

OGMIOS



Picture]

Tjeerd de Graaf suitably attired and equipped in Buryatia (eastern Siberia) in 2005, enthroned with colleague Lyubov Radnaeva.

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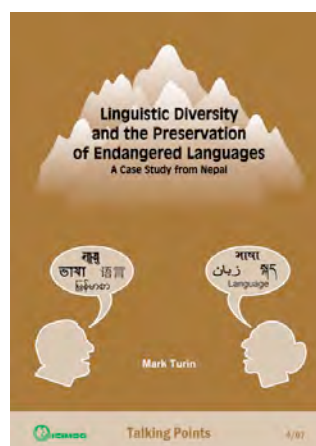
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1. Editorials	3
Tjeerd de Graaf going ever stronger	3
Squandered Worlds.....	3
2. Development of the Foundation	4
FEL XII Conference	4
FEL Grants for 2008 awarded	5
3. Endangered Languages in the News	5
A piece of Mesopotamia in Sweden.....	5
Warrior's language of resistance	6
Non-Native teaching Quileute tongue-twisting language..	8
Nigeria: Umeh Calls for Igbo Language Preservation	9
Standard Cornish spelling agreed.....	9
Gaelic project looks at the long view	9
France: deputies vote for 'regional' language recognition amidst strong UN criticism.....	9
4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities	10
Sorbs give a report of their situation at the European Parliament.....	10
5. Allied Societies, Activities	10
Indigenous Language Institute.....	10
6. In the World, on the Web	11
Linguistic Diversity and the Preservation of Endangered Languages: A Case Study from Nepal.....	11
ADUM project.....	11
Language Geek.....	12
Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program	12
2008 International Year of Languages UNESCO Portal	12
Computer programme created for indigenous language users	12
7. New publications - reviews	12
The Turn of the Ermine: an Anthology of Breton Literature (ed. & transl. Jacqueline Gibson, Gwyn Griffiths (Francis Boutle, 2006).....	12

Discourses of Endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages, ed. Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller. Continuum 2007

The Semitic languages, ed. Robert Hetzron. Routledge (1997: pbk edn 2006)

8. New publications - notices	14
Mbula-English dictionary	14
Syriac Film – Contact details.....	14
Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties.....	15
Theme issue of Journal of American Indian Education..	15
Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities	15
9. Forthcoming events	15
AIDLCM Conference on Endangered Languages and Cultures	15
10. Obituaries	15
R.Elangaiyan.....	15
Blair Rudes	16
Andy Palacio	16
Marie Smith Jones	17
Lois Carrington.....	18
FEL Manifesto	19



New booklet available: p. 11

1. Editorials

The pleasure we see in the forward development of our Foundation has been overshadowed, since the publication of the last issue, by the deaths of two of our stalwarts: people who played host to our conferences and stimulated interest in our field with their unstinting generosity and enthusiasm. I refer to R. Elangaiyan, the convener of our Mysore Conference in 2006, and Blair Rudes, who arranged our Charlotte, NC conference in 2001 and has subsequently been instrumental in setting up our American sister organisation, FEL Inc. You will find tributes to both of these linguistic luminaries and firm friends of FEL in our Obituary section.

Once again I must apologise to readers and members for the delay in delivery of this issue of *Ogmios*. I can't promise that it won't happen again, given the voluntary nature of this task and the need to earn a living, but you do deserve to expect better service. But many thanks to those who have contributed items for publication; they are very much appreciated.

Chris Moseley

Tjeerd de Graaf going ever stronger

on the occasion of his 70th birthday

Try to contact Tjeerd, and you find he is about to leave for Siberia, just back from St Petersburg or not at home at all. Not that he is hard to reach. On the contrary, Tjeerd is so eager to tell you what he is up to, where he is off to or is just back from, that you soon receive all his new plans, ideas, project information and reports.

His ever amazing energy makes you feel silly if you think you might be travelling too much; with Tjeerd there is no competition.



Most admirable is the fact that his energy goes into projects that matter to us all: from historical sound archives, which he works to make accessible, to the preservation of endangered languages and the cultural heritage of minority peoples, a service to mankind as a whole. His persuasive, assertive, way of presenting and submitting projects for funding has proved irresistible to many a foundation. His devotion to endangered languages is infectious: it just carries you away.

If you meet someone anywhere in the world, and start talking about endangered languages, the name Tjeerd de Graaf will come up, apparently of its own accord. Countless people have gained from his projects, over a wide range of important issues. A whole issue of *Ogmios* would not even be enough to name them all.

It is striking that he never loses his hope and trust in people, and with his everlasting good mood, humor and optimism he is the best of company. Tjeerd can take a lot, and his patience, flexibility and adaptability to even the most exotic circumstances, be it food, transport or accommodation, makes working and travelling with him a delight. Never a whine or a complaint.

With such charisma and amiability, the only way to get into a real confrontation with him is probably to fail to understand what he is intending.

Let me finish this short *laudatio* by hoping for his everlasting strong health and energy to continue his important missions, and wishing him a further happy life with his wife and family – though they must often miss him on those ever-frequent trips. But he always comes back with yet another experience to share with them and us all.

Cecilia Odé

Amsterdam 23 April 2008

[Editor's note: The one and only Tseard (that is the original – Frisian – form of his name) will be the Chairman of this year's FEL conference, in Ljouwert.]

Squandered Worlds

Nicholas Ostler

I was struck by Joe Lo Bianco's persuasive description of Australia's current language education policy as "squandering the gift of home-grown bilingual skills". It reminded me of a gut-wrenching – and for me unforgettable – moment in Cormac McCarthy's novel *No Country for Old Men*: "Chigurh shot him through the forehead and then stood watching. Watching the capillaries break up in his eyes. The light receding. Watching his own image degrade in that squandered world." There is something ultimately repellent in the idea of a bully in self-absorbed fascination, gratuitously ending another's whole experience of the world, watching a life ebb away, lost beyond recall.

I don't want to suggest that such psychopathic cruelty is one of the motives for the nihilism of current policy towards foreign language teaching in Australia – and even more in my own country the United Kingdom, where in 2002 any requirement to study a foreign language in secondary school was ended, and where since that fateful decision we have watched actual take-up of language instruction at school level ebb away. Not psychopathy, but quite likely neurosis: Estelle Morris, the minister who took the decision, subsequently resigned from the government, pleading inadequacy in skills of strategic management. Sadly, the management decisions she had taken, stood.

It may be unfair to blame an individual for yielding to a pressure that she did not create – but then again, a minister should be aware of the wide-ranging resonance of any decision they take. We expect our ministers to be made of sterner stuff. But it is undeniable that foreign languages are the closest thing we provide in our school systems to an approach to alternative worlds, or at least world-views. Declaring them optional – and by implication, given the dynamics of school budgets, unaffordable – is to say that an attempt to understand others in their own terms is a luxury our education system cannot afford; that those other world-views are expendable.

But why pay for them when you can get them free, or at least without having to pay for basic oral instruction? The UK is like Australia in having large numbers of children entering school with a first language that is not English: here is a substantial source of other-worldlings, who given a favourable reception will be able to give all of us an insight of what the view is like from those other perspectives.

Yet when (on 29 April) the statistics suggested that the proportion of such children is now over 1/7, this was decried nation-wide as 'a problem', calling – like all politically-recognized problems, for 'increased resources'. For some reason, our politicians – and supposedly, our public – are desperate to be reassured that all these new

citizens will have a command of English, but indifferent whether they retain their linguistic links with the cultures of their families. These alien backgrounds are the special resources – nowadays, you could almost say the selling-point – of these first- and second-generation immigrant children, and they deserve the chance to refine their understanding of them. Hell, everyone speaks English, don't they?

This myopia, or rather this narcissism, about language skills – the view that our own are the only ones we need – is not original to the English-speaking world, in its fresh-faced dominance of the universe as it knows it. There was a time when Latin likewise was seen as a privileged vessel for knowledge and understanding: In 880 Pope John VIII wrote to Svätopluk, king of the Moravians: "In all the churches of your land the Gospel must be read in Latin because of its greater dignity, and afterwards it should be announced to those who do not understand Latin words in the Slav language." In 358 the great theologian Athanasius had claimed that a bishop summoned - by the emperor himself – from Cappadocia to take over the see of Milan was "an intruder rather than a Christian... as yet even ignorant of the Latin language, and unskilful in everything except impiety."

It is in fact a none-too-subtle form of ethnocentric bullying. Listen to Valerius Maximus in the 1st century AD, congratulating the Roman magistrates who "persistently maintained the practice of replying only in Latin to the Greeks. And so they forced them to speak through interpreters, losing their linguistic fluency, their great strength, not just in our capital city but in Greece and Asia too, evidently to promote the honour of the Latin language throughout the world."

But Latin had not always had the linguistic whip-hand. It had once had to assert itself over the solipsistic Greek dismissal of anything non-Greek as *barbaros*. Plato, in his *Politicus*, had seen the classification of the whole world into either Greek or barbaros as misleading – but he was in a minority. Even the broad-minded Herodotus predicated his whole life's work on the opposition Greeks versus barbaroi: and it appears he got his world knowledge through Greek alone, relying on a network of (unsung) Greek bilinguals. The 20th-century Greek Constantine Kavafis probably got it right when (in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, 1949) he saw the Greeks' unending self-appointed struggle against the *barbaroi* as 'some sort of a solution' – perhaps for a national neurosis. Still, their ecumenical regime of Greek-speaking in the Levant had to yield to the next instant world empire – that of the Arabs, who were like all the rest in their immoderate presumption for their language: for them, Indians, Persians, Turks, Greeks, Romans – whoever – were all '*ajami*, their languages not worth distinguishing in contrast with Arabic, eternal medium of the Koran.

Traditionally, it has been the underlings – though often quite powerful underlings – who see value in their betters' or predecessors' languages, and hence in getting to know them. So after Arab conquest the Persians, besides Persian, respected Arabic (and outclassed its speakers by writing the best grammar of it); and after the Turks muscled into the Islamic world in the 10th century, they respected – besides their own Turkic language, Chaghatay – Persian and Arabic. Yet the great Central Asian poet Nava'i, examining the respective merits of languages in the late 15th century (*Muhakamat al-Lughatayn*), interestingly thought it counted against Persian that more people knew it than Chaghatay. There is such a thing as a classy, boutique language, it appears.

So the memory of Persian and Turkish culture from before their encounters with Islam and Arabic has survived: for example, we know the exploits of their quintessential heroes Rustem, who unknowingly slew his son Sohrab, and Alpamysh, who had twice to win his wife from traitors. Languages and cultures which have gone down before Latin's linguistic steamroller have not been so lucky. Consider Gaulish: we can see, from an artifact like the Gundestrup cauldron (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Gundestrupkarret2.jpg>) that the horned god Cernunnos had a complicated myth – but its details, involving stags, snakes, wolves, gryphons and dolphin riding, like all

the vast extent of Druid learning, are gone beyond recall, along with the Gaulish language. No-one recorded them, much less pursued a struggle to keep them alive. Or consider Etruscan: Niccolò Machiavelli himself points out (in his *Discorsi*, II chapter 5) that since Latin replaced this language without a trace, the deeds of its once pre-eminent civilization have largely been forgotten. (He conjectures that the Roman Empire would have similarly been erased if the Catholic Church had not needed to keep Latin!)

