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Approaches to and Strategies for Language Revitalization

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The Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages

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Abstract and Keywords

There are many paths language revitalization can take, but they are not mutually exclusive. A central aspect of language revitalization is the creation of new speakers. One path is for families to learn and transmit the endangered language at home. Schools are major venues for language learning. Language nests and immersion schools have been especially effective. Adult language education has also become a critical part of language revitalization. Universities and "bootstrap" methods such as the Master-Apprentice Program have been able to bring adults to high proficiency. Linguistic archives have been useful for access to language, especially when there are no speakers left. Modernization of the language is also unavoidable, including new vocabulary and the development of writing systems if necessary. Most importantly, language revitalization should involve increased use of the language, by native speakers and learners alike.
Keywords: immersion schools, language nests, family language revitalization, master-apprentice programs, modernization of endangered languages.

1. Introduction

Language revitalization is not an automatic response to language endangerment. In fact, endangerment itself is to a large extent driven by community-internal attitudes that their language is inferior to the encroaching socially dominant language, and no longer useful. These internal feelings are in turn driven in part by external evaluations of the language as useless and should be given up for the sake of assimilation to the larger society. This sense of inferiority of the language and culture is constantly reinforced through education and policies of the larger society. Furthermore, even those who love their language can easily feel a paralyzing sense of despair and hopelessness as they observe people ceasing to use it and children not learning it.

A change of attitude needs to happen before language revitalization can occur (Bradley 2003; A. King, Chapter 23, this volume, and J. King, Chapter 26, this volume). How this change can occur tends to relate to several factors from both outside the community (such as a change in language policy) and inside (such as economic improvement within the community). But in my experience with endangered languages, I have most often seen language revitalization develop steam primarily through the actions and inspiration of individuals within the community—and usually these are individuals of the generation that did not learn their language in the home, and feel the loss. There are many stories of people who have begun a language revolution through their own personal acts, either with the encouragement of their community or simply on their own (e.g., Fellman 1973; Baldwin et al. 2013; Grounds and Grounds 2013; little doe baird1 (p. 444) 2013; see also Baldwin and Costa, Chapter 24, this volume). People outside the speech community—funders, researchers, consultants, teachers—can be helpful and even inspiring in the process, but it takes inspiration and commitment from within for language revitalization to begin and to make progress.

I will focus on four main aspects to the revitalization of endangered and sleeping languages: child learning, adult learning, modernization, and language use. Child learning would include school and home as the main venues; adult learning can occur through university classes, community classes, Master-Apprentice approaches, or learning from documentation (all of which can shade into each other). Modernization includes new vocabulary development and other kinds of language engineering, and use of new writing systems. Language *use* is the ultimate goal of the other aspects, but for endangered languages, using the language has to begin as a consciously planned endeavor with its own approaches and strategies. Each of these four aspects of language revitalization function as strategies for success of the other three aspects as well, as we shall see. In the best of all worlds, all four of these aspects synchronize for a strong program.

2. Child learning

A community begins to be aware that their language is endangered when it becomes obvious that many of their children are not learning their heritage language at home, or are ceasing its use at school age. But as mentioned above, the call to action is often later than that, when the parents themselves have grown up without their language and feel the significance of this loss. The home has faltered as a venue for learning the heritage language, and the school both historically and currently focuses on the mainstream language of the larger society, overtly or unconsciously discouraging the use of the heritage tongue. Yet children are the master language learners of humanity, so if they can be exposed to the local language early enough, thoroughly enough, and long enough, it can be hoped that the community's shift away from the language can be reversed.

2.1. Language at home

It seems like the obvious place to begin language revitalization would be in the home itself. And it is often the case that individuals take the reins of language revitalization in just that way. The Miami language is one case in point (Baldwin and Costa, Chapter 24, this volume), where what has become a strong community-wide revitalization program began with a single family using their language at home. The inspiration for Hebrew language revitalization is often said to be Ben Yehuda's decision to speak only Hebrew to his son (Fellman 1973). There are many examples that can be found of people choosing to use their endangered language at home with their children (Hinton 2013). This approach (p. 445) to language revitalization allows children to learn their language early and naturally, the way everyone learns their first language.

While there are many families that have committed to using their endangered language at home with their children, they are generally taking the plunge on their own. Community-based language revitalization rarely starts with family language support programs. Community-based efforts at language revitalization have tended to ignore family-based possibilities or treat them as an afterthought. In fact, I have sometimes seen that even the teachers teaching the endangered language in schools fail to use it in their own home environment.

But in recent years, there have been a number of family-based programs developed, among them notably the Thousand Homes Māori language program in New Zealand (Kotahi Mano Kāika -1000 Ngāi Tahu Homes, http://www.kmk.maori.nz/home/). An excellent resource for Māori parents is *Kei Roto I te Whare: Māori language in the home* (Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa 2008). It is downloadable from the web (https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-mohiotanga/language/kei-roto-i-te-whare-reprinted). In Scotland, Finlay Macleoid used to run the Taic/CNSA Family Language Plan for young parents (MacLeoid 2013). In 2016, the Tolowa nation in California started a program for five families, led by Pyuwa and Ruby Bommelyn, the first family to use the Tolowa language at home with their children in this era of revitalization (see an interview with Ruby, in Medina 2015). In these programs, in almost all these families the parents are second-language learners, sometimes learning along with their children. Also, as new generations of children grow up who have learned their language from second-language parents or from immersion schools, many of them are choosing to use the language at home with their children. Thus language revitalization in the family is a growing phenomenon and a very hopeful result of the hard work people have been doing over decades of other approaches to language revitalization.

