Language Documentation and Pedagogy for Endangered Languages: a Mutual Revitalisation

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1 Introduction[1]

This paper explores how language endangerment, documentation, and revitalisation can be connected by identifying ways in which documentation can support language teaching and learning.

Up till now, documentation has brought a new focus to linguistics, by attending to the nature of data that supports linguistic research. There is a complementary - but largely unexplored - path of working out how documentary linguistics can support language learning and revitalisation. Creating and mobilising documentation in support of pedagogy might also inject some new energy into documentary linguistics whose progress in refining goals and methodology has stalled in recent years.

Right now, documentary linguistics' methodologies for data collection and representation are barely innovative or distinct to endangered (as opposed to healthy) languages. If the discipline is to continue its role as the principal response to language endangerment, it needs to clarify its specialisations and to further develop the methodologies used in pursuit of them.

While descriptive and typological linguistics have gained through access to a range of new data (and new methodologies for representing data), language pedagogy has received little attention. Important works in revitalisation methodology such as Hinton (2002) have been treated as "a work apart". The interests of other stakeholders in records of endangered languages, such as community members, anthropologists, ethnographers and historians, have barely been considered.

Whatever the response to these provocative suggestions, it seems self-evident that documentary linguistics needs *some* key relationship to pedagogy, and that language documenters could support teaching and learning more than they currently do.

Krauss (1992) pointed out the tragedy of linguists' object of study disappearing under their own watch. Nearly 20 years later, few, if any, have argued that linguistics has contributed to arresting language loss. The major response has been the development, since the late 1990s, of an incipient discipline, documentary linguistics. Its canons such as Himmelmann (1998) emphasise the collection and representation of recordings of a range of speech events, where the resulting resources can be drawn on by various disciplines. This makes sense on the basis that the speech events are at some point in the future unlikely to be observable because the languages themselves cease to be used. What makes less sense, given the broadening of what counts as documentation data, is the assumption that *linguists* are the sole or even natural

[1] This paper is a considerably expanded version of Nathan & Fang 2008. It results from work some of which was funded by the Swedish Institute, the LWW-CETL (SOAS/UCL), the Foundation for Endangered Languages, and the Endangered Languages Archive (SOAS). We have benefited from collaboration and discussion with Peter Austin, Eva Csató, José Antonio Flores Farfán, Gary Holton, and participants at the ELAP Workshop on Issues in Language Revitalisation and Maintenance (2008). However all errors, shortcomings and provocations are ours alone.

practitioners of the documentary approach. Documentary linguistics as currently practised could be (cynically) seen as an association between linguistics and language endangerment motivated by Krauss' paradox but without the goal of addressing it. A filmmaker's or a language teacher's collection of resources that document language usage for the purposes of a film or a language course might equally fulfil documentation goals. The documentation value of such resources would depend on the collectors' skills as filmmakers, teachers, recordists, or interviewers, as much as or more than their linguistic skills.

Therefore, in addressing the relation between documentation and pedagogy, this paper also questions whether (a) linguistics should continue to have priority in setting responses to language endangerment (b) linguists should continue to be principal practitioners of documentary linguistics; and (c) linguistics should continue to have privileged access to the outcomes of documentation.

2 Documentary linguistics revisited

2.1 Revitalising documentary linguistics

Our principal proposals are that documentary linguistics has not fulfilled its potential contribution to language pedagogy and revitalisation, and that documentary linguistics in combination with good pedagogy can make a significant contribution to the situations of endangered languages. However, we can add to these the possibility that documentary linguistics can be complemented and enriched by the injection of some aspects of pedagogy and revitalisation. This is a matter of stimulating innovative and synergistic thinking rather than bolting yet another set of skills and tasks onto the documenter's already heavy workload.

The broad goals of documentation (Himmelmann 1998) and the wide variety of language situations - across and within communities, and across time - mean that a single linguist is unlikely to have the time, resources, and skills to fulfil the goals of the language and scientific communities. Documentation needs to be a collaborative and interdisciplinary activity. Depending on the circumstances, participants in such a documentation team might include audio and film recordists, linguists, pedagogical materials developers, computer data experts, and others according to specific domains of interest, such as ethnobotanists, anthropologists etc.

Recently, Austin and Grenoble (2007) seemed to be suggesting an intradisciplinary rather than an interdisciplinary approach when they argued that the distinction between documentation and description might be spurious and unhelpful. However, it is unclear to what extent those authors see a dialectic arising between the two areas, or whether they are implicitly admitting that documentation has had limited success in developing its own distinctive methodologies. The fact remains that while on the one hand it is frequently claimed that documentation is a distinct discipline, documentary linguists do not think of collaboration between language documenters and *other* linguists as *interdisciplinary* activity.

Of course, many documenters do make significant efforts to produce materials for direct use in language communities, including for language teaching. However, materials created or repurposed for community use (often under the description "giving back to the community") are often adjuncts or by-products of a "contract of exchange" between the researcher and community (Dobrin et al 2007); that is, they

serve as tokens of the researcher's ethical position rather than a central goal of documentation.

An awareness of language teaching and learning principles, methodologies and materials would obviously be useful for documenters. But documenters' efforts in these areas should *not* be primarily for the purpose of teaching or preparing materials, but to help them make their documentation products suitable for use by teachers and others who wish to use or adapt them for teaching purposes.[2]

By asking pedagogists about language teaching and learning, new methods of documenting could evolve. For example, there was a move to "content-based" language teaching through the 1990s,[3] when language became viewed as principally a tool for formulating and exchanging knowledge, rather than an object of study, and began to focus on the acquisition of new knowledge expressed in the relevant language. Similarly, documentations could be based much more on the cultural and material content to be captured, rather than its current targets formulated as linguistic phenomena or "a range of communicative events" (Himmelmann 1998). Documenters could invite various domain experts (including community members) to select areas of interest for interdisciplinary documentation efforts.

