concept elaborated by the Ministry of Education focuses on important monuments of Belarusian culture such as the Belaya Vezha forest, the medieval city of Polatsk, and the palace at Nesvizh, the ancestral home of the Radziwill family.

Under this façade of progress lies a stark picture: the closure of 580 schools over the

Nil ann ach **cumadh**, it is just a **made-up story**. (Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla, Irish-English Dictionary*, 353)

If it were a very long made-up story, one would say in Irish: nil ann ach buanchumadh, it is just a "long, endless tale." A similar Irish compound, buanchuimhneach, means "(someone) having a long memory."

The Irish and Scots-Gaelic word bunkum (buanchumadh) is derived by all Anglo-American dictionaries from a shaggy-dog tale. As the story goes, during the 16th American Congress, a long-winded congressman from Buncombe County, North Carolina, spoke endlessly on a particular bill, while other members impatiently waited to vote. From then on, as the etymological bunkum goes, to talk "bunkum" meant to speak as endlessly as that long-forgotten politician from Buncombe County. (See: Bartlett, *American Dictionary*.)

Ironically the old congressman from Buncombe County may have been speaking Gaelic **buanchumadh** (*pron.* buan'cumah, a long made-up story) after all. North Carolina had an historic Scots-Gaelic and Irish-speaking population up until the beginning of the 20th century. The jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie's family were African-American Gaelic speakers from North Carolina and Alabama. So Buncombe County may have been the origin of bunkum as **buanchumadh**, (*pron.* buan-cumah, "a shaggy dog tale") after all.

"Under an enormous image of (Dizzy) Gillespie beamed on to a wall at Sprague (Hall), Yale music professor Willie Ruff salutes his old friend and explains to the audience how this musical journey began. "Dizzy used to tell me tales of how the blacks near his home in Alabama and in the Carolinas had once spoken exclusively in Scots Gaelic. He spoke of his love for Scotland....." (*The Scotsman* newspaper, Sept. 25, 2005.

<http://living.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=1984012005>

African-American Scots-Gaelic and Irish speakers were not limited to the American South. The Irish and Gaelic languages are hidden strands of both African- and Irish-American Vernacular. Ya' **tuig** (*pron.* dig, understand, comprehend)? **Tuig é nó ná**, (*pron.* dig ay no naa, understand it or not), according to both enumerations of the 1870 U.S. Federal census, 12% of the African-American community in New York City was **Irish-African-American**.

Despite all the academic "whiteness" **bunkum** today, at the dawning of the Gilded Age, in just a single New York City ward, there were hundreds of Irish-African-American families crammed together in the tenements and rookeries of Laurens (W. Broadway), Thompson, Sullivan, and Spring streets, in what is the **swank** (**somhaoinéach**, *pron.* su'wainek, wealthy) neighborhood of Soho in 2006.

In America the word **bunkum** has been slowly replaced by the abbreviated "**bunk**." But in modern Ireland, the word **bunkum** is still popular, as demonstrated by the headline of this recent column by the Irish journalist Jude Collins in the *Daily Ireland* newspaper.

Enough 'one-side-is-as- bad-as-the-other' **bunkum** by Jude Collins

(*Daily Ireland*, 11/05/2006, front page.)

"Pearl (stiffly): De old **Irish bunk**, huh?" (O'Neill, *The Iceman Cometh*, 636)

"Yank: You're de **bunk**. Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, dat's what." (O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*, 636)

"Belle (angrily): Aw, can it! Give us a rest from that **bunk!**" (O'Neill, *Ah Wilderness*, 73)

Let's hope we can put to rest the bunk about bunkum. Though shaggy-dog tales (like academic bunkum) have more lives than a cat.

Daniel Cassidy is founder and co-director of An Léann Éireannach, the Irish Studies Program, at New College of California in San

Francisco. Cassidy is an award-winning filmmaker and musician. His research on the Irish language influence on American vernacular and slang has been published in the *New York Observer* ("Decoding the Gangs of New York"), Ireland's *Hot Press* magazine, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Lá*, the Irish-language newspaper.

His book, *The Secret Language of the Crossroad: How the Irish Invented Slang*, will be published by CounterPunch Books in Spring 2007. Cassidy was born in Brooklyn and lives with his wife Clare in San Francisco. He can be reached at DanCas1.at.aol.com

Jazz is an Irish invention

From: Jonathan Dembling (*dembling at anthro.umass.edu*)

The connection between Scottish Gaelic and African American line singing isn't as direct as the articles suggest. It was once a common practice throughout the English-speaking and Gaelic-speaking Protestant world (perhaps Welsh-speaking too?), but only survives in these marginal communities. The only area where there was a Gaelic-speaking community in the US strong enough to impact outsiders would have been in the Cape Fear Valley region of North Carolina. That's where Dizzy Gillespie's family was from - apparently some of his grandparents spoke Gaelic. Gaelic was spoken in both the black and white churches there into the 20th century (and lasted longer in the former).

Here are some relevant links to stories and audio clips:

Interview with Gaelic scholar Michael Newton, talking about the interaction between Gaels and African-Americans in North Carolina:

http://www.ibiblio.org/wunc_archives/sot/index.php?p=436

Commentary on Newton's research:

<http://greenespace.blogspot.com/2005/11/afro-celts-and-other-cultural-cross.html>

Juan Williams NPR piece on a gathering of line singers from the US and Scotland:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4632964>

Gaelic line singing audio clips:

<http://www.gaelicpsalmsinging.com/audio/>

Pieces on Willie Ruff's research into the Gospel-Gaelic connection:

<http://www.gms.org.uk/news/04/49.php>

<http://www.alternatemusicpress.com/features/gospel.html>

<http://www.sundayherald.com/48330>

Cum fionnar, a chait

(stay cool, cats),

Jonathan

<http://www.science-spirit.org/articles/>

Australia leads in extinct languages

July 13, 2006 (This article from AAP)

Australia has more extinct languages than any other country in the world, a new report has found.

The Worldwatch Institute's latest Vital Signs publication focuses on the threat posed to the globe's languages, particularly those spoken by indigenous populations.

So far, Australia has lost 188 languages, and Worldwatch warns that within decades the demise of Aboriginal languages will rapidly escalate. "It is estimated that 90 per cent of the languages spoken by Australia's Aboriginal peoples will perish within the current generation," it said.

Worldwatch, which canvasses trends in everything from oil consumption to population growth, said Australia led the world in terms of lost languages. The 188 gone from Australia compares to 70 in the United States and about 30 in Brazil.

Globally over the past 10,000 years, the number of spoken languages has shrunk from more than 12,000 to just under 7,000.

Mandarin Chinese is the world's most spoken language, with almost one billion people using it as their first language. Spanish and English are spoken as a first language by more than 300 million each, although English is by far the most common second language. Worldwatch said the number of English speakers in China is growing at around 20 million a year.

Worldwatch found the death of languages is often due to bans on religious grounds, infectious diseases, wars and cultural assimilation. In other cases, economics can drive a language out of use.

"When a community finds that its ability to survive and advance economically is improved by the use of another language, for example, people there stop using their native tongue or teaching it to their children," it found.

Carrier language class kicks off

By Chris Shepherd

13 September 2006

<http://www.caledoniacourier.com/portals-code/list.cgi?paper=11&cat=59&id=725804&more=>

Using the language students of a new Carrier language program want to master, Nak'azdli elder Catherine Coldwell blessed the first day of classes.

"The prayer was to open [the students's] minds and let the spirit into their hearts so they can learn," explained Catherine Coldwell, who's been informally teaching the language for years.

Coldwell is one of the key instructors in UNBC's new three-year program to train First Nations so they in turn can teach the Carrier language and culture in the classroom.

For students and teachers alike, the new program, fulfils a long-term dream.

Francis Prince is one of the 27 students who'll be studying in the classroom at Kwah Hall. He's taught children before, but he drew on his skills in making drums and singing and admits he didn't know enough to teach more than that.

He's excited about becoming a better teacher, but also because the program will keep Carrier culture alive.

Nak'azdli Chief Leonard Thomas agrees. Thomas says the residential schools, where thousands of First Nations were sent by the federal government, damaged their culture and heritage.

"I think something like this will help pick up the pieces."

That will happen because after three years, the students will be certified to teach Carrier culture and language in B.C. schools.

They'll also be able to continue on and earn a full teaching degree if they want.

Learning Carrier will also connect the younger and older generations, Coldwell says.

"There's so much we want to tell [the youth.] They can't grasp it in English or another language."

4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

From The Times of Tibet -
<http://www.timesoftibet.com>

Why Bhoti language should be included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution

Stanzin Dawa

The right of language is a basic cultural right of the people and linked with their economy, culture, social system and political right. UNESCO recognizes the concept of language equality among all languages, irrespective of whether they have a script or not. Irrespective of their power and specific ranking in the world systems of states (Laponce 1987; De Swaan 1993,2001), the language best able to survive the competition are likely to be those that have the support of a government. Unfortunately the Bhoti language has no official support as it is not included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. A nation marked by acute socio-cultural and linguistic diversity must lay down structures and processes that safeguard its unity and integrity. Do we have adequate processes and structures? Keeping people out, denying them the basic human rights because of their region and language is unjustifiable and inhumane. Insisting that they adopt the dominant language and culture is an equally unjust way of denying it. Non inclusion of Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the Australian Aborigines whose children were forcibly taken away by the state, brought up in missionary orphanages and never returned to their families so that they lost all identity are two extreme examples of enforced uniformity and compulsory assimilation.

The Constitution of India is not rigid and it has no fixed number of languages to be included in the 8th Schedule. Many languages have been included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution after India's independence. Many languages were found neither numerically stronger nor more grammatically richer than Bhoti. Assamese, Sindhi, Nepali, Konkani, Manipuri, Kashmiri, Sanskrit (1991 census) have lesser population than Bhoti speaking population but Bhoti has unfortunately not been included in the 8th Schedule. Again, BUT WHY? Bhoti is a language of the masses, language of the people who have struggled for centuries, language of the Himalayans that blessed and bestowed the world with wisdom and prosperity, language of the saints and poets, language of the hills and valleys which treasured the beauties of the nature, language which unites people by heart and mind, language of peace and compassion. Today this language is struggling for its identity in a

country which is being considered to be the world's largest democracy and proclaims the "Unity in Diversity" its backbone.