Family language programs first must make sure that parents have the opportunity to learn the kind of language they need at home with their children. Even parents who have become proficient through school or university programs find that once they are trying to use the language with their babies they lack the vocabulary they need for the intimate details of their interaction. So family language programs teach the language that parents would use with their children. The Māori (O'Regan 2013) and Scots Gaelic programs teach domains of language such as getting children dressed or changing an infant's diapers, waking up in the morning, feeding children, getting into car seats, praise and endearments, and getting children to bed at night (McLeoid 2013). Families learning on their own may seek elders who know the language to ask for instruction in these domains (Grounds 2013) and, more, may seek to learn some traditional aspects of child-rearing. Parents who are learning the language may learn alongside their children in a family program, or may bring home what they learn in an adult program and teach it to their children. Parents learning their language as a second language may try to be consistent in using what they know even though they might have to use the mainstream language the rest of the time (Baldwin 2013).

(p. 446) Inserting the language into a household where English has been used is often tricky. It may feel unnatural to start interacting with one's family in that language, and the tendency to slip back into the first language is hard to overcome. Reminding each other to stay in the language is important; parents can remind a child who has slipped into English that they know how to say it in their other language, or may even refuse to respond unless the child says it in the language. It can be fun for the children to turn tables and remind the adult to speak the language.

Children may feel uncomfortable with the shift into a different language at first. One strategy to get their cooperation is to start with games and other fun activities that use the language (Hinton 2013b). It is also critical to talk to your children about why using this different language is important and what the benefits of it are. Both the Māori and Scots Gaelic programs suggest making a family language plan where all members of the family are involved in the planning, including children. Families trying to make their heritage tongue a language of home also benefit by forming relations with other families with the same goals, and get together socially, showing the usefulness of the language beyond the walls of the household.

Re-establishing the heritage language as a home language is language revitalization at its best. It recreates natural language transmission across generations and makes it a normal part of life. But language at home by itself does not guarantee its survival in the lives of the children. Without additional support from sources outside the nuclear family—the extended family, other families, community programs, and/or school programs—the family may not be able to raise children who are strong enough and dedicated enough speakers able to pass the language on to their own children. While the home may have been the last bastion of endangered languages while they were in decline, the language faltered there too in the end, because of lack of support outside the home. This could easily happen again to families using their language at home if there were nothing else to support it.

2.2. Language nests

With language loss in indigenous communities around the world at a critical point in the 1980s, it was clear that if people wanted to save their languages something drastic would have to be done. Various programs involving the schools were and are being developed (see section 2.3), but some people realized that if families were not using the language at home, it would be best to start bringing the language to the children at the earliest possible age by other means. In 1982, New Zealand, followed in 1984 by Hawai‘i, developed the system of “language nests” (*Kōhanga Reo* in Māori, *Pūnana Leo* in Hawaiian), and this has been replicated in many locations throughout the world. Ideally, language nests are locations where pre-school-age children can spend a large part of their day, and the grandparent generation, who (again ideally) know the language, will communicate with the children entirely in that language. Thus even if the home is using the mainstream (p. 447) language, the children can be exposed sufficiently to the local language to become near-native speakers.

There are now language nests all over the world—Besides New Zealand and Hawai‘i, there are language nests (and immersion preschools for endangered languages by other labels) in mainland United States (for example, the Esther Martinez fund of the Administration for Native Americans funded proposals for nine ongoing or planned language nests and other pre-school immersion programs in 2015 (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/resource/native-languages-immersion-esther-martinez-initiative). In British Columbia, the First Peoples’ Cultural Council was funding ten language nests in 2016 (Aliana Parker and Suzanne Gessner, personal communication, July 4, 2016). The Northwest Territories of Canada alone has over twenty language nests (https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/early-childhood-and-school-services/early-childhood/language-nests). There are also language nests in Mexico (Meyer and Soberanes Bojórquez 2009, 2010). In Europe, both the Skolt Saami and Inari Saami have language nests (Latomaa and Sirkku 2005, 171, Olthuis, Kivela, and Skutnabb-Kangas 2013), along with Lower Sorbian (http://www.witaj-sprachzentrum.de/index.php/de).

In the ideal language nest, the mainstream language of the nation is never heard, and children are engaged at all times in activities where the heritage language is being used. But this ideal is sometimes not reached, since even the grandparents are often so used to speaking the mainstream societal language to their younger relatives that they may have a hard time maintaining their heritage tongue with the children. And as the decades pass by, the number of elders who speak the language is declining, so that it is harder to staff the language nests. Strategies for making language nests function

as they are supposed to are always evolving, including developing strong curriculum and training speakers in how to remain in the language, make themselves understood, and engage the children. As the number of adult native speakers declines, various means to produce new fluent adult second-language speakers are also developed to fill the teacher gap (see section 3).

Many language revitalization programs begin with language nests. While the very best time to introduce the language to children is at infancy and even in the womb, the years before school age are still a very fine time for language learning. Since many countries do not require formal pre-school education, laws and policies are more lenient toward minority language immersion in language nests than they are in the primary and secondary schools, making it easier for communities to implement a language nest than a school program. It is a delight to everyone involved to hear a tiny child singing or chattering easily in the heritage language.

However, language nests have only temporary success in developing new speakers if that is the only input a child has of the heritage language. Without further programs or use at home, once a child has left the language nest there will be no way to continue learning and using the language. Thus language nests are ideally followed by bilingual education or immersion schooling in the language (see section 2.3.2).