While most modern language teaching methods embed language learning in culturally relevant experiences, documentary linguistics pays lip service to the relation between language and culture, because, despite frequent motivation of the association between languages and cultures (e.g. Harrison 2007), the field lacks methodology for representing it. Recent proposals that for documentary records might consist of layers of interpretation and responses to the collected recordings, such as Woodbury 2007, have yet to gain traction in documentary practice.

Other pedagogical approaches could provide useful tools and models. For example, the Performance Approach that we describe in section 3.2 emphasises that language learning involves not only acquiring knowledge and skills but also experiencing what it means to perform various kinds of roles in various settings. The theatricality involved in this technique could be useful in staging performances for recording documentary materials.

And documenters could gain from working with teachers because language teaching and its associated activities can directly provide useful language data and language insights. Language classes provide a unique locus for language activity in a community and present opportunities for the linguist, such as looking at language attitudes, paths of acquisition, language change, literacy, and language in use, as well as social contexts that might provide opportunities to encounter language usage, or even to identify new consultants. Goméz (2007: 101) argued that a phase of language teaching needs to precede the conduct of documentation in a community in order for community members to be fully informed and empowered in any participation, and to make their contributions richer. These kinds of activities bring documenters into useful contact with teachers, materials developers, community representatives, and educational authorities. Understanding the nature of language learning in adverse situations would provide a powerful tool in language revitalisation. However,

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[2] This has also been called *mobilisation* (Nathan 2006).

[3] Or CBI, see http://www.cal.org/resources/archive/langlink/0301.html and Brinton 1989.

documentation of the processes of language learning and transmission has been virtually absent from our field.

2.2 Mobilising documentary linguistics for language pedagogy

Currently, the pedagogical value of documentations is more or less left to chance, or it is simply assumed that they can be easily harvested later for teaching materials. But teachers cannot be expected to understand the content of language documentation, some of which might be highly specialised, for example, to reflect a researcher's focus on some particular linguistic phenomenon. Documenters who are aware of teachers' and learners' needs can use some simple techniques to make their documentations pedagogically useful.

Following are several suggestions. Documenters could work together with pedagogists to create new, interdisciplinary ways of working, such as developing shared vocabularies to mediate between the knowledge and representations used by each of their disciplines. The metadata section below has some initial proposals for this type of work. Another possibility would be to make the linguistic software that many documenters use (such as ELAN, Transcriber, Praat, Toolbox) accessible to teachers and other non-linguists to use. Documentation materials would then be opened up to enable others to use, adapt or create resources that suit their needs.

Many documenters do some kind of sociolinguistic survey as a preliminary step in planning a project and applying for funding. This work could be extended and the results made available to education authorities or community bodies who could use it to identify potential learner groups and their abilities, needs, and motivations, as well as potential teachers and consultants and their particular skills. Currently, documentation's emphasis on discourse, authenticity, and native speakership mean that people who could make contributions to language teaching and learning are easily overlooked.

Although education authorities have been, and continue to be, agents of language shift, we should not underestimate the extent to which they can be mobilised in *support* of languages. In many parts of the world, education bodies are responsive and innovative in their support of local and Indigenous languages. However, they need primary resources as a basis for creating curricula and learning materials. Where such primary resources are lacking, unknown to, or unusable by these bodies, the opportunity to draw on their efforts is lost. In much of Africa, for example, Batibo (2005: 54) found that the "absence of documentation is often one of the excuses advanced by [educational] decision-makers" to not support languages. More than we might like to imagine, perhaps, the fates of many languages rest in the hands of documenters.

2.3 Towards pedagogy-friendly metadata

2.3.1 What is metadata and who is it for?

Metadata is *data about data*. It consists of various information about primary data (recordings etc), such as details of provenance and technical details like encodings and abbreviations. Due to documentation's emphasis on data, metadata is central to its methodology, in particular playing a crucial role in identifying the content of audio and video recordings, because without metadata there is no way to identify content other than listening or viewing.

As well as illuminating its content, metadata provides the keys to managing, understanding, identifying and retrieving data (OAIS 2002). Therefore, metadata not only reflects the knowledge and practice of data providers, but also *defines and constrains* the audiences for data and how they can effectively use it. By looking at formulations of "best practice" metadata schemes (EMELD), we can discover what those intended audiences and usages are. The two commonly used schemes, IMDI and OLAC, emphasise standardised encoding of formal linguistic phenomena to support comparison and statistical aggregation of those phenomena and the easy "discovery" of them.[4] This emphasis particularly benefits typologists for whom endangered languages offer rich and diverse sources for making and testing hypotheses. Indeed it has typically been typologists who have urged documenters to create and apply standardising ontologies and other classifications to their linguistic representations. But aggregation work, while important for understanding the human language facility, offers little contribution to the states of *particular* languages.

2.3.2 How can metadata support revitalisation?

Thus, an analysis of documentation's current metadata methodology reveals that it principally serves the goals of typological linguistics.[5] There seems no a priori reason why this needs to be so, or, on the other hand, why documenters should not be under equal obligation to support languages through pedagogy and revitalisation. Our interdisciplinary choices should be explicit ones. Either the creation of metadata for endangered languages materials is too important to be left to linguists alone, or else documenters need to consider collecting pedagogically useful information. Here is a provisional list of metadata that would facilitate discovery, selection, adaptation and usage of documentation for teaching and learning:

1. identification and description of socially/culturally relevant events such as songs, which are of great interest to community members and which provide invaluable teaching materials (Holton 2007)[6]
2. phenomena that provide learning domains, such as numbers, kinship, greetings
3. socially important phenomena such as register and code switching
4. notes on learner levels
5. links to associated materials that have explanations and examples
6. notes on previous selections and usages of material for teaching
7. notes on how to use material for teaching
8. notes and warnings about restricted materials or materials which are inappropriate for young or certain groups of people (e.g. profane, archaic etc)
9. accessible basic information, e.g. name of language or variety, speaker, gender, speaker's country etc

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[4] The interdisciplinary potential of IMDI is acknowledged, but has not been as successfully embraced as hoped (Klassman 2006).