After India's independence the destiny of the people living in the Himalaya was decided by the people who were mostly alien and ignorant about the realities and condition of the Himalaya. Time and again plains friendly developmental policies and programmes were imported and imposed in the Himalaya, such policies and programmes have broken down the indigenous system of economy, culture, ecology, employment and languages. The inappropriate and irrelevant intervention have not only made them confused and frustrated but also developed an inferiority complex to their own culture, identity and language. They have been displaced from their own lands and villages. Family values and cooperative social system has broken down. Narrow outlook and prejudiced attitude of the outsider policy makers coupled with difficult accessibility have resulted in consistent marginalization of the region by the Governments, Media and Donor agencies. Not including Bhoti language in the 8th schedule of the constitution is a clear evidence of Government's discrimination against 3 million people of the Himalaya, who live day and night with this language. For them it is not a mere language but a way of life that propel progresses in harmony with the nature. Non inclusion of the Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule is a fountain-head of alienation, violence, social discord, intellectual dependency and cultural degradation. Today the Indian Constitution has recognized 22 languages in the 8th Schedule; the recognition of the language in the 8th schedule seems to be completely arbitrary and political.

Today, unfortunately, Bhoti language has been ignored and marginalized by the mainstream politics. The framers of the Indian constitution have not included this language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian constitution. Bhoti is speaking in the Himalayan region of India from Ladakh to Tawang spreading through Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, West Bengal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The glory and grace of this language is not only confining to the Himalayan region of India but also in Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia and Pakistan. This language is a symbol of "Unity in Diversity". People from different religions, regions, cultures and countries are using this language. The Bhoti script was developed by Thomi Sambhota in the 7th century by modifying the four vowels and thirty consonants of the Devnagri script and grammar which was derived from the Sanskrit. It has a rich literature in different fields; such as Medicine, Architecture, Astrology, Music, Arts, Dance, Drama, Yoga, Philosophy, Tantric and Grammar. The collection of Buddha's teachings "Tripitaka" that comprises of 108 volumes and Tantras is also available in the Bhoti language. How many languages in the eighth schedule have

such a rich literary work? In fact very few of them have such enriching literature.

Five states including Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh have recognized the Bhoti language. Different schools, colleges and universities throughout the world are imparting education in and education for this language. All India Radio Leh, Shimla, Gangtok, Karshang Darjeeling, Tawang and Delhi broadcast their news in the Bhoti language. More than ten newspapers and magazines are available in the Bhoti language and nearly 7000 monasteries of the Himalayan region follow this language in their practices and operations. Oh my dear Government of India and the representatives of the people, please may we know what more evidences are you looking for? Why are you treating us as an aliens and foreigners in our land and country? What are your interest for not giving due recognition to our language? Are we not Indians? Do we not have the right to protect our own language? Will you accommodate our language in the 8th Schedule of the constitution? Will you allow the winds of the Constitution to blow in the hills and valleys of Himalaya to imbibe the music and nectar of our language and culture based on cooperation and peace? In the eyes of civil and criminal law of the land (with the exception of personal laws) all citizens are equal. I don't think all are equal in the real sense; non inclusion of Bhoti language is another form of punishment without being committed any crime for the whole community. The Article 29 of the Indian Constitution deals with the "Protection of interests of minorities" It states that "Any section of the Citizens residing in the territory of India or any part there of having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same." I think not giving due recognition to the Bhoti language is a violation of the minority rights; there fore it has killed the spirit of the Article 29 of the Constitution. Being minority and different seems to be a crime and insecure because you get deprived from certain fundamental rights which is constitutionally mentioned.

In the era of globalization and liberalization, the Himalayan region is more vulnerable and fragile to the economic, political, ecological and cultural forces of the outside harsh and aggressive world. Language is an important agent of connecting people and continuity of culture. With the advancement of modern harsh and hostile civilization and prejudiced policy of the Government, the language and culture of the Himalayan region is disappearing, declining and degenerating very fast. The language and culture of the Himalayas was developed over the centuries. It reflects traditional wisdom and technology to live in harmony with the nature. The modern civilization is preaching these peace loving people to conquer the nature, which is bringing irreparable destructions and calamities. It is a shame for a country like

India which claims to be the world's largest democracy and the Preamble of the Constitution proclaims that India is a secular, socialist, sovereign, republic and democratic nation. What democracy are we talking about, when our language is not recognized by our own government in our own Constitution? What socialism are we talking about when the Government is not socialist enough to give due recognition to the Bhoti language? Do I need to question the secular fabric? The Article-15 of Indian Constitution states deals with "Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex or place of birth." It states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. The majority of the people who are using this language practice Buddhism although it's a secular language. Is it not a strategic discrimination against any particular religion minority? Non inclusion of the Bhoti language kills the spirit of the Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, as it discriminates mainly a particular religion which practices this language in their religious affairs besides social, political and economic. I think we have miles to go to live with the spirit of the constitution. A dynamic, united, progressive, secular and democratic India is only possible when we practice what we preach. Many scholars are of the opinion that it is a strategic policy of the Government of India to create inferiority complex and dependency among the Himalayan people over other languages and culture. Is this what we are getting for our loyalty and sacrifice made for the country during all the crisis situations (wars)?

Unity in diversity can only be possible if you are giving equal respect and recognition to small, poor, weak and minorities. I think India and Indians have to work day and night to protect its identity of "Unity in Diversity". Are we not deceiving ourselves as we are preaching something and practicing something differently? How long and how far can we live and be governed by the duality? We cannot afford to lose our dear language and culture. Language is not only a medium of communication, but it also reflects the history, culture, people, relationship, system of governance, ecology, religion, politics etc. Bhoti is a systematic, scientific, culturally and intellectually rich language. In a country like India the richness of the language hardly matters, because the protection and preservation of the sanctity of the language is a more of an arbitrary or number game.

The low representation of Himalayan region in the Indian parliament is a major constraint for strongly advocating for bringing reforms in policy. Even the handfuls of representatives from this region were mostly scattered and unorganized in different directions. The Himalayan people are not only geographically scattered but also politically unorganized. On 12th December 2005 the Trans Himalayan Parliamentary Forum has submitted a memorandum to the Home Minister of

Government of India for the inclusion of the Bhoti language in the eighth schedule. The memorandum was signed by 8 parliamentarians from the Trans Himalayan Region. On 25th September 2003, Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association has submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India for the inclusion of Bhoti language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. On 21st February 1995, 81 parliamentarians from different political parties made a formal request to the Prime Minister to introduce a bill in the parliament to include Bhoti language in the eighth schedule of constitution. On 22nd May 1995 approximately 49 members of parliament belonging to different political parties have submitted a memorandum to Shri P V Narasimha Rao, then Prime Minister of India. Shri Virbhadra Singh, Chief Minister Himachal Pradesh Government, Dr Karan Singh, T K Lochen Rinpoche, former Member of the Minority Commission, Lama Chosphele Zotpa, Member of the Minority Commission and many concerned individuals and institutions are consistently engaged in this movement for the inclusion of Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule.

It is difficult to wake up a giant elephant which is intentionally pretending to be sleeping. All these efforts are of no use, when the Government of India is neither concerned nor interested in the promotion and development of language and culture of the Himalayas. The continued negligence and alienation of the Himalayan people in the mainstream may compel them to demand for greater political autonomy in the form of Statehoods and Union Territories. If the Government of India sincerely and honestly wants to unite and strengthen the whole country, including the peace loving and vulnerable communities of the Himalayan region, it should not hesitate to include the Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian constitution, so that the people in the Himalayas can also be proud of their own language; our students can also appear in the Civil Service Examination with their mother tongue as an optional paper, our members of Parliament can also represent us in a more effective way by addressing our problems and aspirations in our own mother tongue; more research and development work can be feasible, with adequate government's support and the benefits are many more if it included in 8th Schedule.

In the era of globalization and vastly more efficient communication networks, languages die more frequently than they are born. The stronger language eliminate the weaker ones, sometime violently but more often peacefully as a result of people shifting to a language with a greater purchasing power, whether the purchase is of economic, political or cultural goods (Bourdieu 1991; Krauss 1992; Grin 1994; Breton 1999; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Crystal 2000). The prediction that most of the existing 7,000 odd languages spoken today in the world will disappear and that

relatively few will be born (7,000 are upper estimate given by Ferguson 1964 and Grimes 1998). India as a state is an assimilator and protector of languages. It tends to weaken if not destroy the languages of the minority internally while protecting their own dominant languages on the national and international scene. Globalization may well weaken the state in the economic field, but if that weakening increases the sense of insecurity of a language community, globalization will then, very likely, strengthen the state in its role of protector of language and culture.

Keeping this into consideration I must request to all individuals and institutions concerned for Humanity, Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and above all who believe in Unity in Diversity to write letters to the Honorable President, the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Chief Ministers, Members of the Parliament and media to include Bhoti language in the 8th schedule. I must request all non Bhoti speaking people and communities to help us to protect and preserve the sanctity of our language. As we know that Government of India is appealing to the world power to include India in the Security Council of the UN, similarly with folded hands we are appealing to the Government of India for the inclusion of Bhoti language in the 8th Schedule for the security and promotion of our language, culture, identity and dignity. Buddha says, "There is nothing permanent in this world except the change itself". As a trustee of change, I am showing my concern for a better change and I am very much optimistic? Are you?

Threat to Chuvash Autonomy

October 4, 2004

This, from the New York Times, makes an interesting, though discouraging, follow-up to the lead article in our last issue of Ogmios. I have emphasized the specific mentions of the Chuvash language. - Ed.

Unrest Over Moves to Curb Autonomy

by Steven Lee Myers

CHEBOKSARY, Russia, Sept. 30, 2004 - President Vladimir V. Putin may have cowed Russia's national political leadership with his plan to concentrate still more power in the Kremlin, but in regions of the country that stand to lose the most, he has inflamed fierce popular discontent. People in this region along the Volga denounced Mr. Putin's proposal to end direct elections of governors and other regional leaders as unconstitutional and potentially destabilizing. They fear that the Kremlin is planning further steps to recreate a Soviet-like power over the people.