I have travelled far from the pressing need for our education systems to reinforce, rather than replace, the languages which our children bring to school. But the points that I have recalled from a distant past suggest the bleaker, poorer world that results when languages are allowed to wither. Everywhere languages are vulnerable if their speakers are moved into a new setting without community support. Our lives, and our children's lives, will be the poorer in every sense, if we do not treasure them. To discard them knowingly diminishes all of us.

Nicholas Ostler, Chairman of FEL, is the author of *Ad Infinitum, a biography of Latin and Empires of the Word, a language history of the world*. He lives in Bath, England. This article appeared at the Australian opinion site: [OnlineOpinion](http://OnlineOpinion.com.au) (23 May 2008). (www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=7393)

2. Development of the Foundation

FEL XII Conference

In September 2008 FEL will organise its Twelfth Conference in the Netherlands in association with the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning and the Fryske Akademy. The theme of the conference will be Endangered Languages and Language Learning. The conference will be organised and sponsored in the framework of the Jubilee programme KNAW 200. In 2008 the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) completes 200 years. This will be celebrated with a large number of (scientific) activities throughout the year. These activities take place in the context of the general topic *Magie van wetenschap* "The Magic of Science".



Magie van wetenschap

The Conference takes place from 24 to 27 September in the conference centre of the Fryske Akademy, It Aljemint, at Ljowert (Leeuwarden) in Friesland, in the eastern Netherlands. United Nations recognises 2008 as *Year of the Languages*, and 26 September is the annual *European Language Day*: both will be celebrated during the conference.

Topics:

1) Language learning in general:

- Successful multilingual regions with endangered languages
- Language learning processes and language transmission in small communities
- Language transmission outside formal educational settings (pre-school facilities, cultural settings, distant learning facilities)

2) Language learning in an educational context:

- Promoting linguistic diversity through multilingual education and teacher training programs
- Language teaching in small indigenous or migrant communities
- Potential of teaching methods for language revitalisation
- Innovation in language learning and teaching strategies
- Case studies on language immersion in endangered language communities
- The use of electronic tools for language teaching and maintenance

April Counciller, Alutiiq or Sugpiaq/Pacific Eskimo (Kodiak Island, AK, USA), \$1000.

- To advance knowledge of the Alutiiq language among rural Alutiiq Elementary students and other learners
- To document environmental language information with fluent Elders
- To develop resources for language learning accessible to educators, cultural organizations and language learners

FEL Grants for 2008 awarded

This year five grants were awarded a total of \$5,000 (US). Following is a summary of the successful applications, with their goals. All grants shown in US dollars.

John Hobson, University of Sydney, re Banjalang (Northern Rivers district, NSW, Australia), \$1450.

- To conduct an Australian demonstration trial of the Master-Apprentice method in the revitalisation of an endangered language that will inform the development of policy and practice at state and national levels.
- To provide qualified and experienced indigenous language teachers with an opportunity to acquire sufficient fluency in their ancestral language to permit them to transmit it to students in contemporary classroom settings.
- To evidence to Banjalang communities that adult intergenerational transmission of their language is possible.
- To produce and disseminate recordings of Banjalang dialogue.
- To stimulate the increased use of spoken Banjalang in a broad range of contexts.
- To foster awareness of Banjalang and the need and potential for its revitalisation.

Chun Huang, University of Florida, re Siraya (Taiwan), \$1000.

- Finalization of a modern Siraya dictionary and its publication in 2008.
- Preparation of Siraya-learning materials for Siraya Language & Culture Summer Camp, 2008.

Javier Ruedas, University of New Orleans, re Marubo (upper Curuçá River, Amazonas state, Brazil), \$1000.

- Record, transcribe, and translate *saiti*, a form of sung myth, known fully by very few elderly Marubo, and store these along with extensive metadata in linked computer files
- Digitize recordings and transcriptions that have already been made by the speech community
- Help generate contexts for systematic, interpersonal, intergenerational transmission of specialized language registers
- Produce CDs and other digital media for use by the speech community and by NGOs working in indigenous education among the Marubo

Produce educational materials based on transcribed and translated texts

Molly Babel, Mono Lake Northern Paiute (Bridgeport, California, USA), \$550.

- Produce written text collection of traditional narratives with Northern Paiute and English text and accompanying audio CD
- Produce follow along children's book with Northern Paiute and English text and accompanying audio CD

3. Endangered Languages in the News

A piece of Mesopotamia in Sweden

From the Guardian Weekly 4.4.2008, by Olivier Truc

Despite repeated warnings over the public address system the crowd swarmed onto the pitch at the Södertälje stadium. It was more than they could resist. Their football team, Assyriska FF, had just beaten Östersunds FK 4-2, securing promotion to Sweden's premier league. That was last autumn. In the stands moustachioed men wearing dark suits and white, open-necked shirts played with their prayer beads. Behind them two enthusiastic reporters were covering the event in Syriac, an Aramaic dialect, for Södertälje's Assyrian channel, Suroyo TV, which is beamed by satellite all over the Middle East.

On the pitch itself jubilant youths waved flags decorated with a map of Mesopotamia or a four-branched blue star with a yellow spot at its centre and red, white and blue flames blazing outwards, the colours of a once powerful empire, the cradle of civilisation, now divided between Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon and Syria. They are the proud descendants of the "world's oldest Christian people".

But the setting for this celebration was a sports ground in Sweden, and strangely it could hardly have happened elsewhere. Over the past 40 years many Middle Eastern Christians have settled in Södertälje, an industrial district in Stockholm's suburbs. The first ones arrived in 1967 when, at the request of the World Council of Churches and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sweden accepted 200 stateless Christians from a refugee camp in Lebanon.

Many more have followed. They are so well integrated that they have their own football teams and members of parliament. Their successful integration is held up as an example in Sweden, though they have not forgotten their origins. The last time Assyriska FF made it into the premier league the team organised a minute's silence before the first match of the season, paying tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide in 1915 in full view of Swedish television. The Turkish authorities protested. "Football and politics go hand in hand here," says a supporter. Some even dream of the rebirth of the Assyrian nation. The first waves of immigrants came from Turkey and Syria, but in recent years they have flocked here from Iraq. "Sweden welcomed 20,000 refugees in 2006, with twice as many in 2007 and mostly from Iraq," says Anders Lago, the Social Democrat mayor of Södertälje. The pressure on Södertälje nurseries, schools and housing is nearing breaking point, with some three-roomed flats accommodating up to 15 refugees.

The number of Iraqis being allowed to stay in Sweden has now dropped. The Swedish Migration Board has turned down three-quarters of all applications this year, whereas the previous year it accepted three out of four. The board has justified its change of policy by claiming that armed conflict in Iraq has ceased. This prompted widespread criticism from human rights organisations, their fears being confirmed by the discovery last month of the body of the Chaldean archbishop of Mosul, Faraj Rahho, who had been abducted on February 29.

In a large flat in Ronna, a neighbourhood of Södertälje now known as Little Baghdad, the Solrosen organisation helps families with children. Nursel Awrohum has a massive workload. As with most first-generation Assyrian immigrants, she is from Midyat, a town in eastern Turkey with a Christian majority, not far from Qamishli, a Syrian town also with a predominantly Christian population, where many of Södertälje's Syrian Christians originated. "The council schools are packed," she says. At the Solrosen centre children are learning Swedish while their parents are taught to cope with the authorities and Swedish society in general.

Amir and Nadia are waiting for a decision on their cases. One day in Baghdad, Amir, a chaldean barber, found a For Sale notice on his front door. His father was murdered shortly afterwards. Then in February 2007 Amir was kidnapped. He had photographs of himself, gagged and covered in bruises, with a pistol held to his head and a dagger pointed at his throat. His brother finally managed to find the \$15,000 demanded for his ransom. The family left the country and moved to Sweden, paying a smuggler \$15,000 for each person.

Nadia, who defines herself as Chaldean, arrived here from Baghdad in 2007. Masked men had kidnapped, beaten and tortured her 23-year-old son. She had to pay \$25,000 to prevent him being turned into "mincemeat", as they threatened. When they let him go, they gave him a note saying, "Leave everything behind or we will rape your 18-year-old girl." Nadia fled to Sweden, where one of her daughters was already living. "In Baghdad we heard that in some mosques the imams were saying there was no point in buying houses off Christians because they would be leaving the country anyway."

Though their numbers are dropping steadily there are still about 700,000 Christians living in Iraq (3% of the population). Two thirds of them are Catholics – mainly Chaldean, Syriac or Aramaean Catholics.

"Even though we cannot accommodate them properly, because there is so much demand, the refugees from Iraq still want to come here, because what they are looking for above all is security," says Awrohum. "And for them security means family, people with the same language and background." They all want to live in Södertälje, where almost a quarter of the 80,000 inhabitants are Christians from the Middle East.

"In the past two years Södertälje has taken more Iraqi asylum seekers than the US," says Sait Yildiz, a town councillor and one of the leaders of the Assyrian Federation in Sweden. "I quite understand why the Swedes are a little bitter."

"In a way everyone expects the Iraqis arriving now to integrate easily, in view of our past success," says Aydin Aho, the manager of the Assyriska FF football club. Aho himself is a typical example of this process. He was born in Midyat in 1972, arriving in Södertälje two years later with the biggest wave of migrants.

"I was part of the first generation to grow up here and like my contemporaries I grew up with the federation and the holiday camps where we all got together. Football was a social thing," he explains.

"But the Swedish welfare state is not what it used to be," Aho adds, "and the churches and federation no longer play the same role. There isn't the same sense of solidarity. Now there's a serious risk that the Iraqis will remain second-class citizens"

Originally published in Le Monde; submitted by Mikael Grut

Warrior's language of resistance

From The Australian, 31.1.2008, by Victoria Laurie

LIKE living, beating organs, two words and a phrase in the Bunuba language lie at the heart of Jandamarra, a new play about a real-life Kimberley warrior. Words for country, language and the notion of endurance underpin the epic story of

this Aboriginal hero, which premieres next week in a Black Swan Theatre production at the Perth International Arts Festival.

Bunuba linguist and Fitzroy Crossing community leader June Oscar, who helped translate the play's script into her native Kimberley language, writes each word with a teacher's clarity on a piece of paper. "One word is muwayi, home or country, another is thangani or language," she explains.

"The phrase is 'Burrudi yatharra thirrili ngarri', meaning 'We are still here and strong'. That's what Jandamarra was," Oscar declares, passing the paper over. "He lived that and he showed the white man that."

Oscar and her linguist colleague Patsy Bedford are sitting in a Perth restaurant near where Jandamarra is being rehearsed. With them is Steve Hawke, the writer who shaped their community's oral history into a dramatised account of the 1890s Aboriginal rebel who eluded police and white pastoralists in the rugged cave country of the west Kimberley.

