Perspectives

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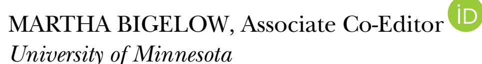
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THE ISSUE

Doing Indigenous Language Reclamation

THIS YEAR'S *PERSPECTIVES* COLUMN follows on the heels of the United Nations' International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019), with contributions from scholars who have rich and varied experiences maintaining and reclaiming Indigenous languages. This column embraces the shifting ideological terrain of Indigenous language efforts and its rejection of the language-as-object paradigm in favor of perspectives that encompass language's entanglements with social, historical, and material relations. The position piece by Richard Henne–Ochoa, Emma Elliott–Groves, Barbra Meek, and Barbara Rogoff embraces the collaborative nature of language in use and in context in order to complicate our conception of what constitutes language and this work of doing Indigenous language reclamation.

Ideological frames such as language as social interaction and language as relationality offer alternative views of language that require a reconsideration of core practices in the field of language teaching and learning. For instance, when we conceptualize language as something that both mediates and originates from intergenerational interactions on or with the natural world, land-based literacies and nonverbal participation can become as important as oral language. This perspective necessitates an expanded view of language and requires frames that can address the complexities of learning and knowing *with* language.

Together and separately, the views expressed in this column represent a critical area of research in applied linguistics. Language reclamation efforts provide profound examples of how scholarship can be deeply rooted in local practice while simultaneously addressing social, environmental, and political concerns on a global scale. Indigenous language reclamation work requires us to think across longstanding disciplinary boundaries and to embrace the interconnected nature of humans in relation with one another and their natural, historical, political, and social environments. By arguing for ideologies of language that espouse situated, collaborative action, this column should inspire locally grown, alternative conceptions of language teaching and learning for languages around the world.

The Modern Language Journal, 104, 2, (2020)
DOI: 10.1111/modl.12643
0026-7902/20/480–525 $1.50/0
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THE POSITION PAPER

Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation: Engaging Indigenous Epistemology and Learning by Observing and Pitching in to Family and Community Endeavors

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Over the last 40 years or so, especially in the last two decades, the world's Indigenous peoples and their allies have responded in earnest to threats to the vitality of their Indigenous languages. Our main purpose in this article is to offer a reconsideration of language revitalization by examining foundational ideologies and related practices. We believe that doing so will inform scholars and practitioners of language work and, ultimately, serve Indigenous communities who want to better align their language revitalization efforts with Indigenous concepts and practices.

Similar to mainstream discourse related to climate change, mainstream discourse about heritage language frames the issue as a crisis that can result in the extinction of not only people, plants, and animals but also Indigenous language and cultural practices (Baldwin, Noodin, & Perley, 2018). Furthermore, the discourses of crisis or death are a function of the settler colonial ideology of Indigenous erasure (Wolfe, 2006), whereby participation in such discourses perpetuates a sense of loss of life. In this context, responses to Indigenous heritage have been varied.

The responses have been labeled most commonly as "language retention" (Bauman, 1980), "language renewal" (Brandt, 1988; St. Clair & Leap, 1982), "reversing language shift" (Fishman, 1991), "language revitalization" (Davis, 2018; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Hinton & Hale, 2001; Hinton, Huss, & Roche, 2018; Jacob, 2013; Meek, 2010), and "language reclamation" (De Korne & Leonard, 2017; Leonard, 2012, 2017, 2019; Perley, 2011). These terms, especially language revitalization, are ubiquitous today in discourse about responses to language endangerment. The meanings of these terms are usually taken for granted as mutually understood across bodies of interdisciplinary scholarship.

Yet, just what exactly are these terms taken to mean in Indigenous communities? As Leonard (2017) recently pointed out, those who engage in language work, that is, "language documentation, description, teaching, advocacy, and resource development" (p. 16)—as well as learning—do not necessarily share the same meanings in common. Complicating matters, definitions of learning itself vary across contexts. We draw on Gutiérrez and Rogoff's (2003) understanding that "learning is conceived of as a process occurring within ongoing activity, and not divided into separate characteristics of individuals and contexts" (p. 20). That is, learning is situated deeply in local family and community contexts, and observation and evaluation of learning takes place across generations. For example, while Elliott–Groves (second author) was conducting research in her home community—Cowichan Tribes on Vancouver Island, British Columbia—she was asked to participate in the end-of-life ceremony for a community member (Elliott–Groves & Meixi, 2020). Given that Elliott–Groves was born and raised in the community, Elders and other community members have observed and evaluated her performance in relation to cultural and community commitments across her lifetime. Each opportunity provided her the opportunity to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge, while providing a chance for the community to evaluate her learning (Elliott–Groves & Meixi, 2020).

Differences in conceptions of what language is or what learning constitutes will inevitably result in differing notions of what language revitalization is and how it should be done. In particular,

we note how Leonard (2017) pointed out that non-Indigenous linguists working as allies to Indigenous communities in their language work tend to conceive of language as an object, owing in large part to their education and training in Euro-Western schools and universities. Emphasizing structural properties, language is framed by such allies as a 'thing' that can be captured through linguistic elicitation from speakers and the recording of narratives—in the Boasian tradition—and turned into documents such as dictionaries, grammars, and texts (Leonard, 2017; see also Darnell & Valentine, 1999). In this sense, a language may be understood as a code that is separable from context.

While this language-as-code ideology is a useful way of conceiving of language for certain intents and purposes, such framing exists "at the expense of social practices" (Leonard, 2017, p. 18; see also Hymes, 1962, 1972, 1974). It masks an understanding of language as social interaction, situated within and in dynamic and dialogic relationship with multiple layers of context, including historical, sociocultural, political economic, developmental, and psychological. We suggest that rendering language as a code is an attempt to remove Indigenous concepts of language from the social and cultural context, resulting in Indigenous erasure. Indigenous understandings of language are intertwined with Indigenous concepts of land, identity, and thought, and as such, cannot be successfully compartmentalized and transmitted.

Importantly, the conception of language as an object fails to acknowledge the social work and cultural meanings of language, including its importance for understanding cultural concepts of identity and the associated relational and moral fabric of the community. Efforts at language revitalization need to design their efforts around ethical commitments to the community (Grenoble, 2009; Kroskrity & Meek, 2017; Meek, 2017). And because language revitalization is most often a collaborative endeavor, differences in conceptions of what language is may be consequential to coordinating language work:

> However it is conceptualised, 'language' provides the basic framework through which people plan, execute, and assess language work. When speaker–consultants participate in language documentation, for instance, it is their understanding of 'language' that informs their motivations in doing such work. When they negotiate ethical and other concerns, it is with this as a backdrop. When community members engage with language documentation or with pedagogical materials based on documentation, it is with their understanding of 'language' that they use these products and assess their value. (Leonard, 2017, p. 19)

Engagement with Indigenous language revitalization activities is preconditioned by ideologies of what language is and what constitutes learning a language, which is reflected in the approach to language revitalization. This, of course, is true whether or not those engaged in this type of language work state their ideologies of language and learning explicitly or are even cognizant of them (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; Kroskrity, 2009, 2018). Further, we recognize that language practices reinforce certain ideologies of language in a dialogic relationship (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998).

It seems reasonable to wonder, then, what ideologies of language and learning exist in language work, as well as how they are manifested in social practices. That is, what are the most basic conceptual foundations undergirding language revitalization and how are they tied to language revitalization efforts? To be sure, there is a substantial body of work concerning ideologies of language (e.g., Joseph & Taylor, 1990; Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin et al., 1998; Silverstein, 1979). Scholarly attention has been given specifically to Indigenous language ideologies or "beliefs and feelings about language and discourse" (Field & Kroskrity, 2009, p. 4) held by Indigenous community members (e.g., Davis, 2018; Hill & Hill, 1986; Jacob, 2013; Kroskrity & Field, 2009; Kulick, 1997; Makihara & Schieffelin, 2007; Morgan, 2009). Yet there is a need for attention focused on Indigenous conceptions of language itself and of what language revitalization means, and how such conceptions shape and are shaped by language revitalization initiatives that occur within and across various contexts.

To this end, we focus on three areas: (a) Indigenous ideologies of language and language revitalization, (b) Euro-Western ideologies of language and how they are (intentionally or unintentionally) built into many current indigenous language revitalization initiatives and programmatic actions, and (c) a family- and community-based response to language endangerment founded on a broader enterprise than language revitalization—language reclamation—that foregrounds Indigenous ideologies of language while also supporting a way of learning, prevalent in, but not exclusive to, Indigenous communities, called "learning by observing and pitching in to family and community endeavors" (LOPI; Rogoff, 2014).

In this way, we hope to contribute to the decolonization and Indigenization of language

revitalization taken up by others (e.g., Hermes, 2005; Hermes & Haskins, 2018; Leonard, 2017). We consider a perspective on decolonization and Indigenization informed by Wilson and Yellow Bird (2005), who stated that decolonization is "the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonization that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and (…) is engaged for the ultimate purpose of *overturning the colonial structures and realizing Indigenous liberation*" (p. 5, emphasis added). To this end, we theorize Indigenous language revitalization using an analytical framework including Indigenous conceptions of land, language, thought, and identity. Drawing on Tuck and Yang's (2012) discussion of decolonization, we hope to offer suggestions for the repatriation of Indigenous languages that emerge from Indigenous ways of knowing.

By complicating the very notion of language itself, we push back against Euro-Western ideologies of language that privilege structure and code. Instead, we advance Indigenous ideologies of language, which we suggest are, in many instances, language-as-social-interaction ideologies (Duranti, 1997), language-as-performance ideologies (Bauman, 1977, 1986, 2011; Bauman & Briggs, 1990), and, more broadly, language-as-social-action in the ethnography-of-speaking tradition (Bauman & Sherzer, 1975, 1989; Hymes, 1962, 1972, 1974). We do this to recenter Indigenous conceptions of language itself, particularly by promoting a language-as-a-process-of-sustaining-relationality ideology.

We also seek to contribute to the deconstruction of common Euro-Western–based ideologies of language revitalization and language instruction tied to those ideologies. We call attention to how such ideologies and practices obscure Indigenous conceptions of language and Indigenous language reclamation. Our interest in problematizing 'language revitalization' stems from how ubiquitous and seemingly dominant conceptions of it mask the role of settler colonialism in Indigenous language endangerment. Instead, we consider how language reclamation (see, e.g., De Korne & Leonard, 2017; Leonard, 2012, 2017, 2019), a concept which derives from a decolonized/decolonizing and Indigenized/Indigenizing paradigm, is a more apt, productive, and dynamic concept to facilitate pedagogical transformation. We further respond to the need to offer critical perspectives on language revitalization practices that center language learning in Indigenous social, cultural, relational, and spiritual contexts.

INDIGENOUS IDEOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE RECLAMATION, AND RELATED PRACTICES

We begin by suggesting that language reclamation should be consistent with Indigenous perspectives and goals. That is, we support a language-as-a-process-of-sustaining-relationality ideology. This is not to suggest that Indigenous and Euro-Western ideologies of language do not mutually influence one another or that there are 'pure' Indigenous ideologies of language. In fact, we recognize the existence of "conceptual convergence" or "what could be called ideological syncretism" (Meek, 2009, p. 165) as it relates to ideologies of language. Rather, we mean to examine areas where the different cultural meanings of language are apparent and consequential, even if interconnected and sometimes challenging to distinguish.

A conception of language as social interaction frames language as a process or verb, not an object or noun, and foregrounds relationships through interaction. Important to this conception is the centrality of relational reciprocity in Indigenous notions of language; ethical relationships with people and the natural world are integral to the how and why languages are learned in context across generations. We are, in other words, suggesting that an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding Indigenous ideologies of language is an Indigenous relational epistemology.

It is important to first reframe language 'revitalization' within a language reclamation paradigm to foreground Indigenous and decolonizing ideologies and practices. This encompasses conceptions of language as relationality, as well as language practices that honor Indigenous ways of speaking (Henne, 2009; Henne–Ochoa, 2018). It also includes Indigenous pedagogies that reclaim Indigenous languages by sustaining and reclaiming Indigenous cultures (McCarty & Lee, 2014). For us, to reclaim a language refers to the active recovery of language processes and practices that have been impacted by colonization and, in this way, allows us to acknowledge that Indigenous languages were never forfeited. These Indigenous conceptions of language, language practices, and pedagogies have existed for millennia, but in many cases they have been weakened and are still under threat by settler colonialism. Thus, rightfully, many Indigenous people seek to reclaim them.

We are suggesting that *language reclamation* is a more apt term than *language revitalization*,

given the expressed language goals of Indigenous communities. It is so because it calls out settler-colonial impacts while also charting a process of decolonizing Indigenous language ideologies and practices by reconfiguring them within self-determined Indigenous social structures in which family and community interaction is (re)embedded.

INDIGENOUS IDEOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH LAND, LANGUAGE, THOUGHT, AND IDENTITY

Iñupiaq scholar MacLean (2010) shared her expertise on the intimate relationship between land, language, and thought from Alaska. Language is used to organize everyday life by communicating local meaning (MacLean, 2010). For Iñupiaq, whose way of life and livelihood is contingent upon respectful relations with land and sea, language is used to direct attention quickly to the accurate location of an object, with respect to visibility, proximity, and safety (MacLean, 2010). Iñupiaq language was developed in relation to the land, and as such, their number of demonstrative pronouns to describe objects in relation to the environment is higher than in the English language. In English, demonstrative pronouns include *this* and *that* in the singular form, whereas the Iñupiaq language has at least 22 stems used to create demonstrative pronouns. The mere quantitative differences across the two languages illustrate the process-oriented nature of Iñupiaq language, while MacLean's description of language in relation to life, livelihood, and safety illustrates a vastly different perspective and function of language itself.

For most, if not all, Indigenous peoples, being Indigenous means "to live in relationship with the place where one is born" (Guerrero, 2003, p. 66). Therefore, Indigenous conceptions of self, including what it means to be a person, are strongly rooted to the land. Among Cowichan, for example, many believe that the land holds the bones of their ancestors, and therefore, their relationship to the land constitutes their individual and collective identities across generations (Elliott–Groves, 2019).

To honor their commitment to respecting plant, animal, and natural world relations, some communities have members who have been trained by Elders to speak up on behalf of the land and water during every community decision. Indigenous language has evolved from Indigenous relationship to land, and in this way, can be understood as emergent from the land (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Without heritage language, many Indigenous people believe that their communication with the land and spirit world could be adversely impacted, thus shifting concepts of Indigenous identity. Many communities have stories embedded in particular landscapes that demonstrate a collective identity associated with generations of responsible relations with a particular place (Cajete, 1994). Indigenous notions of self, then, are also deeply intertwined with Indigenous understandings of language, thought, identity, and relationship to land.

EURO-WESTERN IDEOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION, AND RELATED PRACTICES

How do Euro-Western notions of language as a neutral, representational, and autonomous code align with dominant language revitalization ideologies and practices? To revitalize Indigenous languages, many Indigenous communities whose Indigenous language is severely endangered or dormant have, out of necessity, relied primarily on formal educational institutions and Indigenous-language-as-a-second-language (ILSL) programs (Coronel–Molina & McCarty, 2016). In ILSL programs in schools, language instruction is commonly, though not always, based on Western pedagogy, involving what Rogoff (2014) has called assembly-line instruction (ALI), with efforts to transmit isolated bits of knowledge separate from the contexts of their use.

Moreover, ILSL programs have typically been educational institution-sited approaches that are not supported outside of the formal learning environment by family- and community-based Indigenous language programs. de García, Axelrod, and Lachler (2009) described it this way:

> Problems related to language loss and shift in Indigenous communities seem to be not only that Indigenous languages are no longer spoken by the younger generation and that the contexts for speaking the language within the community are diminishing but also that dominant-culture ways of addressing these challenges are being adopted. Responsibility for revitalizing languages is most commonly situated within the institutions that are constructed to mirror dominant culture values: the schools and the tribal bureaucracy. (p. 118)

The result, often, is that while Indigenous children and youth may develop some knowledge of their Indigenous language in school, they do not develop enough communicative competence

to speak it outside of their Indigenous language lessons for more than a narrowly restricted range of domains and purposes. Instead, they ordinarily speak the language-of-wider-communication (such as English or Spanish) elsewhere in and around the school and in family and community domains. In the long term, they do not ordinarily develop Indigenous language communicative competence to the point that they are well prepared, when they become parents, to immerse their own children in the language at home within everyday activities.