Goodyear man saves the Zuni language from extinction: puts it in writing

Christine L. Romero, *The Arizona*

Republic 13 July 2006

The boxes of documents were tucked away when the government found Curtis Cook on the Internet. The papers the Goodyear man had created with the help of seven Zuni elders had not been forgotten but were collecting dust. They held the origins of the written Zuni language. They represented 15 years of Cook's life and work. And now, at last, the Library of Congress wanted them.

After Cook finished some graduate linguistic studies in the mid-nineteen-sixties, he set out to create a Zuni version of the Bible. But he quickly realized the language didn't have a written form. So he turned his attention to a more basic task: creating a Zuni alphabet, setting down in written form the Zuni language.

Without Cook's efforts, the Zuni language could have perished as the elders died and young Zunis forgot the tongue. Forgetting the language would have forever cut a tie between the generations of Zunis, who live predominantly in New Mexico and in Arizona east of Flagstaff.

"I became concerned that many of their old stories and the richness of their history would be lost to posterity as the elders, who were the storytellers, began to die off," Cook said. The elders were all older than 100 when Cook began his work.

The Library of Congress' intention is to preserve the work and eventually make the traditional Zuni stories more widely available. Cook's work has allowed the Zunis to teach their written language to children from kindergarten through high school on the reservation. The Zuni words are even on street signs, which Cook proudly notes are spelled correctly.

By the end of this year, The Curtis Cook Collection is expected to be finally inducted into the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center.

During his time on the reservation, Cook also approached the Zuni Tribal Council and suggested that some of the tribe's stories should be recorded and preserved. The council agreed and eventually, about 300 reel-to-reel tapes were created with Zuni oral histories, folk tales and religious teachings.

The Curtis Cook Collection will include those tapes, transcriptions, learning guides and some Zuni publications. Now at 67, Cook is the associate state director of community outreach for AARP Arizona. Previously, he was director of the National Indian Council on Aging.

When Cook talks about his time with the Zuni, known as "a friendly people," his eyes light up and seem to dance with respect and excitement. Cook, also known as the Locust, wears turquoise Native-styled rings on his hands. In telling traditional Zuni stories, he infuses rhythmic Zuni words with English ones. To the English-speaking ear, the Zuni language seems breathy and includes many pauses that translate into meaning.

On the reservation, Cook's constant chattering and repetition of Zuni words and phrases earned him the names the Mockingbird and later the Locust among the Zuni Pueblo, now around 10,000 people.

Language experts say there likely still are pockets of the world where some languages exist only orally.

Cook's intent was to create a Zuni version of the Bible. Other oral traditions have morphed into written languages in a similar missionary fashion, experts say.

"Oral tradition keeps certain kinds of intergenerational contacts," said Guha Shankar, folklife specialist with the American Folklife Center. "It keeps memories alive." Without written documentation, the Zuni oral tradition could have been lost, Shankar said.

Cook's work piqued the Library of Congress' interest because he collaborated directly with native speakers in the pueblo, Shankar said. "The difficulty with some cultural communities is that as older speakers of the language pass away, the future generations aren't as likely to pick it up," he said. "Then you have some suggesting that the language might not be around for future generations."

Cook meticulously made language records, including transcribing traditional stories passed down through the generations. Cook learned these stories from several generations, including the oldest that included a handful of men older than 100 who knew these tales by heart. "I was concerned that all of their history would be lost forever," Cook said. "My belief is when people get their language in writing it launches a whole new era. We take notes so we can remember."

Cook used the International Phonetic Alphabet, a commonly accepted set of symbols among linguists, to capture the Zuni language. It took Cook only about six months to learn the language, he said. He admits he's one of those people who is gifted in linguistics. He studied Latin and "ate it up."

The Zunis loved to see the language in print, he said. Reading became something of a novelty on the reservation. He taught a young boy to read in Zuni and soon the boy was going from house to house simply reading. "He became a rock star with the Zunis because he could read and the older people couldn't," Cook said.

Cook contends that the symbols themselves aren't sacred. What is sacred is the process by which an oral tradition becomes fixed in time with written symbols and how that affects the perception of the world. "It becomes sacred when you start communicating," Cook said. "I think there's something that happens when it moves from the mind to the head to the heart."

Standing by their words: Ditidaht

A native community is doing all it can to rescue a language only 8 people speak

Matthew Kwong [Toronto Globe & Mail]

MALACHAN INDIAN RESERVE NO. 11: - A cool air blows under the shifting shade of clouds, restoring the deep green of Mount Rossander's old-growth cedars. The ancient forests wrap around Ditidaht village, a native community of 210 people accessible only by a hazardous two-hour trek that snakes along logging roads 50 kilometres from the nearest paved road at Port Alberni, B.C.

The silence that swallows the little reserve can be unnerving, symbolizing a community that's at risk of losing its own voice.

"I was about 7 when my mother died, and my father died two years later," said Christine Edgar, an elder who still speaks Ditidaht in her head, but struggles to get the sounds out of her mouth. "All of a sudden I no longer heard the language. There was just nobody to talk to."

It's a familiar story here. In spite of the Ditidaht's isolation, outside forces have pushed their language toward extinction. With only eight competent speakers left, the Ditidaht language is on the verge of vanishing, along with half of the languages now spoken around the world.

These projections are a concern for Mike Fortescue, a British linguistics professor who has been living on the reserve for two weeks to study and fill in gaps for a 500-page Ditidaht and Wakashan dictionary he's compiling.

"If they lose this, they stand to lose a direct window on their cultural background," the linguist from the University of Copenhagen said. "Of course there are languages in B.C. that have already become extinct, but this is a very endangered language and . . . there is the chance to revive it."

So the Ditidaht are fighting back. The survival of their language now hinges, perhaps, on three tiny bodies crammed together on a couch in the Asaabus day-care. The giggling children are the first to take part in a Ditidaht language-immersion program that begins in early childhood.

"Qaatqaat, hiihitakiitl, hi7tap7iq, kakaatqac'ib," recites four-year-old Krissy Edgar, singing and doing actions to a Ditidaht equivalent of Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes. It has been three years since the band council approved construction of the \$4.2-million Ditidaht Community School to teach students their language and culture from kindergarten to Grade 12. Previously, village students were bussed out to an English-language school. Already, the village is astounded by the program's success, Elsie Jeffrey, the language co-ordinator for the 70 children enrolled in the school, said.

"We're doing whatever we can to document what's left. We've put out CDs, DVDs; we're working on digitizing the language on FirstVoices.ca," she said, referring to a website that holds audio records for 15 endangered native communities. "We just have to do what we can because we're endangered."

Five years ago, Ms. Jeffrey would have been perplexed if an elder greeted her in the native tongue; now she sees children greeting elders in Ditidaht and teens writing short speeches in a language that existed only orally before 2002. Last year, the school produced its first high-school graduate, Selina Atleo. The 19-year-old now speaks more Ditidaht than her mother and assists in the day-care language-immersion program.

Elder Mike Thompson, one of four fluent speakers assisting teachers in the school, said that another bright light shines in 14-year-old Daryl Patterson.

"He's one of the ones who actually wants to learn," Mr. Thompson said. "He's one of the ones who takes the language and just sticks with it."

At a cultural exchange with a group of visiting Makah students last year, the quiet, shaggy-haired teenager extended an invitation in a stirring speech in Ditidaht, then repeated it in English. In the richly expressive tongue of his ancestors, Daryl implored the audience to sample his people's food, participate in ceremonial games and experience his culture. The lengthy address stunned a village that hadn't heard the voice of its youth at a ceremony in years.

"It was such a proud and emotional time for us," Ms. Jeffrey said. "When Daryl got up and just let it out -- just incredible. That was pretty darn cool to see the progress of the kids."

Ms. Jeffrey, who has been learning the language herself for the past four years, was born on the reserve and raised by a mother who spoke fluent Ditidaht. Dorothy Shepherd, her mother, never abandoned the ancestral language, but rarely spoke it to her children. She believed it was lost.

Only when the band council approved construction of the school did Ms. Shepherd join the effort to save Ditidaht by becoming one of four fluent elders to help teachers at the school.

At 8 a.m. on a Monday, as a group of adult learners still rub the sleep from their eyes, Ms. Shepherd's voice rings clear.

"Remember to pop your 'k,' " she directs. "Baaqiidax7aa7pik."

"Baaqiidax7aa7pik," they repeat. It means, "What are you doing?"

Around the table, the elders discuss the capacity for creating new words and even reinventing their ancient tongue.

They now have Ditidaht terms for "computer" (a translation of "thing with a lot of information") and "refrigerator" (a translation of "cold inside"). Above their heads hangs a 53-character Ditidaht alphabet, a reminder that every student in the room is learning the basics. Some, like day-care teaching assistants Kelita Sieber and Esther Edgar, are Ditidaht teachers and students themselves. During a rehearsal of Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Ms. Sieber and Ms. Edgar gave a clumsy rendition and laughed as they tripped over the words. "Usually it's easier when we do the song with the kids and we can see them," Ms. Sieber whispered. Later, while little Krissy sang along in the day-care, the two adults leading the troupe stumbled but recovered discreetly.

"La7uu," the child requested as the song ended. "Again."

Congress urged to save native languages

Zachary Franz [Bismarck Tribune]

Ryan Wilson, president of the National Indian Education Association, listens to Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara Nation, during a press conference dealing with the loss of native languages and the connection between those languages and academic performance in Native American students Thursday at United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck.

Indigenous languages will die out in America unless Congress acts soon, a leader in Indian education said Thursday. "We're on the very verge of losing our languages," said Ryan Wilson, president of the National Indian Education Association. "We don't have tomorrow. This has to happen today."

Wilson spoke at United Tribes Technical College in a press conference regarding legislation to preserve American Indian languages. Also speaking at the conference were Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara Nation, and David Gipp, UTTC president. The conference promoted passage of a bill co-sponsored by Sen. Byron

Dorgan, D-N.D., that would create grants to establish immersion schools where Indian children could learn their traditional language.