In historical shorthand, Jandamarra was a kind of Aboriginal Ned Kelly. A police tracker who dutifully betrayed his own people, he suddenly changed sides. He killed a policeman, released Bunuba prisoners from their neck chains and played hide-and-seek with his pursuers for nearly three years. He even raided police stations left unattended by troopers who were supposedly hot on his heels.

In Aboriginal parlance, he was a jalgangurru or spiritual man who could disappear, transform into a bird and shield himself from deadly weapons. He represented invincibility against white invaders, but it didn't last: in 1897, at age 23, Jandamarra was cornered and shot dead.

His exploits have been handed down in "whitefella" narrative as well as in Aboriginal oral tradition. Popular Kimberley novelist Ion Idriess wrote *Outlaw of the Leopolds* about him, while singer-songwriter Paul Kelly penned *Pigeon-Jundamurra*. Kelly is now the play's musical director and has spent time between tours in Perth working on the play this month.

Jandamarra is a big theatrical event in several ways: large cast, huge 10m high stage set and an epic tale that Hawke has worked on for nearly two decades.

"I passionately love the Jandamarra story," he says. "It is the archetypal Australian story, magnificent on many levels but inherently difficult to get up. It's hugely expensive (to tell) and it's owned by the Bunuba mob."

That ownership was established in 1984, when Hawke and a group of Aboriginal elders formed Bunuba Productions to make a feature film about Jandamarra. Several times they came tantalisingly close to finding backers for a film, even attracting the interest of Mel Gibson.

But it was only when Black Swan Theatre Company expressed interest in 2005 that a full script -- in Bunuba, English and Kimberley krio -- began to take shape and a date was set for a stage version. Black Swan's Tom Gutteridge is directing the play, and Torres Strait Islander actor Jimi Bani (who appeared in ABC TV's series *RAN*) will play Jandamarra opposite Kimberley-born actor Ningali Lawford-Wolf as his mother.

Other pieces have fallen neatly into place. Several Fitzroy Crossing people with close links to the Jandamarra legend, such as musician-actor Danny Marr, will perform in the play. Marr's niece Kaylene Marr, whose father was a founding member of Bunuba Productions, has produced vivid drawings that have been animated and form part of the stage design.

An important song and dance cycle, the Yilimbirri Junba, will be performed with the play for the first time outside the Kimberley by Bunuba lawmen, singers and dancers.

Hawke has spent years adapting the Jandamarra story for film and now stage, sifting through conflicting accounts of his exploits. "There

isn't a single Aboriginal version of the Jandamarra story," he says. "He's known to Aboriginal people throughout the Kimberley and different people tell the story different ways. (This version) is one I've worked on with the Bunuba people. Every draft of the script I've written over the years has been read, agreed to and changed by these people."

Hawke, Oscar and Bedford clearly have an easy, trusting relationship. They've known each other since 1978, when then 19-year-old Hawke, son of former prime minister Bob Hawke, deferred his studies at the University of Melbourne to go north and help in the Noonkanbah land rights dispute, near Fitzroy Crossing.

"June and I go back a long way," Hawke says. "I did a lot of work with Bunuba people long before I got involved in the Jandamarra story." He ran native title claims and helped set up local organisations, but ultimately left the Kimberley and now writes for a living in Perth.

Says Oscar: "It certainly has helped us, and Steve as a writer, that he's drawn from that personal life experience, relationships and journeys that he's had with Bunuba people."

Above all, says Oscar, Hawke has understood the cultural and linguistic imperatives surrounding the making of the play. The cattle country that Jandamarra roamed was plagued with brutal black-white clashes; today, Fitzroy Crossing has been afflicted by youth suicides and alcoholism, and subjected to a harrowing coronial inquest.

Oscar, who is the wife of reconciliation spokesman Pat Dodson, is a prominent community leader who has fought hard to restrict alcohol sales in Fitzroy Crossing. Her most Herculean effort -- and that of Bedford, who has nearly completed the first comprehensive Bunuba dictionary -- has been keeping language and culture alive. Together, the two women help run the Kimberley Language Resource Centre, which has pioneered the recording and teaching of the region's languages.

"White linguists would describe Bunuba as an endangered language, since any language with less than 2000 speakers is considered endangered," Oscar says. "But from our perspective, it's very much alive. We're alive and we're using it and for as long as we're teaching our future generations, it'll live on."

That's why it was considered so important that when the character of Jandamarra speaks, he uses Bunuba as well as English (which the real Jandamarra learned as a boy stockman on a station).

"Inclusion of language in this project is right at the core of this story," Oscar says. "Without the language, this story could not be told or the message relayed in the way that it should."

It took the women hundreds of hours to arrive at the right translations. "We both work full-time, we've got families and old people to look after," Oscar says.

There were unexpected rewards. For five days last year, Oscar and Bedford took all the cast members out bush at Fitzroy Crossing, pointing out animals and plants, walking along riverbanks, living the language instead of rote-teaching it in a classroom.

Another bonus was hearing once-lost Bunuba words resurface in the minds of Fitzroy's most senior native speakers. "People like my mother, Mona Oscar, have been helped to remember, or going back and finding the right word," Oscar says. "To say 'I am a hunter', as Jandamarra did, is 'Ngayini milhalba'. We hadn't really heard that phrase used before."

"At first I just assumed we couldn't do Jandamarra in language on stage," Hawke admits. "It never even occurred to me, quite honestly. But at the very first workshop in early 2006, Tom and others were talking about a scene and someone said 'Well couldn't we actually do it in Bunuba?' And Tom said, 'Why not? We could have surtitles like they do in opera.'

"The translation process has been some of the most enjoyable work I've ever done," he continues. "It's such a stimulating intellectual exercise. But it's also been a dramaturgical exercise because I'd explain the dramatic intent and they'd come up with another way of saying that in Bunuba, which ends up with a completely different feel to what I originally wrote in English. It's added to the play enormously."

Another tricky area was using artistic licence in a story "owned" by the community. Hawke says he had to imagine unrecorded aspects of the story, and would write up two or three versions of what might have happened. "Someone might then say, 'Nah, that's not going to work, that's too far-fetched.'"

Some dramatic liberties had to be allowed in order to hang the play's structure together. "The thing that unlocked the way for me was trying to understand why Jandamarra shot (policeman) Richardson and changed sides back to his own people," Hawke says.

"I actually came up with a reading of that central event. All versions of the story -- Bunuba oral history, Idriess, all of them -- say many Bunuba men were rounded up at one time, which is when he shoots Richardson, releases them and unleashes this long guerilla war. But how come all of those senior Bunuba men finished up on a chain at the same time?"

"I reckon -- and this is how the play tells it -- that it was a deliberate strategy. Basically the Bunuba were being decimated, they were on the verge of being wiped out as a free people and Jandamarra was the main agent of that. So the Bunuba people let themselves be caught and forced him to make a choice. It was a do-or-die gamble, basically."

Oscar thinks that's plausible. "While there's huge artistic licence there, Steve's influenced by his long association with Bunuba people and the many situations where he couldn't help but think that it was a deliberate strategy."

A lot will be riding on the play's success, not least Hawke's hope that Jandamarra may yet be made into a feature film. For Bedford, the joy has been in hearing the story of her country told in her language. "This has been the dream of the old people."

For Oscar, the phrase, "We're still here and still strong", is a message Fitzroy residents need to hear as they await the findings of the coroner. "Jandamarra is about the stories shared with us by people who are no longer here, or only in spirit," she says. "It's about how we have lived as Bunuba people and chosen to bring that uniqueness into the telling of this story."

University project traces Celtic roots

A project exploring a theory that Celtic was one of the major languages of Europe alongside Greek and Latin has received extra funding.

Aberystwyth University's department of Welsh is tracing the roots of Celtic from which Welsh, Gaelic and Irish are derived.

The £390,889 grant will enable academics to search for evidence of the language in Romania and Turkey.

The money has come from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

It is the third such grant from the council, which supports research projects focussing on topics such as history.

It is well known the roots of the Welsh language extend far back into the distant Celtic history.

'Exciting perspective'

The university said that ancient Celtic had been traced to northern Italy, Switzerland, Spain and France.

But academics added that it was spoken over a much wider area. Recently they have been searching for Celtic personal names in Roman inscriptions.

Professor Patrick Sims-Williams, who is leading the project, said the grant would enable Dr Alexander Falileyev, a scholar from St Petersburg working in Aberystwyth, to investigate Celtic in southern Romania and as far east as Galatia in Turkey.

Prof Sims-Williams said: "We know that these areas were colonized from the 3rd Century BC onwards by peoples who spoke Celtic languages.

"It's becoming clear that Celtic was one of the major languages of ancient Europe, alongside Greek and Latin, and that's an exciting perspective for people who tend to think of Celtic languages as minority languages.

"Somehow this research programme fits in with the fact that students now come from all over the world to Aberystwyth to study Celtic with us. It would appear that most EU countries have a Celtic past."

BBC News web-site 17 February 2008

Non-Native teaching Quileute tongue-twisting language

Jim Casey, Peninsula Daily News, 19 February 2008

Every word spoken in Quileute breathes new life into the ancient Native American language. That's the perception of anthropologist Jay Powell, who has taught two five-week "crash courses" in Quileute — properly pronounced Kwil-LAY-yute — at LaPush and who hopes to teach two more. Without energetic efforts by tribal members and their teacher, the language could disappear. Three, perhaps four, people can speak Quileute fluently. When they are gone, all that remains will be phrases, greetings, ceremonies and songs. Even those could vanish if it weren't for the tribe's hiring Powell to help teach and record the language. Powell and his wife, Vickie Jensen, have worked with the outer coastal tribe since 1968, when 50 Quileute could speak their native language fluently — and the 600 other tribal members could not.

Powell's efforts also have helped the tribe publish its first book, a dictionary that is expected to be released today to tribal members.

"They heard it in ceremonies, and everybody knew a few words," Powell said during a recent stop in Port Angeles on his way from LaPush to his home in British Columbia.

But over the next 40 years, "those 50 speakers grew old and started to die until they were about to lose an irretrievable part of their cultural heritage."

Chris Morganroth III, Quileute tribal councilman, Wednesday said, "Once a tribe loses its language, it loses its identity."

Along with the language, he said, the tribe stood to lose "many legends and stories about how we came to be here."

Morganroth recalled his grandmother, who spoke only Quileute to her family. "I was really fortunate to grow up in the way I did," he said

'Turns tongue to Jell-O'

To the untutored ear, Quileute sounds like it is spoken in the back of the throat and the base of the tongue with breath pushed up from the speaker's diaphragm. "They have a sounds system that turns your tongue to Jell-O," is how Powell put it, with words as long as 40 syllables that incorporate what in English would be whole sentences.

"It is such a beautiful sequence of tones," said James Jaime, the tribe's executive director. "I love listening to it."

Powell began his involvement with the tribe when, as a graduate student at the University of Hawaii, he was offered a chance to study native languages up and down the north Pacific coast.