Pointing to the effectiveness of language nests, particularly in connection with the Māori (see, e.g., King, 2001) and Hawaiian (see, e.g., Wilson & Kamanā, 2001) languages, Indigenous communities have increasingly turned to Indigenous language immersion (ILI) programs. However, unlike the total immersion programs for the Māori and Hawaiian languages, many of these other ILI programs situate immersion solely in formal daycare facilities and schools (Coronel–Molina & McCarty, 2016). We have observed that many of these daycare- and school-based ILI programs do not have learners using the language to accomplish culturally relevant endeavors. Instead, they carry out typical Euro-Western schooling activities. For example, among the Oglala Lakota, a Native American group whose current homeland is the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, and in other Lakota communities on the Northern Plains of North America, Henne–Ochoa (2020) has observed that ILI programs have been operating for about the past two decades, serving a small number of children and youth. Lakota language immersion is occurring in some daycare facilities. In a few schools, there are Lakota immersion programs in early elementary grades. But as with the ILSL programs, based on what Henne–Ochoa (2020) has observed and what Pine Ridge Reservation residents have said to him, immersion in daycare facilities and schools involves doing activities prescribed by Euro-Western school curricula. Further, children who participate in Lakota immersion programs rarely use Lakota outside of those contexts, in family and community life.

Our study of the nature of ILSL revitalization programs reveals several characteristics common to ALI, "which aims to control the learners' attention, motivation, and behavior in settings isolated from productive contributions to the community" (Rogoff, 2014, p. 75). Rogoff's (2014) seven facets of ALI are useful for organizing the description of many ILSL revitalization programs built on that model and tied to Euro-Western language-as-code ideologies. We draw on the seven-facet ALI prism here in order to unearth the ideologies inherent in many ILSL programs and also to problematize and rethink ILI programs that are designed according to conventional Euro-Western philosophies of schooling and pedagogy.

Facet 1: What Is the Community's Social Organization?

In daycare- and school-based Indigenous language revitalization (including both ILSL and many ILI programs), language learning takes place in formal educational institutions, which are segregated from family and community endeavors. The learning community is bureaucratically controlled such that one learns the language according to the normative procedures and rules of the institution, a 'language regime' of sorts.

Facet 2: What Motivates a Person's Involvement?

As in all ALI, motivation to learn an Indigenous language through ILSL programs stems from the learner seeking extrinsic rewards and avoiding threats (Rogoff, 2014). Grades, for instance, serve as prods in ILSL programs to get learners to apply themselves to language learning exercises so as to show 'proof' of competence to others and not to be deemed incompetent by them. At the same time, teachers' involvement is motivated by the bureaucratic system to deliver the curriculum to students, and to attempt to control student involvement and to rank students' language knowledge and skill via points and grades.

However, extrinsic motivation to learn, rather than intrinsic motivation, does not always result in a sustained commitment to learning. In fact, "if there isn't a considerable amount of interest and commitment on the part of the learner, learning doesn't occur at all" (Simpson, 2014, p. 15). For example, among the Lakota of Pine Ridge Reservation, children and youth are often unmotivated to learn Lakota through ALI in school. As they and their Lakota language teachers have reported to Henne–Ochoa (28 April 2019), and as he has observed in Pine Ridge Reservation classrooms, extrinsic rewards and direct assessment of their linguistic competence stifles, rather than kindles, their participation, even though they otherwise express support for the goal of revitalizing Lakota and hold it in very high regard.

Facet 3: How Is Group Interaction Organized?

In ILSL programs, social organization is arranged for direct instruction that follows a typical

teacher–student participation structure in order to learn language in didactic fashion. There is a clear division of labor between the teacher and students, a unilateral arrangement (Philips, 1992). Teachers control students' attention toward and motivation for engaging in activities designed to foster language learning. There are predetermined learning activities that are regimented by prepared teacher–student scripts that prompt asymmetrical participation. In ILI programs, although the aims are consistent with producing new speakers, it is usually carried out in a school and in a form of immersion that is far from being immersed in culturally relevant contexts.

Facet 4: What IS Learning?

What is the goal of learning an Indigenous language in ILSL and ILI programs? While, according to many local adults and Elders, the ultimate goal may be to restore intergenerational Indigenous language learning and sustain and revitalize Indigenous culture, ILSL programs, in effect, transmit from teacher to students isolated knowledge of, and very limited skills for, using the Indigenous language. They do so by reducing the language learning to knowing rules of grammar; memorizing word lists and stock phrases; and creating sentences, questions, and commands by following linguistic patterns found in prefabricated examples. Teachers and parents may implicitly expect children and youth to use their rudimentary Indigenous language competence in other settings where the language is spoken, as prerequisite linguistic knowledge and skill for inclusion in society at large.

Facet 5: How Does Learning Occur?

Daycare- and school-based ILSL programs tend to promote language learning by means of lessons and exercises. For example, the language teacher will say a word or phrase in the Indigenous language and the students are expected to repeat what they hear, either collectively or in individual turns. Often, literacy activities are a major focus of instruction, cutting into opportunities for developing aural and oral competence in the Indigenous language. This entails silent individual seatwork, typically translation exercises from the Indigenous language to the world-majority language, and vice versa.

ILI programs embed language learning within the activities of the institution, which typically conform to ALI. This means communication occurs in the immersion language, but it is situated within organizational structures of formal learning. Specifically, communication is regimented according to step-by-step instruction in the subjects of the curriculum. True, there is some communication that is organized less formally, such as that occurring in gaps between formal lessons. But the bulk of communication involves teacher-directed discourse designed to lead students in a pre-scripted sequence that is often expressed through known-answer questions, followed by student answers, followed by the teacher's verbal assessment of those answers. These scripts occur orally and through written interaction in order to lead students to knowledge and insights about each school subject, framed in terms of the Indigenous language.

Facet 6: How Do People Communicate?

Communication in ILSL programs is limited to formats that do not usually approximate those found in ordinary social interaction. In ILI programs, communication is based on the life of the daycare or school, and not always or usually on life outside of those spaces. For example, in ILSL programs communication tends toward didactic interaction. And in ILI programs, communication is typically organized around a curriculum that does not include a broad range of family and community interests and activities.

Facet 7: Why Evaluate? And How?

When students are assessed for Indigenous linguistic knowledge and skill in ALI-based daycare and school programs, especially in middle school and high school programs, it is done to sort learners according to proficiency standards set forth in the language curriculum. Language assessment procedures and language learning are separate activities. Teachers provide students with feedback that essentially tells them how they rank relative to their peers and what degree of competence they must display in order to receive rewards, such as pleasing the teacher and getting good grades, and avoid threats, such as embarrassment in front of their teacher and classmates for not knowing how to say something properly or not comprehending and responding appropriately to verbal messages directed at them.

Thus, the very heart of the life of the Indigenous language—intergenerational language learning by infants and children from caregivers, through engagement in informal, everyday interaction—often receives little direct nourishment from school-based language revitalization

programs—particularly ILSL programs, which are built largely on an ideology of language as bounded knowledge separate from social interaction. Instead, in many communities, school-based language revitalization programs are socializing children and youth into their Indigenous language such that they come to view the language as a school subject, restricted to school use only. It may be said that language socialization of this sort is effectively a colonizing practice because it removes the Indigenous language from its relations with multiple Indigenous lifeways.

Some Indigenous communities have challenged this intergenerational Indigenous language interaction rift and paired Indigenous language speakers (usually Elders) with individual family or community members (usually from among the younger generations) who learn the language outside of formal educational institutions. These master–apprentice pairings have resulted in considerable language learning (Hinton, 2013). Other communities have established home- and community-based language instruction involving small groups of learners.

For example, Grant and Turner (2013) described the Kawaiisu Language at Home program in California. While the master–apprentice model involves pairing a fluent adult speaker with another person seeking to learn the language—who together use the language for communication in everyday activities—the Kawaiisu Language at Home program extends the model to include whole families engaged in 'immersion sets.' Adults and children take part in scripted interaction activities prepared by a development team and led by at least one fluent speaker. Families are trained monthly through communication exercises, and assessed for communicative competence through built-in comprehension checks and review of videotaped sessions.

While making some progress toward restoring intergenerational language learning, home- and community-based language instruction such as that found in the Kawaiisu language program often involves planned language lessons or otherwise scripted instruction. The relatively few people who are able to devote themselves to language learning this way do so during time away from normal, day-to-day family and community endeavors. And yet, the very design of these programs limits opportunities for participants to become conversant in the Indigenous language through immersion in culturally relevant endeavors.

If an Indigenous language revitalization program is designed according to an ideology of language as grammatical code and vocabulary, those who participate in it are socialized to the Indigenous language in a way that alienates them from seeing it as synonymous with social interaction.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE RECLAMATION

> Perhaps all language teachers need pedagogies for learning and teaching that account for living in and through our languages. Ways of teaching that we can feel in our whole bodies, not just our minds. (Hermes, 2016, p. 574)

As we have articulated in the previous section, when Indigenous languages are taught using ALI, students are socialized away from the idea that their Indigenous language is about relationality. Another way in which such institutional approaches alienate students from their Indigenous languages is by creating expectations based on the structure of schooling that are not (and often cannot be) met by the Indigenous language curriculum. Students expect reading and writing to be a significant part of the curriculum (by third or fourth grade), they expect the lessons to advance their knowledge as they advance through primary and secondary education, and they expect some form of evaluation or assessment and feedback. When these expectations are not met, students often are incapable of using or choose to avoid using the Indigenous language, resulting in a form of alienation from the language. For example, this type of alienation arose when Kaska students chose to take French rather than Kaska, further distancing them from their own Indigenous language practices (Meek, 2009, p. 170; see also Meek, 2010).

We turn now to providing a sketch of an approach to language revitalization that situates Indigenous language learning within everyday Indigenous life. We think of it as but one of many ways Indigenous peoples can learn their Indigenous language through interaction in family and community endeavors. By offering this approach, we do not mean to suggest that formal educational institutions have no role to play in language revitalization efforts; on the contrary, we recognize that schools have played, and will continue to play, a crucial role in Indigenous language revitalization around the world, particularly in communities that have few or no Indigenous language speakers (see, e.g., McCarty & Lee, 2015; Moquino & Blum Martinez, 2017). Rather, we mean to expand attention and resources to informal Indigenous language learning in ordinary family and community endeavors, a way that socializes language learners into and through an ideology of language as relationality.

LEARNING BY OBSERVING AND PITCHING IN TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENDEAVORS

In keeping with a language reclamation paradigm, we offer a strategy for language learning that involves participation in family and community endeavors. The strategy entails a form of learning that, while not exclusive to Indigenous families and communities, is especially prevalent in them, at least insofar as it has been documented in South, Central, and North America. It is LOPI, which Barbara Rogoff and colleagues have abundantly described (Alcalá et al., 2014; Coppens et al., 2014; Correa–Chávez, Mejía–Arauz, & Rogoff, 2015; López et al., 2012; Mejía–Arauz et al., 2018; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009; Paradise et al., 2014; Rogoff, 2014; Rogoff et al., 2003; Rogoff, Mejía–Arauz, & Correa-Chávez, 2015; Rogoff, Najafi, & Mejía–Arauz 2014; Urrieta, 2015).

Learning an Indigenous language through observing and pitching in to family and community endeavors is certainly not the only way Indigenous languages may be learned outside of formal educational institutions. Its promise has, however, already been suggested by Meyer (2017) based on her research in Oaxaca, Mexico. Following Meyer, we present LOPI as an example of a language reclamation strategy that aligns well with Indigenous ideologies of language and Indigenous pedagogy, while at the same time supporting decolonization and Indigenization.

As with our treatment of ALI, we present a LOPI-based approach to language reclamation by organizing it according to seven facets, each framed by a question. The questions labeling each facet of the LOPI prism, and those of the ALI prism discussed earlier, come from Rogoff's unpublished 2019 revision of the prism, and resemble the labels used in the 2014 prisms (Rogoff, 2014).

Facet 1: What Is the Community's Social Organization?

Participants in LOPI-based language reclamation develop communicative competence in the Indigenous language through participating in family and community endeavors. Indigenous language use occurs through intra- and intergenerational interaction in everyday activities. Language learning through a LOPI-based way of learning socializes learners into and through the language such that it is inseparable from daily life.

In order for language revitalization efforts to be effective, those engaged in language reclamation efforts need to recognize and understand community-based knowledge, including relational dynamics, and how these understandings facilitate Indigenous language learning and education more broadly. For Kaska children, this socialization process involves learning about respect, both in relation to how to behave toward older family members and Elders and in relation to understanding what it means to be Kaska (Meek, 2007). Discourses of respect teach everyone about the social structure of their community and their place in that community. LOPI promotes such socialization.

Facet 2: What Motivates a Person's Involvement?

Learner motivation in LOPI-based language reclamation is not dependent on a desire to learn the language exclusively but is tied to participants' desire to be involved in and contribute and belong to family and community life (Rogoff, 2014). In other words, language learning occurs as a by-product, of sorts, of getting things done. For example, a tradition of stick gambling exists in the Yukon Territory, along with an annual stick gambling competition. People are motivated to participate in stick gambling not specifically or not only to practice using their Indigenous language but instead to contribute their share to the gambling. The Kaska language camps that have been run by the Kaska First Nations and by the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) have necessarily involved everyday activities such as berry-picking, moosehide preparing, storytelling, food preparation and cooking, and other ordinary tasks (e.g., wood chopping; Moore, 2003; Meek, 2010). More choreographed events such as plays (of traditional narratives or translated children's books) have also motivated child and adult participation in language revitalization activities (Carr & Meek, 2013). This same source of motivation—a desire to belong and get things done—would drive participation in endeavors in a LOPI-based approach to revitalization.

Facet 3: How Is Group Interaction Organized?

Interaction in LOPI-based Indigenous language learning involves groupings of participants who collaborate in a way that is similar to musical ensembles in which coordinated performances emerge organically (Mejía–Arauz et al., 2018; Rogoff, 2014).

This approach has been a mainstay of Aboriginal Head Start programming for Kaska children in Yukon Territory, where Elders are invited to

share childhood stories, traditional tales, and some basic skills (such as sewing moccasins) with children. The interactions are organized around the visiting Elder who addresses the children, teaching them about their Indigenous culture and demonstrating basic techniques in the language *Dene k'éh* ('in a Dene way'). The teachers direct students' attention toward the Elder, elaborating when necessary. The Elders would typically try to involve the children by either having them participate in the skill being demonstrated or by posing questions that encouraged the children to relate to the narrative through their own experiences and responsibilities (such as watching younger siblings or cousins). Embedded in such activities is mutual respect among the adults and children as they work together.

Facet 4: What IS Learning? and Facet 5: How Does Learning Occur?

As discussed earlier, Indigenous ways of learning, including LOPI, take learning as "a process occurring within ongoing activity, and not divided into separate characteristics of individuals and contexts" (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003, p. 20). Understood in this way, it becomes obvious that learning occurs everywhere, all the time; it is not relegated to only specific sites and instances, like schools and formal learning exercises. Learning, as an ongoing process situated within ordinary—as well as extraordinary—activity, is, thus, a ubiquitous aspect of all social life. From this perspective, a LOPI-based approach to language reclamation occurs as the cumulative outcome of family and community members communicating with one another in order to accomplish everyday endeavors. Learning the Indigenous language happens through verbal and nonverbal communication that is inextricably bound with collaborative pursuits.

It is important to note, however, that communication among participants in the endeavor is not limited to only what is directly related to it. There is also communication that occurs concomitant to the collaborative purpose, including: the sharing of narratives, especially stories; showing consideration and respect toward others; joking; honoring culturally patterned norms of participation; and other communication that may seem 'peripheral' to non-Indigenous outsiders but is, nonetheless, an important aspect of accomplishing shared goals.

For example, consider an event for Kaska language learning involving harvesting birchbark for making baskets, soapberries for making 'Indian ice cream,' and fishing. Kaska language learning occurred directly, as part of the instructions and explanations, and indirectly as part of the ambient conversation among more fluent Kaska users.

Facet 6: How Do People Communicate?

LOPI is based in the shared activity itself. The participants coordinate through nonverbal and verbal means, where these serve the activity at hand. In other words, participants provide or ask for information that is needed in the activity, and because it is based in what they all can see and hear in the ongoing shared context, it can be economical. Explanations do not need to be lengthy when the context is shared, and questions ask for needed information, unlike the quizzing questions common in schooling. Narratives or ribbing may indirectly provide a lesson to correct someone's misbehavior. Stories may provide analysis of related situations that may help to figure out how to handle a challenging situation. Communication unfolds organically throughout the endeavor, as people engage with all modalities in accomplishing the endeavor at hand. The way people communicate in LOPI, therefore, is embedded in ordinary social life and emerges in ways that are consonant with the rhythms of everyday practices and consistent with Indigenous ways of being.

Facet 7: Why Evaluate? And How?