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2.3. The role of schools in language revitalization

Formal education is a requirement in virtually all countries, and although school has been and is even now one of the most important reasons why local languages are endangered, there are many reasons why people turn to the schools for language revitalization. First, it is where a community's children are together for a large portion of their waking hours; if some or all of those hours can be in the heritage language, a whole generation of young speakers might be created. Second, by changing a school's orientation to the language and culture of the local community it can hopefully stop being an agent for language loss. Beyond that, it can become a location for teaching traditional culture and values as well—knowledge that has faded in the wake of colonization and mainstream education. In Hawai'i, for example, the schoolday at an immersion school begins with Hawaiian song and teachings that inculcate Hawaiian values. Highschool electives may include such options as Hawaiian chant, hula, sailing and canoe navigation, and traditional gardening (Wilson and Kamanā 2001).

School programs are often developed and mandated across a broad swath of languages by national governments. In Australia, for example, part of government policy since 2009 has been to support "language and culture nests" (using the term "language nest" as a program in public primary schools, a different definition from the Māoris and Hawaiians).

Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests are an initiative of *OCHRE*, the NSW Government's community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs. They support local communities with realising their visions and aspirations to revitalise, reclaim, and maintain their traditional languages through the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools. https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/policy-reform/language-and-culture/nests.

Similarly, Mexico has a nation-wide bilingual education program for indigenous languages, with centralized training of bilingual teachers. Government-run programs are often criticized and often ineffectual for language retention (e.g., see Hamel 2008). But on a more local scale, there are also ways for communities to be in control of their own language programs and their own schools, easier done perhaps in some locations than others. A high level of local control tends to produce better results (Hamel 2008, 328).

2.3.1. Bilingual education

In the 1970s and 1980s, bilingual programs were set up in many countries. Governments support bilingual education as a way to improve the educational prospects for students whose first language was not the mainstream language of the school, while at the same time making sure that the children are learning the mainstream language. There are two main models of bilingual education—the transitional model and the maintenance model. The transitional model suggests that once the child is proficient in the school language, education in their home language can be dropped. In the maintenance model, education in both languages is continued throughout, so that the first language continues to be supported. (A comparison of the transitional and maintenance models (p. 449) can be found at http://www.idra.org/IDRA_Newsletter/April_2001_Self_Renewing_Schools_Early_Childhood/Boosting_Our_Understanding_of_Bilingual_Education/. But for endangered languages, many communities see bilingual education as something else—an opportunity to strengthen their languages, and to bring the local language into the school even if it is not the home language. Thus bilingual education became one approach to language revitalization. Children were coming to school knowing English or some other mainstream language and not knowing their local heritage language. Bilingual education became an avenue for learning the local language as well as using it for a good deal of the [instructional content] (Watahomigie and Yamamoto 1987).

2.3.2. Immersion schools

Immersion schooling is an intense response to the loss of the heritage language in home and community. Immersion schools go beyond bilingual education in that most or *all* education takes place in the heritage language. In the most intense form, the mainstream language will be introduced only as a “foreign” language, although the students generally know the mainstream language anyway, from exposure at home and in their daily lives outside of school.

Children may not know the heritage language at all when they arrive for their first days in the immersion school. But immersion learning at any age takes place through the medium of actions and activities which allow “comprehensible input” for language learning (Krashen 1983). A very first communication, for example, might be when the children come into the room and the teacher greets them and shows them where to put their jackets and other belongings, talking about it all at the same time in the target language. She may lead them to the rug in the center of the room and tell them to sit down, using understandable gestures as nonverbal cues. She will use pictures to tell stories or to explain various topics, or talk about items that are passed around the room. Weather may be a daily topic, with pictures that the teacher can point to. She can ask questions such as “Is it raining?” in the target language,

and by the second day, if not the first, the students are likely to be able to say “yes” or “no” at least—and soon when she asks what the weather is like students will be able to say “It’s raining,” or other appropriate response. When it’s snack time, the foods will be named in normal conversation as they are given to the children.

These strategies for bringing students into the language come out of applied linguistics, where they were developed not with endangered languages in mind, but rather for foreign language teaching and teaching English as a second language (ESL). For example, a resource that has been used frequently in teacher-training for immersion schools is Asher (2000), the developer of the popular TPR (Total Physical Response) method. Applied linguistics has much to offer to language learning of all kinds, including endangered languages (Cope and Penfield 2011).

Since an endangered language almost by definition exists within a society where a mainstream language surrounds it, it is usually deemed necessary to learn to use the mainstream language. Most activists in language revitalization desire that their children will grow up to be bilingual. If their children go on to higher education, it is likely (p. 450) to be at universities that teach in the mainstream language; and they will most likely get jobs that require it as well. Full-scale K-12 immersion schools must find a balance between the two languages in order to send their children forth in life as strong bilingual speakers. Immersion schools have found that it is important not to introduce the mainstream language too soon, since the endangered language is so vulnerable. Ke Kula Nawahiokalaniopu’u in Hilo, Hawai‘i, for example, will introduce English as a “foreign language” in high school, and occasionally uses English-language textbooks for some of their classes in the upper grades, even though even in those classes, classroom interaction is entirely in Hawaiian (Hinton, personal observation, 2014).

There are immersion schools all over the world, for both endangered and non-endangered languages. The most effective outcomes of the language nests described above are of programs that also provide primary and secondary education in the language.

