



language legacies

ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND MAKES 14 AWARDS FOR 2010

The Endangered Language Fund is pleased to announce the grant recipients in our competition for 2010. This year was especially competitive, with 123 proposals being submitted. Such a large increase over previous years, it would seem, indicates both increased awareness of our program and increased need for its resources. We were able to keep our success rate in the double digits thanks to the generosity of our donors.

The first award, on 'Olekha, is the recipient of this year's Bill Bright award. Named in memory of the prolific linguist, this designation adds 10% to the base amount of the grant in recognition of its achievements in one or more of the areas Bright specialized in, either in geography (North and Central America, South Asia) or topic (including culture, writing systems, poetics and onomastics). The project by Thinley and Hyslop addresses several of these topics in the country of Bhutan, making this a fitting recipient of the award.

Namgay Thinley (Dzongkha Development Commission) and Gwendolyn Hyslop (University of Oregon): An Orthography and Grammatical Sketch of 'Olekha

'Olekha is an extremely endangered language of Bhutan with possibly just one elderly speaker left. From the little we know of this language, it seems quite different from other related languages. It seems likely that 'Olekha may retain archaic features which have been replaced everywhere else by the influence of Bodish languages, but further documentation is necessary to determine if this is true. Because members of the 'Olekha community are concerned about the endangerment of their language, the priority is the phonological analysis and working orthography

along with a brief grammatical sketch of the language. Elicitation, combined with the knowledge of the phonologies of other East Bodish languages, will serve as the primary methodology for phonological analysis. Another goal of the research is to collect as many local stories, legends, oral histories and storytelling/verbal arts in general as possible.

These recordings will be used as a springboard for grammatical analysis, supplementing the data with elicitation. This study of the language will produce the first phonological sketch and grammatical outline of the language. As an unusual variety of a relatively unstudied sub-group, a description of the language will be a contribution to historical and comparative Tibeto-Burman studies. Winner of the Bill Bright Memorial Award.

[ISO 639-3 language code: ole]

Tye Swallow (Saanich Adult Education Center): SENĆOŦEN Language Revitalization and Sustainability Plan - Learning from Homeland Curriculum Development Project

The mission of the SENĆOŦEN language department of the Saanich Indian School Board (British Columbia) is to begin immersion programming from pre-school to grade three. SENĆOŦEN is a highly endangered language with only 20 fluent speakers. The ELF award will be used towards funding a "Learning from Place Language Immersion" curriculum that will directly feed into the current development of a university-level language immersion course for a new Language Revitalization degree program being developed by the University of Victoria.

[ISO 639-3 language code: str]

This year's Bill Bright Memorial Award will support a central theme of Bright's work, orthography development, in Bhutan's 'Olekha language.

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Lalnunthangi Chhange (Converge Worldwide): Documentation of the Ralte Language

Ralte is a Tibeto-Burman language, classified as belonging to the Kuki-Chin languages and closely related to Mizo (Lushai). However, Ralte shares more similarities with the Paihte language, spoken further northeast in the state of Manipur in northeastern India. The Raltes once lived as a separate community, speaking their own language, but they now consider themselves to belong to the Lushai language and culture group. Thus, most people are surprised to find that Ralte was once spoken widely in the Lushai inhabited areas of present-day Mizoram. The remaining 80 fluent speakers have made efforts on their own to record the language. The goal of this project is to gather all the data that has been collected so far and to organize and preserve the information so that future generations will know what the language sounded like. [ISO 639-3 language code: ral]

Chad Thompson (The Three Rivers Language Center), Dani Tippmann (Whitley County Historical Museum): The Miami Language and Cultural Camp

The Miami language, an endangered Native American language from the lower Great Lakes region, has been classified as “extinct” but the 15th edition of Ethnologue (2005) notes that “There are some who know a few words and phrases. A revitalization is in progress” (Gordon 2000). An increasing number of Miami people are currently speaking their language, and the latest Ethnologue no longer categorizes the language as extinct (Lewis 2009). The language is still at least highly endangered, and this project will draw on the expertise, personnel and materials of other successful programs to support a day camp for Miami children between the ages of 10 and 15. During the week, children will be encouraged to speak as much of the language as possible while they make culturally-related crafts with the help of elders/cultural teachers