LOPI-based language reclamation includes mostly subtle assessment and evaluation of individuals' contributions to collaborative endeavors. While those with more experience and expertise may occasionally give novices overt signs of approval or disapproval during and following an activity, most often they avoid calling the group's attention to the quality of an individual's contribution. Instead, for example, an Elder will respect all contributions regardless of their quality and timeliness, giving only positive feedback to individuals by subdued gesturing or otherwise softly and quietly signaling approval with a smile, a kind and reassuring glance, loving words, or delicate touch. But it should be noted that such assessment and evaluation is not really intended to judge contributions per se; rather, it is to recognize others' commitment to the family and community and to show appreciation for their responsible behavior. In addition to assessing individuals' contributions, LOPI involves assessing the supports that are provided. For example, in talking with a 2-year-old, if a directive fails to have its effect, an

adult evaluates what can be done to better support the child's understanding. For example, the adult might point to the desired object, when the child looks confused after being told *hand me that*.

In terms of verbal interaction, which is paramount to novices' learning the Indigenous language, LOPI-based learning affords opportunities to engage with and use language in situ and under guidance. Speakers can and do provide feedback on learners' productive and receptive competence by repeating acceptable versions of what they are trying to say, for direct comparison, and providing opportunities for them to rehearse without receiving a more explicit, and, thus, a less overtly judgmental, kind of teaching. It is this mild 'correction' of efforts at verbal communication that promotes continued efforts.

A LOPI-based approach to reclaiming Indigenous languages would be based in intergenerational interaction in which children are included as contributors to an event with some value to the family or community. It would be structured in a collaborative fashion encouraging the initiative and coordination of everyone involved, and supporting the group's learning and innovation. Learners' inclusion as contributors would provide them with purpose to observe and listen, and to speak as they pitch in to the activity at hand, and more experienced participants would subtly guide their contributions.

The LOPI strategy thus offers the possibility of recentering Indigenous ideologies of language, that is, language-as-a-process-of-sustaining-relationality ideologies, and privileges Indigenous pedagogies coupled with a commitment to Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies.

CONCLUSION

We hope that we have contributed important groundwork toward a new framework of language reclamation. As we reconsider and work toward the transformation of current approaches that center on Euro-Western ideologies and ALI, our aim is to reclaim Indigenous ideologies of language and pedagogies. We think a LOPI-based approach to language reclamation is one effective strategy for creating new Indigenous language speakers who have linguistic knowledge plus communicative competence in various domains and situations.

A LOPI-based strategy for language reclamation is consistent with a number of important Indigenous concepts (which are at odds with ALI). A LOPI-based language reclamation approach employs a relational epistemology, in the inclusion of learners and more experienced people in shared endeavors of importance in the community. We would add that this would include recognition of the role of place and land as a key basis within shared endeavors of importance in the community. A LOPI-based approach also places central importance on the interdependence of people across generations in both a particular collective endeavor and in the long-term collective good. Further, LOPI recognizes and is built on decades of Indigenous scholarship describing Indigenous ways of learning (see also Rosado May et al., 2020). Finally, recent scholarship regarding LOPI increasingly specifies the role of local moral or axiological understandings (see e.g., Bang et al., 2015; Elliott-Groves & Meixi, 2020).

To be sure, we recognize the need for schools to play a role in Indigenous language learning, too. However, reclaiming Indigenous languages by recentering them in family and community life more directly targets informal, inter- and intragenerational language learning—the heart of language vitality. As it fosters social interaction within everyday out-of-school endeavors, so too does it contribute to the rebuilding and proliferation of Indigenous pedagogies, as well as cultures.

Of course, reclaiming Indigenous languages demands more than just a LOPI-based strategy combined with school-based programs. A more robust vision of Indigenous language reclamation would include ongoing and future work to decolonize and Indigenize various other social institutions, such as community centers, by reestablishing Indigenous ideologies of language and Indigenous pedagogies and language practices within those institutions. This would require us to rethink language revitalization from its ideological foundations and corresponding practices, and move into a paradigm of language reclamation. Such language work would be holistic in scope, integrated into life across the lifespan, and carried out as one aspect of overall Indigenous community healing and wellness.

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THE COMMENTARIES

Learning by Observing and Pitching In in the Context of Sleeping Language Reclamation

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In "Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation," Henne–Ochoa et al. contend that a language-as-social-interaction ideology is more consistent with Indigenous worldviews than Western notions of language as an object, and by extension, that learning by observing and pitching in (LOPI; Rogoff, 2014) aligns with Indigenous values about language learning and use. They further observe that uncritical use of Euro-Western models of teaching and talking about language can reinforce structures, ideologies, and practices that work against Indigenous community needs and values. This is indeed true, as is the reverse: Uncritical adherence to Indigenous traditional language learning practices brings its own challenges, particularly in contexts where cultural ruptures have been so severe that initial stages of reclamation might require deviation from otherwise desirable cultural norms. In this commentary, I address this issue and offer thoughts about LOPI as it applies specifically in contexts of reclaiming *sleeping languages*—those that have gone out of use, but that have the potential for future use by virtue of being documented and actively claimed by a community.

Key for sleeping language reclamation, at least in the initial stages of this multigenerational process, is that language learning will not occur in the prototypical way that it has occurred historically. To my knowledge, no Indigenous community has a tradition of learning language from old, written, often decontextualized documents crafted largely by non-Indigenous men, and yet this is an increasingly common process across North America and beyond. It is what occurred in my myaamia (Miami) community starting around 1990, when some members of my community started learning our then-sleeping language, *myaamiaataweenki*, from our ancestors' voices as they were recorded in a large corpus of written documentation.[1] Learning from historical documents clearly differs from prototypical language learning, though both entail observing what was said by language speakers. Archival work adds to this the need to carefully interpret the context and adjust for the cultural lens(es) of the person(s) who curated the documentation.

This commentary reflects my experiences as a professional linguist focused on Indigenous language work across North America, and as a myaamia scholar, practitioner, and beneficiary of a community reclamation process that has allowed me access to a language I did not grow up with. Though it was others who performed the initial work of interpreting and learning myaamiaataweenki from archival records, I have long been involved in reclamation efforts. I am a continuing language learner and researcher of community language ideologies and practices, and for many years was involved in developing language programming.

Arising from these experiences, and especially by observing reclamation leaders' insistence on guiding language work on our own tribal terms—often in defiance of naysayers, including many linguists who claimed sleeping language reclamation was not possible—the idea of *language reclamation* emerged (Leonard, 2011, 2012, 2017). As built upon by Henne–Ochoa et al., language reclamation is a decolonial framework of doing Indigenous language work that identifies and addresses the underlying issues that precipitate language shift in a given community, and centers community goals and views of 'language' in all areas of language work. As a tenet of reclamation is that language work should be planned, executed, assessed, and described in response to specific community histories, needs, and goals, I begin with an overview of the myaamia story that guides this commentary.

Indigenous to what is now Indiana and the surrounding area—but later also spoken in Kansas and Oklahoma following forced removals by the U.S. government of part of the myaamia community from tribal homelands—myaamiaataweenki largely fell silent in the 1960s. This extreme level of language shift resulted from several processes of settler colonialism, including the two removals along with the associated theft of lands, and the forced assimilation of my ancestors

through boarding schools and similar institutions. More commonly referred to at the time by its English names *Miami* and *Miami–Illinois*, myaamiaataweenki was then labeled 'extinct' by linguists. Members of my community contested the colonial logic of 'extinction' and exercised our linguistic sovereignty by instead using the term *sleeping* to describe our language during its dormancy (Baldwin, Noodin, & Perley, 2018; Leonard, 2011), recognizing our agency and responsibility to bring it back from written documentation. Using the same metaphor, our broader cultural reclamation story has come to be called *myaamiaki eemamwiciki* '(the) Miamis awaken.'

Indeed, myaamiaataweenki has come back into the community to a significant degree. While English remains the primary language of communication for events such as business meetings, I now also hear myaamiaataweenki at tribal gatherings, parts of which are entirely in the language. Though it is frequently pointed out that *myaamiaataweenki* is a verb that literally means 'speaking the Miami language,' our language is now also produced in written form in tribal publications and signage, and appears online in media created by community members.

Both in the narrow sense of language learning and also in the broader sense of engaging in the cultural practices embedded in our language, LOPI's tenets have long been a theme in myaamia reclamation efforts. Our programs employ culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014), which recognize "the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization" (p. 103). As noted earlier, the effects of colonization for my people entail damaging disruptions in our relationships with each other and with our lands, ancestors, and language. Thus, cultural programs focus significantly on restoring relationships through activities that draw upon and celebrate our shared kinship, history, values, and language. LOPI emerges naturally in such relationally oriented activities.

Summer youth camps provide an example. Though some participants have long been connected to their tribal community and come with some language proficiency, others are newly experiencing cultural programming and come with little language knowledge. Regardless, all participants in these camps have roles and responsibilities to each other and collaboratively contribute to building a healthy camp community. For example, at the camps I codirected in the 2000s, the participants formed groups (called clans), which had rotating responsibilities such as cleaning and tending the fire.

With their special focus on language, youth camps at times have language lessons that in the moment resemble an assembly-line-instruction model of teaching where an adult explains language concepts to a group of youth who have assembled for this purpose. However, most lessons are grounded in LOPI since they are accompanied by activities that actively bring language into community relations and practices. For example, at one year's camp where the theme was *miiwa, aawiki, myaamionki* 'path, time, Miami place,' participants learned the language associated with different positions of the sun. They then observed ecological markers, such as shadow movement and the location of the sun relative to features in the landscape, while also noting the behavior of animals as a way of further determining the various periods within 'daytime,' which myaamiaataweenki demarcates to a higher level of detail than does English. This activity fostered ecological awareness, which could then be leveraged for a useful task—determining time and organizing the day, a point around which camp participants were collectively accountable to each other. Camp activities largely took place relative to sun location and to when the group was ready.

Part of the responsibility of learning myaamia culture is to teach and otherwise support other members of the community, and camps reflect this principle. One of my favorite camp activities was the creation of a language-learning CD by camp participants, in this case where most were language beginners. Each person recorded a phrase they had learned during the week, and the idea was that others could learn from this CD. Another example is *pakitahaminki* 'lacrosse' games at these camps (as well as at most other tribal gatherings). Each team normally includes people at diverse levels of game skills and experience, and the main communication within the game occurs in our language with recurring phrases like *pimaahkiilo* 'throw it' and *ahtoolo* 'put it [in the goal].' It is expected that more experienced players will guide newer players in game vocabulary and in key game practices, such as how to cradle the ball.

Thus far, I have been primarily discussing children's learning, in recognition that this is how LOPI is usually discussed in academic contexts. However, in sleeping language reclamation (and, in my experience, also in situations where there are a few speakers), equally important are learning and socialization across the full community—even when the explicit focus is on supporting youth language development and use.

I end this commentary with a cautionary note that emerges from my observations about language reclamation in such contexts, where there is frequently some misalignment between ideal and actual community dynamics. Reclamation efforts are often predicated on a goal of embracing traditional roles and practices, including those associated with language transmission and socialization. However, many activities associated with reclamation efforts—those of sleeping or recently sleeping languages in particular—entail disrupting certain traditional practices along with the customary roles of a person by virtue of kinship, age, gender, occupation, and experience.

While the story of *myaamiaki eemamwiciki* '(the) Miamis awaken' (i.e., our reclamation story) has evolved to the point where children are increasingly learning language in ways that are congruent with traditional myaamia culture, as with the summer camps discussed earlier or in their homes, the initial stages of the story involved re-creating myaamia language practices, along with several associated cultural practices, through research. For this reason, it was common at the time for tribal leaders, even some Elders, to learn language from younger tribal members who researched archival materials. As I noted in earlier work with fellow myaamia scholar Scott Shoemaker, language reclamation in our community "is a reciprocal process that requires speakers, in both the literal and metaphorical sense [which includes people with knowledge of the language's cultural contexts], to listen to the non-speakers (…) just as much as in the other direction" (Leonard & Shoemaker, 2012, p. 207). As is also the case for many other Indigenous communities, 'pedagogy' in myaamia programs includes both learning and teaching. In our language, these ideas are formed off the same verb root, and I increasingly hear reciprocal forms like *neepwaantiinki* 'learning from each other.'

Aside from initial misgivings by a few Elders, I have observed that most members of my community accept the contemporary norms of myaamia pedagogy, and some even embrace it. For example, I have heard grandparents commenting on how much they value learning language from their grandchildren, noting how language engagement brings the family together. In other contexts of language reclamation across North America, however, I have several times observed strong warnings about breaking protocol, especially as it regards how language is 'supposed to be' learned—for example, orally rather than through writing, in the home rather than in school, and by younger people from older people who have more life experience.

As reclamation is a local process embedded in specific community needs and dynamics, I suggest that crafting specific 'best practices' for addressing this issue would be odd, though I propose that it is always appropriate to recognize and discuss norms and possibilities of language learning in a given community so that an appropriate response can emerge. Where this issue has come up in my professional work, I have found it most useful to discuss how temporary modification of certain historical cultural practices can serve as a means to address deeper needs: In my community, given the severe historical disruptions in our relationships with each other and with our lands, ancestors, and language, cultivating relationships has been especially crucial. Even when the particular dynamics differ from historical norms, speaking our language is one of the ways we have done this, and our community has become stronger as a result.

NOTE

[1] *Miami* is our English name; *myaamia* (normally written in lower case, plural: *myaamiaki*) is our endonym. Members of my community often also informally refer to our language as *myaamia*, but it is more specifically named with the verb *myaamiaataweenki*.

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Rethinking Ideologies of Learners' Speech and the Multilingual Learning Process

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In "Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation," Henne–Ochoa et al. make clear the importance of an approach to language revitalization shaped by relationality. This approach does not objectify language and separate it from speakers, context, and use ('assembly line instruction'), but fosters shared experiences and meaningful communication through observing and pitching in (Rogoff, 2014). The call to decolonize Euro-Western ideologies of language—from an object that can best be preserved by expert linguists in printed books, to a way of making meaning and a process of sustaining relationality that is controlled and defined by speakers—is a much-needed shift. In this response, I will focus on a related concern that poses a challenge in many language reclamation initiatives: ideologies and praxis around learners' speech and the relationality of the different languages and styles in learners' communicative repertoires. Language learners, in particular Indigenous language learners, often navigate multiple stigmas and uncertain or conflicting expectations about how they may be considered legitimate speakers. With the goal of supporting the learning process as an integral part of language reclamation work, I pose some questions that have no universal answers, but that can best be answered by educators and learners in specific contexts: What ideologies of the learning process and learners' speech might help to move away from deficit views of learners' speech? What ideological and practical approach to bi- and multilingualism would best support language reclamation?

These questions are unavoidable in language education programs where students are explicitly assessed and compared to their peers; they are also important in less formal learning settings, where unwritten social norms may lead to implicit forms of evaluation and critique in daily interactions. Henne–Ochoa et al. propose a subtle, activity-based approach to assessing, and possibly correcting, learners' communicative competence. They specify that in the learning-by-observing-and-pitching-in (LOPI) approach, "assessment and evaluation is not really intended to judge contributions" but rather to recognize and appreciate learners' efforts (p. 489). They suggest that speakers might give "mild 'correction'" to learners "by repeating acceptable versions of what they are trying to say, for direct comparison, and providing opportunities for them to rehearse" (p. 490). Such an approach offers a constructive, nondeficit way to consider learners' communicative contributions to the group, and takes seriously the danger of demotivating learners through "overtly judgmental" teaching (p. 490). Nonetheless, in practice there are many thorny questions about what correction is mild enough, when someone is understood to make an error or produce an unacceptable form of communication, and when their speech is accepted. For example, if a learner communicates successfully by using elements from both the language they are learning and another language they already know, (when) is that acceptable? If their grammar is correct but not idiomatic for the communicative context, (when) should they be corrected? How participants in language reclamation projects address these kinds of questions is influenced by often unexamined ideologies about learners' speech and about the relation of the Indigenous language with other languages in the learners' repertoire. Even if the facilitators of reclamation initiatives are whole-heartedly supportive of learners' emerging abilities and potential mixing of diverse communicative resources, learners are all too likely to experience critical and deficit discourses about language learners' speech from other social or educational sources.

I write as an educational or applied linguist of white settler colonial American background, who has been involved in Indigenous language education initiatives as an assistant, collaborator,

and researcher. My perspective is shaped by my experiences learning from language activists, linguists, education scholars, and anthropologists from different Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. I have experienced and observed an ideological bias in favor of language form and monolingualism (and prejudice against language use and multilingualism) in a variety of academic, educational, and activist settings. The ideologies that lead teachers and learners to equate knowledge with linguistic form and to strive for an idealized competence are often harmful in language reclamation settings, as Henne–Ochoa et al. point out. I have also seen both language activists and scholars who reject these biased ideologies and work with other paradigms. In line with Henne–Ochoa et al.'s call to rethink and decolonize ideologies about language and learning in language reclamation, I suggest that critically examining ideologies about learners' speech and the multilingual contexts in which learning occurs is an integral part of this process.