"I was lucky enough to be taken on by one of the last Quileute speakers — Fred "Woody" Woodruff — who had the patience and perseverance to teach me the language."

Punished for speaking

The loss of the language had been accelerated by the practice at boarding schools for Native Americans, beginning in the late 1800s and continuing into the early 1900s, of prohibiting native languages.

Teachers punished any student they heard speaking a native language and burned any baskets they might have woven or carvings they may have made, Morganroth said.

Along with the language went culture and spirituality and, often, physical and mental health. "It's caused a lot of our health issues," Jaime said. "Those social adjustments can be traumatic."

But young Quileute speakers reap rewards for learning their language, Powell said.

"We've got a lot of evidence that Native students who do best are the ones who are very clear about their cultural heritage."

A portable cultural icon

Renewing Quileute, said Powell, also gives tribal members an icon they can carry anywhere, unlike carved or woven objects.

"It's a portable symbol of group identity," he said. "When you are speaking Quileute, you know who you are."

Powell — who the Quileute named kwáshkwash, or blue jay — has retired from the University of British Columbia. He worked there for 20 years and published 10 books on the Quileute, recording their last speakers and trying to save the language. He hasn't tried to make his students fluent in Quileute.

"We don't know of a single child raised speaking English who has learned a native language in a classroom," Powell said, despite educators' spending \$2 billion on such efforts.

Phrases, not fluency

"Fluency wasn't one of the alternatives. It just wasn't achievable."

Instead, at the invitation of the Quileute Tribal Council, Powell and Jensen devised a series of intensive courses, four to five weeks long, held twice a year over two years.

The Quileute reached the halfway point of the curriculum last month.

What is emerging is a language of English mingled with Quileute words and phrases — greetings, common comments and "useful terms of various kinds," Powell said.

At the end of several weeks of study, "every Quileute realized they had heard people using their language," Powell said. He admits that orthodox linguists might be horrified at the idea of teaching a mixed language.

Tribe's first book

Powell says the purists need to consider the alternative: no one speaking Quileute at all. "Their language is still with them," he said of the hybrid tongue. "This is a language in use. "Something fun and rewarding is happening, and it's called the Quileute Language Revitalization Program."

The Quileute's efforts to relearn their language produced another point of pride: a Quileute/English and English/Quileute dictionary, the first book published by the tribe's own publishing company.

The book is to be distributed only to Quileute tribal members. Asked why he would bother to try to save a dying language, Powell said, "The only argument I need is that the Quileute think it's worth the effort."

Besides, "a language is like a species of bird that has evolved across thousands of generations. "How hard would we work to save such a bird from becoming extinct?"

Nigeria: Umeh Calls for Igbo Language Preservation

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200803240780.html>

A retired secondary school principal, Mr Peter Umeh, has called on Ndigbo to preserve their language in order not to destroy the rich cultural heritage of the people.

Umeh told (NAN) in Enugu that the identity of any tribe was its language and that without language, a tribe would be incomplete and without identifiable root.

"Every tribe cherishes and protects its language because the extinction, marked the end and recognition of that tribe," he said.

He expressed dissatisfaction that Igbo language was gradually becoming extinct because some Igbo children abroad do not know how to speak the language following the failure of their parents to teach them.

Umeh called on parents to teach their children how to speak Igbo language first, before any other language. He said that Ohanaeze Ndigbo should preserve and promote Igbo language by making the teaching of the language compulsory in all primary and post-primary schools.

Standard Cornish spelling agreed

BBC News 19 May 2008

A standard written form of Cornish has been agreed after two years work.

Members of the Cornish Language Partnership have voted to ratify the written form for use in education and public life.

Previously there were four different forms of spelling in Cornish but increasing use of the language led to calls for it to be standardised.

The Cornish Language Partnership said the agreement marked a significant stepping stone in the Cornish language.

The new standard spelling form will be reviewed in 2013.

It was agreed with members of the Cornish language community and linguists from other language communities.

Eric Brooke, chairman of the Cornish Language Partnership, said: "This marks a significant stepping-stone in the development of the Cornish language.

In time this step will allow the Cornish language to move forward to become part of the lives of all in Cornwall."

Note: the detailed specification of the Standard Written Form (SWF), and some details of the talks that led up to it, can be found at:

www.magakernow.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=38861

Gaelic project looks at the long view

By Julie Collins, Cape Breton Post <jcollins at cbpost.com>

12/03/08

IONA — *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* (My Mother's Language) is a project designed to record idiomatic, everyday Gaelic from fluent speakers in Nova Scotia.

Now in its final stage, the project has produced nearly 25 hours of video recordings based on an extensive questionnaire developed with the needs of language learners in mind.

Project co-ordinator Shamus Y. MacDonald and field worker Jim Watson, who volunteered his time on behalf of the Highland Village, visited Gaelic speakers in all four Cape Breton counties to complete the project. Their recordings feature individuals and pairs speaking on a variety of everyday topics including the weather, folklore, child care, baking, chores, music and clothing.

In recent months, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the provincial Office of Gaelic Affairs have announced more than \$45,000 in combined funding for the third phase of the project (approximately \$8,000 from Gaelic Affairs and \$39,000 from Canadian Heritage, through the Canadian Culture Online Strategy).

Funding is being used to create a premiere website showcasing video and audio recordings of contemporary Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton. Besides making the *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* collection available online, it allows *Comhairle na Gàidhlig* to continue its fieldwork with some of the province's best Gaelic tradition-bearers and produce an additional 10 professionally filmed interviews.

"This is a unique project because the website will be geared toward language learners and accessed primarily through Gaelic," said MacDonald, who is now the full-time administrative officer of the Gaelic Council. "There is a concerted effort to make this project a reality, including the support federally and from the province and from our contributors who were interviewed."

The Gaelic Council will also partner with the Nova Scotia Highland Village to include two projects on the website that were recorded over the past couple of years.

One is a collection of about 75 songs recorded by members of the Iona Gaelic Singers.

"This is a collection of full-length Gaelic songs from that area, which is really incredible. These are songs these traditional Gaelic singers know and practised for years."

The other project, which was professionally filmed, features recordings of groups of Gaelic speakers from central Cape Breton and Inverness discussing their culture in their native Gaelic language.

"It's a matter of going over this material, editing and putting it online, along with the extra videos," he said. "This promises to be an incredible site. It will be a fantastic resource for language learners and a real tribute to the continuing Gaelic presence in Nova Scotia."

He added there will be some translation available for English speakers.

"This will be a remarkable, contemporary archival resource, it's all 21st century stuff. We expect this project will be complete by the summer."

Gaelic learner Shannon MacDonald, who lives on the North Shore, is the project administrator.

France: deputies vote for 'regional' language recognition amidst strong UN criticism

Bruxelles - Brussel, Tuesday, 27 May 2008 by Davyth Hicks

The French National Assembly proposed an amendment last Thursday that the clause "Les langues régionales appartiennent à son patrimoine" (regional languages are part of (France's) heritage) be added to Article One of the Constitution. However, the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, has lambasted France stating that the lack of linguistic rights is leading to regional language decline. Commentators suggest that moves by France in support of regional

support of regional languages may be made during their forthcoming Presidency of the EU so as to ward off any criticism of their domestic language policy. The amendment will now be examined by the Senate then senators and deputies vote on the matter at Congress in Versailles in July.

The clause, proposed by the Breton deputy Marc le Fur (UMP), may be a small step towards some recognition for regional languages if it is successful. But it is a weak statement and any mention of "heritage language" often reflects the idea of a language in a museum rather than a living language that should be nurtured. Speaking to EuroLang, the editor of the Breton *Ar Men* magazine Yann Rivallain, said: "Basically I think that it is an important development, and that yes, it would make any opposition to a language law look even more absurd than before. There is a high chance that a law will be drafted by the same people who put that amendment and this will be of great help to justify that proposal. It does not make those languages "languages of the Republic", which means that it doesn't necessarily make it easier to ratify the Charter - which is why I think they chose to mention languages in Article 1.

"However, given the state of matter in France, it is an achievement for those fighting for recognition. It shows too that the question is still second to most other issues for MP's who would have fought this very hard just a few months ago and accept it this time because it is needed to pass another change in the constitution. We're lucky that the general constitutional reform was not supported by many, otherwise regional languages would barely have been mentioned.

"As far as I know the law still has to go through the Senate, which can amend and ask things to be redrafted until there is a consensus... There's a high chance it will get through."

Language campaigner Pierrick le Feuvre added: "Whatever happens, the amendment adopted is a positive development." But that, "It is also probably an opportunistic choice by the Government a few weeks before the French Presidency of the European Union. A breakthrough, yes. But it will take a 6th Republic before things are really changing in France."

The language issue had some coverage in the press with the conservative newspaper *Le Figaro* running an opinion poll, it showed a majority in favour of reform.

UN: France must revise its Constitution

Meanwhile, in Geneva on May 16th members from EBLUL France heard the UN expert Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights once again deplore "the lack of official recognition of minorities within the territory."

According to the Committee "the right to use a minority language, which can only be exercised in common with other members of the minority group" are not respected in France.

The Committee regretted that "the absence of official recognition of regional and minority languages has contributed to the decline in the number of speakers of these languages."

The Committee recalls in France that "equality before the law and the prohibition of discrimination does not always ensure equal and effective enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights by persons belonging to minority groups."

The UN Committee called on France to revise its Constitution to "officially recognize the need to protect cultural diversity and all minority groups under the jurisdiction of the State party".

The Committee reiterated its requests to France to lift its reservations on articles 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (right persons Part of minority groups), and that it ratifies the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, as well as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and Protocol No. 12 of the European Convention human rights against all forms of discrimination.

The Committee said that France must "increase its efforts to preserve and promote regional languages and cultures, particularly in public education, television and radio and calls for official recognition of these languages in the Constitution."

EBLUL France, who have worked with the UN on the issue, welcomed the French National Assembly's amendment on the recognition of regional languages in the Constitution. But "we also find that many more steps are needed, France is still catching up in comparison to other European countries and in relation to the principles it has ratified in the Treaty of Lisbon in particular." (EuroLang 2008).

4. Appeals, News and Views from Endangered Communities

Sorbs give a report of their situation at the European Parliament

A delegation of the Sorbs, represented by the Sorbian umbrella organization "Domowina" will participate at a meeting in the European Parliament on Thursday in the Intergroup for traditional minorities. The representatives of the only Slavic minority in Germany, situated in Lusatia, will give a report about their present situation. The Sorbs are at the moment renegotiating the future funding of their minority, which lives in the border triangle of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic.

The future funding of the Sorbs is ambiguous. The financial agreement for the Sorbs is phased out and no solution has been found. The funding governments -- the Federal States of Brandenburg and Sachsen and the Federal Government in Berlin cannot find an agreement.

