

The Journeys of Besieged Languages

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Edited by

Delyn Day, Poia Rewi
and Rawinia Higgins

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PROLOGUE

Hearing language is one of our first experiences of the world outside of, and beyond ourselves. Born, we are immersed in the language around us, and it is through language that we come to think and know. Our first language, initially experienced as foreign and external, eventually becomes part of who we are; shaping us, and shaping how and what we see.

This book takes the reader on a journey around the world to hear the voices from some of the languages that find themselves pushed to the peripheries and margins, a process accelerated by the strengthened forces of globalisation. Many of the languages in this book typically straddle two worlds, in one a dominant language is used in the institutions of power, in the other the heritage language struggles against the threats of language oblivion, the language frequently hanging by a thread on the coat hook of cultural identity. The languages in this book exist, or have existed, in the no-man's-land between the requirement to speak a language to put bread on the table and the desire to speak the language that sings in the heart from the deep wells of the past.

Unlike many other books focused on threatened or endangered languages, there is no single academic discipline unifying the chapters in this book. Rather, this book primarily brings together authors who are heritage speakers or descendants of the languages they discuss. The authors do not speak from similar perspectives nor from one academic specialty—each writes from his/her own outlook, whether it be linguistic, historical, academic, cultural, as a language advocate, or based on personal experience.

All of the authors have written in English, despite English being for many, a second or even third language. For some, rapid disconnection from the heritage language is combined with a very recent history of speaking English as the first language within their families. As such the cultural content of the heritage language, its rhythms, patterns, and concepts, is far more evident in these authors' writing of English. Other writers come from backgrounds with a long contact with English—these writers write in the way English speakers expect. Either way, the points all the authors make are vivid and clear.

The book begins in the Pacific Rim regions; the first voices we hear are from the First Nations people, Lorena Fontaine and Brock

Pitawanakwat, talking about just two of their languages, Cree and Ojibway. Leaving Canada we travel by sea to be hosted by indigenous speakers; Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Lipe in Hawai'i, Vāhi Richaud in Tahiti (French Polynesia), and Mereana Selby in Aotearoa New Zealand. Crossing the Tasman sea we join Ghil'ad Zuckermann and Michael Walsh who update us on the efforts of the Barnarla people in the Adelaide region of Australia to revive their language. Heading off to Europe our minority language journey continues to Israel where Bernard Spolsky considers whether the success of Hebrew can act as an example for other languages, and reflects on the future of Hebrew language derivatives, such as Yiddish, born and continuing to be spoken in foreign lands. Travelling around Europe we arrive in Piedmont Italy, where Claudia Soria details a language with many speakers that is nonetheless under threat, alerting us that "minority" language status is not necessarily about numbers. Guided by Ian Hancock, we then follow the Romani speakers' criss-cross paths out of India, to learn about a language grown in migration. Stopping with Nicole Dolowy-Rybinska in Northern Poland we listen to the story of the Kashubian language in Pomerania as it contends with the historical impact of two dominant languages, showing along the way that language and politics are inseparable. Leaving mainland Europe we trek on to meet some of the Celtic languages on the old world's sea routes: Kernewek, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic. Finally, close to where we began with First Nations people in Canada, we complete our journey with Lenore Grenoble, following the North Atlantic ocean to Greenland, home of Kalaallisut speakers. Throughout our sojourn, the authors comment and discuss their own unique experiences with those languages; how and why they became beleaguered or marginalised, and what they are doing or think they need to do to turn the tides that cause language shift away from their own traditional tongues.

The stories, analysis, and experiences presented in this book point to the conclusion that the language that is used in and by the institutions that dictate the frameworks for the interactions between people in any geographic or virtual space; whether they be political, economic, social, or educational, is the best indicator for language survival. However, for some, the main purpose of language revitalisation is to maintain a distinct and different identity, for others the language is of the land to be spoken by all those in that land. The fact that a child will learn whatever language he/she is exposed to suggests that a particular language is never innate. Identity through language is always sourced from the outer environment, from the people and communities we grow up with, who nurture us, who teach us new languages and ways of being. Collectively, the authors

discuss from a range of different vantage points the attempts to restore and maintain their languages, which becoming threatened by the imposition of other languages (frequently coercively and violently) in the past, must compete or vanish.

We thus meet an array of situations for threatened languages such as a numerically dominant language that is becoming less and less used, and decreasingly functional in all spheres of life. Kalaallisut, and Piedmontese languages, for example, are numerically dominant in their geographic regions yet both report factors of atrophy in political, social, and economic environments. For some numerically dominant languages, the increasing association of the language with older traditional lifestyles, such as fishing, and agriculture, is juxtaposed with the increasing use of a new global language associated with modernity, professionalism, and globalisation. Some find that their languages have been relegated to private and domestic spheres of use, and are hoping to re-invigorate the role and status of their languages through education and economic functions. In comparison, other authors speak of numerically minority languages that are gaining footholds in the corridors of power, and for at least two of the countries covered, the language heritage people make up the numerical majority and, in effect, run the local apparatus of state but do not do so in the heritage language. Wales, for example, continues to be geographically peopled by a Welsh majority, yet efforts to restore the language to its former social, political, and economic functions beyond the classroom and beyond the home continue to meet resistance. The success of the Welsh initiatives in schools and intergenerational transmission in the home, however, is that a new generation of speakers has been able to learn and speak the language. Further, despite the percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales being static since the 1970s, static is a marker of progress compared to the previous steep decline in the number of speakers, and at least means many of the structures are in place for the language to become once again a language to live by.