Deficit ideologies of learners' speech and multilingual speech communities are well established in Euro-Western academic institutions and practices. We can trace such ideologies back toward de Saussure's division of structured *langue* and messy *parole* (de Saussure, 1916/2011) and onward via Chomsky's (1965) focus on perfect competence over imperfect performance. In addition to directing interest away from faulty performance, Chomsky famously encouraged linguists to focus on the "ideal speaker–listener in a completely homogenous speech community" (1965, p. 3). Scholars with anthropological and educational orientations resisted this decontextualized perspective, putting forward counter arguments such as a focus on communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1968, 1972; Savignon, 1972) and the need to recognize the sociopolitical environment of language research and use (Cameron et al., 1992; Zentella, 1997). Scholars working in culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson–Billings, 1995) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017) have also made strong arguments in line with a relational and politically conscious orientation toward language teaching and learning. Nonetheless, the bias toward linguistic form and idealized speakers has also been present in the fields of second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and language pedagogy (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Rampton, 1990) and has disadvantaged learners in many language classrooms (Heller & Martin–Jones, 2001). This ideology has also cast multilingual speakers in a dubious light, creating a paradigm of 'parallel monolingualism' (Heller, 1999) whereby multilinguals can only be legitimate if they produce monolingual-like speech in all of their languages. While a bias toward language form is deeply ingrained in the discipline of linguistics in particular, applied linguistics and language pedagogy have spread an equally damaging deficit view of learners' speech and idealization of monolingual native speakers (Ortega, 2019). There is a lot that must and can be done by scholars in linguistics and related fields to try to change these ideological biases, in conjunction with other processes of decolonizing our research practices and our curricula (Battiste, 2013; Davis, 2017; de Sousa Santos, 2014; Smith, 1999).

In language reclamation praxis, it is especially problematic to ignore the diversity within the speech community and the sociopolitical context that motivates language work, as Henne–Ochoa et al. and others have argued (Dorian, 1994; Eira & Stebbins, 2008; Leonard, 2012). In practice, there is no speaker with perfect competence and no homogenous speech community; even in supposedly monolingual communities, there is variation in style in relation to social groups and contexts. Indigenous language communities that have not been subjected to the same kind of standardization policy processes as many nation–states have are often especially diverse in terms of spoken dialects and writing practices (Costa, De Korne, & Lane, 2017). The ideology that one kind of speech style or communication practice is better than others has been used to disadvantage learners along social, gender, religious, and ethnic lines (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Heath, 1982; Philips, 1972). This is almost certainly a big part of why this ideological orientation toward language and learners' speech has been reproduced and institutionalized so extensively—not because some academics liked it, but because it serves the power structures of settler-colonial and postcolonial societies. Following this logic, language learners, multilinguals, and people with nondominant dialects speak worse than others and consequently are worth less than others.

A language learner must navigate implicit and explicit ideologies and expectations about their language use on the way toward becoming an accepted speaker. Indigenous language learners and speakers often experience a double stigma, whereby they are subject to external prejudice as members of a minoritized speech community as well as stigma for not speaking their heritage language, or not speaking in an approved way (Gal, 2006; Muehlmann, 2008). Of the many injustices that make language reclamation work necessary,

the layers of stigma that minoritized multilinguals and learners of Indigenous languages have to cope with is one that I find especially wrenching. This double stigma is present in many contexts. In the time I have spent doing ethnographic research on Indigenous language education and activism in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico, I have spoken with many people who are dissatisfied with their abilities in *Diidxazá* (Isthmus Zapotec), the local Indigenous language, and many young adults who said they gave up speaking because they were often corrected or mocked. From young adults I often heard comments such as:

EXCERPT 1

> Mi papá era el que siempre me decía que lo hablaba mal o esa no era la pronunciación y en vez de motivarme, no pues yo me sentía muy mal y mejor ya no lo—ya no lo hablaba, dejaba pasarlo y ya.
>
> *My father was the one that always told me that I spoke it badly or that was not the pronunciation, and instead of motivating me, no, well I felt really bad, and better not to–then I didn't speak it, I let it go, that's all.* (Interview, 17 July 17 2014)

Among adults who grew up and kept using both languages, the bias against multilingualism still exerted a negative influence. In the following excerpt, one highly educated man tells me about his experiences:

EXCERPT 2

> Enrique: Lo peor del asunto es que ni hablo bien el español ni hablo bien el zapoteco.
> *The worst part of it is that I speak neither Spanish nor Zapotec well.*
>
> Haley: ¿Cómo, por qué dices eso?
> *How, why do you say that?*
>
> Enrique: Porque si tú has observado bien, escuchas bien, el zapoteco de nosotros, nuestro diidxazá ya no es totalmente auténtico, original. Ya lleva por ahí—entre diez palabras que decimos hay una por lo menos que es en español—(…)
> *Because if you have observed well, listen well, our Zapotec, our Diidxazá, now isn't totally authentic, original, now it has there—among ten words that we say, there's one at least that is in Spanish—(…)*
>
> Haley: ¿y eso para ti es signo de mal?
> *And that's a sign of bad [speech] for you?*
>
> Enrique: Pues lo ideal hubiese sido que habláramos la lengua tal y como—que la conserváramos lo mejor posible. Pero es tanta la contaminación, es tanta la aculturación, es tanta influencia de la, del español que te repito, escúchanos hablar de repente hay dos tres palabras en español o más.
> *Well the ideal would have been that we would speak the language exactly—that we would conserve it as best as possible. But there is so much contamination, so much acculturation, so much influence of, of Spanish that I tell you again, listen to us speak, suddenly there are two or three words in Spanish or more.* (Interview, 25 September 2014[1])

Multilinguals and learners should not have to feel that their speech is 'contaminated.' They should not have to give up one of their languages to avoid excessive critique. Yet this is the case in far too many contexts. In the past few years, I have been working at the University of Oslo, and have begun to learn a bit about Sámi language work in Sápmi (a territory which spans Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia). While the Arctic region at the top of Europe is different from postcolonial Mexico in countless ways, I often hear echoes of the same insecurities and painful learning experiences. Åse-Mette Johansen has recorded experiences of Sámi speakers and learners in her home community of Manndalen. One 60-year-old man she interviewed commented:

EXCERPT 3

> Da eg vokste opp, så (…) man va jo bare lokalt i bygda her, men når man kom ut fra bygda og skulle begynne på realskole, da følte eg jo at eg hadde ikke lært orntli' norsk, og eg hadde ikke lært orntli' samisk, og man blei apt med det språket.
>
> *When I grew up, so (…) people were just local in the village here, but when one [I] left the village and would begin in secondary school, then I really felt that I had not learned Norwegian properly, and I had not learned Sami properly, and one [I] was mocked with that kind of language.* (Johansen, 2010, p. 16; translation mine)

A deficit view of learners, as semi-speakers who must strive to remove their errors in order to become full, native-like speakers, has been critiqued in mainstream second language acquisition (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kachru, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 2014). Such a deficit view is also clearly rejected by Henne–Ochoa et al.'s approach to language reclamation. Yet these experiences continue from Tehuantepec to Manndalen, and many places in between. It is clear that academics need to redouble their efforts, and language reclamation practitioners need to take up an ideological position and related praxis in opposition to discourses that devalue learners. Even where a language reclamation program takes a positive approach to learners' speech,

learners may have internalized deficit ideologies through their participation in other contexts, making this an important topic to explore and discuss explicitly and repeatedly throughout the learning process.

In an attempt to move away from such deficit views, learners of minoritized languages in Europe have been labeled 'new speakers,' with attention given to the unique challenges they experience navigating identity and authority (e.g., Ortega et al., 2015; Smith–Christmas et al., 2017). Whether this term provides positive recognition or a polite way to hold learners perpetually at arm's length from full legitimacy, or a bit of both, is open to debate. The term 'emergent multilingual' has been used increasingly in North American scholarship in recent years to articulate a glass-half-full understanding of language learners (e.g., Gallagher & Haan, 2018). In our modern contexts, Indigenous languages are almost never learned in a monolingual situation; learners should be able to proudly develop a multilingual repertoire if they choose, and the opportunity to identify with a nondeficit label may be a small support in that endeavor. The relationality among different languages in a language reclamation setting can be a hard topic, and there are often justifiably negative views of other languages, which are sometimes seen as threats, enemies, contamination, and worse. Learners who use them, or whose speech is perceived to be colored by them, may be told and/or experience this to be a negative, undesirable thing. Fundamentally, minoritized language learners should be able to choose their own ways of conceptualizing and naming the processes they are going through, and how they want to relate to the different parts of their communicative repertoire.

I agree with Henne–Ochoa et al. that unconsidered ideologies—whether about language, the learning process, or the desired outcome of learning—may lead to praxis that does not support the ultimate aims of language reclamation. With this in mind, how can language activists (and academic allies) work to dismantle or at least diminish the deficit views and stigmas that learners encounter in their learning process? Following the paradigm of language reclamation (Leonard, 2012, 2017), the goals of language work must be defined by the community involved. There can be no universal answer to the question of what the desired competence is for a learner to achieve. However, I think there may be a universal desire to avoid making learners feel inadequate, and to avoid creating a dynamic where the status of legitimate speaker is forever withheld from them. Discussing and rethinking ideologies of learners' speech in collaboration with all language reclamation participants is an important step in that direction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was partly supported by the Research Council of Norway through its Centres of Excellence funding scheme, project number 223265.

NOTE

[1] Parts of this interview have also been reported in De Korne (2017).

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Approaching From Many Angles: Seeing the Connections for Our Languages to Live

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As a Navajo language revitalizer, someone who has made life-changing decisions to pursue a better understanding of, and identify successful forms of, Indigenous language revitalization, "Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation" is a welcome call to new vision in our efforts to decolonize and Indigenize our work. In their carefully articulated piece, Henne–Ochoa et al. draw important attention to what has been a complicated aspect of holistic language revitalization, the underlying concepts we use to define and guide our work, and how we envision language efforts that break loose from the binds of colonization and empower toward realizing

(re)Indigenized ways of intergenerational language cultivation. For Indigenous language learners, educators, and researchers who have seen all too many efforts designed and guided solely by language-as-code oriented thinking, the authors' focus on a social–relational approach, as well as critical consideration of *revitalization–reclamation* helps frame important aspects of praxis that must be considered if we are to decolonize and Indigenize our efforts. Drawing on my own experiences, in addition to addressing some key foci of the authors, I also reflect on other related and integral elements that can help illuminate the many paths we must take to see our languages live through revitalization–reclamation.

REORIENTING: PERSPECTIVE FROM NAVAJO REVITALIZATION THROUGH ADULT IMMERSION

The perspectives I bring to this discussion come from having been privileged to spend significant time learning other languages in various settings and through what I would later come to see as quite different approaches, and especially from years spent, first as an Indigenous language learner, and then in efforts to promote immersion experiences and revitalization on Navajo Nation. One set of initiatives that I feel particularly blessed to have participated in is the planting, nurturing, and ongoing development of adult immersion programming in Navajo. Growing from a volunteer-led initiative with little support to normalized college courses at Diné College, our immersion group aimed to do things differently, rooting our learning experiences in Indigenous (Navajo) settings, lifeways, natural environment, cultural practices, relationality, learning from and with Elders, learning by doing, and repetitious daily settings. While basing our programming in culturally grounded learning in context, we also found great success in structured parameters of immersion commitments (by students, teachers, speakers), as well as some formal instruction (somewhat 'untraditional' or 'unorganic') to provide communicative resources for the culturally grounded learning that participants experience. Learners in the immersion courses engage all their senses, and connect meaningfully with our language as they learn about, with, and on our lands, including using our language as they observe and take part in collaborative processes like harvesting wood; building fires; preparing and maintaining camp; and making meals, including traditional foods. This approach took time to nurture, and was met with some criticism by those who embrace purely Western forms of language education. But it is this approach that learners comment on as enabling them to best connect not only with the language but with each other and our homelands as well. But how does this approach fit into what we mean by language revitalization–reclamation?

DEFINITIONS, GOALS, AND INDIGENOUS-GROUNDED SOLUTIONS

Like Henne–Ochoa et al., I see that terminology can be confusing in language work. In Navajo, as in many communities, views can vary widely as to what language and language revitalization mean, and clarifying their definitions is of crucial importance. Having worked with many of my people over the past 10 years to understand what we mean by 'revitalization,' a variety of concepts have arisen from diverse voices such as grade school educators, Elders, youth, scholars, traditional knowledge holders, leaders, community-based committees, and community-wide revitalization summits for all stakeholders. I should note here that I will use the terms *revitalization* and *revitalization–reclamation* throughout, as I agree with the conceptual framing of reclamation shared by Henne–Ochoa et al., Leonard (2012, 2017), and others (and importantly the call for critical consideration of what we mean by revitalization)—and I also see that much of what has been called revitalization in my community has been, and is being, carried out with this conceptual frame in mind.

Even prior to building common community ideas of key terms, perhaps more important to accomplishing understanding is critical reflection on our own ideologies and definitions, which can lead to better alignment of expectations with efforts, and more stable group decisions. By openly and thoughtfully considering and clarifying our own notions of language, we can help avert misunderstandings that detract from our efforts. Tied to this, the prioritization of Euro-Western notions of language and responses to language endangerment (Leonard, 2017; Manatowa–Bailey, 2008) that we see in our communities today is not only pushed by outside forces, but at times (knowingly or unknowingly) by our own people as well. The devaluation of Indigenous concepts of language, described by Henne–Ochoa et al., perpetuates colonial constructs in language programs that have proven frustrating, or even (re)traumatizing to Indigenous language learners. What is clear is that Indigenous-driven information sharing, dialogue, engagement, and collaboration are critical to efforts to identify what communities

mean by language and language revitalization–reclamation, and it is up to each community to define these terms for themselves. In a Navajo context, on a larger scale this type of thinking has led to initiation of Navajo Nation-wide efforts like the Navajo Language and Culture Revitalization Summit, with participation by a wide range of stakeholders from across Navajo Nation. While on a smaller scale it drives the iterative process—by which the Navajo immersion efforts I described earlier strive for cycles of continuous improvement—that, while not perfect by any means, have strengthened our efforts.

Related to definitions are goals for language revitalization–reclamation. The goal shared by the authors, allowing learners to increase participation in and contribution to community will likely align well with many Indigenous communities' ways of thought. However, some communities also voice strong interest in cultivating new speakers as a highest priority. This is certainly heard from many Navajo voices. Depending on circumstances, having both goals in mind when we frame what we mean by language revitalization–reclamation may provide the openness we need in addressing community needs for diverse situations. If our goal, as has been articulated in Hawai'i, is revernacularization (Wilson & Kamanā, 2011), or further, to re-establishing natural cycles of cultivation and transmission of language and culture (lifeway), we should be cautious of approaches that are not grown from Indigenous ways of being—but we should also be open to how building communicative language proficiency can go hand in hand with nurturing context, understanding, and Indigenous lifeway.

Henne–Ochoa et al. also address praxis in language revitalization efforts. Their descriptions of (some) Indigenous-language-as-a-second-language and Indigenous language immersion (ILI) programs illustrate that fitting our Indigenous languages into the dominant systems of 'education' that force them rigidly into mainstream lanes of thought and interaction is at best frustrating, and at worst perpetuates colonization's disastrous effects on our languages. Along with the benefits of participation and contribution seen in the learning-by-observing-and-pitching-in (LOPI)-type instruction described by the authors, I would suggest that ILI programs provide space and opportunity for students to (re)orient to a multitude of aspects of Indigenous ways of being, like those demonstrated in their example of activities in the Kaska language camps. For Navajo, we have experienced great success not only with collaborative learning but even more so with immersion on our traditional lands, cooking traditional foods, learning and interacting with plants, making traditional tools, and listening to traditional stories in culturally appropriate settings and times. These have been the aspects that students have commented on as helping them to best connect with and use our language.