2.3.3. Minority language classes in Majority-language schools

Many speech communities do not have the resources for a bilingual or immersion school. Even so, they may be able to develop language classes in the local schools. While a language class is rarely sufficient to create fluent speakers (as most of us know from our foreign-language classes in primary and secondary school), a language class can help students gain some level of knowledge of and appreciation for their heritage language that can serve as a foundation for further development. In the diverse Native American communities of California, for example, there are a number of small communities that teach language classes in the local schools. A few out of many possible examples:

- • The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation has founded their own school, the Yocha Dehe Wintun Academy, where language and culture is a strong component of their children’s education (http://www.yochadehe.org/tribal-government/yocha-dehe-wintun-academy). Through an

imaginative language curriculum (pre-K through eighth grade) and a core of talented teachers, they have produced students with strong enough proficiency in their Patwin (Wintuan) language that at least one student has used it to pass her high school “foreign” language requirement (Leland Kinter, personal communication, May 21, 2015).

- • The Yurok tribe has been teaching their language to tribal children and other interested students for many years now in five public schools in Humboldt County (*Los Angeles Times*, 2013).
- • On the Round Valley Reservation, the talented teacher Cheryl Tuttle has been teaching the previously “extinct” (dormant) Wailaki language to fourteen excited high school students, partnering with University of California linguists and working with the extensive documentation on the language to develop her language lessons (North Coast Journal News Blog, June 9, 2015: http://www.northcoastjournal.com/NewsBlog/archives/2015/06/09/welcome-back-wailaki-an-extinct-native-language-rebounds.)

(p. 451) In the public schools, teachers need a teaching certificate in order to run a classroom. This creates difficulties for teachers of endangered languages—there are very few people, especially in small speech communities such as those of Native California, who have both a teaching degree and strong speaking knowledge of their heritage language. To address this problem, pressure and planning by California Indians led to the passage of AB544 by California State Legislature, which states that any federally recognized California Indian Tribe may develop and administer an assessment of fluency of a person and recommend that person to receive a language teaching credential, which authorizes the holder to teach that language in California public schools and adult education courses.

3. Adult language learning

Even though it seems commonsense to focus on little children for language revitalization, who are such great language learners, adult speakers are critically necessary for language revitalization. Home-based language revitalization can’t happen without parents who can use the language. Language nests and immersion schools can’t function without teachers who speak the language. But it is typically the case that language revitalization is taking place during a time when adult speakers are diminishing in number, especially those of parental and professional age. A language revitalization program without a strong adult language-learning program will have great difficulty moving forward successfully. Thus adult language teaching and learning is an extremely important part of language revitalization.

Approaches to adult language learning are varied. I will examine a few of the dominant approaches: university and other institutional classes, the Master-Apprentice approach, and learning through linguistic documentation. Almost any program for adult language learning will have different results for different people, with some people gaining much higher proficiency than others. Much of the success in language learning depends on the learner’s degree of commitment and dedication, and his own ingenuity. Other factors are also important, such as amount of available resources, previous exposure, and degree of difference between the

target language and the first language (http://www.languagetesting.com/how-long-does-it-take).

3.1. University and other institutional classes

All language-learning courses involve the teaching of vocabulary and grammar by some means. The most successful language classes at colleges and universities utilize immersion strategies to teach these, and go further to teach conversation and cultural aspects of language use as well. There are a growing number of successful language programs for endangered languages around the world. Māori, Hawaiian, Irish, and other endangered languages, especially those where a country or other large political unit has a single endangered language that is emblematic to that area, have strong language (p. 452) education at the university level. Universities in regions of great linguistic diversity have a harder time finding ways to assist in the learning of endangered languages, but there are some great models, including the University of Victoria in British Columbia. There intensive course sequences on particular languages is rare, but they have developed a major program in language revitalization itself, where a student can work toward a certificate or an MA in language revitalization, which also includes self-study of one's heritage tongue through the Master-Apprentice approach (see section 3.2).

Excellent language learning programs have also been developed in college and university settings. For example, the aboriginal-owned and operated Six Nations Polytechnic on the Six Nations Reserve, in Ontario, Canada, teaches Mohawk using a special method of their own (the "Root-Word Method") which also includes teaching in total immersion—always the most important factor in any method that puts out proficient speakers (Hinton, personal observation, March 29, 2016). Another home-grown method is the Accelerated Second-Language Acquisition method (ASLA), developed by Arapaho speaker Stephen Neyooxet Greymorning, and taught at the University of Montana. This is a image-based method, also taught entirely through immersion. Greymorning has done trainings on ASLA in many places in North America, as well as Australia, and the method has become an important language-teaching tool by an increasing number of endangered languages.

3.2. The Master-Apprentice approach

The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program was developed in California by the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, a native-run organization which was founded in 1992 as a response to the critical endangerment of all California Indian languages. California has the situation of extreme linguistic diversity and very small populations, which makes it difficult or impossible for universities to develop effective language-learning programs.

The Master-Apprentice approach is a bootstrap language-learning strategy based on the strategies that individuals have used to learn language on their own. It was developed in response to the critical endangerment of the diverse indigenous languages of California. The Advocates run workshops for one-on-one teams of a speaker and a learner (usually self-selected), and train them to immerse themselves together so that the learner can develop proficiency in the language. The “10 points for language learning” are the basis of the approach. The “10 points” are informal and have been restated in various ways; the original instantiation of the rules are below.