[5] If we include Nathan & Austin's (2005) claims about "thick metadata" - which extend the definition of metadata to include all symbolic descriptions associated with events and recordings, including transcriptions, glossings, annotations - the audiences for current documentation materials can be identified as typological and descriptive linguists.

[6] Linguists typically spend *huge* amounts of time creating morpheme-by-morpheme glosses while not including simple information that would allow teachers or community members to locate particular songs or stories in recordings.

Another way of supporting pedagogy would be to revise current definitions of documentation formats. Documentary linguistics currently recognises a standard representational trio of "working format", "archive format", and "presentation/dissemination format" (Johnson 2005, Austin 2006). This has two negative consequences. Firstly, it makes linguists think that what they generally disseminate - which often means what they provide to communities - is limited to so-called dissemination formats such as MP3 audio files; i.e. resources that can be easily produced as by-products of their "real" work. As a result, teachers and learners have little access to more rich or complex documentation resources. Secondly, because linguists tend to see richness and complexity through the window of their particular software tools, there is an assumption that rich linguistic materials are not disseminable. Nathan's work in interactive multimedia has tried to dispel this myth (Nathan 2006). What linguists can genuinely contribute is the knowledge they add to recordings, not the conversion of media formats.

3 Pedagogy for language revitalisation

3.1 General

3.1.1 General comments

If documentary linguistics can better support endangered languages by opening up documentation to language teaching and learning, how can pedagogy do its part to assist those languages? We think that pedagogy can better serve endangered languages through understanding key differences between learners in endangered language situations and those in mainstream language education, together with understanding what aspects of teaching large languages can and cannot be applied to endangered languages. In addition, an intensive, rapid-learning methodology called a Performance Approach offers suggestions for effective teaching programmes.

In many ways pedagogy is opposite to documentation. While documentation is opportunistic and diverse (Woodbury 2004), teaching programmes need to be carefully planned, designed and run. Documentation projects typically focus on a small number of older community members, while teaching programmes reach out as widely as possible to younger members of the community. Unlike documentation, which can take many years, language teaching must be rapid enough to allow a language to be learned within a time span similar to the length of language incubation in children, which is only a handful of years. Language programmes cannot risk failure, because the learning motivation of an entire generation might be at stake.

Note, though, that *language revitalisation* is a too-onerous and frequently misleading goal. Although the term is useful for contrasting with other responses to various language situations, such as maintenance, revival etc., it is at best a general and long-term aim (Penfield 2008). In most cases, it will be more realistic to direct efforts towards specific language courses and outcomes (Grenoble and Whaley 2006: 174).

3.1.2 Community's language learning goals and motivations

In this section we consider the language learning goals and motivations of heritage learners of endangered languages. There are as many kinds of motivations as there are learners, so labelling all the feelings and factors that lie behind learning as "motivations" is an over-simplification. However, it will be useful to compare factors

specific to learners of endangered languages with those that are common to second language learners of larger languages.

Understanding learners' needs and motivations is central to preparing any teaching activities (Grenoble and Whaley 2006: 48 Hinton et al 2002: 21, Nunan 2001: 55). People want to learn (or learn about) their own language for a variety of personal, social or practical reasons. Learners not only have individual needs and motivations; but these may be diffuse, complex, unrealistic, or expressed in terms that may not relate to language learning as we generally think of it.

Among language community members, attitudes toward the language can range from yearning to hostility. Hostile attitudes can surface as political statements or protests, such as the Gamilaraay woman who, during consultations about an AIATSIS[7] launch of a web dictionary of her language exclaimed angrily: "if you want to give the language back, then you shouldn't have taken it away in the first place!" Remnants of a language may feel like the last possession not yet been stolen by colonisation, and some may wish to keep silent - or oppose teaching - rather than risk divulging its last secrets. Some groups see language as tied to the (ancestral) land, and attempts to undertake language revitalisation outside that land may be met with disinterest or hostility. In other cases, the sacredness of a language may impose an impossibly high burden of stress on those tasked to make decisions about it.

Some motivations are very individual, such as in the case of one person who contacted us about his yearning to communicate with his Hokkien grandmother. He had been estranged from his Hokkien speaking family for 20 years, and wrote:

> "I've been desperately trying to find reference material … those who don't tell me it's a dead language tell me 'Good luck on finding any reference material' … I'm desperate to learn as much Hokkien as I can before my 96-year-old grandmother leaves this earth".

Others to feel that it is not just an elderly generation passing away but a whole culture and history slipping away from them.

Some motivations surface as an interest in language but may in reality be more practical, such as the perceived advantages of language ability for employment, for ratifying the authenticity of an individual's group membership or cultural knowledge, or finding a marriage partner. People may take up political or advocacy roles without being directly involved in activities to strengthen the language, while other quieter individuals are steadily preparing learning materials and teaching. Such different responses mean that people will not always agree about language goals or methods.

Some participate in language learning not for acquiring language competence, but to asserting their identity, or enjoy hearing their language again. They may also *not* want to participate for a variety of reasons, such as social fractures which may be amplified in a small community, especially when brought together in the intensity of a language classroom! For some at the Karaim summer school in Lithuania[8] (Csató & Nathan

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[7] AIATSIS is an Australian federal government agency.