Each language in this book is uniquely challenged, but the historical forces that lie behind language decline are at once the same and in the detail, different. The causes of language shift as seen in this book, the abandonment of one language for another, are varied. Motivating language shift is a set of characteristics, not uniformly shared but often including; declining speaker numbers, attrition in language proficiency, loss of land or the economic base, changes in occupation, reduced inter-generational transmission, loss of, or, exclusion from language functions such as for government, education, socialisation, trade or business, a history of the oppression of the language people, and a history of being caught up in

expanding nations and states with a consequent erosion of the communal spaces in which the languages once prevailed. The order in which the factors of language erosion emerge, and in which spheres, is different, however, because the history, contexts, and language situations are different. Of all the languages deliberated on in this book only Hebrew can no longer be considered to be under immediate threat because it has built itself anew and is the language of state, education, the workplace, business, and the home.

Despite the languages in this book sharing past histories of oppression, the authors also have a forward looking focus on the activities undertaken to support language renewal, regeneration, and restoration of functions. These include recognition of the important role of education and literature in supporting language revitalisation. Standardisation of written forms of the language causes issues for a few, especially for dialectical varieties, but on the whole is generally accepted as supporting language stabilisation. Others find that education alone has been insufficient, whether that is in the home or at school because the children do not speak the non-heritage language outside of school and/or home. For some, the collapse, or partial relaxing, of the political machine has created new opportunity for the previously suppressed language.

All of the languages have a core group of speakers, or sources, from which the language can be regenerated. For those pursuing the teaching of the language in education, teacher supply and teacher quality issues are common. Some authors advocate for public signage and see the use of the language in public as important while others provide examples of regular public events in the language, or opportunities for language use amongst specific community groups. Most authors convey the perception that their language will continue to be “useful” into the future, and speak of the value of the language entering “non-traditional” (non-rural; new public arenas; internet; communication technologies; media) domains of use. For some of the languages, new employment opportunities have become available for the language speakers, and most have language leaders, activists, and language advocates. Many of the authors speak of the interconnectedness of the fate of the language with that of the language speakers’ identities and cultures. The path to raised awareness about what happened to the language in the past, and why, is also a common story.

The following chapters show how difficult it is to generalise about what makes a language threatened, those specific historical circumstances that lead to language loss, or what should be done in what order to restore a language, however, some broad conclusions and comparisons can be made. While this prologue eschews being a vehicle for language

revitalisation theory, a few points might be made. Firstly, no current remedy or model for language survival will fit every situation—languages are embedded in their historical contexts and the culture and lives of the people. Some factors in some situations are more important than they are in others. Secondly, the lessons emergent in the accounts by the authors in this book suggest that perceiving language in an holistic and less mechanical way can be more instructive. The profound connections of language with all human activity and groups make inter-disciplinary approaches particularly valuable. The question many of the authors address is not so much about the order of policy interventions required to restore a language, but about identifying the key factors present when a language is not threatened, and the critical factors that need to be present for a language to return to sustainability, for which we might first look to the needs of the language people.

So here we listen to the voices of the speakers of some of these languages; how they feel; what they think has happened, what they are doing to keep the value and functions of their languages current, and why their languages are important to themselves and others.

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Cover design – Len Hetet

The cover design was designed by Mr Len Hetet of Baked Design Limited. Len has provided original graphics for the Te Kura Roa Project over the past five years. The design is based on the feather, a *kura* in the Māori language which represents something or someone who is treasured as well as a Māori forum for knowledge exchange. This theme follows on from the Te Kura Roa-Minority Language and Dialect Conference in 2015.

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

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Universities

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Ahakoā nā Rawinia rāua ko Poia te hōtaka Te Kura Roa i kōkiri, he mahi nui tā Tākuta Delyn Day hei āta hōmiro, tapitapi, whakatau tika i ngā tuhinga; ko Awhi Wakefield hoki tētahi kaitautoko. E rua mihi, he manomano mihi.

With project oversight by Poia and Rawinia, Dr Delyn Day was pivotal in the final edits and the ultimate completion of this book—Awhi Wakefield also lent assistance—credit to you both.



INTRODUCTORY NOTES: TE KURA ROA-THE PROJECT

Te Kura Roa was a three-year (2010-2013) Pae Tawhiti Research Initiative funded by Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga, University of Auckland. It was co-led by Professor Poia Rewi, Te Tumu–School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago, and Professor Rawinia Higgins, Te Kawa a Māui, Victoria University. Te Kura Roa consisted of two autonomous and interdependent projects; Whaihua and Waiaro. Rawinia led Whaihua: the Community Responsiveness project of this research programme, in collaboration with Te Kōhanga Reo and Te Ataarangi. Whaihua aimed to examine the success factors of these Māori language organisations, through an understanding of why people actively engage in te reo Māori and the success factors of these movements for the development of Māori and whānau. Poia led Waiaro: the State Responsiveness project of this research programme, including national and local state entities. The Waiaro project aimed to understand State responsiveness towards the language, the impact they have and the role they play in Māori language maintenance. Together, the two separate but related research projects provided a comprehensive insight into the value of the Māori language from the micro, bottom-up viewpoint of the community and the macro, top-down view of the state.