1. **1.** Leave English behind
2. **2.** Make yourself understood with non-verbal communication
3. **3.** Teach in full sentences
4. **4.** Aim for real communication in your language of heritage
5. **5.** Language is also culture
6. (p. 453) **6.** Focus on listening and speaking (not reading and writing)
7. **7.** Learn and teach the language through activities
8. **8.** Use audio and video recording
9. **9.** Be an active learner
10. **10.** Be sensitive to each other’s needs; be patient and proud of each other and yourselves!

Explanations and details of each of these points can be found in Hinton, Vera, and Steele (2002, 10–19). The explanations of these points for language learning and exercises to practice them take place over a two- to three-day workshop. From then on the teams are essentially on their own, although in Master-Apprentice programs there is usually regular mentoring by phone, occasional visits, and follow-up workshops at least once a year.

The Master-Apprentice approach (or Mentor-Apprentice approach as it is alternatively named) has spread to many places, including Canada, Brazil, Australia, Scandinavia, and elsewhere in the United States. A recent list of Master-Apprentice programs has been developed by Ryan Henke, a graduate student in Linguistics studying language documentation and revitalization at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. At the point of this writing, his list shows 123 languages around the world that are using or attempting or planning to use the Master-Apprentice program (Ryan Henke, personal communications, June 18–August 11, 2016).

The Master-Apprentice approach is popular because it is relatively simple in concept, commonsense, and based on approaches that individuals have used throughout history to learn a language through immersion in a speech community. All one needs is a speaker and a person with a passion to learn the language. The difficulties come, though, from not actually having a location where there are lots of people using the language all day, every day. The team has to create their own speech community and their own immersion.

3.3. Learning from documentation

In this era of rapid decline of linguistic diversity, there are hundreds of languages that can no longer be labeled “endangered,” and are instead “extinct.” But even in these cases, so long as there is documentation, it may be possible for people to reconstruct, learn, and use the language. Because of this and other reasons, language activists prefer not to use the term

“extinct” at all but instead use the terms “dormant” or “sleeping” (Hinton 2001).2 Linguist Wesley Leonard (2008, 23) writes that there is no such thing as an extinct language unless it has never been documented.

> Miami was reclaimed from extinction within a proposed category of “sleeping languages,” which I define as those that are not currently known but that are documented, claimed as part of one’s heritage, and thus may be used again. (p. 454)

A documented language always has the possibility of revival among its people, and Leonard’s own tribe’s language, Myaamia (Miami) is a strong example (Leonard 2008; Baldwin 2013,). Thus a documented language is not “extinct,” but rather it is dormant, or “sleeping.” The *Ethnologue* uses both the terms “extinct” and “dormant” now, defining the latter on the basis of community rather than documentation:

> Although a dormant language is not used for daily life, there is an ethnic community that associates itself with a dormant language and views the language as a symbol of that community’s identity. Though a dormant language has no proficient users, it retains some social uses. In contrast, an extinct language is no longer claimed by any extant community as the language of their heritage identity. Extinct languages are lacking in both users and societal uses. (https://www.ethnologue.com/enterprise-faq/what-difference-between-dormant-language-and-extinct-language-0.)3

The term “language revival” is sometimes used instead of “revitalization” for the re-introduction of a dormant language into modern use. Hebrew is the most famous (and perhaps the only) example of a fully revived language that was once dormant. The Cornish language (the Brittanic Celtic language indigenous to Cornwall) is another example of a dormant language that is in advanced stages of revival (Ferdinand 2013; Welsh Center for Language Planning 2015). In the United States, Miami (Baldwin 2013), Wampanoag (Makepeace 2011; littledoe 2013), and Chochenyo Ohlone are three examples of languages being revived; and in Australia, Kaurna is one of the best-known examples of language revival (Amery 2016).

A community without speakers needs to know how to access and utilize documentation for language revival purposes. Nicholas Thieberger has written a fine guide on this for Australian languages, based on a workshop held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in 1993 (Thieberger 1995). Starting with the issue of how to identify one’s language, the guide gives instruction on how to find publications and materials on one’s language, how to understand the documentors’ writing systems and read the words, how to develop a consistent spelling system for one’s community, how to understand and use the grammar of one’s language, and how to use a computer to organize the data and create good learning resources.

In 1995, the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival developed the Breath of Life Language Restoration Workshop for California Languages, which has now been going on biennially ever since. Berkeley has a set of archives of field notes and recordings covering a century and a half of documentation on California Indian languages, and also even older documents from early scholars, and from the Mission era when California was part of Mexico. Participants in the program come to learn how to find archival materials, how to read and analyze them, and how to use them for language learning and teaching, materials

development, and actual use in their daily lives. Here (p. 455) are just a few recent examples of how Breath of Life has been useful in helping people do language revitalization from documentation:

