

□ **M. Altun**
Sakarya Üniversitesi

2014 'DİL' HABERLERİ

2014 'LANGUAGE' NEWS



Economic success drives language extinction¹

Ülkelerin ekonomisi geliştikçe tek bir dilin hakimiyeti öne çıkıyor;

Thriving economies are the biggest factor in the disappearance of minority languages and conservation should focus on the most developed countries where languages are vanishing the fastest, finds a new study.

New research shows economic growth to be main driver of language extinction and reveals global 'hotspots' where languages are most under threat.

The study's authors urge for 'immediate attention' to be paid to hotspots in the most developed countries – such as north Australia and the north-western corners of the US and Canada – where conservation efforts should be focused.

They also point to areas of the tropics and Himalayan regions that are undergoing rapid economic growth as future hotspots for language extinction, such as Brazil and Nepal. The study is published today in the journal *Proceedings of Royal Society B*.

The researchers used the criteria for defining endangered species to measure rate and prevalence of language loss, as defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The three main risk components are: small population size (small number of speakers), small geographical habitat range and population change – in this case, the decline in speaker numbers.

By interrogating huge language datasets using these conservation mechanisms, the researchers found that levels of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita correlated with the loss of language diversity: the more successful economically, the more rapidly language diversity was disappearing.

'As economies develop, one language often comes to dominate a nation's political and educational spheres. People are forced to adopt the dominant language or risked being left out in the cold – economically and politically,' said Dr Tatsuya Amato, from the University of Cambridge's Department of Zoology.

¹<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/09/140902205228.htm> (14 Eylül 2014)

'Of course everyone has the right to choose the language they speak, but preserving dying language is important to maintaining human cultural diversity in an increasingly globalised world.'

In the northwest corner of North America, the languages of the indigenous people are disappearing at an alarming rate. Upper Tanana, for example, a language spoken by indigenous Athabaskan people in eastern Alaska, had only 24 active speakers as of 2009, and was no longer being acquired by children. The Wichita language of the Plains Indians, now based in Oklahoma, had just one fluent speaker as of 2008.

In Australia, aboriginal languages such as the recently extinct Margu and almost extinct Rembarunga are increasingly disappearing from the peninsulas of the Northern Territories.

As the researchers point out, 'languages are now rapidly being lost at a rate of extinction exceeding the well-known catastrophic loss of biodiversity'. Major international organizations such as the United Nations and Worldwide Fund for Nature are now actively engaged in the conservation of linguistic diversity.

Amano says the global meta-analysis produced by the team using the species criteria is designed to complement the more specific, localized examples featured in many linguistic and anthropological researches.

Unlike species extinction, however, language diversity has a potentially saving grace – bilingualism. Previous research from Cambridge's Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics has shown that children who speak more than one language have multiple advantages in education, cognition and social interaction.

'As economies develop, there is increasing advantage in learning international languages such as English, but people can still speak their historically traditional languages. Encouraging those bilingualisms will be critical to preserving linguistic diversity,' added Amano.

Journal Reference: Tatsuya Amano, Brody Sandel, Heidi Eager, Edouard Bulteau, Jens-Christian Svenning, Bo Dalsgaard, Carsten Rahbek, Richard G. Davies, and William J. Sutherland. Global distribution and drivers of language extinction risk.

Physicists create tool to foresee language destruction impact and thus prevent it²

Habere göre fizikçiler bir dilin tehlike altında olup olmadığını önceden görebilmeyi sağlayan bir araç geliştirdiler:

There have been numerous cases of cultural changes throughout history. Either by imposition or assimilation, cultural traits are transmitted between neighbouring regions and often one replaces the original cultural traits of the other. Physicists Joaquim Fort, from the University of Girona (UdG), and Neus Isern, from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), are experts in modeling these phenomena by adequately representing a reality, as they have demonstrated with their previous projects.

In this occasion, the researchers applied their expertise to the area of language substitution, i.e. when the language of one region comes under the influence of the language of a neighboring region considered to be at a greater social and economic advantage. The model helps to estimate the

² http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-07/uadb-pct072514.php (14 Eylül 2014).

Contact: Neus Isern, Neus.isern@uab.cat- 34-935-813-301, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

degree to which the languages are under threat and, therefore, are useful in designing actions to control or reverse language diversity destruction.