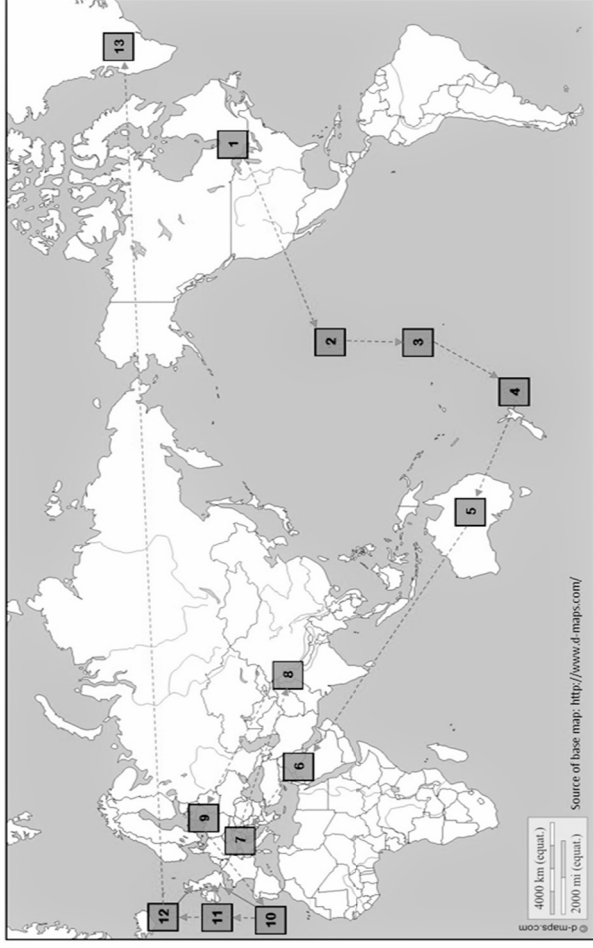
The original objectives, of the project were as follows:

- Objective 1:** Develop a **programme of research** for te reo Māori.
- Objective 2:** A study of the *Māori language as a vehicle of worldview*, getting to the heart of the language, understanding the true value of the language and how it can, and is utilised to, transform the experience and understanding of those who are exposed to it.
- Objective 3:** *Increasing the number of people* participating in, speaking and writing the Māori language.

Objective 4: *Increasing our understanding of fluency* and the numbers of people achieving higher levels of fluency

Te Kura Roa sought to build the capacity of young academics through the provision of post-graduate funding, scholarships for conference attendance, a summer student research programme, and strong mentorship. Additionally, socialising the research with leading academics was also a key desire. All research was carried out with the guidance of pioneering language and Māori Studies academics. Te Kura Roa has thus made every effort to marry the very best with the very newest academic minds. A large number of people contributed to the work of Te Kura Roa: *tēnei hoki te mihi atu.*

- Legend**
- 1 Algonquian languages, Canada / US
 - 2 Hawaiian language, Hawai'i
 - 3 Tahitian languages French Polynesia
 - 4 Māori language, Aotearoa New Zealand
 - 5 Barngarla language, South Australia
 - 6 Origin Hebrew and Jewish language people
 - 7 Piedmontese language, North-east Italy
 - 8 Origin Romani language people
 - 9 Kashubian language, Poland
 - 10 Kernewek language, Cornwall
 - 11 Welsh language, Wales
 - 12 Gaelic language, Scotland
 - 13 Kalaallisut language, Greenland / Arctic Circle



Map prepared by Dr Hauiti Hakopa.

The Pacific Rim region to Australia

As part of Te Kura Roa project, Poia Rewi and Rawinia Higgins sought the views of writers on other minority languages throughout the world to help place the situation for the Māori language in Aotearoa New Zealand in a wider context; those commonalities and differences in minority language speakers' experiences. When the writers of this book were first approached Rewi and Higgins were especially interested in understanding the threats a once majority language faced and why it is now a minority language that is in competition with an unrelenting and powerful adversary, the majority language. But they also desired that the language speakers be able to tell their own stories, in their own ways, about their ongoing battles with languages that dominate their traditional spaces and ways of thinking. The third main objective for this book was to provide a venue where minority language speakers could highlight the value of their languages, and by extension, indicate where the value of the language might be shared with wider audiences, beyond the current users of that language. As shown in the following chapters, language is the key way to make linkages with, and represent, the past, and therefore the present. The narratives of why and how that link came to be broken are a predominant refrain in the writers' responses to the book's themes.

Cree and Ojibway

In this chapter the authors, Lorena Fontaine and Brock Pitawanakwat, successfully reverse the standard third-person approach to academic topics. Instead of the individual experience appearing only in support as examples or in quotation, here the personal is the basis from which to discuss the general and universal, including discussions on the present situation for these languages and the efforts that are being made to continue to ensure they survive into the future. Fontaine and Pitawanakwat describe the value of the Cree and Ojibway languages to their speakers, clearly connecting the relationships between people, language, environment, values, thinking, beliefs, worldview, and culture. The authors touch on many themes and experiences common to endangered languages throughout the world, and the value of their approaching the issues first and foremost from their own experience is that it brings the issues home. The disruption and pain brought by language shift to family relationships and communication is one theme that the authors highlight but as yet this has barely received any academic attention. The authors also describe how important access to speakers is, and has been, to

maintain and regenerate their languages. They remind us that through language we are always approaching the person and the personal.