- • The comprehensive Mutsun dictionary co-authored by long-time BOL participant Quirina Geary and linguist Natasha Warner (now a professor at the University of Arizona), who Geary first met at Breath of Life. This dictionary took over fifteen years of collaboration and includes every word ever recorded by the various linguists that worked with the last speakers. The dictionary is published by the online *Journal of Language Documentation and Conservation* (Warner, Butler and Geary 2016).
- • The Wailaki language class being taught to high school students on the Round Valley reservation by the talented teacher Cheryl Tuttle, who attended Breath of Life in 2014, and has since worked with her linguistic partners Justin Spence and Kayla Begay regularly to develop the curriculum and language lessons that she delivers to her students. An article about Tuttle's course can be seen at http://www.northcoastjournal.com/NewsBlog/archives/2015/06/09/welcome-back-wailaki-an-extinct-native-language-rebounds. A new participant from Round Valley attended Breath of Life in 2016, to study Yuki, the second of six languages in Round Valley, in order to start preparing to teach that language as well.
- • The escalating career of Vincent Medina, Chochenyo, who first came to Breath of Life in 2012, now a very proficient speaker. He is an invited speaker at many events, giving welcomes in Chochenyo, telling stories, and advocating for language revival. He was one of the main editors at the office of the *News from Native California* magazine for some time, and while there conceived and implemented the regular column "In our words," where in each issue there is a poem, a story, or other contribution in a California Indian language. He started the column off with an essay in Chochenyo that he composed himself (Medina 2014). In July 2016, he put together an exhibit on California Indian languages at the Maidu Museum in Roseville, California. Now deeply involved in a project of bringing California Indian foods to the public (see https://www.makamham.com/makamham-means-our-food/), Vince brings the vocabulary of food into the forefront, and still continues to teach Chochenyo to his family and use it with his friends.
- • Louis Trevino, Rumsen, who was a talented undergraduate in Political Science at Berkeley, came to Breath of Life in 2014 and immediately declared a minor in Linguistics. He now runs a Facebook blog for Rumsen researchers and learners called "Learning and Using the Rumsen Language," doing a sentence a day with context and analysis and adding a recording of the sentence; he generally sticks to a theme for several weeks, such as "Greetings," "Emotions," etc.
- • A fairly large number of parents who have attended Breath of Life make it a priority to use their language at home with their children, as well as sharing songs and traditional activities learned or enhanced by research at the workshop. Even when they are still learning the language themselves, this is perhaps the ultimate goal of language revitalization—transmitting the language and culture naturally again across generations.

(p. 456) Breath of Life by name and model has spread to other locations, including Oklahoma and Washington, DC (which also runs a biennial event on the odd years between Berkeley). The Washington, DC Breath of Life is for all languages of the United States and Canada, and works with the vast archives at the National Anthropological Archives, the Library of Congress, and the Museum of the American Indians. It has for the last several events been organized by Daryl Baldwin and the staff of his Myaamia Center at Miami University in Ohio. In 2015 a partnership was formed between the Myaamia Center and the Recovering Voices Project of the Smithsonian Institution, so that the two groups would together work on both funding and organizing of Breath of Life DC.

4. Language modernization

The problem with reviving languages with no speakers is that the documentation of a language is never complete. There may be many things missing in grammar and vocabulary, and even whole functions of conversation—such as conversational patterns, or how to talk to children. A large part of language revival is actually language *creation*. Daryl Kipp describes it this way:

> Our languages are adaptive, incorporating all we know since the beginning of our time. Think of how they describe our worlds; when our tribes first saw the horse, automobile and airplane. Think how our language stays with us no matter what inventions we encounter. It is only when we stop using them do they become inflexible and static. If we keep our language alive in our children, it will stay with them well past I-Pod, bio-fuel, MTV and the million other innovations coming towards them. Our languages can serve us to the end of time. . . . (Kipp 2009, 6–7).

4.1. New words

In an active language, new words are created and spread to others in all sorts of ways. Commercial companies hire people to do “product naming”; biologists seeking and finding new species of plants and animals have specific rules for developing scientific nomenclature. New items and concepts coming from other cultures may be named through borrowing from the language that created it. Or it can be an informal, organic process, such as the creative development and spread of slang.

A language that has not been used on a daily basis for awhile is behind the times in vocabulary development, and new topics and venues need new words in order for the language to be used again in daily life. Depending on the size and intensity of a language revitalization program, approaches to vocabulary development may range from informal, impromptu use of descriptive phrases or borrowings in conversations between language learners trying to use their language, to full-on official language committees and new-word dictionaries. Some examples of dictionaries that focus on including (p. 457) new words

are *Māmaka Kaiao: A Modern Hawaiian Vocabulary* (Hua'ōlelo2003) and *A Student's Dictionary of Modern Cornish* (Gendall 1991).

Here are some of the many possible strategies for developing new vocabulary:

- • borrow a word from the language that the concept comes from (probably with phonological and (if relevant) spelling changes: for example, Koyukon *kelaandas*, "pencil," from Russian *karandásh* (Denser-King 2008); Cornish *bytt*, from English *byte*, in computer jargon (Glendall 1991).
- • adopt a word from a related language that is still in use (for example, Hawaiian *pounamu* "jade," borrowed from Māori (Hua'ōlelo 2003). (While this would also count as an example of the strategy of borrowing a word (see above), the point here is that it is often considered more authentic to borrow from a closely related language.)
- • make a loan translation. A term in another language might consist of more than one word, such as a compound, whose components can be translated into one's own language (for example: Kaurna *wirltu yarlu* "sea eagle" is a loan translation from English "sea eagle: *wirltu* " eagle", *yarlu* "sea" (Amery 2016).
- • expand or shift the meaning of a word that already exists in the language to a new meaning (for example, the Havasupai word *tñudga* "to write" is expanded from its original meaning "to make a design (e.g., on a basket)") (Hinton et al. 1984).
- • modify a word that already exists, using affixation or other grammatical process to signal a new meaning. For example, Umatilla Sahaptin *pluuswit'awas*, "computer," for *pluus*, "brain" + *wit*, abstractive suffix + *awas*, instrumentative suffix (Denser-King, 2008).
- • create a phrase that describes the object or concept (example: Havasupai "Bible"—*tñud ñaa glab* (literally "flat black book", *tñud* "book", *ñaa* "black", *glab* "flat") (Hinton et al. 1984).

