

*Models for Capacity Development in Language Documentation and Conservation*  
Position Paper and practical notes for presenters

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Concern about the diminishing vitality of the world's languages and the challenges facing linguistic and biocultural diversity has been expressed for many decades by communities of speakers and their descendants, and by linguists and members of allied disciplines working to document and describe languages and to support revitalization activities. A substantial body of academic work has been produced in recent years which serves to draw attention both to this language endangerment crisis and to the wide-ranging responses emerging internationally. Contributions range from language documentation and fieldwork manuals (Crowley, 2007, Gippert et al., 2006, Harrison et al., 2008), to papers discussing ethics, protocols and community collaborations (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2007, Furbee et al., 1998, Jancewicz et al., 2002, Penfield et al., 2008, Rice, 2006, Shaw, 2004), introductions to the topics of linguistic diversity and language loss (e.g. Crystal, 2000, Dalby, 2003, Harrison, 2007, Nettle and Romaine, 2000), the framing of language endangerment within the broader framework of the loss of biodiversity (Harmon, 1996, Maffi, 2001), analyses of language endangerment situations in specific areas of the world (e.g. Amery, 2000, Bradley, 2005, Brenzinger, 1998, Brenzinger, 1992, Florey, 2010, Miyaoka et al., 2007, Rau and Florey, 2007), guides to revitalization strategies (e.g. Fishman, 2001, Grenoble and Whaley, 2006, Hinton and Hale, 2001, Hinton, 2002), and edited collections more broadly reflecting the scope of methods and approaches (e.g. Austin, 2008, Bradley and Bradley, 2002, Grenoble and Whaley, 1998, Janse and Tol, 2003). There are also two new academic journals in this field: *Language Documentation and Description*, published by the School of Oriental and African Studies, and the peer-reviewed and free online journal *Language Documentation and Conservation* from the University of Hawai'i.

In addition to scholarly work, a number of recent initiatives reflect a diverse array of international responses, including the emergence of funding opportunities targeting language documentation and revitalization, the development of tools to assess the rate of loss of linguistic diversity (Harmon and Loh, forthcoming), the push for more appropriate national and international language and education policies, and the creation of networks and resource centers.

As the responses, technologies, and resources to preserve linguistic diversity have proliferated, the need for training of practitioners in order to build capacity for language documentation and conservation work has become increasingly acute. Quite obviously new technologies mandate the teaching of technical skills, but, more deeply, the increased recognition of the central role played by speakers and descendants of minority language groups in language conservation has placed a spotlight on how to develop the skills and knowledge of community-based language activists, and of how others can benefit from the skills and strength of those with years □ sometimes decades □ of experience. Training to develop capacity takes place on multiple levels: from one-on-one work with individuals working within a specific project, to degree programs housed at universities or colleges, to large or small stand-alone sessions with local, regional, or international scope. Training has become recognized as a critical component of the language-conservation enterprise.

Training programs take an impressive array of forms, including intensive institutes aimed at Indigenous communities (e.g. AILDI, CILLDI, NILI), shorter-term workshops, initiatives to repair intergenerational transmission of languages (language nests, Master-Apprentice Programs, language immersion programs), bilingual education, programs offered through language or Indigenous knowledge centers, intensive summer institutes,

regional training programs, and focused university degree programs. Training for linguists involved in language documentation can occur as part of degree programs or as part of special short term courses (InField, LLL, LSA Summer Institute or as individual training offered by RNLD, ELDP or others). As mentioned, training also takes place on the local level, in countless small-group or one-on-one sessions within particular projects. It occurs whenever one person explicitly passes on skills and knowledge pertaining to language documentation and conservation to another. Each instance of training increases the world's capacity to address the language endangerment crisis.

The goal of the current symposium is to compare and contrast models of training in language documentation and conservation in order to allow for a deeper understanding of the varied contexts, goals, strategies, and challenges that underlie training programs worldwide. The presenters at the symposium represent organizations which either provide training in language documentation and conservation or facilitate training programs through resource sharing.

Each presenter has been asked to discuss their program, using the following questions as a guide:

#### Organizations which provide training in language documentation and conservation

- Provide a brief statement of the basic concept or focus of the training program
- If training is only one of your organization's activities, briefly outline the other activities, making clear the percentage of time spent on training and how it fits with the broader goals of your organization
- What educational, ideological, or other views underlie the structure of your organization and/or the training program?
- Who are the trainers? Who are the trainees?
- What is the scope of the program? What is the curriculum (formal or informal)? How is it chosen?
- What specific skills are taught?
- What pedagogical models or techniques have proven to be particularly effective (or ineffective)?
- How long are the sessions (per day, over the entire course of the project)?
- How frequently is the program run?
- How do you gauge the effectiveness of the sessions?
- What challenges do you face? (You may want to consider personal, community, ideological, or institutional challenges or constraints.)
- What resources would increase the effectiveness of your program?

#### For agencies supporting the wider goals of training and the consortium

- Provide a brief statement of the basic concept or focus of your program
- Does the mandate of your agency or organization support training programs?
- In what ways can training programs external to your organization contribute to its goals?
- Has your agency created policy that addresses training needs or is this a future possibility?
- Does your agency have the capacity to host training programs or to share training resources?
- Based on your interactions with endangered language communities and those that serve them, what type of training would be the most effective? For whom? By whom? When? Where?

The following questions will be addressed in a one-hour discussion by all participants at the end of the symposium:

- Which types of training programs are most effective for building capacity in which contexts?
- How is training most effectively delivered?
- What are the greatest needs of trainers and the greatest challenges we need to overcome in order to promote and increase training programs worldwide?
- Does the consortium have the potential to lobby or advocate for policies supporting training programs?

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