[8] The Karaim Summer School is a series of language revitalisation programs held at Trakai, Lithuania. They are co-ordinated by Professor Éva Csató of Uppsala University (and occasionally by David Nathan), and funded by the Swedish Academy and also supported by the Endangered Languages Archive at SOAS and the Foundation for Endangered Languages.

2007), attending the classes was the discomfort to be endured as the cost of the sponsored trip to Trakai and the opportunity to catch up with family; language classes were a "side effect" of other activities (which themselves may have had positive language or cultural aspects).

Years of denigration of the language by the dominant society (or even by members of the language community itself) are likely to be only one ingredient of broader damage to the group's social identity and wellbeing. Factors that discourage and demotivate learners can be exactly those that were responsible for cultural dislocation and dispossession in the first place, and will not be easily counteracted. A language's unstable or demoralised state is a *symptom* of a community's treatment at the hands of wider forces; therefore it is questionable whether a linguist can merely "document" a language without also attempting to address such historical issues, or at least take them into account.

Ultimately, then, an individual heritage learner has personal motivational and demotivational factors that are far broader and more complex and potent than the standard integrative, instrumental, and intrinsic motivations recognised in language learning. And these factors may be so powerful that it is not easy for learners to overcome them to find the more gentle kinds of motivation needed to support day to day language learning and sustain it over a long period.

If people do believe their language is primitive, or are scarred by punishments imposed for speaking the language in their youth, they are unlikely to make informed judgements about their goals for language learning. What may be needed first is a process of "healing", "triage", or of "selling" the idea of language to communities first, before even considering the feasibility of language programmes. A process for "linguistic healing"[9] might provide a way to better understand who would gain from language programmes, and what their specific needs are, before any planning begins at all. Since quite a lot is now known about forces that have led to the destruction and abandonment of languages, one could envisage programmes put together by sociolinguists, historians, language activists, and counsellors designed to provide this "language healing". But a successful language healing process would not, in itself, guarantee language outcomes. Even if a necessary step towards participation, it is unlikely to provide the kind of motivation and stamina needed to sustain effective learning during the hard slog of day to day language acquisition. The progress of language acquisition depends more on motivation provided by short-term feedback loops of challenge and reward.

In any particular language situation, until past damage is understood, we can only guess at learners' abilities and motivations, their likelihood and extent of participation, and appropriate course goals, structures, and methods.

3.1.3 Planning for the learners

Perhaps the major difference between teaching endangered languages and teaching larger languages is the different way that each takes learners into account in the planning process.

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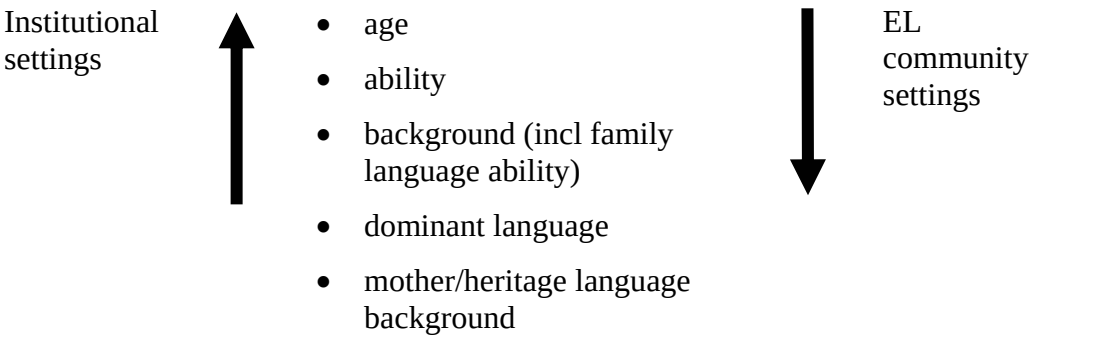
[9] Note: a web search might suggest that linguistic healing is something to do with Neuro-linguistic programming. It is not. Also, see Alice Taff's comments on "language healing" at http://www.hrelp.org/grants/projects/index.php?lang=4 .

In conventional educational systems, the "community" is the system or institution itself, which designs and runs courses for cohorts of generic students external to itself. Types and levels of classes are defined and learners are placed in them according to conventional criteria such as age or proficiency level; language classes cater only for learners across a narrow range of goals and levels. In EL settings, the situation is reversed; the learners are just those individuals who want to participate, with their widely varying needs, motivations, ages, language and learning abilities, and educational experience, which must be catered for. EL programmes are thus more likely to be established in response to goals - perhaps rather too loosely defined ones - such as revitalisation.

We noticed that in many ways the learner demographic in the heritage language class is inverted from that in the typical (e.g. UK university) foreign language classroom. Figure 1 (below) shows learner attributes listed in order of increasing similarity for the typical mainstream learner group; in the heritage language classroom the order is reversed:

Figure 1: Opposite trends in similarities (arrows) between learners in mainstream and endangered languages settings



Those contemplating teaching, or initiating or supporting the teaching of endangered languages need to consider questions such as: Who wants to learn? Why do they want to learn? What would they like to learn? When and where will they be able to attend? How do they like to learn?

3.1.4 Goals and planning

Resourcing, planning and running language classes depend on having clear, informed and appropriate goals. These must be negotiated before work can begin. While the activity of community consultation is complex and beyond the scope of this paper (but see Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998), informing about and negotiating pedagogically realistic goals, principles, methods and outcomes should be done by a suitable pedagogical advisor, using suitable data collection and consultation methods. Diffuse goals such as vague targets for language competence might do more harm than good, because it will be hard to know whether or not they have been achieved, or how a course could be improved or followed up. Instead, concrete criteria should be established, such as ability to perform linguistically in particular situations (several criteria are well established in the language assessment field). Equally important are the many factors that tend to be overlooked because mainstream education seems to handle them "automatically": the number of hours of teaching, whether the best

course would be intensive or regular throughout the year, the balance between class work and self-learning, and who the teachers can be. Language communities are entitled to be delivered learning in the same way that has endured the test of time elsewhere - in structured, digestible, achievable, packages that enable learners to understand goals and outcomes, empower them to "own" their learning, and facilitate transitions from level to level.