For those of us who believe in the sociocultural, the interactive (like Henne–Ochoa et al.), and the spiritual basis of language, there is great value in language development opportunities that lead to organic emergence of authentic communication through collaborative experiences. That said, another extremely important piece that must be factored in to our practice is the precious and all too limited resource of time, that is, time spent *in* our languages. Oftentimes in programs it is difficult for authentic communication to emerge as it naturally would due to limitations of time. Sometimes speakers are few or increasingly elderly, seasonal or nature-guided activities occur infrequently or for short duration, and/or abilities to have critical mass of speakers and learners is limited due to many factors. These all impact the time necessary to see authentic communication naturally emerge, especially for second language learners of our languages. And this may push us to strategically utilize some approaches that may be *less natural*, but which have potential to help learners participate in natural interactions, and to create speakers who can return to the natural as their language abilities improve. In realizing solutions for any particular community or program, utilizing all tools that can help us reach our goals (as we define them) can expand the benefits of our practices. The authors astutely point out that initiatives that have been built on language-as-code ideology will limit what is possible through our efforts. From my experiences as a language learner and educator, I could not agree with this more. However, I also ask, if we create language cultivation that is grounded in and organized primarily from Indigenous ways of being, is there no use for any aspects of what are considered nonnatural, nonorganic, or non-Indigenous ways of learning? Or, are there ways to employ tools, useful to meeting our revitalization–reclamation goals, that support and fuel organic language development? Historically, this idea aligns with Navajo practice—as we have always learned from, borrowed, and incorporated various tools, not in displacement of our own lifeway and worldview, but to help us maintain them for a good life. This means nurturing and growing from foundations in who we are, and using only what outside pedagogical tools will support positive development as we define

it. For adult Navajo immersion programming, we have strived to develop an approach, providing some direct instruction (minimizing and tweaking it as needed) in ways that support natural, communicative interaction within limited timeframes. Our work has involved an ongoing process with which we have seen positive development. Of course, how much direct instruction of aspects like grammar will be part of language cultivation is dependent on a program's characteristics, such as the age of learners, number of speakers or teachers, contexts outside of a formal learning environment, time, and other factors that are specific to each set of learners and Indigenous group.

SOME OTHER KEY FACTORS IN LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

In their article, Henne–Ochoa et al. note the "multiple layers of context, including historical, sociocultural, political economic, developmental, and psychological" (p. 482) to which understanding of language as social interaction is tied. With this in mind, I now turn my attention to other factors, intricately related to—and equally as important as—ideology and praxis to Indigenous language revitalization, focusing first on broader preparation, followed by the concepts of education, healing, and our own attitudes and behaviors related to revitalization–reclamation.

If addressing any one layer alone, in isolation, will limit our progress, then we must carefully plan both broad system-wide approaches and small local approaches, which must be intentionally coordinated and prioritized. In my work with Navajo communities, leaders, students, and others, I often ask the question, "What factors are related to maintenance and revitalization of Navajo language?" After taking a number of answers, I show a slide I created after making a presentation to some of our tribal leaders years ago, in which I was asked how a plan for a small immersion initiative would solve seemingly everything related to our language decline. The current slide has more than 60 factors including ideas as diverse as youth, government, pedagogy, television, historical trauma, adult learners, intergenerational transfer, language status, curriculum, family, lexicon, and more. The sheer volume of factors can be overwhelming, which is why we must thoroughly map out our intentions and objectives and identify how any part of what we are doing (ideology, praxis, policy, programs, etc.) fits into our ultimate goals, both at the system-wide and local levels. Along with thoughtfully addressing decolonization and Indigenization of our approaches to language revitalization, this careful planning also involves critical consideration of how best to utilize our limited resources, and how best to connect all of our efforts (e.g., family, school, media, political) to and within strong Indigenous networks of support, as it will be extremely difficult for any one of the many players in the fight for our languages to bear the full weight of revitalization alone.

Realistic, thorough, multi-level, multi-stakeholder planning and preparation along with communication with community, are critically important to the success or failure of our efforts. Nowhere is this more apparent than when community members perceive a lack of long-range or cohesive plans for language revitalization. Also critical is to build capacity among our peoples, individuals, and groups who can weather the challenges of revitalization work, which often requires extra doses of effort and stress, and little time for rest. We need to be realistic to the tune of 'eliminating magical thinking,' like not expecting to cultivate culturally grounded speakers from language-as-code, didactic-heavy approaches (Harper & Manatowa–Bailey, 2019). This involves knowing that our natural cycles of intergenerational transmission have been severely disrupted, accepting potential new approaches and power dynamics, and asking hard questions to align our programs with purpose, method, and capacity (Harper & Manatowa–Bailey, 2019). These new approaches are what I often call doing somewhat unnatural or untraditional things to help us reestablish the natural cycles of cultivation.

With this in mind, we have great opportunities to disrupt dominant forms of colonizing education by realizing language revitalization as community building. Not only is it a right of a community to identify what language revitalization–reclamation will look like for itself (Leonard, 2012), but by working together to build consensus on what we mean by language and how we envision and concretely plan for revitalization–reclamation, there is greater commitment and participation than if initiatives come from the outside. As Ojibwe language revitalizer Mary Hermes put it, "Everyone has a place in this struggle, but sometimes finding the place is difficult" (Hermes, 2004, p. 50). In Navajo we say, *T'áá hó ájít'éego* and *T'áá nihí ádaniit'éego*—not only individually, 'it is up to me' but also collectively, 'it is up to us,' as grandparent, teacher, leader, parent, learner, brother, grandchild, sister, child. Key to this idea is fighting the cycles of internalized oppression that make conflict amongst us our

own greatest challenge. Returning to Indigenous ways of being, participation, and community building will help us see our efforts succeed.

EDUCATION, HEALING, AND OUR PART IN KEEPING OUR LANGUAGES ALIVE

As we look to Indigenous ways of being for ideology, praxis, and planning, we should not limit our thoughts for change to language cultivation alone—it is also a question of looking at the broader notion of what we define as *education.* To deconstruct Euro-Western ideologies of language revitalization, we must also confront the idea of Euro-Western institutions of education and the great challenges they pose to any form of Indigenous ways of knowledge cultivation. To have truly restorative effects on natural lines of cultivation and transmission of Indigenous languages (and in conjunction with them, Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of being) we must create space for learning initiatives that are founded in Indigenous-grounded (not just relevant or sustaining) ways of knowing. In a revernacularization context, I agree that if we continue to focus on language development that is either heavily or only didactic and structural or code focused, within school walls alone, we will limit what we can accomplish in language revitalization–reclamation. In order to break away from the shackles of institutions that focus language development only or mostly on contexts of the institution, we must create situations that promote development of language of, in, and for community and relations as a priority. What will happen when we redefine *school* (culturally grounded learning) based on life in the community and world (Indigenous ways of being)? More importantly, we need to ask to what extent we are willing to (re)Indigenize learning for our peoples. Rather than continuing to sprinkle limited elements of Indigenous ways of being into dominant mainstream school structures, let us truly reenvision what education looks like for our peoples, and then choose what limited aspects we might want to include from mainstream paradigms.

As we engage in the decolonization that Henne–Ochoa et al. suggest through unmasking "the role of settler colonialism in language endangerment" (p. 483), healing will be of utmost importance. Today we are hard pressed to find any family unaffected by negative psychosocial effects related to not speaking our languages. As discourse increasingly links historical trauma with decline of Indigenous languages, some researchers have begun identifying links between negative feelings at not speaking one's Indigenous language and negative effects on overall health or well-being (Taff et al., 2018; Whalen, Moss, & Baldwin, 2016). As a result, increasingly, revitalization–reclamation movements are being tied to well-being and seeing our people heal (Hallett, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007; Hermes, 2004; McCarty, Nicholas, & Wigglesworth, 2019; Thompson, 2014). Regardless of how well we plan or how pedagogically effective our approaches, we may perpetually struggle to reach what is truly possible in language revitalization–reclamation without engaging with the process of healing. For many Indigenous people it has been, or is becoming, abundantly clear that language is medicine. Our Elders and our ceremonial practitioners have long shared this understanding. The question is then: How can we best help our people, in all the roles they represent in Indigenous language revitalization, to find and experience healing through our languages? The answers may lie in what Tlingit scholar X̱'unei Lance Twitchell called Indigenous counterhegemonic transformation (ICT), which "seeks to expel cultural guilt & shame, external value systems, racist hierarchies & structures, and lateral oppression & violence by embracing respect, healthy communication, kindness, and unfragmented existence" (Twitchell, 2018, p. 125). Critical to our survival will be efforts that identify how our peoples actually take proactive and restorative steps to help re-establish balance and wellness within all members of our communities through and with language revitalization. This certainly goes beyond the notion of language as code.

Finally, for language revitalization–reclamation to be successful, change must also come in our own minds, attitudes, and behaviors. Educational institutions are not the only entities that affect change for revitalization. What of the political, the structural, the human? What of the community (however that is defined), and what of the family role? How much do we invest in collectively and individually deciding (and then carrying out) how we will promote and nurture the lives of our languages into future generations? There are still, in our communities, people who devalue our languages, who elevate the status of English or other dominant languages (many of us do this to some extent in at least some contexts, knowingly or not) and are content with giving meager support to the languages that have sustained us and made us who we are for countless generations. We must work with our families, with our communities, with all our relatives, to breathe positive energy and enthusiasm for and into our languages and

their use. We must share information about the importance of our languages to our well-being, and especially to the well-being of future generations. We must continue to counter the 'English as prosperity' idea in our communities (Hermes, 2004), as well as Euro-Western hegemony of thought. This will take commitment. It will take a greater shift in how we do things. It is not simple and easy. Yes, there are small things that we can do, and are doing, and even the smallest effort counts toward the whole of revitalization–reclamation—but if we set our goals high, to reach for once again living our lives through our languages, then it will take major commitments, major resources, major shifts in not only our daily routines and conveniences but also in our ways of thought about mainstream American ways of living, and how much we want them to be part of who we are. In Navajo we say *nihizaad hiná* 'our language is alive.' This idea (and the worldview that comes with it) represents a very different epistemological orientation than one that focuses on language only for its utility or potential for economic prosperity. Our commitments to our languages are commitments to who we are as peoples. It is within us to keep them alive.

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On Autonomy and Transformative Traditions

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The ongoing revitalizing of Indigenous languages in the United States and Canada occurs in complex contexts and struggles. Broad efforts for defending rights in hostile legal landscapes, direct actions to protect lands and waters, fighting injustices against Indigenous women and gay and queer persons, and navigating the creative and technical efforts for tribally controlled digital networks and social media platforms would name only a few topics within the broad themes of

Indigenous governance and Indigenous resurgence taken up in American Indian and Indigenous Studies. Addressing these issues as speakers of Native languages is a decisive and fundamental concern. How those languages are taught and by whom are critical questions to consider when there is an interest in how community practices inform governance decision-making and resurgence for autonomy. Put differently, it may make a significant difference in decision-making for topics such as (tribal) rights of queer citizens if a speaker comes from a context-rich, community-activity-driven language-learning environment or from a second language classroom. I intentionally say *may make a difference* here because context does matter—the language instructor, perhaps most centrally—and the relations between changes in language learning processes and (traditional?) ideologies for Indigenous autonomy may not be reducible to how a language is learned.

The position paper by Henne–Ochoa et al. inspires me to consider the above themes and revisit some thinkers that I struggle with and against. The efforts of Henne–Ochoa et al. for conceptual clarifications between language revitalization and reclamation invites readers to assess sedimented pedagogical practices and the ideologies that can undermine a wide range of commitments to Indigenous autonomy. For them, any pedagogy (classroom-based in particular) that undermines the participatory everyday practices within which language is acquired—what I will call here Indigenous autonomy—misses the goals not only of creating speakers that are able to enact language as communication and not code but also of enacting broader, robust forms of Indigenous commitments.

In the reflections that follow I seek to complement their pursuits of conceptual clarity for 'tradition.' At best, my thoughts here will be impressionistic and recollecting; fluctuating between essay form and academic argument. In doing so, I am working to be in conversation with Henne–Ochoa et al. on the use of *traditional* and *decolonization* as categories. I draw from several other regional contexts as a way to challenge myself, reconsider my own contexts, and think with their essay as I understand it. That is, in deploying the terms *traditional* and *decolonization*, there is something like an accountability to the breadth of these terms outside North America that can challenge me to work against the dichotomy as a sedimented concept. Exploring the differing valences of such terms can help me reassess what kind of normative force is being enacted that is specific to my own local contexts. This is not to suggest, however, that local expressions of and for tradition and decolonization are not obviously crucial to how I do the work to critique ideology but at best to also build the alternatives as Henne–Ochoa et al. forcefully suggest is necessary. Yet considering the differing contexts of Nigeria or the autonomous towns of Zapata or Diecisiete de Noviembre in Chiapas can be a useful exercise in reflecting on how I do (or do not) use terms of *traditional* and *decolonization* 'at home.'

I am also thinking with Henne–Ochoa et al. on the question of the teachers of Native languages and their critique of those teachers' classroom practices as masking colonial ideologies. From the inside of such efforts, it is often friends and relatives who are teachers, and more often they are women who have committed to language education. I want to acknowledge that and be clear about my respect for and deference to these speakers, their profound commitments, and often their life's works. I also respect the point of view of Henne–Ochoa et al., yet the lifework of Native women and men language teachers represented as flattened out, one-dimensional practice enabling colonialism seems reductive. Even where we may agree on neoliberal ideologies at work in many classroom practices—maybe even my own university teaching insofar as I do not always employ portfolio type assessments—this is often not the entirety of their practice as fluent native teachers. Instead, it is more like the experience of being around Native women who say, "ok, we'll do this *and* this *and* this *and* this" and do it all in the face of sometimes significant skepticism, particularly from men. Thus, there are many dynamics of and sites for critique of ideologies, especially for Native language workers who in their own ways enact local forms of *mandar obedeciendo* 'leading by obeying' and I am grateful for the opportunity to think with those committed to reclaiming language in the most robust forms of community life.

Mamdani (2012) wrote on decolonization in several national contexts on the African continent: "Decolonization was the preoccupation of two groups that propelled the nationalist movement; the intelligentsia and the political class," asking "how far have we gone beyond either settler claims to being custodians of cosmopolitan pluralism and nativist preoccupations with origin and authenticity?" (p. 85). Mamdani as a theorist of indirect (colonial or neocolonial) rule is deeply suspicious of discourses of tradition upon and through which authenticity for decolonial nationalisms might be promoted. For Mamdani, indirect rule occurs where the subjectivities of the colonized emerge through categories, such as

'customary law,' that emanate from histories of racist colonial administration; the Native has unchanging custom, the settler cosmopolitan pluralism. Historical dynamism and change in this model only comes from the outside, as custom is written as having no internal vigor. Discussing the historical process of 'tradition' with Nigerian historian Usman, two important points are made that are, I think, useful juxtapositions to a critical pedagogical project for conceptual clarity on decolonization and tradition in language reclamation.

First is the notion of which tradition. Usman's in-person conversations with Mamdani (2012) elaborated a position that traditional or customary knowledges are historically situated such that in trying to discuss the "tradition of Katsina for example, one has to choose which traditional governance and customary law system," is to be put forward as tradition (Usman quoted in Mamdani, 2012, p. 95). Would it be the period of autonomous towns (pre-1450), Saruata (1450–1804), the Jama (1796–1804), the Fulani or the Emirate (1816–1903)? "If you want to say what is the traditional political system in Katsina," Usman stated, "you will have to identify which of the five to choose" (Usman quoted in Mamdani, 2012, p. 95). Reflecting on the historical contexts of tradition leads to an appreciation of the kinds of broad, intersecting forces out of which tradition is articulated.

This gives rise to the second observation of Usman that "what is believed to be traditional society is not something that has existed in any past. It is essentially what has existed in the colonial and neocolonial present" (Usman quoted in Mamdani, 2012, p. 96). From Usman's point of view, to speak of 'tradition' in politics, governance, and culture entails a probing analysis of history. Usman interprets a discourse on tradition that does not take up this task of rigorous historical analysis as "an admission of historical ignorance" (Usman quoted in Mamdani, 2012, p. 94). With this thought, Mamdani noted more broadly that Usman was thus compelled to argue that "the contemporary significance of tradition [is] political (…) part of an overall effort to check the integrative effects of the market economy" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 96).

For Usman and Mamdani, decolonization efforts in the contexts of Nigeria and Darfur, among others, that assume immediate access to 'traditional' practices may be more accurately read as an intelligentsia and political class trying to check their integration into the university/knowledge, market economy (Mamdani, 2012). If Usman and Mamdani are deeply skeptical of a role for 'tradition' in projects of decolonization as one of indirect control, their position would then be that university faculty who call for tradition as a mode of decolonization are registering their own anxieties regarding professionalization and integration into a market economy. I think the authors overstate this argument and are inattentive to the transformative efforts and resistances occurring within the terminologies and practices of such movements. Perhaps unlike Mamdani and Usman, I do not think this is necessarily a bad thing, particularly where these practices constitute checks that reassert alternative economies like those Coulthard (Yellow Knife Dene) (2014) described as "bush" or "mixed bush-market" economies to disrupt social-land-water-other than human relations organized through capitalism. Yet, the basic point I am thinking with here is to take seriously the challenge of Mamdani and Usman to historicize the concepts of 'tradition' in discourses of education broadly, and language reclamation for decolonization specifically.