A few days ago at the "Brandenburger Tor" in Berlin there was a demonstration about the present situation which had a wide coverage in German and European media FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) supports the demands of the Sorbs and the Assembly of Delegates of FUEN unanimously adopted the "Memorandum concerning the future survival of the Sorbian people in the Federal Republic of Germany". Additionally the president of FUEN wrote a letter to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and asked her to mediate in the conflict between the Sorbs and the German officials. Read more: "Memorandum concerning the future survival of the Sorbian people in the Federal Republic of Germany" FUEN-Congress 2008 Resolutions: The demonstration in Berlin

If you need further information -- contact Susann Schenk or Jan Die-drichsen at 004522308876 / info at living-diversity.eu

5. Allied Societies, Activities

Indigenous Language Institute

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

The Indigenous Language Institute (ILI) recognizes the imminent loss of indigenous peoples' languages and acknowledges the individuality of indigenous communities. ILI facilitates innovative, successful community-based initiatives for language revitalization through collaboration with other appropriate groups and organizations, and promotes public awareness of this crisis.

“Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”, Yakutsk, Russian Federation, 2-4 July 2008: report by Tjeerd de Graaf

This conference was one of the Russian contributions to the International Year of the Languages and organized by the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, the National Committee of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for UNESCO and other organizations.

The conference discussed the political, scientific, cultural, social, ethical, technological and other aspects of the development of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace, and the use of ICT to preserve languages. Some of the themes were:

- The creation and circulation of the local content in minority languages
- Mass media (television, radio, newspapers and magazines) in minority languages in the Internet
- Digital television in minority languages
- Cultural heritage and cultural diversity in the Internet
- What libraries, museums and archives can do with ICT and by other means to preserve multilingualism
- The ethical aspects of preserving multilingualism in cyberspace
- Multilingualism and the cultural dialogue
- The use of new technologies for the preservation of languages
- How to guarantee the presence of particular languages in cyberspace
- How to gauge linguistic diversity in cyberspace
- Electronic documentation of languages
- Types for minority languages
- Electronic dictionaries and translators
- The importance of developing information retrieval systems in minority languages
- Creation of bilingual and multilingual websites
- What should be the role and activity of international organizations, governments, civil society institutions and private enterprise in preserving multilingualism in cyberspace and elsewhere? What role should legislative regulation play?
- Internet sites dedicated to minority languages
- What is the situation of multilingualism in the world and in cyberspace?
- Why are languages vanishing? What will happen if a mere 10% of presently existent languages survive by the end of the 21st century, as certain forecasts say? Is it possible and principally necessary to preserve all presently existent languages? Is it a necessity or pointless and extravagant enthusiasm? The role of enthusiasts
- Who needs the survival of minority languages – only ethnic minorities or also governments, dominant nationalities, researchers and other cultural activists?

The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is one of the most interesting parts of the Russian Federation. It occupies more than 3 million sq km, which makes 20% of the entire Russian territory, and is the largest constituent entity of the Russian Federation, and the world's largest administrative territorial unit. It has a population of 950,000, which represents more than 120 nationalities. The Yakut, the northernmost

Turkic ethnic community, make an ethnic majority of 45%, and Russians 41%.

Yakutia is a unique place for linguistic diversity: it fruitfully works to preserve the language of the Yakut, the titular nation, while the Yakut are doing much to preserve the languages of indigenous ethnic minorities of the Far North (Evenk, Even, Chukchi, Yukaghir and others).

The Yakut folk epic *Olonkho* is on the UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Yakutia possesses the largest goldfields and diamond mines in the world. It has the world's most affluent river, the Lena. The Lenskie Stolby (Lena Pillars) national park on its banks has been nominated for the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List. During the conference the participants could visit this magnificent place.

The Northern Pole of Cold (the coldest inhabited spot in the world) is in Yakutia. This is Oimyakon. The absolute temperature record of minus 72°C was registered in this township in 1933.

The capital of the Republic of Sakha, Yakutsk, is one of the oldest Siberian cities. With a population of 250,000, it possesses universities, research institutes, theatres, museums and libraries. In particular, the city has an unprecedented Mammoth Museum.

A greater part of conference work and the cultural program took place during a Lena River cruise on board the boat Mikhail Svetlov. We departed from Yakutsk in the evening July 2 and returned in the evening July 4. After coming back to Yakutsk a reception was organized by the president of Sakha and the delegates attended the opening ceremony of the IV International Games Children of Asia.

During the conference Tjeerd de Graaf informed the audience about the work of the Fryske Academy, the Mercator European Research Center and his projects on Endangered Languages and Archives. He could establish valuable contacts for future joint co-operation with colleagues in the Republic Sakha (Yakutia).

6. In the World, on the Web

Linguistic Diversity and the Preservation of Endangered Languages: A Case Study from Nepal

On 27 January 2008 Mark Turin announced:

You might be interested to download a short booklet I recently wrote. It's available as the second entry on my publications page:

<<http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/projectteam/turin/publications.html>>

2007 *Linguistic Diversity and the Preservation of Endangered Languages: a Case Study from Nepal*. 42 pages, many colour plates. *Talking Points*, 4/07, ISBN 978 92 9115 055 7 (printed) & ISBN 978 92 9115 074 8 (electronic).

ADUM project

On 15 February 2008 Sergi Vilaró of the Catalan Open University wrote:

Let us contact you again to inform you about the recent developments regarding the ADUM project which, as you may remember, offers information on EU programmes relevant for the funding of minority language promotion projects. It also wishes to be a means to

interrelate with other people by providing an interactive environment to aid the drafting of proposals. For this purpose, the project's website (www.adum.info), available in English, French, German, Italian and Catalan (like the present attached newsletter), avails you of the opportunity to consult the "Partners & Experts" database which we kindly invite you to join or send it to further potential users. We would also like to remind you about the website's "Forum", where you are invited to set up separate communication systems with potential partners or people sharing your interests. We would finally wish to let you know about the possibility to contact us <info.at.adum.info> if you wish to propose and submit news for our news service, or relevant internet links for the "General Resources" or "Resources by Country" databases within the site. Thank you very much in advance.

Sergi Vilaró ADUM Project Research Coordination, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Language Geek

<http://www.languagegeek.com/>

This site is dedicated to the promotion of Native North American languages, especially in providing a means by which these can be used on the internet. Language Geek provides fonts and keyboard layouts which try to cover all of the glyphs (alphabetical letters/Syllabics) necessary for writing the Native languages on the continent. Syllabics (Algonquian, Athapaskan, Inuit, Cherokee) take centre stage with type faces in several different styles. Fonts are also available for those languages which use a Roman orthography.

Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program

<http://www.rosettastone.com/global/endangered>

Across North America and around the world, indigenous communities are working to preserve and revitalize their languages. Rosetta Stone can be a valuable resource for these efforts. Indigenous communities contract Rosetta Stone to develop editions in their language for their exclusive use. Around North America—from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake in the northeast, to the Seminole Tribe in the deep south, to NANA Corporation's Inupiat shareholders in the Arctic—Rosetta Stone has been selected as the technology of choice for language revitalization.

2008 International Year of Languages UNESCO Portal

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/admin/ev.php?URL_ID=35344&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201&reload=1199465343

To celebrate the International Year of Languages, UNESCO invites governments, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations, educational institutions, professional associations and all other stakeholders to increase their own activities to promote and protect all languages, particularly endangered languages, in all individual and collective contexts.

Computer programme created for indigenous language users

On 24 January 2008 Darryn McKenny in Australia announced:

You may or may not have heard about the computer program "Miromaa" that we have developed. For those that have not here is a quick brief:

Miromaa is a computer program which is aimed at empowering Indigenous people to enable us to best utilise technology in the task of researching, recording, reclaiming and disseminating our traditional languages. It enables us to be hands on in the preservation and revitalisation of our languages.

Well, we are proud to now give you all a sneak preview of Miromaa 3, this is our major revised version developed on the .Net platform. The program still has all of the great features of before but now with a new fresher layout to make using Miromaa even easier. The program enforces good archive practise and helps you gather any and all evidences of language including, text, audio, images and video. You can also use it to store your digitised documents for example pdf and Word documents, Excel spreadsheets plus more. It has a secure environment which can only be accessed by username and password, it can help you work on multiple languages or dialects and it also has a learning area where you can begin learning immediately.

The program can run on either a stand-alone desktop or on a network and you are not just limited to using Miromaa only as the program has the ability to export its data in various forms including SIL Shoebox/Toolbox text file format, Lexique Pro text file format, Microsoft Word, tables and more. Please add your thoughts to the BLOG <<http://www.arwarbukarl.net.au/blog/?p=69>> as we would love to hear them. So, to get on with it here is the link to the preview site: <http://www.arwarbukarl.net.au/miromaa/Preview/Preview.html>

You will need a broadband connection to view the Shockwave video. For further information about Miromaa 2 please visit here: <http://www.arwarbukarl.com.au/default.aspx?id=153>

For further information about Arwarbukarl CRA visit here: <http://www.arwarbukarl.com.au/>

Daryn McKenny, Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association Inc.*

7. New publications - reviews

The Turn of the Ermine: an Anthology of Breton Literature (ed. & transl. Jacqueline Gibson, Gwyn Griffiths (Francis Boutle, 2006)

reviewed by Nicholas Ostler

For me, revelations about the Bretons began with the title. Duchess Anne of Brittany, Anna Vreizh, they say, once saw an ermine that preferred to stand and die fighting a fox, rather than to escape but



ruin its coat in a mud puddle. Hence the Breton Duchy's motto – Potius mori quam foedari / *Kentoc'h mervet eget am zoatran*: "Better die than be stained". Ermine spots are much used in Breton heraldry, and the ermine spot (left) was indeed early used as a Breton



symbol in struggles against the French, until it was noticed that it was too easily confused with the fleur-de-lys (right). Indeed, ironically enough, a fleur-de-lys is almost exactly an ermine spot, turned.

This is a fighting anthology, pointedly published in Breton and in English translation, deliberately leapfrogging the Parisian French context against which the Bretons have been condemned to define themselves for well over a millennium. The preface, by Bernard Le Nail, former Director of the Institut Culturel de Bretagne, is a straightforward rant against French domination, of politics and of mental outlook.