Goals may be unclear or contested due to the complexity of language situations, or because people have different views. And goals will change over time. If teaching is effective, for example, courses at higher levels will be needed. In small communities, the learner cohort grows up and moves through life's steps - puberty, employment, marriage - any of which can radically change their motivation or ability to participate. In the best of circumstances, language programs will keep up with these changes and offer relevant courses to keep up interest. All these effects were observed in the case of Karaim language summer schools, where change was also precipitated by wider forces; the community's participation in language classes changed as they became more busy and prosperous following the entry of Lithuania into the EU.

Programme development does not have to start from scratch: this would ignore the skills and understandings already developed by the language teaching and assessment fields. However, endangered languages teaching may not fit easily with standard categories of first, second, or foreign language teaching. For example, in standard foreign language courses, students learn how to speak to native speakers (in the foreign country), yet are exposed to little of the target language in their current environment. In endangered languages situations this may well be an accurate scenario (e.g. see the comment from the Hokkien grandson in section 3.1.2) yet the idea of a "foreign language" course may not seem very appropriate to the learners (Fang 2008). On the other hand, in foreign language courses listening and understanding are more important than production; but courses aimed at revitalisation have to emphasise *using* the language. Areas such as pronunciation and cultural awareness that are salient in the foreign language classroom may already be very familiar to heritage language learners, who are in this case more akin to second language learners.

Broadly, we can distinguish two types of language goals: those concerned with heritage and identity, which we could call language-relationship goals, and those more conventionally concerned with language proficiency.

Everybody will depend on proper organisation and description of the language course's goals, structure, and organisational aspects. Learners need to be clear about whether a course is appropriate for them, and what will be expected of them. Goals and course outlines provide a "roadmap" for students, milestones for phases and achievements, and a set of "pegs" on which to hang their learning, so that they can "own" their learning by being able to talk about the course's topics and structure. Clearly describing a course's goals is crucial where many participants have language-relationship goals and few plans for increasing language proficiency. Launching such people into a course that focuses on proficiency will condemn them to failure. Such effects can be complex and subtle, as in the case of a well-educated Karaim man with little intention to improve his proficiency who attended the same summer school class several times, but who nevertheless complained that the course was repetitive and boring!

An effective course has a clear, achievable, modular, sequenced and concrete progression of language competences, which means that they are keyed to a series of lessons. By making steps explicit, teachers and learners can better understand their shared task and be accountable for progress. On the other hand, those who are not successful - or not happy - will be clearer about why. It will be easier to identify the cause of problems, and to compare and improve courses. Clear and explicit course designs will be more useful to others, such as other communities, or educational institutions.

3.1.5 Course types and settings

As well as the goals and learners, a teaching programme has to consider the following:

- the setting and venue
- curriculum and course design
- teachers
- teaching resources
- teaching methods, strategies, and operations

In general, there are three major types of programmes. This classification is not meant to be exhaustive or to distinguish broader approaches such as immersion vs. bilingual education, but rather to provide a simple basis for comparing the implications of programme type.

- institutional courses, such as at universities, colleges and schools
- community-based courses, organised in the community and held in community centres or out-of-hours in schools, with classes of 1-2 hours each week
- intensive programmes, such as summer schools

Institutional courses

These are courses taught in schools and universities, including the teaching of larger or "national" languages such as Maori, Welsh and Sámi (see papers in Hornberger ed. 2008), or "niche" courses such as at Yorta Yorta taught at Worawa College (years 7-12) in Australia, or Hokkien taught as part of MA at SOAS in London. Although these two examples are very different, what institutional settings share is that teaching takes place across the year (according to the institutional calendar), curricula are designed to take learners from one level to the next, and teaching resources underlie the institution's ability to provide consistency across years and across the various teachers that they employ. Levels of resources and types of assessment are decided at the institutional level, and once these are established, the institution itself is committed to maintaining them. Most importantly, institutional courses are designed for "typical" learners at abstractly defined levels; incoming students are then assessed and allocated to the course which is the closest fit to their ability.

Community settings

In community settings, the goals, levels, methods, and resources tend to depend on the community itself, and, more specifically, on the particular values and contributions of the people participating in the programme. Programmes might vary between running formal evening sessions once or twice a week, or Master-Apprentice programmes that

are fluid in content and require at least 10 hours a week contact time (Hinton et al 2002). Learners might be of all ages and abilities, from children to the elderly and from those who have learned the language as a mother tongue to those who are at beginners' level; and the mix of such levels can change at any time. Therefore, the most important characteristic of this programme type is that courses and activities need to cater for the actual learners at any particular time.

Intensive settings

These can take some of the characteristics of the above two types, and include courses such as the Karaim Summer School. In the latter, for example, students come together for about 20 hours a week for two weeks a year. Based on our experience, it seems that while some learners can potentially advance quickly within the course, the year-long gap between courses means that without follow up support, and provision of self-learning or community-based learning opportunities in the intervening time, progress can be limited. Each year's intake needs to set time aside for refreshing, and the unpredictability caused by variation in the learners' retention and/or intervening learning or decay mean that assigning learners to levels is likely to be a hit or miss affair, so the language learning resulting from such courses may be limited.