I find Mamdani's (2012) clarifications on the intended function of the category of tradition for indirect colonial rule compelling. Likewise with his descriptions of the importance of multiple centers of authority as crucial to communities to counter any singular traditional authority of culture or customary law—often wielded against women, denying Native women drumming groups in some U.S. contexts, for example. By suggesting multiple social authorities I may be more flexible than Henne–Ochoa et al. to the idea of plausible contexts for engaging language revitalizing as code as a complementary shared authority for differing tasks in the life and language of a community. Mamdani would argue that locating a singular authority for language learning within customary practices reveals colonial ideologies where they were least expected. Even as I have some questions and concerns about such a suggestion, I want to take seriously any such critique because I respect the rigor with which he interrogates his own contexts with that question in mind. At the same time, with Mamdani, I want to affirm that "definers of tradition could come from women's groups, age groups, clans, religious groups and so on" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 49).

It was with this in mind that I raised my earlier question of who the language teachers are. Perhaps naively, I am assuming they are Native peoples themselves and more specifically, fluent first-language speakers. If a Native speaker is most comfortable providing opportunities to learn with something like language as code, can that authority not coexist with other authorities? Or is it the

case that a form of tradition and decolonization would see such practices as always corrupting traditional authorities? Henne–Ochoa et al. are of course right in their critique of the ideologies that inform most classroom environments. But I think flexibility to changing circumstances—technical and otherwise—can be useful.

Scott Lyons (Ojibwe/Dakota) provided an example of such a moment where inflexibility on these issues are on display: "Years ago I wrote about witnessing (...) [a] conflict between what I called 'new Elders' and 'new traditionalists' at an Ojibwe language retreat. Basically, the young traditionalists—or culture cops—visibly disrespected the new Elders who were presenting, because what they presented were Christian hymns translated into Ojibwe (...) Ojibwe 'hymn singers' like these are not only fluent speakers of *Ojibwemowin* but also widely recognized for their knowledge of traditional arts and crafts, skills in hunting and gathering practices, and other arcana" (Lyons, 2010, p. 99). Lyons posed the question then of whether, as fluent speakers with an interest in teaching language, these 'new Elders' have a place in Henne–Ochoa et al.'s paradigm if they may lean in the direction of teaching language as code. Similarly, I would note that Lyons made a point that the language retreat itself was organized by middle-aged women, visibly angry at the disrespectful actions of the 'young traditionalists.' Along with Lyons (2010), I also think fluent speakers as formal or informal teachers are complex persons deserving of considerable deference and respect.

Indigenous women who lead efforts for robust community-based experiences in language learning may not always fit easily into categories such as traditional or decolonization—at least as these categories are most often deployed by the 'intelligentsia' in the 'political class,' as Mamdani (2012) called us. If Mamdani was correct about the discourse of tradition being a tool for indirect neocolonial rule that ignores tradition as a historical development, perhaps the viability of the term is limited to some narrow contexts. Dale Turner (Temagi First Nation) made a similar argument in his book *This Is Not a Peace Pipe* (Turner, 2006). To paraphrase Turner's general positions: He suggested that for those of us who are not fluent speakers, getting into discussion of Indigenous 'ways,' Indigenous 'ontologies,' or Indigenous 'epistemologies' is going to be very difficult and at worst can become more mystification and less clarification when we want to use Native languages as a base for legal, political, or ideological critique. Turner's cautions are, I think, warranted, yet traditions in the movement of history are also practices through which Indigenous peoples resist certain kinds of integration while perhaps negotiating others, and they can be discussed. In this sense of tradition, Usman and Mamdani may have overstated their notion of a 'discourse of tradition' (Mamdani, 2012). For me, these are precisely the questions and discussions in the enactments of Indigenous autonomy.

With the scene Lyons (2010) described, situated in the contexts of the themes of tradition, decolonization, and autonomy, I am reminded of the Tseltal and Tojolabal Zapatista women who engaged with Mora (2017) for *Kuxlejal Politics*. For these Zapatista women, tradition was not an act of reception of premade practices but one of critical reflection, learning with the heart and moving into differing, complex contexts with a deference to the people. These are "active processes of transmission, selection and re-appropriation of practices and concepts as part of collective political actions" (Mora, 2017, p. 197). Tradition in this context might be said to be under constant renegotiation as differing groups—new Elders, youth, men, women, teachers, researchers—bump up against each other trying to address the current needs of community life from their own unique perspectives. Staying engaged in the process, despite the differences, is to take up the work of Indigenous autonomy—of "governing by learning to govern" as the Zapatista enact it in Diecisiete de Noviembre (Mora, 2017, p. 193), a town in Mexico. As Henne–Ochoa et al. direct our attention to the transformative power in reclaiming language, they likewise highlight the importance of these sites to reconceive tradition as part of the historical movement of a people for autonomy in all the bumping up against each other that this entails.

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Yucatec-Maya Language Revitalization: A Reconceptualization of Indigeneity and Call for Action

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"Are you Indian, then?" A friendly U.S.[1] acquaintance posed this question to Yucatec-Maya-speaking and self-identified *maya* [Maya] co-author Miguel Oscar Chan Dzul during his first visit to the United States a decade ago. Miguel Oscar's response was a clear "no."

(Chapel Hill, NC, April 2009)

My family and I—all speakers of Yucatec Maya—we didn't think that my cousin Julio spoke Yucatec Maya because we'd never heard his parents or brothers use it with him. We'd only ever heard them use Spanish together. But one day, while in the park of my Maya-speaking-village, I noticed a group of boys speaking in Yucatec Maya, and was surprised to see that one of them was Julio. He was speaking Yucatec Maya with his friends, having learned it from these classmates of his, and from others in our community.

– Irma Pomol Cahum
(Hunuku, Yucatán, México, November 2019)

These vignettes are perhaps confusing to many English-speaking readers of this journal, language education scholars, and even language revitalizationists who work outside of the Yucatán, Mexico. Nonetheless, both involve aspects of 'Indigenous' identity and sociolinguistic tendencies that many speakers of Yucatec Maya, a language of Southeast Mexico, would consider relatively ordinary. Such contextual considerations—namely, local constructions of social identity and local significance of the language—are critical for understanding language revitalization. We speak to these matters in the context of the Yucatán Peninsula in order to contribute to the overarching goal of this column: to rethink 'Indigenous language revitalization.'[2]

Our observations are firmly rooted in the context of language revitalization that we know best, that of Yucatec Maya. This is the minoritized language of the Yucatán Peninsula and one of the 68 original languages of current day Mexico (Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2015), where the dominant colonial language, Spanish, is also spoken. Our commentary article complements the position paper "Pathways Forward for Indigenous Language Reclamation" by Henne–Ochoa et al., which we believe is largely framed through the contexts that those authors hearken—namely Native American, First Nations, and in particular Lakota language projects. The context of the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico differs in many important respects from the aforementioned more northern lands.

CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP FROM A YUCATEC MAYA PERSPECTIVE

This commentary is co-authored by two expert Yucatec-Maya speakers, born and raised in the Yucatán—Irma Pomol Cahum and Miguel Oscar Chan Dzul—and one White middle-class applied linguist from the United States—Anne Marie Guerrettaz. Explanations of researchers' positionalities are customary in language revitalization scholarship. Building on that tradition, we explain our 'collective' positionality as long-term collaborators, noting that such research practice is unfortunately not frequently discussed in the literature on applied linguistics research methodology. Nonetheless, a moral and professional imperative in language revitalization inquiry is that scholars who are not lifelong insiders learn to see the world through the eyes of the cultural group in question, for example, through close collaborations with community members.

Spouses Irma and Miguel Oscar were among Anne Marie's first Yucatec-Maya teachers, beginning in 2008. Often, Anne Marie has engaged in long-term ethnographic research—in 2010, 2012, 2015, and 2016—by collaborating in many different ways with Irma and Miguel Oscar, who are experts in linguistics, revitalization, and pedagogy vis-à-vis Yucatec Maya. Moreover, with deep roots in the Yucatán, Irma and Miguel Oscar naturally have close familial, personal, and professional relationships there; they also have expertise in locally relevant and culturally sustaining research methods (see Paris, 2012).

The ways that we have grown to work together might, in English, be called a *critical friendship* (Brighouse & Woods, 1999; Costa & Kallick, 1993; McDonald, 1989; Stoll & Thomson, 1996), which "is a flexible form of assistance for development and research" (Swaffield, 2008, p. 323). Key characteristics thereof include "trust, provocative questioning, an alternate perspective, and constructive critique and advocacy" (Swaffield, 2008, p. 328). Critical friendships among insiders and researchers who arrive more from the outside can "inject (…) more realism" into the "extrapolations" (Hansson & Lindh, 2018, p. 115) that certain academics—non-Indigenous applied linguists in this case—might otherwise make. Such realism allows for the language revitalization work—be it research, practice, or combination thereof—to be better grounded in local realities. In the Yucatán, such perspectives have the potential to transform problematic assumptions both of Mexican academics who do not have close ties to Yucatec-Maya-speaking communities and of foreign scholars.

The notion of a critical friendship is imbued with the meanings and epistemologies of this English-language phrase. These do not quite capture the exact nature of our collaboration, which is further explained through a Yucatec-Maya concept—a central processual component of our critical friendship vis-à-vis Yucatec-Maya language work. This is *múul tsikbal* (Berkeley, 2001; Canul, 2011; Cocom, Cal, & Rodríguez, 2015), which loosely translates as a mutual dialogic conversation that is informal in nature. Individuals in close relationship to one another may engage in *múul tsikbal*, which involves certain Yucatec-Maya cultural norms that one must know or learn: a central skill for engaging in *múul tsikbal* is being a good listener. Also, *múul tsikbal* cannot be rushed; a single *múul tsikbal* event can at times continue for hours.

In writing this article, we engaged in *múul tsikbal*, with much of the substantive response to Henne–Ochoa et al. guided by Irma and Miguel Oscar, which Anne Marie processed and framed for an English-speaking applied linguist audience, drawing on her 11 years of experience researching Yucatec-Maya language revitalization while frequently living in the Yucatán. In the next sections, we explore some realities of Yucatec-Maya speakers, many of which U.S. researchers such as Anne Marie might not adequately understand without ever-important critical friendships with lifelong insiders like Irma and Miguel Oscar.

INSIGHTS FROM AND ON YUCATEC-MAYA LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Approximately 860,000 individuals speak Yucatec Maya (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2015), in a quite different political, socioeconomic, geographical, historical, and cultural context from those that are referenced in the anchor article (Henne–Ochoa et al., this issue). About 20% of individuals in the Yucatán Peninsula speaks Yucatec Maya, based on Guerrettaz's (2013) analysis of regional language censuses.[3] Thus, one salient contextual difference among the Yucatec-Maya language group and many First Nations, Native Alaskan, and Native American language groups relates to the number of speakers. These latter, more northern groups are often more focused on reclamation of sleeping languages or of languages whose number of speakers may range from a handful to a few dozen, from one hundred to a few thousand, for example (Hinton & Meek, 2016; McCarty & Coronel–Molina, 2016). Such situations seem implicit in Henne–Ochoa et al.'s compelling and insightful article, which is quite logical because these are the contexts in which most of these authors have lived and worked. Importantly, we do not view number of speakers as a measure of language vitality or of any other criterion that fails to recognize the tremendous value and uniqueness of each Indigenous language, culture, and community.

Rather, we simply view the question of numbers of speakers as a situational difference—one that can affect how language revitalization is conceptualized in a given context (Hinton & Meek, 2016; McCarty 2016). In considering such differences and analyzing our experiences with Yucatec-Maya language revitalization, we believe that salient dimensions of the Yucatán deserve particular attention for the purposes of this column: (a) local constructions of social identity, particularly in relation to Indigeneity and personhood, and (b) the local significance and sociopolitics of the language, specifically with regard to linguistic human rights and language in education.

INDIGENEITY, LANGUAGE IDENTITY, AND PERSONHOOD

As those of us who live and work in the Yucatán often do when considering the construct of 'Indigeneity' in other parts of the world, we Yucatecanists are intrigued by the notion of Indigenous identity that is implicit in the anchor article. Indeed, *Indigenous* is a social identity label

that has different meanings and degrees of relevance across the globe, as Māori scholar Smith (2012) has explained (see also Guerrettaz, 2020). Moreover, the notion of Indigeneity is at the heart of the very concept of Indigenous language revitalization: Thus, we believe that our observations about this construct from the Yucatán contribute to this *Perspectives* column's overarching reconceptualization of Indigenous language revitalization within the field of applied linguistics.

In English, the word *Indigenous* seems an acceptable social identity term that is widely used in the language revitalization literature. Arguably, the term *Indigenous* even has affirming connotations for many individuals and groups who self-identify as such in English. However, the most common translation of this in Spanish—*indígena*—carries a pejorative connotation in the Yucatán (Guerrettaz, 2020),[4] though this Spanish term is used extensively there in research and even in names of government institutions (e.g., *Dirección General de Educación Indígena* 'General Directorate of Indigenous Education'). Nonetheless, speakers of Yucatec Maya do not typically use this identity term—*indígena*—though outsiders might naively refer to them as such (Guerrettaz, 2020). Many Yucatec-Maya-speaking language professionals and revitalization activists instead use the term *originario/originaria* 'originary.' Thus, throughout this article, we speak in terms of *originary* languages, cultures, and people, in lieu of the term *Indigenous*. The English term *Indigenous* and the (Yucatán) Spanish term *indígena* seem to be false cognates of one another, which are nonetheless inappropriately and widely used as synonyms within the discourse of language revitalization scholarship and practice. By proposing the English term *originary* when discussing Yucatec-Maya language revitalization, we hope to help disrupt this widespread confusion of terminology.

Digging deeper into local constructions of Indigeneity and social identity, Mexicans in general, including residents of the Yucatán Peninsula, do not typically see themselves as members of distinct races or ethnicities, but rather as members of one *mestiza/mestizo* 'mixed' race and nation (e.g., Gabbert, 2001; L. King, 1994). Of course, the area now known as Mexico was first inhabited by originary people, including speakers of Yucatec Maya, and this region was brutally colonized by Europeans beginning in the 1500s. Nonetheless, social identity has evolved over the past 500 years in Mexico, including in its originary communities, such that race, ethnicity, and even the construct of Indigeneity are not nearly as relevant as these concepts seem to be in other contexts, like Canada, Europe, the United States, and beyond.

Social identity in the Yucatán—and much of Latin America—is less of a bio-genealogical construct and much more fluid. Choice of language use and/or dress, way of life, class status, and educational level are all often more salient markers of one's social identity than constructions of one's 'racio-ethnic' lineage (Guerrettaz, 2020). In various regions of Latin America, individuals may move in and out of the social category of *indígena* throughout their lives (García, 2005; Hornberger, 2014), depending, for example, on how they prefer to position themselves and/or on changes to their social class.

In the Yucatán in particular, as alluded to in the first vignette at the beginning of this article, speakers of Yucatec Maya increasingly refer to themselves as *maya*, though we believe this is most prevalent in academic circles of Yucatec-Maya speakers, which are somewhat elite. Another alternate social identity term is *mayero/mayera*, which does not denote prestige but is more widely used in colloquial speech: Interestingly, this term is used by Yucatec-Maya speakers for self-identification but not for official, governmental purposes. Yucatec-Maya speakers self-identify in other complex ways as well, often in reference to a specific local community (e.g., village) with which they strongly affiliate (see Gabbert, 2001; Guerrettaz, 2020; Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019, for in-depth explanations).

Such social identity constructs have direct implications for Yucatec-Maya language and cultural revitalization. Part of this relates to the prominent and oftentimes problematic role that regional and federal governments play in both constructing Indigeneity in the Yucatán and in controlling Yucatec-Maya language planning efforts (see also Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019). Some examples of both types of government agencies include the Institute for the Development of the Maya Culture of Yucatán State (INDEMAYA), National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), and departments of public education concerned with originary languages, namely the *Educación Indígena* 'Indigenous Education' system. Individuals who may identify as *maya* can receive social services from such government agencies, including financial support. Moreover, entire communities—typically in rural areas—that are externally identified by the government as predominantly *indígena* may collectively receive public education that purportedly includes bilingual instruction in Yucatec Maya and Spanish.