Before Europeans came to America, there were about 500 different American Indian languages, Wilson said. Fewer than 100 have survived, and only 20 are spoken by American Indian children. Immersion schools are important for two major reasons, Wilson said. First, indigenous languages are an important part of America's culture and history. Second, research has shown that Indian students do better academically when the lessons are relevant to their culture, he said. Language is an important part of that.

At a language immersion school, of which there are already a few in the country for Indian students, children learn traditional languages and are then taught other subjects in the language. Most of the schools focus on young students, for whom it is easier to pick up new languages.

Graduates of the existing programs have been more academically successful than students at traditional schools, Wilson said.

There are far too few of the schools, though, he said.

"You have one system that's scientifically proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, to fail our kids," Wilson said. "Here's another system that might be a potential answer."

Furthermore, he said, other research has shown that studying any language fosters intellectual development. For Indian students, an indigenous language is the logical choice for study, he said.

At Thursday's conference, Indian leaders urged Dorgan to continue championing the cause, and push to get the bill signed into law in this congressional session. Dorgan is the vice chairman of the senate's Committee for Indian Affairs.

"Indian country is resting its hopes on him," Wilson said. "He's the only one that can carry water on this."

The bill doesn't set a fixed dollar amount, but Wilson said the program would likely cost around \$8 million.

Fast action is important because some languages have only a few remaining speakers, said Tex Hall. There are only 8 people alive who speak Mandan fluently, he said.

"If we don't do this now, it will be gone," Hall said. "These speakers are passing on. When they pass, they take a wealth of knowledge with them."

One reason there are so few speakers is because the government discouraged previous

generations from speaking or learning indigenous languages in an attempt to force cultural assimilation, Wilson said. Many Indians attended boarding schools, where they were punished if caught speaking their native tongue.

"We know that while that was well-intentioned ... we also know that it did great damage to Indians," Wilson said. "We're not playing the role of victims; we don't believe in that. But the U.S. government made the biggest investment in the destruction of the languages, and it should make a commensurate investment in helping to bring them back."

Wilson said that while most immigrants in the country's history have been eager to assimilate, American Indians traditionally have not shared that desire. That is something mainstream America has struggled to understand, but is the right of Indians, nonetheless, he said.

"We ceded millions of acres of the most productive land in the world for the right of continued sovereignty," he said. "It's our right. We've already paid for this."

Phraselators for Cherokee

CITIZEN-TIMES.com: 29 Aug 2006: High-tech language lessons from tribe

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians will use a federal grant to buy hand-held computers that translate English into Cherokee.

The computers, called Phraselators and made by Maryland-based VoxTec International, will help the tribe teach members how to speak Cherokee.

The Phraselator is a small hand-held translation device. In the articles I've read about the device, it's mostly been used in combat (if I recall correctly it was first developed for the military). It's nice to see it being used in a language preservation situation.

With about 20,000 speakers, Tsalagi, the Cherokee Language, is one of the most-spoken Native American languages.

The 900-year reunion: separated by distance, united by language

Sam Lewin 22 Aug 2006

A coalition that existed a century ago will be replicated in a mid-sized Oklahoma town next month.

The Shoshonean Language Reunion takes place Sept. 25-27 at the Comanche Nation's tribal complex in Lawton.

The reunion stems from the Snake Tribe, a partnership located in what is now the state of Montana and made up of "Shoshone, Paiutes, Utes and Comanches," according to Comanche historian Reaves Nahwooks of Indianola, OK.

Nahwooks tells the Native American Times that he became interested in the Snakes while living at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho during the 1960s and seeing how close his Comanche language is to the dialect spoken by the Shoshone of the region. Years of research led Nahwooks to continually contemplate one tantalizing mystery: Why did the Snakes split?

Various theories abound and many are passed off as fact. One idea is that the groups separated because of a "fight over meat or a fight between kids where one was killed while they were playing, so the families left," Nahwooks said. But he discounts that theory, saying that the tribes involved "don't forget, and they hold grudges. There would be some very prevalent stories [about the feud] still around."

Another thought, which Nahwooks give more credence, is that the Comanches left in order to follow the buffalo, moving south into Mexico then north to Texas and Oklahoma.

The idea for a reunion had been bandied about for many years but it wasn't until that late 1990s that the ball really got rolling, motivated primarily by the fact that there remained a group of tribes living 3000 miles apart yet speaking the same language. The Comanches today number about 10,000, with roughly half living in Oklahoma. Some historians believe the tribe may have once numbered 20,000. With a dwindling membership, the desire to learn more about the past apparently became even more pressing.

Another factor in creating an annual reunion is use of peyote, which created a "more intense reason to promote communication," according to a write-up in the Comanche Nation News attributed to the Reunion Committee Staff. Up until the reunions began, "most information has been put together by non-Indian anthropologists, teachers, explorers,

linguists, writers and others. Though this is a valuable service, it does not include in-depth information about tribal customs and traditions," the article states.

The reunion places a strong emphasis on the cultural, Nahwooks said, featuring "storytelling, singing and talking about the cultures. Every tribe there does that."

"Highlighted in every reunion was the hospitality that each tribe extended to visitors," the Comanche Nation News article relates. "The histories began to come together and the tribes seemed to become comfortable with each other."

The first and second reunions were held in Fort Hall, with the Comanches hosting the third. Subsequent reunions have taken place in Wyoming and Nevada. With the seventh incarnation returning to Oklahoma, reunion organizers are seeking to pull out all the stops. The Comanche newspaper account is accompanied by an announcement that the reunion committee is putting out bids for caterers.

"We are one people in language and tradition, but learn more customs in food and practices which makes us more knowledgeable and proud to be together," the reunion staff says.

You can contact Sam Lewin at sam.at.okit.com

Device may help preserve languages

By Diane Huber

The Olympian

<http://159.54.227.3/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060909/NEWS01/609090306/1003>

SHELTON - A hand-held electronic device could help the Squaxin Island Indians - and tribes throughout the country - preserve their native language.

"After the elders pass on, that's it," said Corey (Bear) O'Lague, who lives on the Squaxin reservation and grew up speaking a southern dialect of the language.

He was one of about a dozen people who came to the Squaxin Island Tribe Museum, Library and Research Center Friday for a demonstration of the Phraselator, a tool for revitalizing American Indian languages.

"We could take it to the elders, who still speak the language," O'Lague said.

The Phraselator was developed by a defense company after the Sept. 11 attacks and was

first used strictly for soldiers to communicate with non-English speakers.

Don Thornton of California-based Thornton Media Inc. thought the technology would apply well to American Indian tribes, inspired by his own Oklahoma Cherokee background.

Now he and his wife, Kara, travel the country showing off the \$3,300 device.

They're working with more than 40 tribes.

"If your kids aren't learning the language, then the language is in trouble," Thornton said.

The device looks like an oversized calculator with a computer screen.

The user can speak an English phrase or select one on the screen, such as "Hello, how are you?" and "My name is." A male or female recorded voice then speaks the phrase in the tribal language. It also can play back entire prayers or songs.

The tribe hopes to purchase some of the devices, museum Director Charlene Krise said.

"It will be important because we have language that has been so diminished" by the introduction of English, she said. "The language for our tribal people has always been extraordinarily important because the language is connected to the land."

Many families speak the tribe's language with their children at home, and preschoolers learn the dances, songs, numbers and ABCs in school, she said. But people her age - from 40 to 60 - have trouble speaking the language.

"We hear it and can understand it, but it's very difficult to speak," she said.

Peter Boome, an Upper Skagit Indian who lives on the Squaxin Island reservation, said he'd like to use the device to teach his four children the tribe's language.

"Language conveys a way of thinking. ... You view the world through your language," he said. "And English is very different than American Indian languages, the thought processes and philosophy."

Words for "fire," for example, convey that it has different forms and is living and moving, he said.

He knows little of his own language, Ute, because his parents' generation went to boarding school and were disciplined for speaking their tribal languages, he said.

Thornton told a similar story about his mother.

Valerie Bellack, a coordinator for the Muckleshoot Language Program, said she will take information on the Phraselator back to her tribe in Auburn.

"I think it's a tool. I don't think in itself it can create a fluentspeaker," she said. "With the children, they learn a language by hearing it, so I believe this will be a useful tool for the younger generation."

On the Web

For information on the Phraselator, go to www.ndnlanguage.com

For information on the Squaxin Island Tribe Museum, Library and Research Center, go to www.squaxinlandmuseum.org

Diane Huber covers the city of Lacey and its urban growth area for *The Olympian*.

Australia picks first Aboriginal-language movie as Oscars entry

The Guardian, 1 September 2006

Australia has picked the groundbreaking Aboriginal-language film "Ten Canoes" as its official entry for the 2007 best foreign-language film Oscar.

The movie, the first ever to be filmed entirely in one of Australia's indigenous languages, will vie for a nomination in the prestigious Academy Awards category, the Australian Film Commission (AFC) said.

"*Ten Canoes* is exemplary in terms of the director's vision, the craft of filmmaking and presenting a uniquely Australian story," said acting AFC chief executive, Chris Fitchett.

"We are hopeful that the entry of *Ten Canoes* results in an Academy Award nomination," he said of director, Rolf de Heer's critically-acclaimed film.

The movie, which was filmed entirely in the indigenous language of Ganabingu, was screened at the Cannes film festival in May, winning de Heer a special jury prize.

Starring Jamie Gulpilil, Richard Birrinbirrin and Frances Djalibing, it tells a fictional story set in the distant past in which the lead character is attracted to one of the wives of his older brother.

In order to teach his brother tribal law, the older sibling tells a mythical story of love, kidnapping, sorcery and revenge.

To be eligible for an Oscar foreign-language nomination, a film has to have been released in its country of origin for at least seven days and consist of dialogue that is predominantly non-English.

Oscars' organisers are expected to pick the shortlist of contenders vying for a nomination in the best foreign-language film category later this year.

Nominations for the 79th annual Academy Awards will be unveiled on January 23 next year and the famed golden statuettes will be handed out at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre on February 25.