The Miami language has made the transition from “extinct” to “Revitalization program in progress” in the Ethnologue.

and camp counselors and are immersed in the Miami language as much as possible. [ISO 639-3 language code: mia]

Digna Lipa-od Adonis (Benguet Network): Eg Tayo Kari Dibkhanan, Let Us Not Forget: A Documentation of the Ibaloy Indigenous Language in Benguet, Philippines

There are approximately 55,000 native speakers of Ibaloy, an endangered language belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian languages spoken in northern Luzon in the southern part of the Province of Benguet in the Philippines. Ibaloy has been giving way to Ilocano, with Tagalog and English as second languages. This project aims to support two ongoing Ibaloy language and culture preservation initiatives through interviews with native speakers to compile an extensive list of Ibaloy conversational phrases, dialogue text material on cultural subjects, and word lists that make up selected semantic domains. Audio recordings will be collected of the listed words, phrases and themes and endangered cultural activities will be gathered by video recording. [ISO 639-3 language code: ibl]

Adam Baker (Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan): Ishkashimi Language Documentation & Development

Ishkashimi is spoken by about 1,500 people in Afghanistan and another 1,000 in Tajikistan. A recent shift to Dari, the language of wider communication, has led many Ishkashimis to believe that their children will speak only Dari in the future. At the same time, the Ishkashimi people value their language and wish to see it developed, responding very positively to the ideas of producing an orthographic system for Ishkashimi, producing Ishkashimi books, and holding literacy classes in Ishkashimi. The first goal is to support the language community’s becoming literate in Ishkashimi, including developing books. The second goal is to produce an annotated corpus of Ishkashimi language data, to be made available to linguists in the form of a language data archive. [ISO 639-3 language code: isk]

**Olga Lovick (First Nations University of Canada):
Transcription, Translation, and Annotation of Upper
Tanana Athabascan**

Upper Tanana is an Athabascan language spoken in several communities in eastern Alaska and across the Canadian border in the Yukon Territory. With fewer than 100 speakers, the youngest being in their 40s, Upper Tanana is a highly endangered language. Most of the speakers are elders who generally do not use the language when non-speakers are present, and it is no longer used in church or other ritual contexts. Recently, several untranscribed recordings of Upper Tanana speakers made by linguist James Kari in the 1990s have been found in the Yukon Native Language Center. These will be transcribed and made available with the help of the remaining native speakers.
[ISO 639-3 language code: tau]

Jonathan David Bobaljick (University of Connecticut), David Koester (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan) and Tatiana Degai (Itelmen Community Member): Itelmen Language Audio Recordings

The Itelmen language is the sole member of the Kamchatkan branch of Chukotko-Kamchatkan and is quite distinct from the Chukotkan languages in many ways. In the Itelmen population of 3,000, only 15 to 20 are fluent native speakers, scattered among various villages and the main city, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskij, Russia. Although there is an official orthography, no native speakers are literate in Itelmen. Because there is a particular lack of multimedia material, the ELF award will be used to allow Tatiana Degai, a young member of the Itelmen community, to travel to two villages to collect recordings based on targeted elicitation lists constructed by Bobaljick, as well as to collect additional recordings, such as narratives of various sorts. The recordings will be used for language revitalization, archiving and pedagogy purposes.
[ISO 639-3 language code: tau]

Asha Mulki: Preservation of Sakuye Indigenous Language

Northern Kenya is home to the Sakuye community and four pastoralist communities of Somali origin. Sakuye culture is based on hunting and gathering, which helps sustain the language; pastoralist communities in northern Kenya speak Somali. A young generation has had to move into neighboring Ethiopia and then return after a peace agreement; they returned, however, with a different lifestyle, culture and language. This project will collect poems, oral narratives, songs, folklore, and other practices that surround marriage ceremony, ceremony for sacred areas, cultural festivals and some important Sakuye sayings and words.