Institutional settings have been somewhat overlooked in regard to their potential contribution to language maintenance and revitalisation. The comments here apply to local Indigenous languages rather than those endangered larger or "national" languages that have been officially adopted into the curriculum in some countries. While minorities and Indigenous people can be alienated from formal schooling, and issues such as bilingual schooling in Indigenous languages in Australia have become captive to local politics, it is still true that educational systems remain the greatest potential source of resources - and are still likely to be in contact with the community long after a linguistic project has finished. Problems that exist may be more about communities' relationships with schools than about the practices that take place there. It is not as if formal schooling has been thoroughly tried and found to fail; rather, the lack of attention to endangered languages within institutional school settings is a significant contributing factor to the decline of languages.

3.1.6 Problems for teaching programmes in EL settings

Often teaching will take place in community settings, possibly rural or remote. Gathering of community members from disparate places means that accommodation will be needed. And teaching venues may need to be found, probably by negotiating use of facilities normally used by other organisations. Consultation and decisions will need to be made about who is eligible to participate. Participation may be limited to community members, in which case there may be further discussion about how community membership is to be determined. Class membership and learners' commitment to attendance are important because they influence not only classroom relationships and dynamics but also the effectiveness of learning activities, feedback and assessment. Observers, journalists, and other "guests" can be disruptive to class dynamics, and undermine the real significance of course participation.

Dependence on others for venues, unpredictability of participation, and variability of ages and abilities mean that programme design is difficult. Under these volatile circumstances, which can easily unsettle learners, clear understanding of goals

structures and outcomes are even more important. There is a danger that teaching programmes find themselves defined - whether implicitly or explicitly - by calendar constraints of organisers, linguists, projects, teachers or learners, or the availability of facilities. It may be that, for example, a short summer course just cannot effectively deliver the community's language goals, or that quite different teaching and learning activities are needed under the circumstances. There are thus many ways in which such "accidental" but insidious control may be imposed by default cultures and constraints, leading to poor learning outcomes and exclusion of potentially valuable contributors such as local educational systems, specialist teachers, and other multidisciplinary practitioners described earlier. Those undertaking documentation projects and wishing to add a revitalisation component could easily fall into some of the pitfalls we have described.

3.1.7 Reflections on sustainability

Watching activities at the Karaim Summer School over four years gave a bright glimpse of the possibility that if they were continued well, language revitalisation would be virtually *inevitable* as language competence grew amongst a cohort of motivated young community members. This optimism was dashed by the reality that progress is limited by the short programme and the competing demands on learners' time to fulfil all the other personal, economic, and social aspects of their lives, especially their mainstream schooling.

Does this all-too-common situation give learning a fair chance, or does it doom learners to failure? Perhaps the "big bang" of the language workshop, or the summer school - so familiar to academics - should be replaced by working out how to sustain basic resources and language activities throughout the year.

3.1.8 Teachers and linguists

Finding and choosing teachers can be one of the most difficult tasks in setting up a language programme. For language documenters, there is a danger that they see teaching through the lens of their linguistic work, and assume that their highly proficient consultants (perhaps also their allies in the community) are the default choices for teachers.

Factors in selection of teachers include community membership and status, availability, and qualifications. It can be important that the teacher has the right status or seniority in the community's eyes, leading to situations where those most qualified to teach the language are those least likely to have been through formal schooling and hence not qualified or accredited to teach in institutional settings. A solution to these problems frequently used in systems classrooms in Australia is team teaching, with the team usually consisting of a qualified staff teacher, a community member of appropriate standing, and a linguist, who is an indispensable team member where the language is seriously endangered.

Community members may have strong feelings about who should teach. At the Karaim Summer School, we saw both extremes. In one case, keen and qualified Karaim teachers were prevented from teaching due to having the "wrong" alliances. In another case, a teacher, widely respected and held in affection, was universally welcomed as a teacher despite her deafness limiting her ability to teach effectively.

Should the linguist be a teacher? The community might not question the linguist's desire to teach, at least not overtly, although we have heard community members

privately voice disquiet about a linguist's role, including an exclamation that "if anyone is going to kill this language, it is *him*". Linguists are not "neutral" participants in language programmes. Their perspective will be influenced by their research topics, their career context, and, in some cases, broader motivations such as activism or missionary work. They may have friends or spouses from the community, or be community members themselves. Many linguists have already have spent time researching in the community, and will already have created relationships and alliances with particular individuals, families and organisations. There may be the temptation to nominate the linguist because he/she is the technical "expert" on the language. Since linguists undertake their occupation in field settings, they may be one of the few in those settings receiving salary and funding. This can skew their influence and introduce the constraints of the funding source; for example payments may not be allowed to participants other than research consultants, leading to unsustainable over-reliance on volunteers. Any of these factors may shape a linguist's contribution in positive or negative ways. Generally, linguists are likely to contribute best as providers of resources, as described in the first section of this paper.

3.2 A Performance Approach

3.2.1 Introduction

We now turn to summarise a language teaching methodology 'Performance Approach' (PA) that has been developed by Meili Fang over several years (Fang 2008). The approach emphasises:

- course design: the curriculum, learning materials, class activities, feedback and assessment must all be carefully designed and co-ordinated, and based around the learners and clearly defined learning goals
- teaching materials design: materials must be learnable and constantly reinforcing
- class activity design: teaching has to be effective and accountable
- evaluation and feedback design: continual assessment of learners *and* teachers
- drama and its outcomes: language outputs are valued and authentic

While the PA was originally developed for teaching large languages, its key features - such as its effectiveness in achieving rapid, measurable learning within short, intensive language programs - have been found very relevant for the teaching of less commonly taught and endangered languages. It has been applied, for example, in teaching languages ranging from Japanese (in Taiwan) and Chinese (in Japan) to Hokkien/Min Nan (Japan and UK) and Karaim (Lithuania).