It covers two millennia of writing from Julius Caesar's remarks on Druids and the Veneti (both doomed for extinction at the hands of Romans) to the present day. It tells moments of history, therefore, as

well as presenting fragments of writing from different ages, but sadly there is a vast hiatus, between tales of legendary saints and the French Revolution: a millennium is missing, though it appears that bilingual Breton entertainers were popular in the courts of Europe. To represent the “Traces of a Lost Literature”, we only have the lay of a lost nightingale, killed by a jealous – and ironically perceptive – husband. Here are the closing lines:

“ <i>Dalit, dalit, va greg iaouank;</i> <i>Setu aman hoc’h eostik koant;</i> <i>Me’m euz hen paket evid hoc’h;</i> <i>Me chans, va dous, e plizo d’e-</i> <i>hoc’h.”</i> <i>He den iaouank d’al ma klevaz,</i> <i>Gand glac’har vraz a lavaraz:</i> <i>”Setu ma dous ha me tizet;</i> <i>Ne hallfomp mui en em welet,</i> <i>Da sklerder loar, d’ar prenester,</i> <i>’Vel ma oamp boazet da ober.”</i>	”Here, here, my young wife; Here is your fine nightingale; I went and caught it for you; I hope, my sweet, it pleases you.” Her young lover, when he heard of this, With great sadness did he speak: “My love, we have been found out, No more can we see each other, Under a clear moon, at the win- dow, As we used to do.”
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At over 500 pages, no summary can do justice to the content of this book, which focuses on the pains of the Bretons, often locked in political struggle for existence with the French through the crises of their shared history, above all the Revolution, the Great War and the German Occupation. As well as these socio-political themes, there are sections on Love, Death, Childhood Memories, the experience of the Breton countryside, Women on Women, and of course the Breton language. Consider, for example, this start to the *Klemm ar Brezhoneg ouzh ur Brezhoneger* (Complaints from the Breton language to a Breton speaker) by Arzhig in 2004:

‘ <i>Al laou a beg start o genoù</i> <i>Ouzh divrec’h treut va</i> <i>c’hemmadurioù.’</i> <i>“Ouzh al laou on deut da</i> <i>voaziañ;</i> <i>Kaer em befe klask o spazhañ.”</i>	‘Lice grab, teeth in motion, At the thin arm of each muta- tion.’ “I have got used to lice; Anyway, they are too small for me to dice.”
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Despite these moments of hilarity, back and back comes the note of plaintive sadness. Around 1910, Yann-Bêr Kalloc’h wrote this on the *Sadness of the Celts*:

...*Doué ’lakas en dristé é kalon er Breton.*

O men Doué, en dra-sé e vank d’em hoanteu-dén,

Hwi é ! Rag, ar en Douar ne hram nameid tremén,

Rag, n’é ket aveitoñ ’ma groeit or haloneu...

... God sowed sadness in Breton hearts.

My Lord. This thing which, as a man, I miss so much

Is You! For we are only visitors on this earth,

Our hearts were not designed for it...

A prescient commentary on what the 20th century had in store for Brittany. But this book provides a rare chance for outsiders to appreciate many features of the Breton view of the world in the round.

Note. The publisher, Francis Boutle, informs us that there are more anthologies to come, this year and next, on Cornish, Manx, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and Galician.

Discourses of Endangerment: ideology and interest in the defence of languages, ed. Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller. Continuum 2007

reviewed by Nicholas Ostler

This work, an early entrant in a series hopefully entitled “Advances in sociolinguistics”, is an attempt to examine, supposedly without any combative stance or prior commitment, the basis for the discourse about language endangerment. Since it is intended as an analytic, if potentially iconoclastic work, it is surprising to find it produced as an edited volume: it is as if its editors felt they could simply frame the problem, and leave their contributors to come to the right conclusions. But evidently they knew their contributors.

The discourse is contested from the very start, an introductory essay by the editors, which refers to most of the following chapters, though it is presented as a contribution on a par with them. It is called “Sociolinguistics, globalization and the social order”. Its authors are exercised by the purported fact – not evidenced, but simply presumed – that the same discourse of endangerment is often employed on behalf of some of the great languages of the world, French, Spanish and even English. ‘How could this be?’ they ask disingenuously. There is dishonesty afoot here, they opine, and the aim of the analysis is to ask questions which suggest, if they do not reveal, what is really at issue when people appear to get concerned about the future of languages, or of linguistic diversity. This refusal to accept claims of endangerment at face value means that they are free to finger their usual suspects. These turn out to be proponents of the nation state seeking to defend it against subversive globalization, and as an afterthought (although they accept that none of the books chapters actually broach this theme) religious missions.

Subsequent chapters address language discourse in Canada, Switzerland, Corsica, Catalonia, Ireland, Sweden, France and the Spanish-speaking world. We do not, therefore, get very far away from the writers’ comfort zone of Europe-centred cultural politics, a biased sample-set which naturally tends to reinforce the *parti pris* from which they set out. There may very well be useful subversive work to be done in chopping away at ‘essentialist’ (a favourite word) assumptions equating languages with single cultures, but this is at cross-purposes to the issue of whether whole language systems are facing an uncertain future, and may in many cases be about to go extinct. Strangely – strange at least to the authors of this volume – I think that this is the essence of ‘endangerment discourse’, whether conceived as a scientific, or a humanitarian, issue. The real statistical scandal of this discourse – namely that there are no relevant longitudinal statistics for languages, except for censuses in the British Isles – is unmentioned here. But of course, critics are free to comment on whatever aspect they will, the only danger being that their comments may be seen as irrelevant or predictable. The problem comes when a reader is asked to pay £75 for a volume in which the contributors simply express their pre-avowed scepticism.

The final article by Deborah Cameron is useful, or at least instructive, in pointing out historical analogies between much modern discussion of endangered languages and the sense of diversity as expressed in language difference that animated 19th-century opinions, primarily in Germany: these (unfortunately) led up to views endorsed by Nazi theorists. But language and language-attitudes are a tricky issue, always eliciting strong public responses, and it would be surprising if an important stream of 19th-century thought had no analogue in the present day. There is a sad moral lesson to be learnt from Nazi sociolinguistics. But it lies not in seeing a distinct value in one’s own cultural and linguistic tradition, risky as this vision may be: it lies in the fault of arbitrarily preferring one’s own over every other. Studied indifference to the various views, memories and sentiments that language traditions have generated is not the only alternative to extreme partiality backed up with extreme violence.

The Semitic languages, ed. Robert Hetzron. Routledge (1997: pbk edn 2006)

reviewed by Nicholas Ostler

This is a collection of magisterial surveys of Semitic languages, extending in space from Zway and Gunnän in southern Ethiopia to Eastern Modern Aramaic in eastern Turkey, and in time from the start of the 3rd millennium BCE to the end of the 2nd CE. The main constraint on purchase hitherto had been its horrendous price for the hardback edition (£235), but this has now come down to £40 for the paperback.

The data on all the languages is almost exclusively grammatical, from phonology to syntax – and occasionally a disquisition on lexis or dialects – but each chapter (on a language, or a closely related sub-family) begins with a short section on external history. These vary reasonably with how much there is/to say: half a page for Tigre to 5 pages for Aramaic. The common organization of the chapters means that it is easy to compare the structures of the different languages point for point. There is an account of genetic sub-groupings, and a comprehensive description of scripts and numerals used for Semitic languages from Akkadian cuneiform and Ugaritic to the romanized orthography for Turoyo Aramaic devised in Sweden in 1981. There is also a chapter each on the Arabic and Hebrew grammatical traditions. All the chapters have good bibliographies, divided into ‘References’ and ‘Further Reading’ sections.

It is useful that there is a separate chapter on the languages Amorite (reconstructed from many Akkadian proper names – each of which is a little sentence) and Eblaite (with its own corpus of inscriptions from the ancient city of Ebla), casting them as distinct from more standard Akkadian.

Specifically as to modern languages now endangered, there are relatively few, which perhaps should be a matter of congratulation to the Semites, were it not for the fact that this whole volume predates the Iraqi War that began in 2003, with its dire implications for many communities of Neo-Aramaic speakers (as well as so many others without unique languages). Nevertheless there are chapters on all the South Arabian languages (Arabic’s pre-historic siblings), on Neo-Aramaic, and on Harari (until 1975 spoken exclusively by 30,000 Muslim inhabitants of the city of Harar in southeastern Ethiopia, but now – for reasons to do with the Dergue revolution – with 70% of them spread in a diaspora across the country).

Argobba, with 10,000 speakers, is covered in parallel with its Ethiopian sister the national language Amharic (17 million), though in practice in perhaps 10% of the detail. Every language may be equally entitled to a system of grammar – as Antonio Nebrija and the Spanish missionaries to Mexico discerned in the 16th century – but, as Max Weinreich discerned in the 20th, those with an army and a navy continue to gain disproportionate respect, even from the grammarian.

8. New publications - notices

Mbula-English dictionary

Rene van den Berg writes:

SIL Papua New Guinea would like to announce the publication of the Mbula-English dictionary. Mbula (also known as Mangap or Mangaaba-Mbula) is an Oceanic Austronesian language currently spoken on Umboi Island in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea by some 4500 people. The 742-page dictionary is based on 25 years of fieldwork by Salme and Robert Bugenhagen. The volume contains a vernacular introduction, an English introduction that briefly describes the phonology, morpho-syntax, and major dialectal variations of the language, a Mbula-English section (= the major section), an English-Mbula finderlist, and some semantic field listings: body and plant

parts and products, colour terms, environment and geography, houses and buildings, kinship terminology, biblical key terms, quantity classifiers, fauna and flora.

The Mbula-English section of the dictionary is mainly root-based, so most entries contain a number of sub-entries. Meanings are abundantly illustrated with full example sentences, and much cultural information is included. The Mbula language heavily utilizes body-part idioms, and these are well illustrated in the dictionary. For example, the entry for *mata* 'eye' extends over 12 pages. And like many other languages of Papua New Guinea, the Mbula lexicon contains many very specific verbs of hitting, cutting, and breaking. The dictionary will be of interest to linguists interested in Oceanic Austronesian languages, semanticists, anthropologists, and others interested in the peoples and cultures of Papua New Guinea. The dictionary is a hardbound volume, and will sell for \$30 USA plus cost of shipping, and should be available for purchase by mid-April or the beginning of May. To order, please contact the Book Distribution section of the Language Resources Department of SIL Papua New Guinea, email address: LR-bookdist@sil.org.pg

The dictionary is also available online at <http://www.sil.org/pacific/png/abstract.asp?id=49817>

For pictures of the authors during a recent celebration, see <http://www.sil.org/sil/news/2008/mbula-english-dictionary.htm>

Other dictionaries and wordlists of Austronesian languages in PNG that have recently become available include Mapos Buang by Bruce Hooley (over 400 pages), Bunama, Dobu, Iamalele, Maisin, Muyuw, Nehan, Sinaugoro and Sudest. Some of these are scanned copies of existing publications, others represent work in progress. The full list of online documents from SIL PNG is at http://www.sil.org/pacific/png/show_subject.asp?pubs=online&code=Linguistics

René van den Berg

r.vandenberg@sil.org.pg

Documenting and Revitalizing Austronesian Languages

Edited by D. Victoria Rau and Margaret Florey

Language Documentation & Conservation Special Publication No. 1

2007, University of Hawai'i Press

<http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/ldc/sp01/>

Part I. International Capacity Building Initiatives

Part II. Documentation and Revitalization Activities

Part III. Computational Methods and Tools for Language Documentation

Contributors: Margaret Florey, Kenneth L. Rehg, Peter K. Austin, I Wayan Arka, Fuhui Hsieh and Shuanfan Huang, D. Victoria Rau and Meng-Chien Yang, Yih-Ren Lin, Lahwy Icyeh, and Da-Wei Kuan (Daya), D. Victoria Rau, Hui-Huan Chang, Yin-Sheng Tai, Zhen-Yi Yang, Yi-Hui Lin, Chia-Chi Yang, and Maa-Neu Dong, J. Stephen Quakenbush Eric Albright and John Hatton, Meng-Chien Yang, Hsin-Ta Chou, Huey-Shiuan Guo, and Gia-Pyng Chen, Phil Quick

ISBN: 9780824833091

Syriac Film – Contact details

Further to Ogmios 34, p. 5 (Dec. 2007) on the Syriac language film with a Turkish title *Yarına Bir Harf* “A Letter for Tomorrow”, Özcan Geçer, the author, gives two e-mail addresses for information:

belgeselci@hotmail.com, info@yarinabirharf.com

Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties

Editors: Kendall A. King, Natalie Schilling-Estes, Lyn Fogle, Jia Jackie Lou, Barbara Soukup. Georgetown University Press, 2008. <http://press.georgetown.edu/detail.html?id=9781589011922>

Abstract

In the last three decades the field of endangered and minority languages has evolved rapidly, moving from the initial dire warnings of linguists to a swift increase in the number of organizations, funding programs, and community-based efforts dedicated to documentation, maintenance, and revitalization. *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity* brings together leading researchers and practitioners to provide the most recent and innovative theoretical and empirical work in defining, documenting, and developing the world's smaller languages and language varieties.