The collections will be preserved and circulated to the indigenous Sakuye community through media that reach all the four districts of northern Kenya.
[ISO 639-3 language code: gax]

Previously made recordings of Upper Tanana will be transcribed with the help of the remaining native speakers, making the recordings much more valuable.

Deborah Sanchez (Barbareño Chumash Council): Chumash Family Singers Recording Project

The Barbareño Chumash Council is a tribal group comprised of Chumash descendants of the greater Santa Barbara area. Some Council members participate in the Chumash Family Singers, a group that uses traditional native instruments and incorporates the Šmuwič (Barbareño Chumash) language into its material. The primary goal of this project is to create original Chumash songs in the Šmuwič language that can be shared with the Chumash community and the public. The planned recording would

benefit Chumash community members who wish to learn songs, and would also encourage the regular use of the Šmuwič language through song.
[ISO 639-3 language code: chs]

Ana Carolina Hecht (University of Buenos Aires): Documentation of Language Socialization Practices in Intercultural School Contexts of Language Shift of Toba

The Toba Language (Guaycurú family) is spoken by an estimated 33,000 speakers both in Chaco, Formosa and Santa Fe Provinces as well as Gran Buenos Aires. The ELF award will be used to compare these two contexts, particularly the relationship between the treatment of languages in school projects developed among indigenous populations and the representations and uses of indigenous languages in educational processes inside (and outside) the scholastic setting. This research is important not only in academic terms but also in terms of the possibilities of designing educational public policies sensitive to the rights and identity of indigenous peoples.
[ISO 639-3 language code: tob]

Angoua Jean-Jacques Tano: Documentation and Description of Ivorian Sign Language

As in several countries in West Africa, at least two sign languages are used in the Ivory Coast. American Sign Language (ASL) is used in Deaf education and by educated Deaf adults; however deaf individuals with no formal schooling use various forms of Ivorian Sign Language or Langue des Signes de Côte d'Ivoire (LSCI). ASL is spreading within the Ivorian Deaf community at

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the cost of LSCI; more generally, the prominence of ASL in West Africa overshadows the local sign languages to such an extent that the latter are falling into disuse. This project is part of an effort to document and analyze LSCI in various parts of the Ivory Coast.

[no ISO 639-3 language code]

Annahita Farudi (University of Massachusetts) and Maziar Toosarvandani (UC Berkeley): A Community-based Oral History Project for Zoroastrian Dari

Zoroastrian Dari (also called Zartoshti, Behdin[^]ani, or Gabri) is a Central Plateau language of the Northwestern subbranch of the Iranian language family (Indo-European). It is spoken by the Zoroastrian religious minority of Iran, primarily in and around the city of Yazd, and is distinct from the eponymous dialect of Persian spoken in Afghanistan. The 5,000 fluent speakers who remain are the last generation to grow up when the language was still the community's primary mode of communication. This project will record the oral histories of elderly Zoroastrian residents of Yazd, documenting Dari as it was spoken before modernization, when the Zoroastrians of Yazd still lived in isolated agrarian communities.

[ISO 639-3 language code: gbz]

Syngen Kanassatega (Mille Lacs Band Government Center): Ojibwe Cultural Activity Preservation

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (in Minnesota) estimates that only about 90 fluent speakers remain of their variety of Ojibwe. The goal here is to assist in teaching future generations to be bilingual, preserving linguistic heritage while being proficient in English. The team will record traditional stories and songs about their history, spiritual wisdom, cultural activities, and life skills while they are being practiced, narrated, and explained by fluent speakers, elders, and adult mentors. [ISO 639-3 language code: ojb]

—In Memoriam—

Rebecca Bending, 1932-2010

We are saddened to report the passing of Rebecca Bending on September 27th, 2010. Becky was a member of the founding Board of Directors of the Endangered Language Fund. She was a stalwart member of our grant review committees, reading the majority of our regular proposals and virtually all of our Native Voices endowment applications. Her enthusiasm for language was an inspiration to the many tribal members she worked with. We would like to extend our condolences to Ray, Ray Jr., and all of Becky's friends and family. You are invited to read about Becky's life and achievements on the memorial site maintained at www.dignitymemorial.com (search for Bending).



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