People at work reviving their languages can study the documentation to find the strategies that the former speakers used to coin new words.

A small group of people trying to revive their sleeping language through informally using the language together can just use these various strategies together informally as they struggle to converse. But some kind of authoritative decision-making is essential in large groups that are doing immersion schooling, simply to teach the subject matter of the classroom. The Hawaiians and the Cherokees are among the many groups that have official language committees, to decide on systematic principles, choose between suggested alternatives, and keep their language developing in a single direction between multiple communities and schools.

4.2. Writing systems

For indigenous languages that do not have a long history of written literature, writing systems must be devised and/or chosen from available choices. This is an involved (p. 458) process that may take years or even generations to settle, as intellectual and social changes affect people's choices (Grenoble and Whaley 2006; Hinton 2014). There is often a strong history of documentation of otherwise unwritten languages by linguists and other people who have taken on the task of documentation. Some groups have decided to use these linguistic

orthographies. Some First Nations programs in coastal British Columbia have done that; famed for their large numbers of consonants with unusual points and manners of articulation, the special symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet seem most appropriate to represent them. Using the same writing system in which their language may already have a large amount of documentation also gives people access to that documentation, which may be an important resource for language revitalization.

In other cases, it is deemed beneficial to design a new writing system, which is often modelled after existing writing systems for the mainstream language that the community people already know. Thus we see that most revitalizing languages in colonized and post-colonial countries of Europe and the New World will have alphabetic writing systems, using the symbols that are already familiar to the local community and easily available on typewriters and computers. Sounds not in the mainstream language can be represented by digraphs, diacritics, or redefinitions of how a given letter is pronounced.

In some cases, writing systems were developed within a community while the language was still strong. These orthographies may be very different from the mainstream language, and may even not be alphabetic. In North America, two of these systems are in use today in speech communities—the Cherokee syllabary and the Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics, used by many languages, and taught in immersion schools. Writing systems such as these, that have a long history within communities, are seen as part of the cultural traditions to be revitalized.

It is not necessary for a community to settle on a writing system before language teaching and learning take place. But certain important venues must use a writing system, such as immersion schools. Once established, a writing system has many important benefits for language revitalization, such as access to or community development of dictionaries, pedagogical grammars, reference grammars, children's books and other kinds of creative writing in the language, and ability to communicate on social media through writing. Writing also gives the opportunity for more public display of the language, on street signs and maps, newspapers, and flyers. Many communities make pocket-sized phrasebooks that can be distributed to community members, not just for possible use but also to increase awareness and interest in the language.

4.3. Reconstructing grammar

Documentation may also be incomplete with regard to the wide range of grammatical constructions that would have existed when the language was being used in daily communication. Further research on documentation, possibly from deep in the history of the language, and borrowing grammatical features from related living languages, are (p. 459) two of the main ways that the grammar of a language in the process of reclamation can be expanded. As Ferdinand writes for Cornish:

> An additional obstacle faced by Revived Cornish was the incompleteness of its syntax, semantics and lexicon. Since Cornish had been silent for about a century, there was no possibility of consulting with traditional speakers in order to fill in gaps or resolve inconsistencies. The issue of grammar and syntax was basically resolved by Nance and A. S. D. Smith between 1920 and 1940 using the works

> of Lhuyd (1707), Stokes (1872) and Breton grammar, the closest language to Cornish, as a comparative model. Although there were some mistakes in the reconstruction, these were rectified as soon as they came to light. (Ferdinand 2013, 213)

In some cases, there is simply no further documentation, and no related languages. This was the case for the California language Esselen, the first California language to go dormant (Golla 2011, 112). Linguist David Shaul has retrieved as much of the grammar as possible through analysis of the small corpus of words and phrases that exists (Shaul 1995) and has worked with members of the Esselen community on language revitalization at the Breath of Life workshops in Berkeley. Esselen may seem like a close to hopeless case. But despite the minimum of information on morphology and syntax, what has come out of the Esselen efforts of language revival is some lovely verbal art by people who identify with the Esselen languages: storytelling audio recordings by Louise Ramirez, powerful poetry by Deborah Miranda (published in Miranda 2012), and Esselen raps by Melissa Leal (Indian Country Today 2013. http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/02/28/california-educator-bridges-generation-gap-hip-hop-147707).

This brings up the question of "authenticity" in revitalizing languages. Linguists and language activists alike may wish that the language they are bringing back could replicate closely the language of their ancestors. However, the new versions of languages in revitalization are very likely to be quite different, and not just because of the necessity of adding new vocabulary. In the case of Hebrew, for example, it has been argued that modern Hebrew is a "hybrid" language, bringing in many elements of grammar from European languages (Zuckermann 2009).

Some people have suggested more than just to be tolerant of the kinds of language change that occur in revitalization but even to consciously teach a new version. An interesting article by Gary Holton discusses the kinds of phonological and grammatical changes that occur in the speech of second-language learners of endangered languages, and suggests accepting this and just teaching them that way (Holton 2009).

5. Language use

The biggest hurdle for both native speakers and language learners is to actually start using the language on a daily basis. For endangered languages, this is a major challenge. (p. 460) Just as elders in a community that has undergone language shift cease to use the language they grew up with because most of the community doesn't know it, so do second-language learners find themselves without interlocutors. Furthermore, there are various social and psychological factors that make people silent, even if they know the language well. The main strategy for developing the habits of language use is to join or create groups, times, and physical spaces where the language can happen. Of course an immersion school is one such space; and the home is another possible space. Beyond those important venues, sometimes people have set up "language houses" where the rule is that the language must be used most or all of the time. The Yurok tribe of California set up a program of "language pods," a regular gathering where people are using the language together—with a facilitator to make sure it happens

(http://www.yuroktribe.org/departments/education/Yurok_Tribe_Language_Program/documents/PodParticipants2011.pdf). The Karuks have developed their own language pod program as well.