Yet such government systems do not adequately account for the complexity of social identity in the Yucatán—namely, the fact that most Yucatec-Maya-speaking individuals do not identify as *indígena* and relatively few readily identify as *maya.* Nonetheless, individuals are frequently acknowledged or designated as *indígena* by regional or federal government agencies, based on the following types of stereotypical identity markers: occupying low socioeconomic status, having a Yucatec-Maya-sounding last name, and/or residing in a rural village community—where many Yucatec-Maya speakers have historically lived. In contrast, many other Yucatec-Maya speakers—and others with varying degrees of proficiency who grow up in Yucatec-Maya-speaking families—may be excluded from receiving such services because they happen to have a Hispanic-sounding last name or are city dwellers. This is problematic, since many such individuals undoubtedly deserve these externally controlled social services designated for those that the government describes as *indígenas* 'Indigenous people.'

Importantly, in the midst of this fraught situation involving questions of social identity—which Rhodes and Bloechl (2019) argued to be a form of symbolic violence and source of psychological trauma—the Yucatec-Maya language itself is profoundly significant for many Yucatecans when it comes to their self-understandings and ways of life. Meaning, language identity is a powerful social identity construct in the Yucatán, more relevant than notions of ethnic or racial identity such as *indígena* 'Indigenous.' Language identity is deeply and enduringly shaped through overt behaviors such as one's language use and linguistic practices. Language identity also involves one's 'inner language'—meaning, one's ways of thinking, feeling, and being—and one's personal, familial, and community relationship with the language in question (Ortega et al., 2015).[5]

Use of Yucatec Maya is often a primary marker of what it means to be an originary person from and of the Yucatecan Peninsula, and to be engrained with the lifeworlds that are associated with this type of *personhood*—a central concept in the discipline of Indigenous studies (see Astor–Aguilera & Harvey, 2018). Personhood is about "the mutuality of being" (Sahlins, 2011, p. 10) for many originary people, including many throughout Mesoamerica (Astor–Aguilera, 2018). Rather than focusing on "the person" as a bounded corporal individual—one of the core concepts of Western social science—many originary people often see the "animistic person" as intrinsically "relational and situational" (Bird–David, 2018, p. 25). This "allows persons to be consubstantial with" other entities (Glaskin, 2012, p. 305), meaning that living persons, ancestors, places, things, and other creatures are entangled in this view of personhood. As such, the Yucatec-Maya language is entangled in local understandings of personhood in the Yucatán.

To put it in other terms, Irma describes the Yucatec-Maya language (*máaya t'aan*) as a way of life. It is the way that she and others who have grown up in rural village communities have always communicated with parents, siblings, and other relatives. She and her sisters have all noted that they "don't feel comfortable" speaking to their nieces, nephews, and children in the dominant colonial language, Spanish, which the younger generation is shifting to, and simply feel better speaking to them in Yucatec Maya. Similarly, Miguel Oscar considers the Yucatec-Maya language as a "part of himself, part of life in general, part of family life." Miguel Oscar grew up in the city of Saki' (sometimes spelled Zací, and 'renamed' in the colonial Spanish language as *Valladolid*). While his parents, like many across the peninsula, avoided speaking Yucatec Maya to him in his early childhood (beginning in the late 1980s) because of the associated stigma, he nonetheless learned it growing up by using it daily with others in his household, namely his Yucatec-Maya-speaking grandparents. Moreover, like many Yucatec-Maya-speaking urbanites, he has often relied on the language to communicate with his cousins and other relatives who have grown up in more rural areas.[6]

It is difficult to explain with words alone to those who are not intimately familiar with the Yucatán just how central language identity is to one's sense of personhood in this context. Yucatec Maya is inextricably intertwined with local communities, land, worldviews, and cultural practices. Taking the significance of local language in relation to personhood a step further, this is also a useful lens through which to view the broader sociopolitical dynamics of language in the Yucatán: "[Yucatec] Maya language and personhood are regularly conceptualized [not only] in relation to each other, [but also] in relation to Spanish" (Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019, p. 17).

Because language is entangled with what it means to be a person—to be human—sociolinguistic dynamics that privilege Spanish over Yucatec Maya have ramifications for local people's sense of personhood. For example, Irma has found that in many Yucatec-Maya-speaking communities across the region, the language is profoundly important to parents in the context

of their own families, even if they are sometimes unsure or simply unaware of the complex dynamics of how to transmit it to their children. Moreover, in such communities where children and youth are increasingly Spanish monolingual, Irma has found that many are deeply interested in learning Yucatec Maya. During one of her research projects, Irma came to know an adolescent girl named Karina[7] who had not learned the language as a child. Karina shared with Irma that she was now trying to do so in her teens, upon discovering that no family member of her generation (i.e., none of her cousins) spoke Yucatec Maya. With this realization, Karina began to fear that soon her family would not be able to pass the Yucatec-Maya language on to new generations. She reported that such a situation is one she simply cannot accept.

LINGUISTIC HUMAN RIGHTS, LANGUAGE EDUCATION, AND A CALL FOR ACTION

Communication patterns in the Yucatán are shaped, in complex ways, by power dynamics that often privilege Spanish over Yucatec Maya (Armstrong–Fumero, 2009; Canul, 2011; Guerrettaz, 2019, 2020). Such situations are widely documented in the language planning and language revitalization literature (e.g., Cooper, 1989; Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, 2008; K. King, 2001): We mention them here because they offer important context for this part of our response to the anchor article. We have observed in the Yucatán that many individuals know how to speak Yucatec Maya, but choose not to speak it in particular situations because of the stigma associated with the language. In other situations, notably in education, Yucatec-Maya speakers often do not have this choice: Instead, they are forced to speak or to learn to speak Spanish. Such sociolinguistic power dynamics have widespread implications for interrelationships between language and personhood within the schools of Yucatec-Maya-speaking families across the peninsula.

For many decades, since the implementation of mandatory public schooling in Mexico (Heath, 1972; L. King, 1994), Yucatec-Maya-speaking families have felt the pressures to teach children Spanish, which has arguably had the effect of pushing Yucatec Maya out of more private, intimate domains as well—namely, the home. This is evident in the second vignette at the beginning of this article about Irma's cousin Julio. We believe his learning of Yucatec Maya was attributable to the important presence of the language in the day-to-day life of his friends and village community broadly conceived, and not so much in his immediate family or formal schooling itself. Regarding the last, we have observed that not much effort is typically put toward teaching Yucatec Maya itself in school nor toward teaching content (e.g., language arts, mathematics, civics) through the language.

Seeing that hundreds of thousands of individuals speak Yucatec Maya as their primary language—including some Yucatec-Maya monolinguals—it is critical that they have the chance to obtain education in their language, among other linguistic rights. Yet these rights are often, at the time of this writing, still violated daily in the Yucatán. Gustafson, Guerrero, and Jiménez (2016) noted that such a rupture between progressive policies that support originary languages and the implementation thereof is a common tendency across Latin America. This is, in our view, deeply disconcerting in the context of the Yucatán because of the significance of the Yucatec-Maya language vis-à-vis local actualizations of personhood.

Examples of existing laws that theoretically protect the linguistic rights of Yucatec-Maya speakers include Mexico's *Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas* 'General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples,' the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and local legislations. Though these laws and policies are not typically or adequately adhered to in the Yucatán, they have had some positive outcomes concerning local language politics. One such recent sociopolitical shift in the Yucatán, as with much of Latin America, has been the integration of local originary languages into the curriculum and school day, even in 'mainstream' urban schools designed for Spanish-monolingual populations. Such public schools exist in the Yucatán alongside the separate *Educación Indígena* system, which mostly operate in rural areas. Many, but not all, *Educación Indígena* schools are purportedly bilingual (Yucatec-Maya–Spanish), meaning they are part of a subsystem called *Educación Intercultural Bilingüe* 'Intercultural Bilingual Education,' (henceforth EIB). Nonetheless, certain linguistic challenges affect both overarching types of schools: (a) 'mainstream' schools, which serve populations that are allegedly Spanish monolingual and teach Yucatec Maya much like a 'foreign' language, and (b) *Educación Indígena* EIB schools, which supposedly offer bilingual education.

Regarding the first, urban 'mainstream' schools that teach Yucatec Maya on occasion and with a focus on decontextualized grammar and vocabulary can improve local language attitudes. However, they do not typically foster the abilities

of Spanish-monolingual or Spanish-dominant children to communicate in the language with Yucatec-Maya-speaking relatives or community members. Nor do they do adequately serve urban children who are themselves Yucatec-Maya speakers (i.e., Yucatec-Maya dominant or Yucatec-Maya monolingual).

Regarding the second, *Educación Indígena* EIB schools, in reality, often do not offer instruction in Yucatec Maya but rather almost exclusively in Spanish. While fewer children are currently learning Yucatec Maya in their families and broader communities than in years past, within the smallest and most remote villages of the Yucatán, researchers such as Irma and Miguel Oscar still encounter widespread Yucatec-Maya monolingualism. Moreover, even in less remote and larger villages, Anne Marie has encountered many preschoolers who begin school as Yucatec-Maya monolinguals—in studies conducted in 2015 and 2016. In such cases, the education system has an ethical obligation to hire teachers who speak this language for the well-being of these children. For youngsters who begin their formal education as Yucatec-Maya monolinguals or with little Spanish proficiency, Spanish-monolingual schooling is an unconscionable barrier to their learning and a probable source of trauma.

Based on our observations, when schools do make an effort to teach Yucatec Maya, it is often a 'purist' version of the language, which attempts to remove Spanish language influences that have transformed Yucatec Maya over half a millennium of language contact (see Rhodes, Cahum, & Dzul, 2018). Many argue that such a purist version of Yucatec Maya is unintelligible to most speakers (although see Cru, 2017; Guerrettaz, 2019). Arguably, 'real-life' languaging practices in the Yucatán are best understood through "heteroglossic language ideologies" (Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019, p. 5). Such orientations consider multilingualism as "normal" and "resist (…) bounded classifications of languages" (Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019, p. 5) thereby accepting and affirming translanguaging and the outcomes of language contact, like Spanish borrowings in Yucatec Maya.

Considering these linguistic and human-rights-related challenges in public schooling within the Yucatán, one cannot help but recall that many, though not all, language revitalizationists have long questioned the utility of formal schooling in efforts to revitalize and reclaim originary languages (see Canché Teh, 2014; Hornberger, 2008). Along these lines, addressing the perennial gap between community and formal schooling is at the center of what we view as the action plan that Henne–Ochoa et al. propose in the anchor article on the learning-by-observing-and-pitching-in (LOPI) framework. Building on that framework, we believe that a focus on *language learning* is important for advancing revitalization projects in Yucatán. We thus suggest that language revitalizationists there—and in other regions—consider adding the following to the LOPI framework: "What is *language* learning?" (Facet 4 expanded) and "How does *language* learning occur?" (Facet 5 expanded).

Importantly, our call for addressing these concerns around language learning in the Yucatán hinges on pedagogical–political action and local agents. We believe that local, action-based plans for revitalizing Yucatec Maya represent an important path forward; such plans must (a) carefully consider the nature of language learning, and (b) be led by Yucatec-Maya-speaking community insiders and teachers.

Regarding the first, the LOPI framework and Western applied linguistics scholarship both acknowledge that language learning is more likely to occur through immersion and/or content learning in the language (e.g., Yucatec Maya), in contrast to occasional Yucatec-Maya grammar and vocabulary lessons conducted in Spanish. Indeed, the field of applied linguistics has made great research advances in recent decades when it comes to understanding effective and appropriate teaching practices, yet many classrooms worldwide ultimately do not benefit from these empirical advances (see Freeman & Johnson, 1998). One might even argue that the field has made advances in what we might call culturally sustaining language teaching practices (Paris, 2012)—examples of which include 'language nest' and 'master–apprentice' models of language revitalization (Hinton & Hale, 2001)—though the gap between research and practice remains (although see McCarty, Nicholas, & Wigglesworth, 2019). Language revitalization is a field that we believe must be action centered, which implies that the broader field of applied linguistics must work to become more practice centered in order to support these efforts. Such an institutional paradigm shift would involve increased valorization of language revitalization activities, including pedagogical, political, and relational work.

Such a paradigm shift also requires that the locus of power move away from 'traditional academic experts' to the originary community itself. This is the second component of the action-based plans that we wish to see and experience more of in Yucatec-Maya language politics and revitalization. The central importance of local

agents is widely acknowledged in the language revitalization literature, yet academic and other institutionalized projects in the Yucatán often fall short on this regard, in our experience. In the Yucatán, many revitalizationists—such as Irma and Miguel Oscar—who have close ties to Yucatec-Maya-speaking communities are frequently pushed to the peripheries or made absent from governmental and academic revitalization efforts. Broader sociopolitical dynamics that shape these hierarchies are difficult to change. Nonetheless, within the field of language revitalization itself, we urgently feel and see on the ground that such change is needed, especially considering how important the Yucatec-Maya language is for local understandings of personhood.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The LOPI framework presented in the anchor article offers language education scholars and practitioners with much-needed direction for language revitalization and reclamation work. Inspired by their sophisticated yet practical framework, in this commentary article we (a) call for a new or renewed focus on pedagogical and political action within applied linguistics especially regarding originary languages, and (b) invite readers to rethink and even problematize the notion of 'Indigenous' identity.

Regarding the first point above, academic power structures often offer little support for the day-to-day realities of the language teachers and learners that applied linguistics aims to serve,[8] particularly in originary language communities. This is paradoxical—if not a bit hypocritical—given that our field often defines itself as one that is dedicated to "dealing with the practical problems" (International Association of Applied Linguistics, n.d.) and "real world" challenges related to language (Applied Linguistics, 2020).

Regarding the second point above, any time that one joins efforts to revitalize an 'Indigenous' language, one must consider what exactly this and other parallel identity labels (e.g., Aboriginal, Native) mean in the context in question, in part because such social identity considerations have profound political and practical implications. Thus, we would suggest that a LOPI-based approach to language revitalization also involves the following question: How is social identity constructed locally, especially with regards to the concept of Indigeneity?

Paradigms of identity that differ from those prevailing in the West may seem disconnected from 'mainstream' applied linguistics: this is what we consider an ontological gap in the field (also see Kubota, 2016). This is not so much the case in other closely related disciplines, like (critical) anthropology, cultural studies, Indigenous studies, and area studies (e.g., Latin American studies, African studies, American studies, and more). Such disciplines have largely been keenly aware for decades now of a great diversity of social identity paradigms that exist in the world, including those that differ from Euro-Western paradigms such as 'race' and 'ethnicity.' Thus, language revitalization and the aforementioned related disciplines are areas where applied linguistics has room to improve its epistemological grounding and expand its transdisciplinary reach (see also the Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Such expansion has the potential to offer radically new understandings of core concepts in our field, such as language, identity, and learning.

A prime example of this is how the notion of personhood—derived from our work in Indigenous studies—allows us in this commentary article to reconceptualize the construct of 'Indigenous' identity. Moreover, considering the notion of *personhood* as a way of understanding humanity, this construct also serves as an important reminder that language rights are ultimately human rights. Indeed, language revitalization projects are closely tied to our humanity, as citizens of the world and of local communities—in that language reclamation and education in originary languages are a means of acknowledging those whose very humanity has often been unconscionably disregarded.

Looking outside the Yucatán, we are similarly struck by terms that several 'Indigenous' communities have historically used to refer to themselves, which foreground shared humanity—unlike Euro-Western paradigms of race and ethnicity. For example, the Ojibwe term *Anishinaabe* and the Haida word *Haida* are respectively used by each group in self-reference, and both mean 'the humans' in each language (respectively, Anishinaabe, 2005; Vaillant, 2009, p. 56). Similarly, speakers of Spokane Salish report: "If someone asked, 'what are you?' - we would say *čn sqélix*^{w} [meaning] 'I am a human being'" (M. Wynne, personal communication, February 26, 2020; Wynne, 2015).[9] Language learning often affords new cultural and linguistic insights, thereby representing a journey in discovering what it means to be human. For language revitalization efforts in particular, such language learning journeys are particularly significant

opportunities to (re)define personhood in local terms.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Washington State University (WSU) funded some of the research by Anne Marie Guerrettaz that is referenced in this article and other travels that fostered collaborations among the three authors. WSU Pullman is located on the ancestral homelands of the Palus people and on the ceded lands of the Nimíipuu (Nez Perce) Tribe. Much of the academic work and writing that made this article possible happened on those lands. The Universidad de Oriente (UNO) also funded travels that made this article possible. The authors also thank Ken Lokensgard, Brian McNeill, Melodi Wynne, and WSU's Center for Native American Research and Collaboration as well the Mestizo Collaborative for their enduring support and insights. Additionally, the authors are grateful to Carolina Silva and Nancy Carvajal Medina for their collaboration.

