



language legacies

ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND MAKES AWARDS FOR NINE PROJECTS IN 2008

The The Endangered Language Fund is pleased to announce the recipients of awards for 2008. Nine proposals were selected for funding from a very competitive cohort of 64. As in past years, the success rate for various regions of the world roughly matched the proportion of proposals received for that area. Every inhabited continent has endangered languages, and there are estimated to be between three and six thousand of them. Each tells a different story, and the value to the communities is immeasurable. We are pleased to be able to help with at least some of them.

Our general competition is funded by the generosity of our donors. If you would like to help promote more work in and on endangered languages, please visit:

<http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/donate.html>

Next year's competition will be similar in scope. The deadline for applications is April 20th, 2009. The request for proposals can be found at: <http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/request.html>. We look forward to seeing another fine crop of proposals. Here are descriptions of the nine projects that were funded this year:

Amy Campbell, Ramón Escamilla, Lindsey Newbold, and Justin Spence (University of California, Berkeley) *Hupa Multimedia Text Corpus*

With fewer than five first-language speakers remaining, none younger than 60, Hupa (Pacific Coast Athabaskan) is a critically endangered language. The language is fluently spoken by only a handful of elderly speakers, few of whom use it on a day-to-day basis; it is now mainly used in ceremonial contexts, such as for offering prayers at community events. In recent decades, the Hoopa Valley Tribe has been actively engaged in efforts to reverse the

obsolescence of their language. The tribe supports Hupa second-language classes in the elementary and high schools and at the adult level, and there is now a small but growing number of second-language speakers. Although Hupa morphophonology has been described, very little work has been done on syntax, semantics or discourse phenomena. This project will contribute to a complete description and documentation of the language by producing a corpus of transcribed, annotated, and analyzed texts from a variety of speech genres, with associated digital audio and video recordings. The corpus will be accessible through a simple, web-based search interface, suitable for use by language learners and linguistic researchers.

[ISO 639 language code: hup]

Marit Vamarasi (North-eastern Illinois University)
Training Rotuman Language Teachers

Rotuman is spoken by approximately 2,500 people on the island of Rotuma in the South Pacific, and by 7,500 more in overseas communities in Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S. and Canada. Whereas at one time nearly all Rotuman people spoke their language, migration in recent decades has taken its toll. Transmitting the language to the younger generation presents special challenges since many of the speakers of Rotuman are dispersed in communities across the globe.

The present project seeks to train Rotuman speakers to teach their language, using both electronic and written materials, including a teacher's manual for native speakers with no background in language teaching. The instruction will take place in after-

From the Americas to Oceania, the Endangered Language Fund's projects help maintain languages throughout the globe.

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school or weekend classes. The program will begin in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Vamarasi will begin training several teachers, and it will be brought to other parts of the Rotuman diaspora from there. This project will benefit the Rotuman community by giving them the tools to teach their own language and by creating opportunities for the children to learn the language. These materials will also be of interest to linguists who are interested in learning about the structural properties of this unique language.

[ISO 639 language code: rtm]

Thiago Costa Chacon (University of Utah) Kubeo Documentation Project

The Kubeo language, also known as Cubeo, Kubewa, and Pamiwa, is spoken in the Vaupes region of southeastern Colombia. This project's aims are to produce a reference grammar of Kubeo, and to provide the Kubeo community with a practical grammar, dictionary, and pedagogical resources. Fieldwork research and the production of these materials will be carried mainly by Thiago Costa Chacon, a PhD student and research assistant at the Center for American Indian Languages (CAIL, University of Utah), in cooperation with Kubeo speakers. The specific goals of this project are to collect Kubeo lexical and grammatical data, prepare of specific pedagogical materials, and answer indigenous representative demands. The Kubeo Documentation Project involves a partnership between CAIL and Kubeo leaders and school teachers through the Federation of Indigenous Organizations from the Rio Negro (FOIRN), the main indigenous organization of the Brazilian North West Amazon.

[ISO 639 language code: cub]

Jane Freeland (University of Southampton) and Eloy Frank Gómez (Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de las Cosat Caribe Nicaragüense) Developing materials to train Mayangna Indian sociolinguistic / ethnographic researchers into community attitudes to language loss

The purpose of this project is to train a team of Mayangna indigenous researchers to conduct sociolinguistic and linguistic ethnography research into the social and cultural causes of language shift

among the Mayangna through a staged sequence of guided, hands-on research. The language of the Mayangna Indians, which linguists refer to as Northern Sumu, comprises two varieties, Panamahka and Tuahka, in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) of Nicaragua, and a third variety, Tahuahka, in the Honduran Mosquitia. There are currently estimated to be 12,000 Panamahka-speakers and 2,000 Tuahka-speakers, though no reliable census has been made. This project will produce a team of indigenous Mayangna researchers trained in sociolinguistic and linguistic ethnography techniques and report writing, an archived corpus of naturally produced language of various dialogic genres (conversation, group discussion, autobiographical narrative), a corpus of Mayangna popular discourse on language, and a good sense of what the Mayangna consider to be the most important sociolinguistic and ethnographic questions relating to their language and its varieties.