Hawaiian

Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Lipe explores her relationship with the Hawaiian language from the perspective of her experiences, ancestral connections, Hawaiian worldviews and metaphors to find the transformative potential. The chapter gives insight into the significant challenges faced in re-establishing Hawaiian as the language of the family, Lipe also acknowledging that the hard won successes are in part due to being able to access educational resources and privileges that are not available to all. Her personal narrative provides the nuance, colour, and feeling of individual experience, detailing the paralysing grief and the intergenerational pain that language loss, or not being able to use one's language, can provoke. As a speaker who learned Hawaiian as a child, Lipe's observations suggest that simply educating one generation in a language is insufficient without wider societal change. Many of her observations and experiences will be recognised by others engaged in language revitalisation throughout the world. Readers will be interested in her personal account of, and tactics for, raising children in the ancestral language, especially the example of the child who knows the ancestral language but chooses to respond in the language of her peers / the larger world. Small comfort, but at least the child knows the language and has a platform from which to reinvigorate her language later. Lipe thus transverses some international themes in language revitalisation—in the home and in education—is it a matter of shutting the English speaking world out, or is a better strategy to aim to be bilingual and grow the base of those who speak Hawaiian by extending the language to all those who live on Hawaiian soil? How can this be done when the author's own sense of privilege to have learned suggests a dearth of opportunities to learn? If children's first impetus is towards sociability, rather than language choice, does this explain their resistance to using the ancestral language in the home once they reach the ages where their main sociable interest is their peers—children, as a general rule look outwards towards the world—is that where the Hawaiian language needs to be too—in all environments? Lipe provides comment on many language issues and articulates her sense of responsibility that in speaking her language she helps creates the language environment for others. Lipe's chapter also speaks to the value of the individual account which is its ability to speak through uniqueness to the universal.

Tahitian

Vāhi Tuheiava Richaud addresses the book's themes, writing in what is likely her third language (te reo Tahiti, French, English), to reveal the processes by which a majority population's language, te reo Tahiti, became minoritised. Tahitian therefore provides a critical point of comparison. Although te reo Tahiti has been able to maintain its existence in a few important and influential language domains, by 2013 its speakers numbered only 24% of the population. Throughout the chapter there are references to the benefits brought by speaking what was once the minority language—French, showing that some regions have had less reason to engage with the French language than others. Te reo Tahiti, until very recently was not automatically taught at schools, has a history of hostility towards it by the educational authorities, and French is widely perceived as the language to advance “for economical and professional” reasons. The people of French Polynesia have struggled and continue to struggle to have their languages used by government and to access government services provided in te reo Tahiti. Tahiti is a good example of the decisive role of power, politics, and control in language outcomes—a numerical minority can make their language the majority language, mainly through the tentacles of the state—the domains of politics, education, and media, for example. Any concessions made for te reo Tahiti seem to be complicated by the ongoing politicking of those in power—gains in one year are withdrawn in the following years, or vice versa.

The support of the State for te reo Tahiti seems at best fluctuating, at worst, prohibitive, but despite this, two main continuing and surviving domains for use of te reo Tahiti are the representatives' working sessions of the Territorial Assembly, and the churches. Pockets of language resistance, or, larger community sources and forces for language use, have been maintained largely through the activities of language supporters in cultural community networks, church, the media, parts of government, and in education. As 95% of French Polynesia is fluent in French, it is evident that the Tahitian language has been extensively eroded in its role as the *lingua franca* for much of the Pacific. The Tahitian Tupaia, taken on by Captain Cook as an interpreter, was able to use Tahitian to converse with Māori in Aotearoa, for example.

Language revitalisation activities to date, as opposed to continuing use, have been based on a renewed respect and pride in the knowledge carried within the language, such as star knowledge, oceanic navigation, cultural, and spiritual understandings. The chapter gives evidence of a spectrum of Tahitian language use and types in French Polynesia; different dialects, mixed French and Tahitian hybrids, formal taught language, academic

language, and church informed language. Richaud details tense boundaries between some language types, especially where they reflect the different statuses and occupations of the people. Those speaking a mix of French and Tahitian, which the author finds to be the most popular, is likely to be related to the historical moment in time when speakers have not learned te reo Tahiti in schools, remain influenced by older native speakers, but also have a need to speak French. Those speaking te reo Tahiti as a regional language in the Assembly are likely to be more educated and fluent in both languages.