Lack of fluency should not preclude the use of the language. Language use can and should take place as a part of language learning. One strategy for a learner is to replace English words and phrases with the target language as he learns them. Learning through conversation also helps beginners start using the language. The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program described above is focused strongly on language learning through conversational practice. The team practices speech related to different domains of activities, usually related to daily routines.

Lushootseed language teacher Zalmai Zahir has given added structure to learning domain by domain, asking his students to consider their daily activities within a certain room of their house, such as the kitchen or bathroom, and to ask for utterances related to those activities, which Zahir then translates into Lushootseed. The students must utter these sentences every day as they practice those activities, and build on them each week. Note that this practice is not exactly conversational in nature—it is commonly sequences of phrases such as “I am taking the knife,” “I am getting an onion,” “I am cutting the onion,” what Zahir calls “self-narration”(originally a literary term about first-person genres of writing). The goal is that over a period of months the student will master enough domains within that particular room—for example, in the kitchen it would consist of various domains around cooking, eating, cleaning, etc.—that the kitchen can become a “language nest” for the language being learned, and English will no longer be spoken in that space (Zahir 2015).

There are many ways to use language besides conversation. Robert Amery has pointed out that for the Kaurna language of Australia the primary use of the language is in the public sphere, where memorized ceremonial speech and prepared talks may be used (Amery 2016). In many programs, prepared self-introductions are a very common genre that learners develop early. People might compose songs in their language, or poems. They might learn traditional tales or translate English versions of tales back into their language, and tell them at gatherings. Even the tiniest gesture toward language use can have symbolic importance for revitalization, such as a tribal council deciding to vote (p. 461) “yes” or “no” in their language instead of English. A family may decide to give a traditional name to their children or their pets.

Other public uses of the language take place in writing—street names and other public signs can be a way to bring the language back into a community. The internet gives people other ways to practice using their language. Language learners and second-language speakers can and do email each other or post on Facebook or other social media.

6. The role of linguistics

Woven throughout this chapter and this volume as a whole are examples of how analytical and applied linguistics is useful to language revitalization. An understanding of the

grammatical rules of a language is essential to using it. Children learn these rules naturally through long-term exposure and practice, but adults learning their endangered language for the first time may need to become conscious of the rules in order override a tendency to use the grammar of their first language (e.g., English) in place of their heritage tongue. Analytical linguistics can help with figuring out the grammar of a language; applied linguistics can help with ways people can learn their language effectively. Linguistics is also necessary to understand linguistic documentation—how linguists write down languages that do not already have a writing system (and how and why they might use linguistic transcription even for those languages that do have a writing system); how to pronounce the words written in linguistic orthography; and how the grammatical rules are figured out through elicitation or the analysis of texts. Through applied linguistics, the community members can learn how to effectively teach others the language. Linguists coming into a community to document the language may be utilized for revitalization projects the community is interested in. Communities may hire linguists to help create dictionaries, pedagogical grammars, materials of various sorts, and curriculum for the schools.

Much of the content of the field of Linguistics is changing in response to community needs and demands for language maintenance and revitalization. Analytical and theoretical linguists are learning applied linguistics in order to be of use to the communities. Documentary linguists have a new understanding of domains that should be documented to be helpful to present or future language revitalization efforts. A new ethic in linguistics has taken root, where members of speech communities are seen as partners in mutually beneficial endeavors, rather than the old colonialist view of speakers as subjects to benefit science (see Good, Chapter 11, this volume).

But increasingly, it is the community members themselves who have decided to get the education they need to become linguists. Many of the linguists mentioned in this chapter are indigenous people who have gotten degrees in order to learn their language and benefit their communities.

7. Other important factors

I have said little about language planning, which is dealt with elsewhere in this volume (see Cahill, Chapter 14, this volume; Wright, Chapter 28, this volume). Almost any speech community that is doing language revitalization will (either from the beginning or at some later point) develop councils or committees that plan strategies for advancing revitalization. Frequent review of the strategies for improving language learning, increasing language use, and increasing the public profile of the language is itself an important strategy for revitalization.

Language revitalization within a community is generally part of a constellation of efforts involving the revitalization of other aspects of its culture—reclaiming traditional lifeways in a broader sense. Communities may be reviving forms of ceremony and spiritual activities. They may be reclaiming aspects of knowledge of care and use of wild or domestic plants, hunting, butchering and food preparation, or traditional arts such as dancing, song, material arts such as basketry, weaving, and traditional clothing, and traditional child-rearing practices and social

values. Language revitalization can also be preceded or accompanied by efforts to regain control of a land base, or claim increased autonomy with regard to important social and political aspects of a community, such as education and lawmaking. Language is part of all these different aspects of life, and can inspire and be inspired by efforts to strengthen any of them.

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Notes:
(1) little doe baird purposely spells her name with lower case.

(2) People sometimes react to the term “extinct” as somewhat of an insult. L. Frank, a Tongva artist and activist for her dormant language, often refers to this with humorous sarcasm when she introduces herself: “Hello, I’m L. Frank, and I’m extinct.”

(3) The Ethnologue also uses the term “awakening language” for a language in the process of revitalization.

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