[ISO 639 language code: sum]

Paulina Yourupi (University of Hawaii at Manoa) Developing a Pollapese Orthography

Pollapese is an Austronesian language spoken on the atoll of Pollap in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia. Half of the 905 speakers (according to the 2000 census), live outside of Pollap. Yourupi will document the language in various settings and archive her data so that they are accessible to linguists, native speakers of Pollapese who want to develop pedagogical materials, their descendants, and the wider public. This project will focus specifically on developing a Pollapese orthography, one that is accepted, endorsed, and implemented by the speech community on Pollap. This writing system will be constructed based on two existing writing systems, the Chuukese Orthography and the Mortlockese spelling system, which were developed by missionaries to create the Chuukese Bible. Yourupi's orthography and her repository of Pollapese material will aid not only linguists and native speakers but also their descendants and researchers in other disciplines.

[closest ISO 639 language code: puw]

The teaching of languages is receiving greater attention as we begin to explore ways in which minority languages can best be taught when the communities are not using the language.

Marine Vuillemet (Laboratoire Dynamique Du Langage (DDL)) Saving the “Sloth Woman Myth”: a Collaborative Project in Bolivia

Ese Ejja is a language of the Takanan family spoken in northern Bolivia and southeastern Peru. There are no more than 4000 speakers of all of the Takanan languages combined. This project on the ‘Sloth Woman Myth,’ a famous story that recounts the creation of the world, is the first concrete step towards a multidisciplinary and cross-border documentation project on the language. The goal of the project is to recover a full version of the myth from an elderly speaker, the only one known to still remember it well. Vuillemet will record the myth and make it available for distribution and use in the community in video and print format. These materials represent a valuable source of literacy that is an alternative to the Bibles and booklets provided by missionaries. This myth presents syntactic features only present in mythic discourse, and therefore it is of value to linguists as well. It is also a valuable resource to evaluate dialectal divergence, as a different form of the language has already been recorded in Peru.

[ISO 639 language code: ese]

Benson Oduor Ojwang (Maseno University) Promoting Documentation and Maintenance of Kinubi, a Minority Creole in Kenya

Kinubi is spoken in Kenya by the Nubi linguistic minority of about 10,000 people. This tribe has maintained a distinct identity as a speech community despite the fact that they are third generation immigrants who have not been recognized by the government. There are very few written materials in Kinubi, and the literacy rate in the language is below 1%.

The Nubi have not been given official recognition as a distinct community with a unique culture, language, history, religion and tradition, and there is no repository for the language and culture of the Nubi people. Ojwang’s project will examine the vitality of the language, identify indicators of language shift among the Nubi, observe the language choices in various domains and develop wordlists and recorded texts of stories in Kinubi. The texts will be published as basic readers for school-aged Nubi children.

[ISO 639 language code: kcn]

Jermy Imanuel Balukh (Cakrawala Nusantara Kupang) Documenting Folk Tales and Procedural Texts in Ndao

This project will create a collection of Ndao folk tales and procedural texts describing the use of traditional tools and activities such as weaving, tapping lontar-palm, and metal handwork, as well as a wordlist of up to 2000 entries. Balukh will attempt to publish the reading materials and the glossary through the local government as an alternative to the religious texts provided by missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics. These texts will be available for use by the Ndao communities as well as by linguists as preliminary data for further research on the grammatical analysis of Ndao and the production of reading material for both public and educational purposes. Ndao is

an Austronesian language spoken by about 3000 people, mainly on the islands of Ndao and Nuse, in East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Speakers of Ndao also live in the neighboring islands of Rote, Timor, and Flores.

[ISO 639 language code: nfa]

Strang Burton (Stolo Nation) Elizabeth Herrling Collection of Upriver Halq’emeylem

Upriver Halq’emeylem is one of three major dialects of Halkomelem, a Salishan language spoken in Southern British Columbia, Canada. There are currently two living native speakers, including Elizabeth Herrling, who is now 93 years old. Herrling is the last speaker of the Seabird sub-dialect. While working for the Stolo Shxweli Halq’emeylem language program, Burton has been recording and transcribing short texts provided by Elizabeth Herrling. These texts are of two types: stories from Herrling’s life and the lives of her families, and stories that Herrling narrates based on sketches, pictures, and slide show presentations. The goal of this project is to organize the existing corpus of recordings and transcriptions and to commit it to a reliable archive. This will involve formatting and indexing the materials and transcribing the rest of the recordings. This project is important for making this set of materials--a significant collection, told by one of the very last speakers of this language--available to meet the needs of both scholars and the community.

[ISO 639 language code: hur]

At the time of this writing, there are currently two living native speakers of Upriver Halq’emeylem, one of whom, Elizabeth Herrling, is now 93 years old.

LANGUAGE LEGACIES:

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Conference on Endangered Languages and Cultures of Native America

5th annual CELCNA

University of Utah in Salt Lake City, March 27-
29, 2009

Papers or posters are invited on any aspect of American Indian languages, in particular on documentation or revitalization. American Indian participants are especially invited. Nora England (University of Texas, Austin) will be the keynote speaker.

The deadline for abstracts is Jan. 16, 2009; see <http://linguistlist.org/confcustom/celcna09>

Papers and posters can be presented in English or Spanish; abstracts can be submitted in English or Spanish.

16th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium “Indigenous Languages Across the Generations — Strengthening Families and Communities”.

Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.
April 30-May 2, 2009.

The web site for the 16th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium “Indigenous Languages Across the Generations — Strengthening Families and Communities” to be held April 30-May 2, 2009 at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, USA is now accessible at <http://education.asu.edu/sils/>. This series of conferences has brought together a wide range of researchers and language activists, exchanging examples of what works (and what doesn't) in language revitalization.



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