Te Reo Māori

Mereana Selby's chapter shows how a community (Ōtaki), without government funding, can rally to achieve its goals and make promising progress revitalising te reo Māori, the Māori language. After a steep decline in speakers in the 20th century to the point that by the 1970s there were no Māori language speakers under the age of 30 years, the revitalisation occurring in Ōtaki is tribally led, initiated by the three regional *iwi* (tribal groups) who decided to act. Selby identifies activities and environments that have led to the growing recognition of Ōtaki, a small town on the West Coast of the North Island, as a revived Māori language community, describing the benefits that have accrued to all residents. Selby tells what was done to change the future for the Māori language in Ōtaki, such as having a first focus on teaching a new generation the Māori language through education initiatives, having tribal agreement, and gradually normalising Māori culture generally. The original *Ngā Whakatupuranga Rua Mano* strategy agreed to by the tribal confederation of ART (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toa Rangatira) set out the principles and steps to be taken by the year 2000 and laid the foundation for success. Also detailed in the chapter are the unexpected results of the community's efforts, a major one being the creation of a Māori language economy where the economic impact of establishing a Māori-led tertiary institution in the town, Te Whare Wānanga o Raukawa, builds on and encourages Māori language schools, provides employment for graduates, and attracts income into the town. Selby also outlines areas for improvement and development. When speaking of the achievements for the Māori language in Ōtaki, her joy in being able to think in Māori comes across as the most valuable benefit, raising awareness of the greatest loss when the Māori language is not known.

Australasia–Barngarla Aboriginal

Ghil'ad Zuckermann and Michael Walsh take us into the negative aspect experienced by the South Australian aboriginal people, Barngarla, of the Eyre Peninsula, an example of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suffering the effects of linguicide (language killing). While looking at evidence from Barngarla and other Aboriginal revivals, Zuckermann and Walsh begin to determine whether there is a positive correlation between language reclamation and increased personal empowerment, improved sense of identity and purpose, as well as reduced cases of depression and suicide amongst peoples revitalising their ancestral tongue. The authors describe a language being revived from what has been left in written records, and encourage language communities to focus on the positive benefits of the revitalisation journey. The authors who are not of the Barngarla heritage language group, but as linguists experienced in language revitalisation, Zuckermann for Hebrew in Israel, and Walsh with many years of experience as a linguist for indigenous Australian languages, look to a future where the Barngarla language people and their language can re-locate themselves culturally as speakers of their own language. In a situation directly related to the colonial past, the Barngarla people have not only lacked access to their language, but also to the institutions in which their language is studied. Zuckermann and Walsh believe in “placing the endangered-heritage people rather than the Western linguists at the centre” of their work. To this end they are working to “secure funding for a young Barngarla scholar to study linguistics at Adelaide and to become the first reclaimed Barngarla language expert.” The authors especially advocate that the impact of language reclamation is measured throughout in terms of its immediate and long-term benefits to a people and their well-being.

Middle East and Europe

Hebrew

Renowned language revitalisation scholar and author, Bernard Spolsky, introduces the topic by providing a summary of the factors that have enabled the revitalisation and revernacularisation of Hebrew in Israel. Spolsky finds that the maintenance of the knowledge of Hebrew through the written texts and its continued use in prayer and ceremony meant that “Hebrew never died”. Access to education in the written texts was crucial, and urbanisation, when Jews were excluded from Christian or Islamic

controlled education, was a positive factor for the survival of Hebrew. He observes that natural regeneration of a language in the home is not the only way to renew a language, and indeed, where a language has stopped being spoken in the home, that patience is required to wait for those educated in the language to become parents and reinstate intergenerational home learning. Spolsky concludes that a preserved written record enables a language to be revitalised through education, but that this also depends on “a strong ideological commitment”. In terms of revitalisation theory, Spolsky’s chapter supports the need to have the *capacity*, the *opportunities*, and the *desire* (Grin and Moring 2002) to revitalise a language. As an example of a revitalised language, Hebrew is used in “all domains of normal use”, “most children grow up speaking it”, and it is being learned by Palestinian and immigrant communities. Spolsky’s comment that Hebrew is “firmly established as any other hegemonic national language”, however, points to the importance of state support in revitalisation, expressed later by the author as “full community commitment”. The primacy of the Hebrew language in the national institutions has not meant that other languages are not also spoken in Israel.

Spolsky devotes the remainder of the chapter to the fate of Jewish language varieties as immigrant languages in a number of countries. One lesson from these examples is that wherever a language people go, their language adapts to the new environments, creating new varieties of the original tongue that also reflect the dominant language(s) spoken around them. Spolsky raises the question of the cost, or price, for giving in to the pressures and shifting to a dominant language with its different belief systems and practices.

Piedmontese

Claudia Soria presents the available models for measuring language vitality and then assesses them against the situation for the Piedmontese language. Piedmontese is only being transmitted to a small degree within families, is not spoken outside of familial groups, is not taught in schools, does not have official protection, and while it is a source of cultural pride for some, it is subject to negative attitudes from others causing shame and the retraction of use to limited situations. Soria finds some hopeful signs for the language in revitalisation programmes and a new interest from younger generations using Piedmontese in online tools.

Soria argues that the UNESCO vitality result for Piedmontese is more appropriate for assessing the language situation, with reservations, as it

applies to Piedmontese, rather than the more optimistic EGIDS, EuLaViBar and Red List models. Critiquing the models, she posits that an over-emphasis on intergenerational transmission can obscure or deflect from the impact of revitalisation trends in other areas, such as revitalisation programmes, digital tools and social media. Soria also finds that an over-emphasis on some vitality measures can also obscure language endangerment, because stressing the importance of speaker numbers and intergenerational transmission can elevate a language's vitality rating. Soria proposes that crowd sourcing initiatives where speakers can contribute more accurate data and the development of the Sustainable Use Model may be the way forward, especially as the model gives "community members primary agency in decision-making and program implementation."