In a PA, performance is the primary learning activity. The classroom becomes a "stage", where a kind of authenticity can be achieved. A range of simple, concrete, routine activities are used, culminating with group creation and presentation of a short drama. The drama provides a flexible, effective, and highly motivating platform for group-based language learning. At the Karaim Summer Schools, these group drama performances have become not only the culmination of the school program but also an annual community-based event, where the whole local community gathers as audience, senior members form the judging panel that assesses the groups' dramas, and the performances are followed by prize-giving and further musical performances.

The PA has common elements with methodologies such as task-based learning (Nunan 2004) and with linguistic understandings that various types of meanings (lexical, propositional, pragmatic, and social) are enacted in actual language use. It also shares with the Master-Apprentice method an overwhelming emphasis on "how to perform and respond" (Hinton et al 2002:xvi). By treating language interactions as performances, learners are able to take on a wider range of roles in creating resources that suit their own needs and interests, performing and recording events, and reflecting on their skills and learning. The PA's use of drama is one of the few effective ways for developing language functions such as modality and the expression of emotions.

In conventional teaching methods, what students *produce* typically has little real value or use, except perhaps for assessment. The value of language learning is typically *deferred* until, for example, students study further or get to interact with speakers of the language. The PA aims to make language learning activities relevant and valued in classroom settings. One way of doing this is to connect to the actual social and theatrical contexts of the classroom itself rather than attempting to *simulate* events that can only really happen elsewhere, as communicative approaches tend to do. An activity should "have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right" (Nunan 2004: 4). Thus a PA offers language learning contexts that are more "authentic" than those of many communicative methodologies (Fang 2006).

Similarly, while learning resources are typically static and barely relevant to the learners, in the PA learners continually perform, revisit what they have learned, create new resources, and use the performances themselves as the basis for further learning. Performance builds up the learners' repertoire (of all skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) in layers, through routines of activities such as question and answer, monologue, conversation, text production for drama, rehearsals and improvement and refinement. Students move through various roles, from language investigator, to story teller, to performer. Many of these performances can be worth documenting, both as language-using events and as records of a language development/revitalisation process.

In the process of creating their drama, learners watch video of previous classes' performances in order to visualise what they can achieve. By seeing these videos they get a sense of where they are going and what it *feels like* to use the language with the level of competence, fluency and flair that they are expected to reach.

3.2.2 Performance Approach - design features

The PA does not centre on progression of grammar or vocabulary, or on sequences of interaction genres, but on the learners themselves, by building their strengths at performing in a range of roles. Paradoxically, by having this strong and learner-centred approach, the teaching and learning process can be broken down into manageable components that may involve activities of all types, including everything from rote learning to story creation in the dominant language.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the PA in detail, but here is a summary of its "design features":

Clearly describe the course learning goals

Identify the course's purpose; students' motivations; course length and calendar;

class sizes, hours and frequency; age and level ranges of students; number of class levels to be offered.

Courses are learner- and group-centred

All aspects of course planning and implementation are focused on the language performance outcomes of the learners. Groups provide microcosms of social settings where authentic language learning and usage takes place. The teacher is an active facilitator.

The learning process is explicit and signposted

Course plans and materials have clear modular stages so that learners can see their progress and get regular personal feedback.

Teaching materials are rationally designed

Learning materials are carefully created or selected as sequenced modules, where each module is fully learnable, and each module builds on the previous one.

Teaching and learning follow the designed sequence

Class activities are designed to ensure that students can complete each phase before moving to the next one.

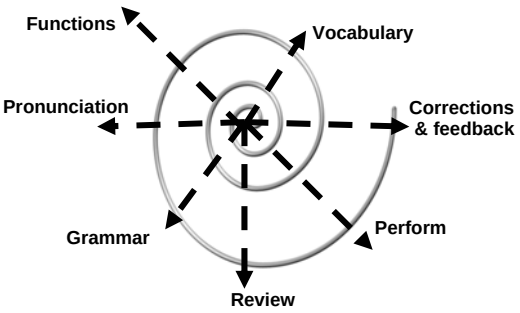
Learning activities are effective

Learning activities are designed to maximise language input and output (i.e. performance) throughout classes for all learners.

Learning takes the form of a spiral

As they advance, learners re-encounter and reinforce what they previously learnt (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Learners revisit and extend what they previously learned and performed



Provide opportunities for feedback and correction

"Mistakes" are opportunities for learning, and learners must perform in order to make them. Teacher actively monitors and responds to mistakes either with corrections, by keeping records for providing feedback later, or by preparing remedial materials.

Teacher records students' progress

Teachers keep detailed records of each individual student's progress and patterns of mistakes and weaknesses. These can be used to give feedback to students, monitor the course effectiveness, and as part of ongoing assessment.

Learning from drama creation

Creating and presenting a short drama is the principal and indispensable component. It consolidates all learning, and provides unique learning opportunities, such as how to express emotion in the target language.

Continuous and varied assessment

Distribute varied types of assessment throughout the course to more accurately reflect learners' progress. Assessment should be used to keep teachers and learners focussed on the learning process and the course goals, not administrative needs. Use innovative assessment methods, such as group work and drama performances. Assessment should provide realistic measures of students' achievements so that course progression to higher levels can be properly managed.

Use learners' language production as resources

Invest in learners' work by recording it; for example, make video of drama performances. This gives learners opportunity for feedback, demonstrates that their performances are valued, and can provide useful study and documentation materials for future users.

3.2.3 Teaching resources

The PA's emphasis on design of teaching resources is particularly relevant in the case of endangered languages, which are often plagued by a lack of teaching materials. National languages not only have a variety of textbooks, and listening and other materials, but are found in a diverse landscape of accessible, authentic and usable materials such as literature, media, internet, and advertisements dotted around the environment. In other words, dominant languages decorate the environment, so teachers and materials developers only need to select them appropriately. However, in endangered languages settings, there may be few manifestations of the language, and even these may be associated with restrictions and sensitivities.