The lost tongue of Provence

By Ros Taylor, *The Guardian*, 6 September 2006

Unless you happen to be at the Occitan festival in the Italian village of Sancto Lucio di Coumboscuro this week, it's extremely unlikely that you will hear Occitan spoken by more than a few elderly people. (But if you do want to know what that sounds like, listen to **Radio Occitania**).

There are a few places in France where you might encounter Occitan - in Toulouse, for example, which has bilingual street signs. But Britons who are familiar with the high street soap and unguent purveyor *L'Occitane en Provence* might assume that the language is only spoken in that region.

In fact, there are dwindling Occitan-speaking populations in Spain, Italy and Monaco and even corners of Germany and the United States. Quite how many people use Occitan on a daily basis is not clear: several hundred thousand in France, perhaps, most of them elderly. So great is the number of sub-dialects that no one has much idea how big the lexicon is: estimates vary between 250,000 and a million. But very few, if any, of them speak no other language.

Occitan (or Languedoc) speakers are rightly irked by the suggestion that their language is merely a dialect of French (or Langue d'oil). Languedoc - "oc" means "yes", where northern French speakers said "oil" (the modern "oui") - was the language of medieval troubadour poets during the 13th century.

But linguists trace its decline back to the Edict of Villers-Cotterets in 1539, which established the langue d'oil as the language of all French administration. As France's national identity emerged during the Sun King's reign, the revolution and the First World War, so Occitan became marginalised. It rallied slightly in the late 19th century when a Provençal poet, Frederic Mistral, took up the cause and was jointly awarded the **Nobel Prize** for his efforts.

Occitan is not to be confused with Catalan either, though a speaker of one can usually understand the other. No doubt the revival of Catalan in the Spanish region of Catalonia and the official promotion of Welsh have encouraged Occitan speakers to call for more broadcasts in the language.

The EU's support for minority languages has also helped embolden them. Occitan has not stood still: it has a word for the web (oèb) -

and indeed it could be the web that saves Occitan from the fate of, say, Cornish. After all, if Geoffrey Chaucer can blog in Middle English, what's to stop Occitan speakers from following his example?

Salish, Kootenai keyboards coming to a school near you

Students across the reservation will have the languages of the Salish and Kootenai tribes right at their finger tips.

Modified keyboards featuring unique characters will soon be available in area schools and will enable students to type in traditional Salish and Kootenai languages -- the result of hard work by a former SKC technology director.

Something that was once blamed for taking a toll on tribal languages and customs could actually help preserve the native tongue.

"When modern technology first arrived here, it started taking our language and culture away from us," said Tony Incashola, director of the Salish Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, in a prepared statement. "But now we're learning how to take that same technology and turn it around, using it to teach our children our language and culture."

Using the newest creation of software, former Salish Kootenai College technology director Jim Ereaux has created two new fonts that will work on both PC and Mac platforms.

To have fonts that work on both Mac and PC was critical, he explained. While most of the world uses PCs, Macintosh computers are still used in many educational settings, and Ereaux said the program had to work with both operating systems to be effective.

"We needed to bring standardization to it," he said.

The keyboards are like any other, he explained, only the English letters have been replaced with either Salish characters or Kootenai characters. The Salish language has more characters than the English language so it doesn't quite fit on the standard English keyboard. The solution? Use the numerical buttons on top and replace them with Salish characters, Ereaux said.

Also, with the simple tap of the caps lock button, people can switch between writing in a native language or English. Plus, the keys are removable, allowing you to place more commonly used characters within comfortable reach of your fingers, allowing for more efficient typing.

But what really allows for quicker typing speed is the OpenType technology. Many languages use require several glyphs to compose one character. Rather than type two

or three glyphs per character, one key stroke is all it will take for the glyphs to be assembled automatically, he explained. (However, if you're accustomed to punching each glyph, you will still have that option.)

Because the project largely aims to educate students in Salish and Kootenai Languages, the new fonts also allow for use of teaching programs like crossword puzzles and software that creates teacher user plans.

Native language fonts are nothing new, he explained, but what makes this program unique is that it can spellcheck documents written in both tribal languages. It also has a find /replace feature, which is also a new option for programs of this kind.

The new fonts were created using two new technologies called Unicode and OpenType. Unicode is the global standard for multi-language word processing and houses thousands of languages and is capable of supporting over one million possible characters.

The Salish and Kootenai Tribes have had access to a variety of computer fonts and applications in the past to produce publications and historical documents, but these programs are antiquated and becoming more and more obsolete as computer technology advances, Ereaux explained.

The Salish and Kootenai Culture Committees tapped Ereaux to help develop the new software last year. Since then, he estimates he has put in about 400 hours on the project. With the coordination of Culture Committees, several linguists and the typographic community on the Internet, the project was underway. Tony Incashola, Shirley Trahan and Thompson Smith provided guidance from the Salish Culture Committee while Vernon Finley and Dorothy Berney provided guidance from the Kootenai Culture Committee.

In April 2006, a grant was written through Salish Kootenai College, from both Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative and the Lower Flathead Valley Community Foundation to support the creation of customized keyboards for both languages. Both organizations donated nearly \$6,000 to the project.

The idea behind this new word processor is that it will be compatible with more advanced systems. The minimum operating requirements are Windows XP and higher on the PC and OS 10.4 on the Macintosh.

"We knew there was this globalization with other processors and that is the direction we wanted to head," he said

Alternative Eurovision Song Contest

Stockholm, 27 September 2006
Onno P.Falkena (www.eurolang.org)

The lesser used language song contest Liet-Lavlut in Östersund is arousing a lot of interest from Swedish and international media. On Saturday the 14th of October Swedish P2 radio will broadcast the songcontest live from the Storsjöteater in Östersund. Sámiradio, Sisuradio and Radio Norrbotten are also involved in the live broadcast. The weekend will also feature the first ever Sámi 'joikopera'.

Listeners outside Sweden can follow the developments on P2 radio's live web stream, <http://www.sr.se/p2/>, it will be the first time that Liet will be broadcast live.

Swedish television SVT will film the songcontest and broadcast it later.

At least four of the participating artists will be accompanied by a TV-crew from their own country. Also, various other radio stations and newspaper journalists from across Europe have expressed their interest in the songcontest.

Liet-Lavlut started in 2002 in Fryslân, the Netherlands, as Liet Ynternasjonaal with the aim to promote the cultural, musical and linguistic diversity of Europe.

This year Liet-Lavlut moved to the Swedish part of Sápmi, because the Sámi won the last two editions of Liet Ynternasjonaal in Friesland. This makes the Sámi the 'most musical minority of Europe', according to Frisian newspaper Leeuwarder Courant. The first edition of Liet Ynternasjonaal was won by the Catalan group Pomada.

The organisation of Liet-Lavlut is proud of the programme for the fourth edition, it comprises some of the finest bands and singers the stateless nations of Europe have to offer. Out of 61 entries, the jury selected eleven new songs; in Basque, Friulian, Frisian, Gaelic, Galician, Manx, Meankiëli, Occitanian, Romani, Sámi and Votian. One thing is certain, never before have songs in all those languages be heard at the same music festival.

By gathering singers from minority language communities the organisation aims to promote cultural, linguistic and musical diversity to a large international audience.

In a few years Liet-Lavlut has become one of the most successful events win terms of promoting minority languages to a large audience.

Liet-Lavlut:

Arbe Garbe - A lively band from Friül, in the north of Italy.

Anna Murray - One of Scotland's best Gaelic singers and pipers, from the Outer Hebrides.

Gari - A distinguished Basque singer, also a veteran from the Basque rock scene.

Johan Kitti and Sara Ellen Bähr - A very strong joik duo and this years winners of the Sámi Grand Prix in Kautokeino.

Jord - a Tornedalian folkband full of harmonies.

Karavan Familia - A lively Romani band from Hungary, creating new songs based upon the rich Romani tradition.

Liza - One of the most promising singers from Occitania.

Moot - Manx Gaelic drum and bass from the Isle of Man.

Narf - One of the finest troubadours of Galicia, with a touch of samba.

Raud Ants - Estonian folk metal band, who sing in Votian - a language with very few speakers in Ingria (now north west Russia).

Van Wieren - One of the best Frisian rock bands, the winners of the Frisian song contest at Liet 2005.

In various of the participating nations the selection of their singer has aroused a great deal of interest. This is particularly true in Estonia and Friesland. The Votian band Raud Ants will travel to Östersund with a bus full of fans and Estonian music lovers. The Frisians are sending 25 people among them the delegate for culture of the Frisian government, Bertus Mulder, and the councillor for culture of the Frisian capital of Ljouwert/Leewarden, Yvonne Bleize.

Music lovers are also in for a treat as the Storsjöteater in Östersund hosts the worldpremiere of joikopera 'Skuvle Nelja'. During the weekend of Liet-Lavlut the joikopera will be performed five times. Joiking refers to traditional Sámi singing and this first joikopera in the history of music has been composed by Frode Fjellheim. He won Liet-Lavlut in 2003 with his band Transjoik. For 2006 he will be presiding over the contest's jury.

The winners are elected by votes from a jury from the eleven participating nations. The Swedish audience will be invited to vote by sms-message immediately after the concert. The international audience will be able to join the voting process on the internet. The

www.liet.nl.

Liet-Lavlut in Östersund is organised by SWEBLUL, The Swedish Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, and Estrad Norr, with the support of the Liet Foundation in Friesland.

Websites:

www.liet.nl (7 languages)
www.sweblul.se
www.sr.se/p2/

Breton: New school year marks small increase in numbers attending immersion and bilingual schools

Davyth Hicks, Brussels (www.eurolang.org)

Ofis ar Brezhoneg, the Breton language office, report a small increase in the number of Breton immersion and bilingual schools at the start on the new school year, but the current trend means that, despite an increase in numbers by 6.5%, it will fall short of the Breton regional government target for 20,000 in bilingual and immersion education by 2010.

Ten new bilingual sites have opened, five by the public bilingual model (Diw Yezh) in Briec, Daoulas, Queven and Landerneau; three under the Catholic bilingual model (Dihun) Melrand, Plouarzel, Plouvron. And two with the immersion model (Diwan), Chapelle Neuve and Louannec.