Romani

Ian Hancock discusses the history and characteristics of the Romani languages, contributing to understanding of how languages develop, change, and survive under migratory conditions and the influence of other languages. Seeing Romani languages as languages that continued to develop outside the heritage people's land(s) of origin, Hancock dispels common myths and popular assumptions. By exploring the way Romani languages incorporate the marks and signs of their respective histories, he provides insight into how memory and language are entwined, how language provides clues to the events of the past, how language conveys belief systems and world views, reflects the interactions and interconnections with other peoples and languages, and how many peoples can become one people, through language. Hancock also speaks of the modern-day challenges to Romani languages and the separating paths in different contexts—one people can become many people. The remainder of the chapter provides an analysis of the features of the Vlax Romani language from a linguist's perspective. Vlax Romani, a people from the Romanian region, are described as "both the largest and geographically the most widely dispersed of all Romani populations" and, partly because of this, their language is becoming the "variety of choice for international use". The technical focus at the end of the chapter gives the reader a rare insight into the language.

Kashubian

Nicole Dolowy-Rybinska addresses the historical and contemporary situation for the Kashubian language and its people who reside in the

Pomerania region, Northern Poland. Kashubian is described by the author as a language for “everyday occupations, customs, rites, the cycle of the seasons, fishing, farm work, and their religious beliefs”, but details a continuing struggle to perceive the language as relevant to modern life and work. Dolowy-Rybinska shows how the creation and expression of negative stereotypes about the language (and Kashubian people and culture) have affected the speech community, especially through education and the treatment of the language and culture as “folklore”. Activists and animators who “showed the positive aspects of being Kashubs” have helped undermine those stereotypes, although a lack of recognition of value is still an issue for the Kashubian language and culture. Giving examples of speakers who question the “usefulness” of the language to industry and the economy, apart from in tourism, Dolowy-Rybinska outlines the steps taken to combat negative attitudes towards the language, pointing to the entry of the Kashubian language into new spheres, such as in media and broadcasting, as creating more opportunities for the language to be used and helping the language’s value to become more realised.

The chapter demonstrates the oppression of a language in political, social, religious, and economic areas through one language group’s assertion of dominance over another language group by restricting language use. In contrast to many other threatened languages, Kashubian language and culture has experienced colonisation by two different language groups, Polish and German. Dolowy-Rybinska shows that attitudes about a language are also attitudes about the people of that language, detailing along the way how two dominant languages have impacted on Kashubian.

North Atlantic Seaways

Kernewek (Cornish)

Kernewek is being restored as a language for modern day use in Cornwall, re-built from what was a small core of speakers and knowledge bases about the language. Mike Tresidder discusses and details a range of initiatives to support *Kernewek*, noting that to date, insufficient progress has been made in educating the next generations in *Kernewek* and there continues to be issues around standardisation for written and contemporary purposes. Despite continued challenges, *Kernewek* is nonetheless reclaiming its role as the language for Cornwall, albeit only symbolically at times, and is aided by the perception that the *Kernewek* language, in making Cornwall unique, is also useful for economic purposes, tourism in

particular. Tresidder points to the links between culture and language, including the importance of the representation of historical events from the language peoples' point of view with a consequent upsurge in interest in *Kernewek*. He outlines the political, physical, and economic forces via England and English that slowly, and sometimes rapidly, undermined *Kernewek* until the present day where politically the *Kernewek* language is entwined with Cornish aspirations for Cornwall, and economically, *Kernewek* is recognised as providing an authentic and unique language for the region, however, ensuring even Cornish history has a place on the curriculum remains difficult.

Kernewek faces many similar challenges to other indigenous languages that have a history of suppression and oppression. In particular, the situation for *Kernewek* is complicated by having two historical language bases to draw on—*Kernewek* as it was spoken when the first dictionary was written, and *Kernewek* as it appears in ancient manuscripts. Tresidder notes, however, that the ultimate effect of dissension on “what is *Kernewek*”, is seen by some writers as stimulating “public awareness”. Despite the challenges, Tresidder finds that an important value of the *Kernewek* language lies in returning the history of its speakers, and therefore the culture and identity, to its people as a historically, and contemporarily, distinct group. Insight into *Kernewek* terminology, springing from different systems of categorisation, provides readers with a little insight as to how *Kernewek* might lead to, and result from, perceiving the world differently (see Deutscher 2010). Tresidder also discusses some signs of language vitality for *Kernewek*, such as use in public domains and the natural play children make with the words and language, seeing the next generations as the most important focus for language revitalisation.

Wales

Jeremy Evas begins with a discussion on the historical processes and forces that help explain decline in the use of, or abandonment of, a language by its speakers. The specific argument explored is how the historical role and rise of the homogenising nation state, caused the designation of those “other” languages caught in its expanding orbit to become perceived as “peripheral”, even threatening to its “modern” core and self-assumed superior functions. Evas’ ambit, highlighting the economic imperatives behind the rhetoric of the expanding “nation” states, particularly focuses on the impact and example of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Evas goes on to observe that, conversely, “language conservation can even facilitate economic development, as a

result of the sentiment of community solidarity that language can create and sustain”, citing Price, O’Toma and Jones (1997): “the economy is in the culture and the culture in the economy, and language is at the root of both.”¹ Evas makes clear throughout that it is people who speak a language and language groups are social groups, where members can belong to more than one group. These observations resonate with the Welsh Strategy concept of “Iaith Pawb” “everybody’s language”, as discussed later in the chapter—the attendant irony of language revitalisation requiring the adoption of a democratic principle born in the same modernising forces that flung so many languages into the outer darkness brings a Māori saying to mind—*kei roto i te pōuri te māramatanga e whiti ana*—in the darkness the way is shown. Having discussed the processes leading to the decline in Welsh-speaking, including commentary on the internalised impacts on speakers’ perceptions of where and when they should/could use their language [diglossia] the author devotes the remainder of the chapter to updating readers on the current progress of the Welsh language, drawing on statistical evidence, legal parameters and supports, and finally language policies.