Dyoos bo'otik xan tu xoknáalilo'ob UNO lek u tsikbaltik to'on ba'ax u yoojelo'ob yéetel u yáantiko'on múul tuukul yóoklal ba'ax ku yúuchul yéetel in maaya t'aano'on. [*Un agradecimiento a los estudiantes de la UNO por compartir sus experiencias con nosotros y crear un clima de reflexión en torno a nuestra lengua maya.*] 'With thanks to UNO students for sharing their experiences with us and for creating a reflective environment around our Maya language.'

NOTES

[1] We use an English translation of the commonly used Spanish term *estadounidense* here, to avoid ethnocentrically using *American* (*americano*) to refer just to the portion of the Americas that is the United States.

[2] In English we capitalize the identity term *Indigenous*, in line with common practice in Indigenous studies. In Spanish, Yucatec Maya, and Yucatec-Maya–Spanish translanguaging, we use lowercase for identity terms (e.g., *indígena*), in line with academic publishing conventions for these languages.

[3] In the state of the peninsula (Yucatán State) where Irma and Miguel Oscar live, 30% of residents is estimated to speak Yucatec Maya (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2010).

[4] The term *indígena* has different connotations in other varieties of Spanish that seem to be more positive and empowering than those in Yucatán Spanish—a variety of Mexican Spanish.

[5] Meaning, one may or may not necessarily be an expert speaker of the language in question in order for it to be a significant dynamic of one's identity.

[6] One reason we describe Miguel Oscar's experiences is because we believe that they are representative of those of many other urban speakers of Yucatec Maya. Similarly, we believe that many experiences that Irma has with the language are representative of those of speakers who have been born and raised in rural areas.

[7] 'Karina' is a pseudonym.

[8] Aspects of our critique are perhaps most relevant to the national and regional contexts with which we are most familiar, namely areas of Mexico and the United States.

[9] We thank Mel M. Engman and Martha Bigelow for these insights regarding Ojibwe and Haida languages, respectively.

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Languages Ideologies and Practice From the Land and the Classroom

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Ideologies of language and of learning are local, underpinned and shaped by shared historical and current spiritual, cultural, social, and political understandings and experiences. We are keenly reminded of this in Henne–Ochoa et al.'s position paper. Contesting language ideologies that privilege language-as-code at the expense of social practices, the authors put forward alternative ideological frames to center Indigenous conceptions of language, learning, and language reclamation. They open our eyes wider to learning—and to learning in informal contexts. They draw our attention to ideologies dominant in formal schooling settings, and the colonizing practices they perpetuate, while acknowledging that schools have played, and will continue to play, a crucial role in Indigenous language revitalization (p. 487).

In approaching this response, we learned of Leonard's (2012) language reclamation framework: the larger effort by a community to claim its right to speak a language and the associated goals set in response to community needs and perspectives. In the larger effort of reclaiming language, identity, and power, schools may or may not be priority sites. With gratitude to the authors for sharing their thoughtful critique and practice from our positions as educators, in this short response we reflect on language ideologies and the challenges of decolonizing classrooms in Australia.

We are Rosemary Narrurlu Plummer, a Warumungu educator and poet, Barbara Napanangka Martin, a member of the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust and retired Warlpiri educator, and Samantha Disbray, a non-Aboriginal education linguist. For more than a decade, we have worked individually and together in Central Australia on language teaching and learning in schools (Anderson et al., 2018; Disbray & Martin, 2018; O'Shannessy et al., 2019) and in informal contexts (Disbray & Bauer, 2016; Disbray & Guenther, 2017; Disbray et al., 2019).

EVERYTHING COMES FROM AND GOES BACK TO THE LAND

Co-author Martin, Warlpiri educator, bilingual education advocate, and scholar, shares her conceptualization of language-as-being, stating, "I don't 'speak' Warlpiri, I 'am' Warlpiri." In Martin's account of Warlpiri language genesis and custodianship, the Warlpiri landscape and its features were brought into existence by the travels of ancestral beings moving across the country in the Jukurrpa '*Dreaming*,'[1] naming places and speaking Warlpiri as they went, then descending into the ground (for an exploration of the term *Dreaming*, see Green, 2012). They, like languages, eternally inhabit the country. Those born or conceived upon the country belong to it. Plummer's account of Warumungu genesis resonates with this Warlpiri one. The land, languages, and social order are lasting, as Martin (in Disbray & Martin, 2018) wrote:

> We are talking about living culture '*warnkaru*.' It's alive in the country and in each person. There are proper ways to act and live and move in places, that show that everything is connected—law, land, country, songs, people and language. When we are on country, the right person or right skin[2] must call to the spirits, we call it 'wintaru'—calling to the spirits. (p. 37; footnote in original)

Arrernte Elder Mary Margaret Turner set out similar connections in a system, where "everything comes from the land" (Turner, 2005, p. 1) and Jawoyn man David Mowaljarlai explained the core of language and land custodianship as "everything goes back to the land" (quoted in Rumsey, 1993, p. 204). Describing language ideologies among Arrernte and Jawoyn, non-Aboriginal anthropologist Rumsey (1993) wrote of ancestral beings, often multilingual themselves, who encountered speakers of other languages in this creation time. The sites at which they met and interacted signify and mark boundaries: of Dreamings, of moiety groups, of countries, songs, and languages. Through these enduring acts of sociality and relationality, are links between people and languages, grounded in the landscape, yet "languages were already placed on the landscape before any people came on the scene" (Rumsey, 1993, p. 204).

Finally, Ebony Joachim, a young language champion for the revival of her language Yorta Yorta similarly expressed the enduring nature of these links:

> Language and culture come hand in hand. They belong to each other. Without both, it is hard to recognise the holistic understanding of a people's way of living, the connectivity of past–present–future, belonging and the connectivity of all the living organisms on their country. (Joachim, 2019)

Such language ideologies, with their connections to tracts of country, descent-based custodianship and set within social, spiritual, and multilingual practice, are distinct from Western, particularly Anglo, conceptions of 'language'; compartmentalized and ever needing the reminder that language and culture go together. Nevertheless, the recently released *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* (ACARA, 2019a), does seek to recognize and reconcile these frames. Indeed, it articulates an ideological frame, which underpins a de facto language policy. We ask, how well can they be reconciled, in words and in action?

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION, ACTS OF RECONCILIATION: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS

The *Framework* (ACARA, 2019a) is the first national curriculum for traditional Australian languages (Disbray, 2019) and drives current support for language teaching, learning, and maintenance through Indigenous-language-as-a-second-language (ILSL) programs, and somewhat less enthusiastically, Indigenous-language-as-a-first-language (ILFL) programs (Disbray, 2016).

Developed in consultation with Indigenous educators across the country, their language ideologies represented the *Framework*'s "Rationale" (ACARA, 2019b):

> Each language is unique to the Country/Place on which it arose (…) [giving] voice to the landscapes, thoughts and ways of seeing and interpreting the world, [while encompassing] the relationships of these people with one another and with the landscape, past, present and future. Learning a language incorporates the realities of its people and facilitates students' deep engagement with knowledge, ways of being and ways of knowing. (…) The ongoing and necessary revival, maintenance, and development of these languages also contributes to reconciliation.

The "Rationale" includes statements from Indigenous educators, such as Deminhimpuk Francella Bunduck (Murrinhpatha), a teacher in a remote mother-tongue bilingual program (Bunduck & Ward, 2019), and Taylor Power, a

Kaurna teacher in an urban language revival setting. In Power's words (ACARA, 2019b):

> To me, teaching Kaurna means sinking my toes into this sacred soil and embracing who I am. It means being so proud of my language and culture that I want to share it with whoever wants to listen, learn and be a part of my journey.
>
> *Ngathaitya, ngathu Kaurna Warra nguthu-atpama, ngai tidna kuinyunta yartangka ngatpanthi. Naku'athu, yailty'athu ngana ngai tiyati. Ngai kararrinthi ngaityu warraku, ngaityu tapa purrunaku kuma. Ngai padlurninthi ngaityu warra pirrki-apititya ngapidluku, ngana padlurninthi yuringkarnititya, tirkatitya, kumangka ngathaityangka padnititya.*

The words are right, but for various reasons reconciliation and realization are difficult to achieve. There has been a history of teaching some of the over 300 languages of Australia; however, for most there is a massive implementational task ahead—in terms of support for schools and communities in adult language learning, staff training and remuneration, community engagement for protocols, creation of individual languages syllabus and teaching materials, and prioritizing and timetabling planning and teaching (First Languages Australia, 2018). On the ground, power must shift, and those in institutions must make space for the realization of ideological frames articulated in the *Framework.*

Seizing the ideological and implementational space (Hornberger, 2005) to allow the emergence and enactment of authentic pedagogies present in Australian schools settings, distinct from the assembly line of instruction (Henne–Ochoa et al.), is complex. The *Framework* has some promise, with the broader framing of language learning in the National Curriculum as:

1. extending capability to communicate and to understand linguistic and cultural systems
2. enhancing analytic, reflective, creative, and critical thinking, which goes well beyond learning words for things in other languages
3. developing in the learner intra- and intercultural understanding and respect for diverse experiences and perspectives. (ACARA, 2019b)

But once again, these are words. We look to some leaders sharing their craft to see their realization of relational and situated learning in schools. We select three sites for this.

DECOLONIZING LEARNING IN CLASSROOMS

Martin and her colleagues in the four Warlpiri communities teach and advocate for bilingual education in their communities (Minutjukur et al., 2014; O'Shannessy et al., 2019). We consider the decolonizing moves within this program as a first site of exploration. Initially, the Northern Territory Bilingual Education Program was designed as an early-transfer bilingual model in the 1970s; however, as more teachers were trained and a professional network formed, their goals for their school programs crystalized into a broader program of Indigenization (or decolonization) through curriculum, pedagogy, and leadership (Disbray & Devlin, 2017; Stockley et al., 2019; Yunupingu, 1990). By developing local curriculum, teachers crafted content expressing local knowledge, relationships, and knowledge systems (Disbray & Martin, 2018; Marika, 1998, 1999; Marika–Munungginitj & Christie, 1995; Marika–Munungginitj, 2002) and literacy workers created rich collections of literature, emergent and distinct, in first languages (Christie et al., 2014; Gale, 1994). Indigenous pedagogies developed that intersect with ways of organizing knowledge and learning experience. Strong elements of programs include country visits, lasting from a day to a week, involving Elders, family members, and school staff (Disbray & Guenther, 2017; Fogarty, 2013). Government policy swings have repeatedly threatened the bilingual program (Nicholls, 2005), driven hard most recently by standardized English language test regimes (Devlin, 2011; Simpson, Caffery, & McConvell, 2010). Moreover, local policy, in particular the power of individual principals, can pose equal or greater threat (Hoogenraad, 2001). However, Indigenous educators and communities have protested, and some have triumphed (Freeman et al., 2017; Nganbe, 2019; Ross & Baarda, 2017). Currently only a handful of schools operate bilingual programs, including two in the Warlpiri region. The fight for bilingual programs continues, with limited action from government.

As another example, Maningrida College, an elementary–secondary remote Arnhem Land school in the Northern Territory has a long history of bilingual education and a strong Aboriginal staff in classrooms and in the school's Lúrra Language and Culture Centre. The school community strives for local and culturally relevant real-world curriculum and pedagogy, with learning on and off country, in students' first languages (Godinho et al., 2017; Townsend, 2006).

In a recent collaboration, Lúrra Language and Culture Centre staff, teachers, a teacher linguist, and a department linguist, along with medical researchers and community clinic staff, developed a unit of work on acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD) (TakeHeartTV, 2018). These are common and dangerous conditions found in remote Australia (Mitchell et al., 2019). First, so that educators and students would fully understand the information, the collaborators developed verbal messages and visual methods to effectively communicate accurate medical information. Next, the school staff devised a range of staged activities and accompanying resources for different levels of the school, from primary to secondary school, and in the community—all in first languages. These included activities to develop vocabulary and understanding of how the heart functions, how germs and white blood cells act, how medicines support white blood cells, how to recognize the symptoms of RHD, and how treatment fights the disease. Teaching and learning involved carrying out echograms on hand-held devices to understand diagnosis, and students created videos, labeled diagrams, community posters, t-shirt designs, and songs, all with rich oral language cultivated by teaching staff to communicate concepts and by students to enquire and display their knowledge to and for their community (RHD Australia, 2018). The Maningrida College team show us that responsive and pedagogies can emerge in school settings through meaningful and collaborative social learning processes.

Aboriginal teachers in newer programs, smaller programs, and in diverse language ecologies (Angelo & Poetsch, 2019) also push back to decolonize the spaces they teach in and realize their community goals for language reclamation. Nathan Schrieber teaches Gunggay language and culture on Gunggay country in his community, Yarrabah, in tropical Far North Queensland, near Cairns. He explained:

> I let the Principal know that for the program to run well, the school would need to let go of it and it would need to be built up from the community. He left it in my hands. I needed to consult with community, our Elders. They were very aware of the language situation in terms of (limited) daily use of the language and in terms of what information we had. We were faced with all these challenges. (quoted in Angelo & Poetsch, 2019, p. 17)

Challenges included the development of resources and local curriculum, which Schrieber and community Elders developed and deliver together, in a theme-based learning teaching cycle:

> First term is local history—looking at our home before and after contact, trying to build a picture for our students that we have always been here, and to get the students to realise that what is around them now is not the way it has always been (…) [The forced movement of people] can be confronting for some of our students, so we try to do it in age-appropriate ways and sensitive to the community. In one regard we're trying to build up our kids from the inside out and say, 'Look, this is who you are, this is your strength,' and in order to do that we need to face those hard truths that make up our history.
>
> Term 2 we look more specifically at kinship. Term 3 is Gurugulu, which is our dry season. We talk about bush tucker, hunting, weather and anything that's connected to the theme of seasons. That's a really good term because we spend a lot of time outside the classroom, and working on a walking trail we're re-establishing. In Term 4 we look at arts and artefacts from Yarrabah and the wet tropics area because there's a lot of material culture that's been developed by different groups up here, things like shields, boomerangs, head-dresses. It's really handy having our Arts and Crafts Centre just down the road from the high school. We connect with them, and also look at contemporary art, e.g. photography, pottery, canvas painting, woven baskets. (quoted in Angelo & Poetsch, 2019, p. 18)

Like the previous examples, Schrieber's practice is broad and locally situated, encompassing relationships in histories, places, and past and present practice.

CLOSING, AND KEEPING GOING

Communities across Australia are working hard to reclaim their languages, learning, and socialization in and out of schools. For Rosemary Plummer, there are no boundaries to her and her community's endeavors to reclaim Warumungu. In her family, she lives her daily life speaking her traditional language, as well as local ways of talking, which embrace Warumungu language and being (Morrison & Disbray, 2008). She uses traditional medicines to heal, and contemporary media, such as radio and the arts to model for and reach family and others (Disbray et al., 2019). At home and in the school programs she teaches in Tennant Creek, along with other Warumungu teachers, such as colleague and kinswoman Annie Morrison, they share knowledge of Warumungu history, language, and the knowledge it holds; of country, seasons and animals, and stories learnt from family. Through songs and stories, they teach Warumungu-heritage children and young people, those from other Aboriginal countries and languages, and non-Aboriginal students, aware of the different understandings

they bring to and take from their classes. Warumungu students connect to and build on their knowledge, their country, and (extended and classificatory) family. Those from other countries think about and make links to their languages, country, and families. Non-Aboriginal students learn new ideas, and learn about Warumungu country and its history and people, through language. All can see and hear Warumungu country more keenly, in and out of the classroom.

There are many challenges for communities, their languages, and custodians in reclaiming languages. Institutions such as schools often pose more challlenges than they do affordances. However, there are signs of reconciliation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous language ideologies, at least at the level of discourse in significant policy documents, such as the Australian Curriculum. Where language learning in schools is a goal, its success lies in Aboriginal people decolonizing and reclaiming space. For this, language custodians on the ground must lead these endeavors, with their leadership embraced by non-Indigenous people in the space, guided by the (de facto) policy from above. The exemplars detailed above show the potential and realization of reclamation in education spaces.

NOTES

[1] Jukurrpa is used here to evoke one sense of this Warlpiri term and its common English translation, 'Dreaming,' acknowledging that they are shorthand for complex cultural meanings (see Green, 2012). In its sense here, it refers to the creative time of ancestral beings, and their enduring acts and stories.

[2] 'Skin' is a classificatory moiety system. There are eight skin groups, with eight male names and eight female names. Every Warlpiri person has a skin name through their mother and father. This links all Warlpiri through as classificatory kin, such as mother and father and also husband and wife, and so the skin system prescribes relationships between people. Patri- and matrimoiety groups are linked to places, sites and Dreamings belonging to a skin group. Many other Aboriginal groups across Australia share similar skin systems.

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