Altogether it marks a slight improvement on last year where nine new sites were opened with only a moderate increase in pupil numbers.

It is now possible to follow a bilingual education at 157 sites in Brittany in 114 communes, making up 8% of Brittany's communes. For this year the majority of the new sites, 6 out of 10, are in Penn ar Bed (Finistère) of which 4 are in the Brest area, where the number of pupils in bilingual education are the highest in absolute terms. In Landerne or Karaez areas around 20 – 25% receive their education in bilingual and immersion schools.

All the new sites are in Western Brittany with no new openings in the East.

Currently there are 11,090 pupils in Breton bilingual/ immersion education, it marks a growth from last year's figures (10,407) of 683, a 6.5% increase.

All three models saw an increase : Diwan (immersion) has 2,943 pupils, Div Yezh (bilingual) 4,264 pupils, and Dihun (Catholic bilingual) 3,883 pupils.

The administrative Region Bretagne aims to have 20,000 schoolchildren in immersion and bilingual education by 2010 which, however, will need a 15% increase per year. This target is set in order to help replace the natural loss of older speakers.

The numbers of those in Breton bilingual/immersion education account for 2% of Brittany's total school going population. (Eurolang 2006)

Ofis ar Brezhoneg <http://www.ofis-bzh.org/index.php>

V Mercator International Symposium on Minority Languages "Linguistic Rights as a Matter of Social Inclusion" 19 - 21 October 2006

Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC), Barcelona

Organizer: Mercator-Legislation, CIEMEN (Barcelona, Catalonia) www.ciemen.org/mercator/simposis/2006ML/index2006en.htm

11th International Conference on Minority Languages (ICML 11), 5-6 July 2007

Pécs, Hungary.

Call for papers and further details

http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/ICML_call_for_papers.doc

http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/ICML_call_for_papers.pdf

Conference website

<http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/>

Noongar, Native Title, Linguistic Evidence: A Small Celebration before the Night

Jane Simpson, 21 September 2006

From: Transient Languages and Cultures Blog

The cause for celebration is Justice Murray Wilcox's finding that Noongar people have 'native title' to certain parts of the Perth Metropolitan area ([Federal Court \(Bennell v State of Western Australia \[2006\] FCA 1243](#)), Perth, 19 SEPTEMBER 2006).

The pursuit of native title (like the Snark) has cost heaps and caused much grief. But when native title is recognised, it's great, and when the value of linguistic evidence in determining it is recognised, this is also great. Wilcox's findings have lots of interesting things to say about Noongar language, what the claimants said, and the expert linguistic evidence provided by PARADISEC's Nick Thieberger.

Wilcox finds:

The evidence indicates that Noongar people have continued, since sovereignty, to occupy, use and enjoy those parts of the lands and waters of the claim area to which they have had legal access. It will, therefore, be appropriate to make a determination of a non-exclusive right (at least) to occupy, use and enjoy the claimed land and waters of the Perth Metropolitan Area (excluding all off-shore islands and waters below low-water mark). 'Native title' consists of a bundle of rights to land which are intended to translate in a way that makes sense to Australian law, the relationship between Indigenous Australians and the land. To have it recognised, groups of indigenous people have to apply to the Australian Courts and argue that they descend from the original owners of the claimed land, have a continuing attachment to that land, and have laws and traditions relating to land use that have been passed on from before the European invasion.

Language often plays a role in determining native title (HENDERSON, JOHN and NASH, DAVID (eds.) 2002. *Language in native title*. Native Title Research Series. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press). One reason is that nineteenth century word-lists often give some indication of what language was spoken in a place, and if the claimants still speak some of the language, this is an indication of their historical connection with that place. They can also suggest that a particular area was occupied by a single group, speaking one language. Linguistic evidence (including expert evidence from Frances Kofod) was important in the 'Miriuwung Gagerrong case' where claimants were found to have native title (*Western Australia and Ors v Ward and Ors* (2000) 170 ALR 159).

Two decisions relating to native title that many people found shocking involved groups who still speak Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara, and whose lands were only taken over by Europeans in the early twentieth century. Both groups had fine linguists offering expert testimony (Cliff Goddard and Peter Sutton). In the case of the Yulara decision, Justice Sackville found against the claimants, even though they had been found a few years earlier to have Aboriginal freehold title for the surrounding land (which requires similar evidence of ownership and traditional laws) (*Jango v Northern Territory* (No 4) (2004) 214 ALR 608. 23).

In the case of the De Rose Hill pastoral lease, Justice O'Loughlin found that the claimants did not have native title because they had left the pastoral lease 20 years ago, had only been back to hunt kangaroos, and had suffered a breakdown in tradition since they'd left. Justice O'Loughlin said:

The evidence showed [the owner of the pastoral lease JHS]...was mostly well disposed towards his Aboriginal workers and their families, but ...would not hesitate to

physically assault people...He would not tolerate Aboriginal people who wished to visit friends and relatives...living on the station...[O]nly those who worked for him and their families were, in his assessment..., entitled to be on "his property"...[H]e would not hesitate to resort to the occasional use of firearms to make his point...Even allowing for his shooting of the [Aboriginal people's] dogs, his conduct was not such as to justify a claim from the resident Aboriginal people that he was the cause of them having to leave their land. (*De Rose v State of South Australia* [2002] FCA 1342)

(O'Loughlin's decision was modified **on appeal** in a Full Bench appeal decision of the Federal Court - one of the judges was Murray Wilcox. (*De Rose v State of South Australia* (No 2) [2005] FCAFC 110)

This was some of the background to Wilcox's decision in the Noongar case. If two groups who still spoke their language, carried on traditional ceremonial life, and lived in the remote parts of Australia couldn't prove native title, what hope did the Noongar have of claiming land in a boom-town city after two hundred years of occupation?

Well, Wilcox's judgment shows a great deal of refreshing common sense. Rather than complaining that every single claimant couldn't show unbroken genealogical descent to ancestors at the time of the invasion, he writes:

While the evidence does not permit me to make a positive finding in relation to the claim of any particular witness, it is highly unlikely that all the claims are wrong. After all, we know some thousands of Aborigines lived in the Perth Metropolitan Area at date of sovereignty. In the ordinary course, those people would now have hundreds of thousands of living descendants. Nineteenth century families (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) were usually large. There was a high rate of infant mortality and European settlement must have resulted in loss of Aboriginal lives and forced dispersal of Aborigines to other areas; but it seems most unlikely that the wider Noongar community contains no descendant of any of them.

Uncommon common sense!

Nick Thieberger provided linguistic evidence about the Noongar language, about the historical sources on the association of the language with the areas of land under claim, the Noongar dialects and the differences between Noongar and the neighbouring languages.

Wilcox summarises both the expert linguistic evidence and the claimants' comments on their language use and that of their parents, (which is interesting reading itself, as they talk about singing songs, about telling stories, about announcing oneself to the country, about word order, as well as the way language

developed in contact with English) . And here are Wilcox's conclusions:

As appears from the Aboriginal evidence I have summarised, the oral tradition of south-west Aborigines is that there is, and always has been, only one indigenous language in the south-west; that language is called 'Noongar' and is still spoken by many of them. [...] Dr Thieberger expressed a firm opinion that, in 1829, there existed a common language, although with dialectical differences, throughout the claim area. He expounded his reasons. Although Dr Thieberger was cross-examined at length, his opinion was neither challenged nor explicitly contradicted by other evidence. I thought him to be an impressive witness: knowledgeable, careful and fair. [...] I conclude that the evidence about language in the claim area provides significant, although not decisive, support for the Applicants' claim that, in 1829, there existed a single community throughout the claim area.

The last line of Wilcox's findings is also terrific:

In short, it would seem to be desirable for the parties to engage in some serious thought and discussion before any of them spends more money on legal action.

So what does our Prime Minister say? Does he congratulate the Noongar on having kept community and culture alive for 180 years since invasion? Does he indicate a desire to heed Wilcox's final remark? **No**. Here comes the dark night:

"My initial reaction is one of considerable concern," he said. "I know that the judge has said that the grants of freehold and almost certainly leasehold will have extinguished native title claims. Many people will regard it as somewhat incongruous - there could still be some residual native title claim in a major settled metropolitan area. We will consider our own position in relation to an appeal."

5. Allied Societies and Activities

ELDP Grants announcement

Jean Tullett of ELDP has forwarded the following announcement for distribution:

The trustees of the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund invite applications for the 2006/2007 round of applications for research grants for the documentation of endangered languages. The Endangered Languages Documentation Programme is a component of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, administered by the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. It offers up to one million pounds in grants each year for the documentation of

endangered languages in any location around the world. There are two main types of grants:

1. Large Grants for major documentation projects and post-doctoral fellowships. Closing date 5th August 2006.

2. Small Grants for pilot projects, PhD studentships and fieldtrips.

Closing date 9th January 2007.

For further information and application forms visit

www.hrelp.org/grants

6. Letters to the Editor

Would you like to fill this poignantly empty space?

7. Overheard on the Web

Akaka Introduces Legislation to Perpetuate Native American Languages

http://akaka.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Filtered=Speeches.Home&month=4&year=2006&release_id=92
27 April 2006

Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that would amend the Native American Languages Act (NALA) that was enacted into law on October 30, 1990, to promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages. Since 1990, awareness and appreciation of Native languages has grown. Continued action and investment in the preservation of Native languages is needed. I am pleased to be joined by my colleague, Senator Daniel K. Inouye, as we seek to improve the cultural and educational opportunities available to Native Americans throughout our nation.

Historians and linguists estimate that there were more than 300 distinct Native languages at the time of first European contact with North America. Today, there are approximately 155 Native languages that remain and 87 percent of those languages have been classified as deteriorating or nearing extinction. Native communities across the country are being significantly impacted as individuals fluent in a Native language are passing away. These speakers are not only important in perpetuating the language itself, but also serve as repositories of invaluable knowledge pertaining to customs and traditions, as well as resource use and management.