The book begins by reconsidering the very definitions of 'endangered' and 'minority' by asking who makes such classifications, and what is at stake in linguistic, political, and ideological terms. The contributors then turn to the documentation and description of endangered languages and focus on best practices, methods and goals in documentation, and on current field reports from around the globe. The latter part of the analysis examines contemporary practices in developing endangered languages and dialects, as well as particular language revitalization efforts and outcomes. Concluding with critical calls to consider the human lives at stake, *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity* reminds scholars, researchers, practitioners, and educators that linguistic diversity can only be sustained in a world where diversity in all its forms is valued.

Theme issue of Journal of American Indian Education

From Teresa McCarty

I wanted to let you know about the recent publication of a theme issue of the Journal of American Indian Education (the flagship journal of the National Indian Education Association), which I guest edited, entitled: "American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Education in the Era of Standardization and No Child Left Behind." The issue addresses the impact of federal education/language policy on American Indian schools, students, languages, and cultures. It also includes policy recommendations in light of the pending reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

This issue can be individually purchased (\$8.00 + P/H) by contacting the Center for Indian Education, Arizona State University, PO Box 871311, Tempe, AZ 85287-1311 (PH: +480-965-6292). It is also available by subscription (\$20.00/year) and as a benefit of membership in NIEA.

Teresa L. McCarty, Ph.D., A lice Wiley Snell Professor of Education Policy Studies, Arizona State University, Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Farmer Building 120 - PO Box 872411 Tempe, AZ 85287-2411 Teresa.McCarty@asu.edu

Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities

welcomes book proposals with a focus on Endangered Languages. Information on recent volumes in the series can be gleaned from the following website:

<http://tinyurl.com/2vy2q9>

Informal enquiries can be addressed to Gabrielle Hogan-Brun

<g.hogan-brun@bristol.ac.uk>.

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Series Editor, Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities

9. Forthcoming events

AIDLCM Conference on Endangered Languages and Cultures

Pierrette Berangier writes:

I am the general secretary of AIDLCM (*Association Internationale de Défense des Langues et Cultures Menacées*). You send us each issue of "Ogmios" and I read them with a great interest.

I write you to say that our congress will be in Liège, on 21, 22 and 23 August 2008. Perhaps you can write this information in your Newsletter. People who want more information can send me an e-mail to pierrette.berengier@orange.fr or to the president, Paul Lefin who is at Liège: aidlcm@skynet.be

I thank you for all you do for our languages.

10. Obituaries

R.Elangaiyan

It is my sad duty to inform you all of the sudden death on 18 January 2008, from a heart-attack, of R. Elangaiyan, of the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore, the FEL Committee, and formerly Chairman of the FEL 2006 conference. He will be sadly missed by all of us who knew him.



I was lucky to meet Elan first in 2001, when I visited CIIL in connexion with their joint corpus project with Lancaster University: Elan was very clearly an enthusiast for endangered languages, and when he learnt of my equal concern through FEL, he took me off on his bike for a quiet dinner in the country. Afterwards, the link we had made was crucial, I think, in ensuring the timely organization of all the multifarious issues leading up to our 2005 conference, EL and Multilingualism, which I think of as a joint triumph for CIIL and FEL. We could see that he was having to smooth over some not quite straightforward relations, but he did so with boundless good humour and energy - just leaving us concerned that he was working himself to a frazzle - since he seemed to feel all the difficulties quite personally. I

myself always enjoyed the frequent phone calls he put through to me - usually in Japan - though he usually sounded worried when he called. He was a wonderful collaborator for us, and we always felt safe in his hands. Sure enough, the conference went off to perfection. Circumstances later made it hard to get the full print run of Proceedings out as soon as we had hoped - but again, the most notable thing from our side was how conscientious Elan was being in pursuing the matter. Within the year, the whole matter had been tied up to everyone's satisfaction, and we are still reaping the benefits now.

He was a very great credit to FEL, CIIL, and a very dear man.
Nicholas Ostler

Blair Rudes

We were very sad to learn in late March of the sudden and unexpected death of the founder of our sister organisation in the US, Blair Rudes, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Blair had come into our lives when FEL was still in its infancy, and it was he who organised our successful conference on Endangered Languages and Literacy at Charlotte in 2000, the memory of which I still treasure. It was our Foundation's first leap across the oceans to hold a conference - and it was the springboard to future expansion too. When interest in and support for our organisation grew in America to the point where we had potential donors, it became necessary to set up a separate organisation in America so that donors could enjoy tax incentives, and it was Blair who ably and patiently undertook the protracted negotiations with the IRS to make FEL Inc. possible. This became a reality in 2003. Following Blair's untimely passing the running of FEL Inc. now passes into the hands of another staunch friend and conference host, McKenna Brown.

Blair also popularised awareness of endangered languages through his dynamic interest in and great knowledge of the Native American languages, particularly those of the southeast. He did monumental work on Tuscarora, but his wide knowledge earned him the position of language coach on several large American film productions. The following obituary was posted on his university's web-site following his death.

Chris Moseley



Blair Rudes (1951-2008)

Dr. Blair A. Rudes, Associate Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, died unexpectedly on March 16, 2008, after spending the afternoon exercising.

An internationally known linguist and expert in American Indian languages, Dr. Rudes came to UNC Charlotte as an Assistant Professor in 1999 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2005.

During his career at UNC Charlotte, Dr. Rudes became famous as a "Hollywood linguist." In 2004, film director Ter-

rence Malick hired Dr. Rudes to work as a consultant and dialect coach for the film *The New World*, which deals with the founding of Jamestown and the interaction between the Native people and the English settlers. Malick wanted the American Indian characters to speak in their native language, but this language had been extinct for over 200 years. Dr. Rudes drew on his expertise in the history of American Indian languages to revive the Virginia Algonquian language. He then translated the dialog spoken by the Native characters into Virginia Algonquian and coached the actors on how to pronounce their lines in this language. Dr. Rudes' contributions to this film attracted widespread publicity including a feature story in the *New York Times*. Impressed with Dr. Rudes' contributions to *The New World*, film director Carter Smith hired Dr. Rudes to serve as the Mayan Dialogue Coach for the film *The Ruins*, to be released by Dreamworks later in 2008.

As a scholar, Dr. Rudes is best known for writing the Tuscarora-English/English-Tuscarora Dictionary, which the University of Toronto Press published in 1999. He also edited several other books and published over 20 articles in scholarly journals. At the time of his death, he was completing a three-volume work entitled *The Catawba Language*.

In recent years, Dr Rudes received several important honors. In 2006, the Tuscarora Indian Nation honored him for his contributions to preserving the Tuscarora language. In 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a bill honoring Dr. Rudes for his contribution to the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs. Most recently, the State University of New York at Buffalo (where Dr. Rudes received his Ph.D. in 1976) gave him their Distinguished Alumni Award.

A valued member of the Department of English, Dr. Rudes will be deeply missed by his colleagues and students. The memorial service for Dr. Blair A. Rudes is set for Tuesday, April 1 from 4 to 6 pm in The Rowe Theater, 130 Rowe Arts Building. A blog in memory of Dr. Rudes is at <http://blairrudes.edublogs.org/>.

Andy Palacio

The Belizean singer, songwriter and cultural campaigner Andy Palacio has died at the age of 47 from respiratory failure after a stroke and heart attack. A generous, energetic and committed musician, he had begun to see significant results from his efforts to raise awareness of his Garifuna culture, notably through the album *Wátina*, released last February.

Descendants of African slaves, the Garifuna were shipwrecked on the island of St.Kitts in 1635 and formed inter-racial communities with the indigenous people - until 1797, when the British brutally expelled them to Honduras. From there they spread out along the coasts of Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, and arrived in Belize in 1802.

At Palacio's school, this history, including the forced expulsion, had been censored. The situation is slowly changing, he said, "with so many more Garifuna in influential positions". When I interviewed him about *Wátina* last summer, I was struck by his warmth and directness, and the urgency of his campaigning through his music.

Palacio was born in the fishing village of Barranco. His father Reuben was a fisherman-farmer who played English folk songs and popular radio hits on harmonica and guitar, and taught his son harmonica. At high school in nearby Punta Gorda, Andy took up the guitar and played soul, reggae and soca music; he wanted to be like Bob Marley, he admitted. A scholarship at 18 to the teachers' train-

ing college in Belize City drew him into the capital's buzzing music scene.

Throughout his life, Palacio combined his natural talents for teaching and music with occasional forays into official positions. On graduating, he taught at Barranco Roman Catholic school, and in 1980 volunteered for Nicaragua's national literacy campaign, working with an English-speaking community. He was disturbed by the ignorance of their ancestral language and culture: "I was looked upon like a rare specimen who spoke Garifuna." He was determined to prevent that happening in Belize, where a new electric dance beat called "punta" was sweeping the country. His own punta singles, *Watu* and *Ereba*, spread his name beyond his Garifuna fan base: as he put it, "We had crossed over." In 1981, he presented both musics on Radio Belize, and taught music and songwriting to local Barranco boys.

The 1980s saw Palacio's popularity as a musician and community worker intensify. His 1985 song *Bikini Party* became a punta classic. Two years later, he came to London to train with the Cultural Partnerships arts organisation in studio production and electronics. On returning to Belize, he was appointed director of Sunrise, a community recording project dedicated to Belizean music. He recorded *Come Mek Wi Dance* with local musicians, and then made some recordings for Caye Records in California.

In 1995, Palacio met the local producer Ivan Duran, who ran the Stonetree label. The albums *Keimuon* (1995) and *Til da Mawnin* (1997) were produced in Belize and Havana, and *Paranda* (1999), recorded in all four Garifuna countries, wove roots music into the songs and inspired many young punta-rockers to include traditional elements in their work.