So it is important that teaching programmes are able to not only create materials, but to create materials that are effective, co-ordinated, and keyed to the course goals. Each section of a textbook should be designed so that all students can complete it before moving to the next one. Those designing textbooks need to distinguish their different functions. For example, a textbook will obviously include language content (i.e. language input), but whether or not it also articulates the course design (goals, length, levels etc), or teaching methods (classroom tasks, assessment etc) depends on how the textbook fits within the range of available resources and teacher skills.

Endangered languages do not make good subjects for textbooks. The "market" or target audience is probably very small. There may be no standard orthography (or multiple or contested orthographies). Textbooks can easily become the forum for battles about orthography (cf Grenoble & Whaley 2006:155, Nathan & Csató 2006). Although these battles can seem to be a waste of time and energy, they are often proxies for other concerns and thereby highlight the almost infinite variety of interdependency between language activities and other areas of community life.

Despite such difficulties, textbooks offer many advantages, most of which could be summed up by reminding ourselves that cultures with a strong history of education, whether eastern or western, use pedagogical texts as important tools for learning. They provide explicit descriptions of a course's goals, structures and content, together

with modular targets and milestones. They also provide a record of the programme development, opportunities for self-learning, and a place where the kind of community and cross-disciplinary collaboration discussed earlier can come together.

Listening materials are an example of useful teaching resources arising from documentation. Using some of the ideas for metadata and annotation mentioned earlier, standard linguistic software such as ELAN could be used to create multimedia conversational materials, stories and songs. In many communities, such electronic resources may be more useful than traditional written texts. Linguists who have criticised the development of electronic materials when communities do not even have electricity have failed to see the *opportunity* to have electronic representations of the language and culture already prepared right at the moment when the glamorous new force of globalisation finally arrives - which is only a matter of time.[10]

3.2.4 Evaluation and assessment

Evaluation and assessment are invaluable for checking the effectiveness of teaching, and for giving learners tangible signposts of their own achievements. Assessment does not need to be competitive, or even quantitative. For example, creative group work can be qualitatively assessed. And evaluation should not be limited to assessing learners' proficiency - the teachers and courses should also be evaluated by the learners and by other stakeholders. Assessment needs, of course, to be designed, adding another form of quality control and documentation to the course.

3.2.5 Developing a drama

Learners' group-based creation and performance of an original drama is the centre-piece of the Performance Approach. This component of the Performance Approach encapsulates several processes that are ideally suited to endangered languages: new texts are created, not only "keeping the language alive" but also serving as resources for other learners and as sources for linguistic documentation. The use of theatricality can legitimise certain kinds of performance in the classroom (such as those involving emotions, or controversial topics). It can allow for video recording in Native American classrooms, since playing roles mitigates the problem of being violated by capture of personal images (pers comm. Phillip Cash Cash).

The process of developing, performing and recording a drama is described in more detail in Fang 2008; here is a basic outline of steps the steps used to teach Hokkien (for many languages, there might be less emphasis on preparing scripts):

1. Establish drama parameters

Establish basic parameters, including length, size of groups, and individuals' roles, depending on learners' levels, time available, and assessment requirements.

2. Set up the stories

Discuss story themes and structures, e.g. arguments, misunderstandings, dreams failed or achieved, love stories etc. Watch video of previous performances to see what is expected and what can be achieved.

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[10] However, it is patronising to claim that putting just any linguistic materials on the web is really "giving back" or delivering benefit to the community (Nathan & Csató 2006, Dobrin et al 2007).

3. Formulate and present the story

Groups write a brief outline of their story, including title, characters, and plot. Groups present their story to the class for discussion and feedback.

4. Script writing

Introduce scriptwriting conventions, including stage directions. Groups draft their scripts, usually in their own (dominant) language - otherwise they will oversimplify the dialogues - with teacher help where appropriate. Once settled, scripts are written in the target language.

5. Script correction

Teacher gives feedback about cultural content and appropriateness, discourse structure, social and cultural aspects, grammar, expression, pronunciation and intonation. Teacher and other groups offer suggestions for improvement, expansion, etc.

6. Script re-presentation

Oral presentations of revised scripts; teacher monitors, especially for pronunciation, expression, emotion. The emphasis now moves away from "accuracy" to "effectiveness" and enjoyment of performances.

7. Preparing for performance

Groups finalise scripts. Teacher checks scripts and records audio of the lines for the groups to help them practise. Groups practise/rehearse.

8. Performances

Groups perform their dramas, with no use of written scripts or cards etc. This should be done in a "theatrical" venue if possible, with suitable space, light and acoustics for shooting video. Encourage groups to use props. Invite an appropriate audience. The performance itself should be the focus of assessment.

9. After the performances

Everything should build up to learners feeling a sense of achievement. Schedule a follow-up class for the learners to watch the video recording of their performances, and/or produce copies on DVD for each learner as a memento of the event and their learning.

10. After the course

The video is useful for reviewing the effectiveness of the course, and for course planning.

4 Conclusions

It might not appear that the unexciting topics of metadata and pedagogy can conspire to offer new hope for endangered languages. We have tried to show in this paper how rethinking some of the assumptions of documentary linguistics in scientific, humanistic and accountable ways might help. In particular, we proposed drawing in expertise from adjacent areas to create new synergies between those who know how to investigate languages and those who know how to transmit them.

We may not be alone in thinking that documentary linguistics has lost its way, with some of its key principles (such as its distinction from description, or its role in revitalisation) contested, a growing gulf between its goals and its methods, and no evaluation mechanism for its outcomes, whether they be data, archived materials, or actual language usage outcomes in communities.

Linguists have started to reach out to a wider public to communicate endangerment issues (e.g. Harrison 2007), but not to other communities of practice, such as language teachers, filmmakers, and others, with whom we may be able to address Krauss' paradox.

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