The Native American Languages Act Amendments Act of 2006 would amend NALA to authorize the Secretary of Education to provide funds to establish Native American Language Nest and Survival School programs. Nest and Survival School programs are site-based education programs conducted through a Native American language. These programs have played an integral role in bringing together elders and youth to cultivate and perpetuate Native American languages. My bill would establish at least four demonstration programs in geographically diverse locations to provide assistance to Nest and Survival Schools and participate in a national study on the linguistic, cultural, and academic effects of Native American Language Nest and Survival Schools. Demonstration programs would be authorized to establish endowments for furthering activities related to the study and preservation of Native American languages and to use funds to provide for the rental, lease, purchase, construction, maintenance, and repair of facilities.

As Americans, it is our responsibility to perpetuate our Native languages that have shaped our collective identity and contributed to our history. For example, during World War II, the United States employed Native American Code Talkers who developed secret means of communication based on Native languages. The actions of the Code Talkers were critical to our winning the war and to saving numerous lives. My legislation would serve as another opportunity for our country to acknowledge and ensure that our future will be enhanced by the contributions of Native language and culture.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to enhance the cultural and educational opportunities for Native Americans and Native American language speaking individuals.

Language Retention Ignites Young Entrepreneurs Vision

<http://www.wawatay.on.ca/index.php?module=pagesetter&func=viewpub&tid=5&pid=208>

A January 2004 paper by Indian Affairs and Heritage Canada explored the survival and maintenance of Aboriginal languages and concluded only three of about 50 languages were not in danger of being lost forever.

According to the paper, "From Generation to Generation: Survival and Maintenance of Canada's Aboriginal Languages within Families, Communities and Cities," "Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut are the largest and most wide spread languages. And young entrepreneur Clayton R. Ogden, 26, originally from Mishkeegogamang wants to make sure that the numerous Ojibway and Oji-Cree dialects in northern Ontario stay strong.

Ogden is aiming to have each school in Treaty 3 and Nishnawbe Aski Nation outfitted with Anishinabe language materials for children; which will be "tailored made" to each community's dialect.

"I love business," the young entrepreneur explained of his pursuit. "Business is my life. But it's not just about business; it's about doing something for the people. I've always wanted to make a significant contribution to the Anishinabe people and I feel this is how."

Ogden spent three years at Confederation College in Thunder Bay studying business. After completing his education, he settled back in Grassy Narrows where he spent the bulk of his youth, and it was there during a teaching stint that Ogden first got the idea to develop Aboriginal language materials for schools.

"While I was working there, I noticed there were no materials and everyone kept talking about how bad they needed materials. So, I thought to myself, I'm going to produce the materials."

Inspired, Ogden began producing materials on his laptop. Six months later, Ogden had developed a wide variety of materials such as a selection of children's spelling books, flashcards and items for walls of classrooms.

Ogden hit his first hurdle when he tried selling his newly developed material to schools within Treaty 3.

"I tried selling the materials and found out that each school and community has their own dialect.

"This is where the first failure hurdle came in due to a lack of capital. This was extremely hard on the business and on me. "I then went back and redid my marketing plan and also found my new goal of offering each school the option of ordering materials, which are developed specifically for their children and developed with their very own dialects."

Operating under the name Oji-Cree Crow Incorporated, Ogden now will be sending out promotional packages to schools along with a word list for language teachers to type in their own dialects which will allow his business to custom develop every order.

"This is to ensure 100 per cent language accuracy for all who order," Ogden said. "It's a new concept, a way of giving the schools exactly what they want, so I am excited to see how schools respond."

Ogden often rises at dawn to work freelance jobs such as creating advertisements and brochures.

"I was up at 4:30 this morning and walked to work, and the money I make from here will go towards a promotional package. It's not

always the healthiest thing to do; yet I feel it's a small sacrifice for a greater good."

Ogden hopes to one day see all First Nation schools in northwestern Ontario, Manitoba and northern Minnesota using his materials.

Ogden's plans have grown into more than just a business venture. Ogden can be reached by e-mail at c_ogden24.at@hotmail.com

Universities accused of killing African languages

By Stephen Korir, Kenya Times

<http://www.timesnews.co.ke/22may06/schtime/s/sch2.html>

UNIVERSITIES' obsession with foreign languages, as well as inadequate reference materials on African mother tongues has undermined the development of African languages.

The investment, use and promotion of international languages in tertiary institutions as well as the universities has been overemphasised at the expense of Africa's diverse mother tongues.

Schools, middle level training colleges and universities, particularly in East and Central Africa, have also contributed to the dismal performance by students in languages during examinations.

The practice has also limited a large proportion of learners to a few international languages by failing to mount courses in a wider scope of foreign languages.

These sentiments were expressed at a regional conference on language policy and education held recently at a city hotel.

Many publishers are said to shy away from printing mother tongue publications due to perceived limited readership, an issue that is compounded by urban societies averseness to their children speaking their first languages.

Universities and tertiary institutions, it was noted, have failed to pioneer centres for teaching and promotion of the use of Africa's multiple languages in the international fora. Maseno University which recently launched a faculty

of African language studies was hailed as the only one attempting to inculcate a culture of promoting african languages.

Participants at the Regional conference were consistent in their calls for the need to strengthen teaching of first languages' long neglected history hence joining the books of the least developed or rather less used in the process rendering them useless for many professionals.

The participants further stressed the need for nurturing more courses on foreign languages such as Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Spanish among other widely spoken languages of the developed countries to enable local people compete with their counterparts at the same level for the various opportunities in this era of globalization.

Mother tongue was seen as the appropriate medium of communication by the children at early stages of development and lower primary classes in particular as it was the only language they may express themselves in freely since thinking as a process is expressed through language and the more the

communication skills, the more likely that the child will be empowered to think and express opinions and experiences.

Use of mother tongue not only enables the children to start embracing their culture and values, but also facilitates smooth transition from home to school environment ensuring that child develops a sense of self confidence to participate freely in all activities.

Local languages should also no longer be seen as useless as they are also becoming resourceful owing to the outside world's growing interests in the fields of theology, history, singing and literature of the particular communities as explained by one of the speakers.

Those proficient in spoken and written versions of these languages can land jobs as translators, writers and even mass communications industry especially in this advent of vernacular stations.

The increasing rural to urban migration too provides another opportunity for those who have mastered first or mother tongue languages to utilise them for gain by way of tuition to the children whose parents feel they risk losing touch with their communities a programme pioneered by some parents in the city.

According to Education PS Prof. Karega Mutahi, the government is focused more on development of these languages through the production of quality learning materials. According to the PS all mother tongues are recognised as unique and with roles to play in the development and the adult life of the children.

He regretted that teachers handling mother tongue classes (1-3) did not benefit from any formal training in the teaching of such languages during their training adding that the situation was compounded the poor reading culture amongst pupils in upper primary classes, secondary and even teachers apathy to literature in mother tongue.

As a way forward, the conference resolved that publishing of reference materials on all the languages be encouraged and self study

reading culture be promoted amongst all learners was further felt that there is need for a

regional language policy on Kiswahili as one of the widely spoken languages in East and Central Africa.

Kenya's language policy on education stipulates that the particular catchment language be used as the medium of instruction at the Early Childhood Development Centre and the lower primary level. It is also recommended that English be taught during a pupil's formative stages so as to lay a sound foundation for pursuing future prospects in various spheres of life.

Workshop Seeks Ways to Safeguard Endangered Nigerian Languages

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200608140739.html>

In a bid to preserve endangered Nigerian languages and other intangible oral cultural heritages from extinction, the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) in collaboration with UNESCO, recently held a workshop on best practices to safeguard minority languages.

With over 300 different ethnic groups and languages, Nigeria is one of the richest countries in the world as far as culture is concerned. Each ethnic group is blessed with a unique language and cultural paraphernalia that can withstand the test of time.

But recent studies have shown that many of these languages in the country are either at the brink of extinction or already disappeared.

While the mystery surrounding the disappearances of some of these minor languages continue to remain elusive, NCAC in collaboration with UNESCO, organised a one-day workshop in Enugu to kick-start the move to preserve the languages.

Declaring the workshop open, the chief host, Governor Chimaroke Nnamani condemned what he called the institutional attack on the cultures and traditions of the venerable people of Africa.

The governor who spoke through his Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Arch. Paul Nze blamed colonialism and other western induced developmental programmes such as globalization and African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as partly responsible for the destruction of African values.

His words; "the institutionalisation of English as a means of communication by the colonial masters and its adoption as instructive tool has continued to decimate the indigenous languages of our people." Addressing the

participants, the Chief Executive of the NCAC, Mr M. Maidugu said Nigeria is confronted by the ugly effect of alien cultures to the extent that some Nigerians could not speak their languages.

He said: "Worse still, Nigerian authors in indigenous languages are daily abandoning such crafts and calling to embrace the highly patronised English language texts."

In his goodwill message, the Country Representative of UNESCO/ECOWAS, Mr Hubert Charles said the theme of cultural preservation has been in the front burner of his agency which he said has led to the identifications of two World Heritage sites in the Nigeria.

Participants in the workshop were of the view that unless there is a combine efforts to address the phenomenon, more languages are on the brink of extinction.

Four papers were presented by the resource parsons. In one of the papers, the presenter, Dr Andrew Haruna of the University of Maiduguri revealed that about 15 languages have so far disappeared from the Trans-Saharan region of the North while 30 are on the brink of extinction with very handful good speakers left in existence, mostly old people.

The workshop resolved that in order to reverse the ugly trend, oral and intangible cultural heritage must be promoted and safeguarded by relevant government and non-governmental agencies.

It called for the establishment of publishing houses that cater for the minority languages as the long term benefits are unqualifiedly while the existing publishing houses should be encouraged to publish text books in one or two minor languages.

Participants agreed that language specialists and the local communities should cooperate in language preservation especially in the face of electronic age challenges and the threat of globalisation. Also, that universities should be challenged to take practical steps to encourage students of languages and linguistics to work on their indigenous languages.

A reward system aimed at encouraging the continuous use and development of endangered languages should be instituted at community and state levels.