In 2000, Palacio succeeded in his request that UNESCO should formally acknowledge the need to preserve the Garifuna language, music and dance. He accepted influential posts in the education ministry's literacy campaign, in the ministry of rural development and culture, and at the national institute of culture and history, where he organised activities connected with Garifuna history and the now annual Garifuna festival. In 2006, when Stonetree formed a link with the American label Cumbancha, Palacio and Duran spent four months recording by the sea. The result, *Wátina*, is a marvellous mix of modern and traditional music, and poetic vignettes from Garifuna life.

Last year Palacio was declared UNESCO artist for peace, and in October he and Duran were given the annual WOMEX award in Seville, where he made a typically modest speech. *Wátina* appeared on dozens of 2007 "best of" lists in many countries, and in December Palacio was chosen unanimously as a winner in the forthcoming BBC Radio 3 world music awards.

Discussing the album's success, he echoed the pleasure that the widespread appeal of his early punta singles had given him: "It is accomplishing everything I ever dreamed of where our community was concerned. I thought it would appeal to old people because of its mature and sophisticated sound, its exploration of the soul of Garifuna music, and inclusion of ritual beats. But no, it crossed over!"

In the track *Amunegu*, he pleads for a deliberate transmission of culture to the next generation, "or we'll lose it". But teenage bands were already singing unplugged Garifuna songs. He is survived by his five children and two granddaughters.

Andy Vivien Palacio, musician, born December 2 1960; died January 19 2008

Sue Steward (The Guardian, 23.1.2008)

Marie Smith Jones

The last full-blooded member of Alaska's Eyak people, and the last fluent speaker of their language, has died. Marie Smith Jones, 89, died in her sleep on Monday at her home in Anchorage, said her

daughter, Bernice Galloway. "To the best of our knowledge she was the last full-blooded Eyak alive," she said. As the last fluent speaker, Jones worked to preserve the Eyak language with Michael Krauss, a linguist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Jones wanted a written record of the language so future generations would be able to resurrect it. She and Krauss compiled an Eyak dictionary and grammar guide. Jones, her sister and cousin shared Eyak stories that were made into a book. Being the last of her kind for the last 15 years, Krauss said, "was a tragic mantle that she bore with great dignity". About 20 native Alaskan languages are at risk of the same fate as Eyak, Krauss said. "If we lose them, we lose what is unique to Alaska."

Jones grew up on Eyak Lake. Many of her siblings died young when smallpox and influenza tore through the Eyaks. In 1948 she married a white Oregon fisherman, and the couple had nine children, seven of whom are still alive. Jones twice spoke at the United Nations on peace and the importance of indigenous languages, Galloway said.

Mary Pemberton, Anchorage (The Guardian, UK 28.1.2008)

An appreciation of Mary Smith Jones by Mark Abley entitled 'It's like bombing the Louvre' appeared in the same issue of the paper:

Some deaths come as a shock. The death last Monday of Marie Smith Jones did not. She was 89, blind, a heavy smoker and a recovering alcoholic, who had borne nine children and buried two of them. People had been expecting her death for years.

By "people" I mean linguists. Most residents of Anchorage, the Alaskan city where she spent her final decades, had never heard of her. Even after she addressed a UN conference on indigenous rights, she managed to maintain her privacy. Yet among the advocates for minority languages, Jones was famous. A few of them knew her by a different name: Udach' Kuqax'a'a'ch', a name that belonged to the Eyak language and means "a sound that calls people from far away".

Jones is thought to have been the last full-blooded member of the Eyak, a saltwater people of southern Alaska. When the Exxon Valdez ran aground in 1989, it spilled 240,000 barrels of crude oil into their traditional fishing grounds. More important, Jones was the last person to speak Eyak fluently. She had held that melancholy distinction since her sister's death. Her passing means that nobody in the world can effortlessly distinguish a *demex'ch* (a soft, rotten spot in the ice) from a *demex'ch'ida'luw* (a large, treacherous hole in the ice). It means that *siniik'adach'uuch'* – the vertical groove between the nose and upper lip, literally a "nose crumple" – has fled the minds of the living.

Are such arcane details significant? Jones thought so. Asked by Elizabeth Kolbert of *The New Yorker* how she felt about her language dying with her, she replied: "How would you feel if your baby died? If someone asked you, 'What was it like to see it lying in the cradle?' Jones added that she hated reporters. A fisherman's daughter, who had worked in a cannery from the age of 12, she could not then have imagined how many journalists she would meet in old age.

The Eyak language has no offspring – no close relatives of any kind. Kolbert wittily described it as "the spinster aunt of the Athabascan language group". Linguistic evidence suggests the Eyak people split off to become a separate culture roughly 3,000 years ago, travelling downriver to a salmon-busy coast. In verbal terms, Eyak's nephews and nieces include the Apaches of the dry south-west, familiar to us from westerns.

The Eyak may never have had a large population, and in recent centuries they suffered badly from the ravages of smallpox, measles, influenza and colonisation. A larger Indian group, the Tlingit, began to encroach on their territory. Today, powerless and divided, the Eyak scarcely survive as a cohesive people.

Yet even after Jones's death, their language will enjoy an academic half-life. Unlike hundreds of other tribal tongues in the world which fell silent before the linguists arrived, Eyak is richly documented.

Video and audio recordings, transcriptions of ancient stories, a hand-typed dictionary that runs to well over 3,000 pages: all this now exists in DVD format. Future scholars who set out to explore Eyak's grammar, or its exact relationship to other languages, will have plenty of material to draw on.

The dictionary's compiler, Michael Krauss, founded the Alaska Native Languages Center in 1972 to record, preserve and (if possible) strengthen the 20 indigenous languages in the state. He is an informed and eloquent spokesman for minority tongues. But despite his work, most Alaskan languages are in feeble health.

They were weakened by terrifying epidemics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, by the economic and social destruction of their communities, and by the unsparing malice of an education system that promoted the silencing of all indigenous tongues. Can they now survive a force that Krauss has described as "cultural nerve gas"? To minority languages, he famously predicted, the mass media will prove "insidious, painless and fatal".

As in Alaska, so it is in much of the world. The statistics have become routine; their shock value has faded. Even so, it may be worth repeating that if a child who is born today survives the century, three-quarters of all human languages are likely to vanish during his or her lifetime.

Thanks to Jones's feisty presence, Eyak became something of a poster child for the cause of language preservation. The notion of a "last speaker" carries a powerful mystique. But perhaps Eyak was an unwise choice. Now the poster is out of date, what happens to the cause? Linguists and cultural activists were not the only ones to seize on the solitary example of Jones. In a famous essay published a few years ago in *Prospect*, Kenan Malik did the same. He used her to illustrate a trend he saw as both inevitable and desirable: the concentration of human intelligence among fewer and fewer languages. "The reason that Eyak will soon be extinct," Malik wrote, is not because Marie Smith Jones has been denied her rights, but because no one else wants to, or is capable of, speaking the language. This might be tragic for Marie Smith Jones – and frustrating for professional linguists – but it is not a question of rights. Neither a culture, nor a way of life, nor yet a language, has a God-given 'right to exist'".

Fair enough. But Eyak's death comes as a result less of personal choice than of longstanding government policy. For most of a century, indigenous children in Alaska suffered physical punishment if they were caught speaking their mother tongue in the classroom or the playground. In Wales and Ireland, Canada and South Africa, the same held true. There are many countries, including China and Russia, where language loss should still be a human-rights issue. Official policy in Alaska centred on "reclaiming the natives from improvidential habits," on convincing them, to "abandon their old customs" and on "transforming them into ambitious and self-helpful citizens." Small wonder that after several generations of reclaiming and transforming, the remaining handful of Eyak were unable to speak their ancestral tongue.

Jones married a white man, and did not pass on her language to her children – a decision she came to regret. But she made it to spare them the pain she had endured. As a girl, she had learned to see bilingualism not as an asset but an impediment. Eyak, she had been told, was a useless language. Or perhaps her teachers didn't deign to call it a language. In 1887, a federal commissioner for Indian affairs had made the prevailing wisdom clear: "Teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him." The word "barbarous" betrays obvious contempt; the use of "dialect" is more subtle and insidious. But any language can seem barbarous to its speakers' enemies, and no language is primitive.

So the cause of language preservation carries on, as it must. In Krauss's words, "Every language is a treasury of human experience." His fellow linguist Ken Hale put it more bluntly: "Languages embody the intellectual wealth of the people that speak them. Losing

any one of them is like dropping a bomb on the Louvre." How best to avoid that fate? For a minority language to flourish, its speakers need a sort of bullheaded confidence. Such stubborn self-belief emerges from a sense of cultural power and feeds back into it. The classic example is the astonishing rebirth of Hebrew a century ago in what would become Israel. In our own time the Basques and the Catalans, the Welsh and the Maoris display a similar faith.

These are the groups who should now act as poster children for minority languages: the Maori boys and girls in pre-school "language nests", the artists and producers who mutate the mass media in Welsh, the Catalan activists who have peacefully forced Spain to rethink its identity. The vigour in these cultures, and many others, belies the easy notion that all minority languages are doomed.

It was sadly different for Jones. During the last 15 years of her life, she could use her mother tongue only with a visiting linguist or in her dreams. She had, as Krauss said this week, "a tragic mantle" to bear, and she did so "with great dignity, grace and spirit". Perhaps last week she was called from far away under her Eyak name.

We can say "thank you" as a tribute. There is no one to say *awa'ahdah*.

Mark Abley, The Guardian (UK) 28 January 2008

Lois Carrington

Beatrice Clayre has sent the following appreciation:

Lois Carrington, who died in Canberra on April 2, aged 79, was a well-known figure in Pacific and Australian linguistics, much respected for her contributions in bibliographical and publishing work. Lois grew up in Melbourne where she did a BA at U. Melbourne. In 1976, after earlier careers teaching English and in publishing, which took her to Europe and Papua New Guinea, she joined the Department of Linguistics in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. As the Department's Research Assistant she was given scope to apply her formidable intellect and skills to a wide range of projects. By introducing systematic copy-editing to the 'Pacific Linguistics' series, she brought about a quantum rise in the quality of the 15-20 books published each year in this series. She co-edited several large symposia, including the proceedings of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th international conferences on Austronesian linguistics, played a leading role in organising several international conferences, and compiled several landmark bibliographies. Her *A Linguistic Bibliography of the New Guinea Area*, a meticulously thorough work of nearly 500 pages, appeared in 1996 and the equally comprehensive *Ozbib: a Linguistic Bibliography of Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands* (with Geraldine Triffitt) in 1999. Retirement at the end of 1993 allowed Lois to complete other books including *A Real Situation: the Story of Adult Migrant Education in Australia 1947 to 1970* and *A Lad from White Hart Lane: Charles Munt and his Family*. Her gifts for friendship and communication led her to maintain a wide network of contacts around the world. She had close ties with the Indonesian community in Australia and was for some years editor of the Australia-Indonesia Association Newsletter.

FEL 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 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.

Foundation for Endangered Languages

Please send this form, or a copy of it, to the Foundation's UK Treasurer:
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