Gaelic (Scotland)

Wilson McLeod notes that despite efforts since the 1970s to revitalise Scottish Gaelic the numbers speaking Gaelic and the locations in which Gaelic is used as a community language have declined. He concludes that policies to “sustain and promote” Gaelic have been insufficient. Regarding the origins of the decline of Gaelic, McLeod looks to the fourteenth century when, due to a “range of economic and political factors,” Scottish Gaelic increasingly became confined in the Highlands—tracking the story of Gaelic as a slow retreat to those regions in the northwest, the furthest and most cut off from England, (and more reliant, perhaps, on traditional sources of income). Eventually, the Gaelic spoken in the Highlands becomes continually weakened, losing ground to the inroads being made by English in a number of spheres, a process McLeod sums up as the people becoming “less and less strongly Gaelic”, with some areas becoming totally English speaking.

McLeod’s account of the Gaelic language provides evidence, as do other authors in this book, that the stereotyping of a people as “backward”

¹ This has certainly been the case for the Māori language where much industry and enterprise has emerged as a consequence of Māori language initiatives, and where the employment market had previously required Māori language speakers to leave their language at the door.

is soon reflected in attitudes towards their language. McLeod locates the roots of the oppression (political, educational, and attitudinal) of the Gaelic language in the language shift of those living closest to England—when the Lowlands, for political and economic reasons, began using English. In the context of Scottish history the tribal nature of Scotland is likely to have played a part (and continues to have an influence in Gaelic being seen as a regional language)—however, those closest to England were not only under greater pressure to engage with the English but it was also to their economic and political advantage within Scotland to do so.

For the remainder of the chapter McLeod assesses and updates the reader on language revitalisation themes and initiatives for Gaelic speakers in Scotland—education, intergenerational transmission, broadcasting, community use, age range of speakers, literacy levels, potential role as a national language, institutional and legal provisions, signage, printed material, numbers of speakers, language policies, corpus planning (or lack of it), and types of use. McLeod argues that there is a disjuncture for the “use of Gaelic in secondary and higher education and official business” against the background of decreasing community use, and increasing second language acquisition.

Kalaallisut

Language revitalisation expert Lenore Grenoble provides an exploration of the Kalaallisut language in four situations: a language spoken by the majority in Greenland; a language spoken by a minority in Denmark, and in Greenland when considered as a colony of Denmark; a minority language spoken by Inuit peoples across the Arctic circle (crossing national boundaries from Russia, Alaska, Canada, to Greenland), where it is also a majority language in the sense of “overall vitality and percentage of the community members who speak it”. Although the Kalaallisut language is closely linked to Greenland’s drives for independence and has been supported by policies after Home Rule Government was established, Grenoble picks up on some unresolved semi-postcolonial legacies, which are potentially threatening Kalaallisut’s status as the language for Greenland.

The warning that can be read in Grenoble’s careful deliberations on the Kalaallisut language is that Kalaallisut may eventually be used only as a language for symbolic and ethnic identity, replaced by an English language which has had long practice transcending ethnic boundaries. Kalaallisut, despite its status of being a majority language in Greenland, because of immigration and the colonial past, may yet lose the competition

to be the language for daily functioning, for all, within the borders of Greenland.

Concluding Comments

The situations discussed by the authors in this book sometimes show, counter-intuitively, that some factors, such as the numerical dominance of a heritage people or culture do not determine language survival. Although numbers can assist, they do not alone ensure a language will survive. Nor does it seem wise to advocate that intergenerational transmission alone, within private, domestic, social groups, can be a model for revitalisation, although the Roma and Jewish diaspora peoples have done just that for centuries but develop numerous language varieties along the way. Many tales of language shift and loss, point to unremitting pressure on ensuing generations to speak a language “against the flow” of another language that is used in all other spheres of life. As Spolsky advises in his chapter, “strong ideological commitment” seems required, to keep to the task. The diversity of language contexts, however, means that “what helps” is contested, and often, poorly understood. Learning a language through education, likewise does not guarantee survival, especially if it is not spoken socially or in the homes. But if the calculation is whether something is a shift towards maintaining a language, or letting it go (see Higgins and Rewi 2014), does it matter which factor is most important? We are left with many questions, and unresolved dilemmas and one of these is that while the pressures to shift to the “dominant” language remain unaddressed is language maintenance and learning amongst small groups the best that can be hoped for? The authors in this book provide much to think about on language revitalisation which we hope might provide greater inspiration and appreciation. Recognition that a language grows and goes with its people (is not static and unchanging) means that language initiatives must, as Evas comments in his chapter, “deal with *people* not language-reified-as-concrete and manipulable object”. Bilinguals and multilingual, the authors in this book, are travellers across the borders of identity—we believe that although their reports are in their lesser desired language, they are of immense value. We leave you now in the experienced hands of these travellers, voluntary or otherwise, to share their observations and viewpoints through their second, third or fourth language; to share their grief, aspirations and longing for their mother tongues, because, in so many ways they remain in exile.