Policy makers should put into action the National Policy on Education that a child be taught in his or her mother tongue while the wider lingua franca should be taught at the kindergarten and primary schools as languages courses.

8. Places to Go - On the Net and in the World

Peruvian Congress Website entirely in the Quechua language

To see the website, go to:

<http://www.congreso.gob.pe/qu/index.asp>

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AILA Language Policy Research Network

AILA has now approved the establishment of a Research Network on Language Policy. Its website is

<http://www.lpren.org/>

The network also hosts a mailing list. For information, visit:

<http://groups.google.com/group/LPREN>

Symposium in Honor of Joshua A. Fishman's Eightieth Birthday

Joshua A. Fishman's eightieth birthday will be celebrated at the University of Pennsylvania on Sunday, September 10, 2006 with a one-day symposium honoring his pioneering contributions to the study of language and society.

In addition to a keynote by Professor Nkonko Kamwangamalu of Howard University on language policy and practice in post-apartheid South Africa, and a special presentation to Fishman on behalf of Maori people by three Maori representatives, speakers include sociolinguistic greats of Fishman's generation – Dell Hymes, Courtney Cazden, and William Labov, as well as a distinguished intergenerational panel composed of Shirley Brice Heath, John Baugh, and Kendall King, and a second panel of newly emerging scholars. Scholars from all over the world have already registered to join this celebration of a visionary and inspiring leader.

For more information about the symposium, including how to register and how to submit congratulatory greetings and narratives, visit

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/clpp/fishman80/>

28th Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum

<http://www.gse.upenn.edu/cue/forum.php>

In most parts of the world attempts to homogenize education must compete with ever-expanding cultural and linguistic diversity. Standardized educational goals and assessments are becoming dominant as school systems seek to prepare students to participate in broad national and international markets. Yet students and teachers also live their lives in rich and vibrant local communities, which do not conform to standardized knowledges and practices. The 28th Ethnography in Education Research Forum seeks to explore directions for education in these trying times. What are the implications of educational standardization for the value of local knowledges in education? How can ethnographers put local knowledges and practices back on national and international agendas?

The Ethnography in Education Research Forum invites papers that explore these issues by ethnographically documenting grassroots responses to varying levels of educational policy, describing teacher-researcher collaboration in the development of equitable educational practices, making theoretical and methodological connections between the study of societal level phenomena and local processes, bringing to light covert responses to overt policy decisions, and critically examining relationships between academic and public interests.

E-MELD School of Best Practices in Digital Language Documentation

<http://linguistlist.org/emeld/school/index.html>

This site promotes best practices in digitizing language data. Computer programs commonly used in field research, such as word processors and spreadsheets, produce files that are often unreadable after only a few years. Physical media like cassette tapes deteriorate even when carefully stored. This site suggests how you might collect, convert and store your data in robust digital formats.

Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and promoting American Indian languages

<http://www.native-languages.org/>

This is a compendium of online materials about more than 800 indigenous languages of the Western Hemisphere and the people that speak them.

The Native American Language Center at the University of California, Davis

<http://nas.ucdavis.edu/NALC/home.html>

The Center has a dual function: to encourage linguistic research on American Indian languages, and to foster the intergenerational transfer of language knowledge in Native American communities. The overall aim of the Center is to develop a sustained and productive relationship between American Indian linguistic scholarship and the needs and aspirations of Native American people. The Center encourages the active participation of scholars and students, both native and non-native, in the task of language preservation and revitalization, while also providing the resources and support for the training of a new and engaged generation of linguists.

Virtual Livonia

Uldis Balodis, a Latvian linguist working in the USA, has for many years now been running a highly informative web-site dedicated to the highly endangered Livonian language, formerly spoken by a community of fisherfolk on the coast of Kurzeme in western Latvia. The language is now in imminent danger of being the next European language to perish, with only a handful of first-language speakers left. But intensive revival efforts are under way, as documented on his site
<http://homepage.mac.com/uldis/livonia/livonia.html>

9. Forthcoming Meetings

Pearl Beach Papuanists' workshop: 27-29 Oct 2006

Now calling for papers and for registration of participants.

The Linguistics Department at Sydney University is organising a workshop for Papuanists to be held at the Crommelin Field Station, Pearl Beach
(<http://www.bio.usyd.edu.au/SOBS/RESEARCH/FACILITY/Cromm.html>) from Friday 27 October to Sunday 29 October.

Anyone who has an interest in Papuan languages and linguistics is invited to come and present a paper or just to listen to other people's papers and join in the discussion. Papers should be 20 or 40 minutes long and on a topic related to Papuan languages or linguistics.

Space is limited to 35 people, so you should register as soon as possible. Costs for the workshop will be minimal - around \$35 for all meals over the weekend and \$15 per night for accommodation at Crommelin (or you can organise your own accommodation).

For more information, go to
http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/linguistics/ling/papuan_2006.html

To submit a title and abstract for a paper or to register, e-mail James McElvenny, jmc at student.usyd.edu.au

Linguapax symposium, Tokyo, 7 Oct 2006

We are pleased to announce that Linguapax Asia will hold the 3rd International Symposium at the University of Tokyo (Komaba Campus) on 7 October 2006 (Saturday). For details, please visit the following website:

<http://www.Linguapax-Asia.org>

Tasaku Tsunoda, Linguapax Asia

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 20-21 Nov 2006 in Swansea, Wales

We would like to announce that the School of Law/ University of Swansea in Wales is hosting an international conference on this topic in joint co-operation with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Welsh Language Board.

We are honoured to have Mr Fernand de Varennes, Mr Jean-Marie Woehrling and Mr Robert Dunbar as our keynote speakers. For more detailed information, please contact Mr Gwyn Parry (R.G.Parry at swansea.ac.uk)

Simone Klinge, Council of Europe /Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Strasbourg

Mercator International Symposium on Minority Languages

“Linguistic Rights as a Matter of Social Inclusion”

19 - 21 October 2006

Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC), Barcelona
Organizer: Mercator-Legislation, CIEMEN (Barcelona, Catalonia)

www.ciemen.org/mercator/simposis/2006ML/index2006en.htm

11th International Conference on Minority Languages (ICML 11), 5-6 July 2007, Pécs, Hungary.

Call for papers and further details

http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/ICML_call_for_papers.doc

http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/ICML_call_for_papers.pdf

Conference website

<http://www.nytud.hu/icml11/>

Series Title: LINCOS Studies in Asian Linguistics 64

Anvita Abbi's book on the Andamanese languages – the fifth language family of India – has just appeared. Professor Abbi is at the Center of Linguistics and English at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

This is a book on the languages of one of the world's most endangered and ancient linguistic groups - the Andamanese. Andamanese, a language isolate, is considered the fifth language family of India. Based on fieldwork conducted in the impenetrable jungles of the Andaman Islands, the author brings out a comparative linguistic sketch of Great Andamanese, Jarawa, and Onge. The book provides the first detailed description of phonology, word formation processes, morphophonemic processes, lexicon containing words from various semantic fields, and syntax of the three languages.

Similarities and differences between Great Andamanese, Jarawa and Onge are discussed to suggest possible genealogical affiliations and language contact. In addition, the book contains information on the nature of the field work pursued by the author, as well visual materials, which help contextualize the different tribes and their languages, in terms of civilization and environment. This is very relevant in the context of Tsunami-havoc that led to dislocation of some of the Andamanese tribes.

The CD-ROM contains sound files, which help to provide more detailed phonetic and prosodic information as well as phonetic variation among the speakers of the dying and 'mixed' language such as Great Andamanese. This is an important book as the speakers of these languages [8 Great Andamanese, 250 Jarawa, and 94 Onge] represent the last survivors of the pre-Neolithic population of the Southeast Asia. Latest research by geneticists (Science 2005) indicates that the Andamanese tribes are the remnants of the first migration from Africa that took place 70,000 years before the present. These languages are highly endangered, especially Great Andamanese, of which not more than 6-8 speakers are left. Even these few speakers have stopped speaking the language amongst themselves. Very little work on these languages has been carried out so far. While a cross-linguistic study in the present book has generated a good description of typological similarities and differences among languages, the comparative study of the lexicon and word formation processes draw the reader's attention to the genetic similarity between Onge and Jarawa.

The accompanying CD-ROM exposes, for the first time, the sounds and pictures of the tribes in their natural surroundings that may serve as a rare audiovisual treat to the users of the book. Some important sociohistorical events, which happened to take place during the author's field trip, are also included in the CD, providing an indispensable insight into the lives and culture of these ancient peoples. Each grammatical sketch is complete in itself as it deals with all the aspects of grammar from sound system to syntax to a large inventory of lexical items and sociolinguistics. The current book is rich in visual representation. It has thirty one tables and figures, seven maps and substantial number of photographs of tribes taken in their natural surroundings.

Because of the unique and rare nature of the data the book is launched with a CD-ROM containing pictures, first-hand raw linguistic data, sound files of songs and narrations, short video clippings shot in the local habitat. For more information, please see www.lincom-europa.com.

Publication Year: 2006

Publisher: Lincom GmbH

<<http://www.lincom.at/>>

Linguistic Field(s): General Linguistics

Subject Language(s): Jarawa

Format: Paperback

ISBN 3895868663

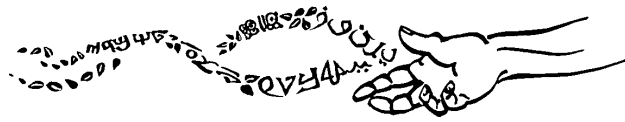
Pages: 175

Price: Europe €64.00 USA \$78.08 UK £44.89

10. Recent Publications

Anvita Abbi: Endangered Languages of the Andaman Islands

As Andamanese data have been analyzed against the parameters provided by the most current theoretical research in linguistic typology, the linguistic data and its analysis reported in the current book are of utmost importance theoretically, typologically, and historically.



FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Registered Charity 1070616

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, Gordon 2005) lists just over 6,900 living languages. Population figures are available for just over 6,600 of them (or 94.5%). Of these 6,600, it may be noted that:

56% 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 100 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:-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Membership in the Foundation is open to all. If you need an application form, please contact the Editor at the address on page 2 above.