LANGUAGE LOSS AND REVITALIZATION

LORENA FONTAINE
AND BROCK PITAWANAKWAT

The Indigenous languages of the first peoples of Canada are considered to be the peoples' cultural treasures. They are important to Indigenous identities, cultures, and communities. Simply said, the ancestral languages of Indigenous peoples are recognized as the most important vessels in Indigenous cultures. This chapter focuses on the authors' personal experiences with two Indigenous languages in Canada; Swampy Cree and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway).

Lorena Fontaine is Cree and Anishinaabe (Ojibway). She is a member of the Sagkeeng First Nation which is located in the central eastern part of Manitoba. She also considers home to be her maternal community of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation located in northern Manitoba. Lorena cannot speak either of her ancestral languages which are Swampy Cree (a dialect of the Cree languages) and Saulteaux (often referred to as Ojibway or Anishnaabemowin). Both languages belong to the Algonquian language family, which is one of the largest linguistic groups of North America with approximately 144,015 speakers out of a total population of 3.8 million in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). They are two of the three Indigenous languages that have been predicted to survive in Canada. According to the 2011 census, there were 83,475 people who reported Cree as their first language and 19,275 who reported Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway) as their mother tongue. The majority of Cree speakers are located in the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan (28.8%), Manitoba (24.0%), Alberta (21.9%), and Quebec (18.5%).¹ The same census estimated 10,180 speakers of the closely-related Oji-Cree.

¹ According to "Aboriginal Languages in Canada", Canadian Census Population, 2011 (Statistics Canada).

The term *Algonquian* loosely translated from the Maliseet term *elakomkwik* means: “they are relatives or are allies.” It suggests that there is an intimate relationship linguistically and culturally amongst the speakers of the approximately twenty-nine related languages.²

Map 1-1: Pre-contact distribution of Algonquian languages (Ishwar 2005)³



Brock Pitawanakwat is a member of the Whitefish River First Nation, in Birch Island, Ontario. The community has descendants from all three Anishinaabe peoples, the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi. They spoke a mutually-intelligible language, Anishinaabemowin, and maintained an ancient alliance known today as the Three Fires Confederacy. There are alternate terms for this language, but Anishinaabemowin is commonly understood to refer to all dialects including those of the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi. The shared language of Anishinaabemowin unites the people who are referred to individually as Anishinaabe and collectively as Anishinaabeg. There are many alternate spellings for the Anishinaabe people: Chippewa (primarily used in the United States), as well as Ojibwa, Ojibwe, or Ojibway.

Anthropologists and linguists have attempted to categorize the different peoples and their languages using various terms, but Anishinaabeg complexity defies clear taxonomic classification.

² Blackfoot, Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Cheyenne, Cree, Menominee, Ojibwe, Pottawatomi, Sauk-Fox-Kickapoo, Shawnee, Miami-Illinois, Mi'kmaq, Abenaki, Malecite-Passamaquoddy, Massachusetts, Narragansett, Mohegan-Pequotog, Quiripi-Naugatuck-Unquachog, Mahican, Nanticoke-Piscatawy, Carolina Algonquian, Powhatan, Etchemin, Loup A, Loup B, Shinnecock (Goddard 1996).

³ Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository. Released under Creative Commons License CC-by-2.0, 2005.

Anishinaabeg traded with and married among their neighbours so the distinctions between them and others are often difficult to discern, although there are different accounts of Anishinaabe creation stories. Anishinaabeg lived around and west of the Great Lakes when they first came into contact with Europeans. Brock uses the term Anishinaabe-aki to refer to all Anishinaabe territories whether traditional or contemporary. Colonization dispersed descendants over a vast geographical area that now includes Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in the north, and Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Kansas, and Oklahoma in the south.

Both Brock and Lorena have been affected by assimilative policies that caused the destruction of Indigenous languages in Canada. They will provide brief accounts of the intergenerational legacy of language loss that many Indigenous families have experienced. They will also describe revitalization efforts in their communities and the impact that these are having on their languages.

Lorena

While I was growing up, I knew very little about my family languages. Although my mother could speak Cree and my father Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway), I cannot recall a time when I heard them speaking publically in either language. My mother would often communicate to her siblings privately in Cree. Normally, I would hear Cree spoken in conversations between the adults when they were certain none of the children were around. The only time I was guaranteed to hear our language was when my grandfather was present during family gatherings. As for my father, I do not have a clear memory of him speaking Anishnaabemowin to family members. There were a few instances where I overheard him say a few words as he exchanged pleasantries with Elders from our community. These brief interludes with my ancestral languages are now precious. Although I was unaware at the time, those moments became critical markers of my Cree and Ojibway heritage that became more significant as I got older. It was not until I started to conduct historical research on the residential school system while in university that I was able to make the connection between my families' experiences in the schools and the language loss that is now apparent in my family and my community.

My families' experiences with the schools started in the early 1900s, however, the churches initially established the residential schools in the mid-1800s. Control of many of the schools was later taken over by the federal government beginning in the 1880s. By 1920 it was mandatory