Researchers analyzed the case of Welsh and its deterioration. Isern and Fort verified how, from 1961 to 1981, English took over Welsh and became the main language of communication. The researchers described the evolution in number of speakers, by reproducing the decrease over time in speakers of the native language as they substituted Welsh for the neighboring language, English.

In this research, the physics defined parameters which allow them to estimate the speed - in kilometers per year - in which the stronger language expands geographically over the native language. Their work has also focused on observing the evolution of other languages such as Quechua and Scottish Gaelic. Neus Isern explains that 'these parameters can be applied to languages spoken in countries where the governments are not concerned about their conservation, while they are more difficult to use with languages such as Catalan, which is protected under a series of linguistic policies'.

In a wider context, this type of model could be applied to other examples of cultural changes in which the more favourable traits expand and abolish the predominance of a native cultural trait.

The study conducted by Neus Isern and Joaquim Fort was published in an article in the prestigious *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*. The journal is among the top five interdisciplinary journals worldwide, according to the parameters used to calculate impact by the Institute of Scientific Information (Journal Citation Reports rankings). The researchers worked on this study under the framework of the Consolider SimulPast project, dedicated to the simulation of human history. The Consolider is made up of large research projects in which researchers from different disciplines and institutions participate.

The article Language Extinction and Linguistic Fronts can be read at:³

Linguistics Students Help Revitalize Critically Endangered Language in Mexico⁴

'Dil bilimi öğrencileri Meksika'da tehlikedeki dillerin yeniden canlandırılmasına yardımcı oluyor';

*Share on facebook Share on twitter Share on google Share on linkedin Share on tumblr Share on email More Sharing Services;*⁵



'So much of the work in revitalizing languages is spreading the message that these languages are important and worth caring about,' says Carolyn Anderson '14 (right), with Haverford's Anneke Heher '14 and May Plumb '16.

A professor and three Tri-Co students recently visited the leaders of a city in Oaxaca, Mexico, to present their Zapotec Talking Dictionary,

³ <http://rsif.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/11/94/20140028.full>

⁴ <http://www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/linguistics-students-help-revitalize-critically-endangered-language-mexico> (14 Eylül 2014). By Ryan Dougherty, 27.05.2014

⁵ <http://www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/linguistics-students-help-revitalize-critically-endangered-language-mexico5>

designed to help revitalize a native language on the verge of disappearing.

Carolyn Anderson '14 was nervous about that early-May visit to Tlacolula de Matamoros. She and the rest of the Tri-Co team were proud of their work on the dictionary but unsure of how it would be received. But those nerves vanished as soon as Assistant Professor of Linguistics Brook Lillehaugen displayed the dictionary on her phone.

'[The Tlacolula leaders] started smiling,' says Anderson, a linguistics major from Tacoma, Wash. 'These are important, busy men, but they all took the time to squint at the small screen and try it out. You could see their faces light up as the phone was passed around the room.'

The Zapotec language family is comprised of approximately 40 languages, all endangered, says Lillehaugen. The variety spoken in Tlacolula de Matamoros is critically endangered, with only about 100 elderly speakers remaining. Key causes include economic and ideological factors that push native-language speakers to adopt Spanish.

Assistant Professor of Linguistics Brook Lillehaugen presents the Zapotec Talking Dictionary via smartphone.

On the front line of the movement to revitalize native languages is K. David Harrison, associate professor of linguistics and co-leader of the National Geographic project Enduring Voices. He views languages as 'the primary conduit for human culture.'

'Each of the Mexican indigenous languages contains millennia of human experience, wisdom, and



practical knowledge about the natural environment,' Harrison tells National Geographic News. Sponsored by National Geographic, Harrison determined the need for a talking dictionary for the Zapotec language. He enlisted Lillehaugen, already set to teach a course on Zapotec language last fall, to produce it. 'I hoped it would be a way to bring Zapotec voices into my classroom,' she says, 'but it became so much more'. Eight

students from Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and Swarthmore (including Caroline Batten '14, an Honors English literature major from West Newton, Mass.) helped build the dictionary from the ground up, says Lillehaugen- conducting the research to expand it and collaborating with members of the Zapotec community to enhance it.

The town council of Tlacolula de Matamoros invited the Tri-Co team to come present its work on the dictionary and discuss further collaboration, which will include a Tri-Co student returning this summer to offer a Talking Dictionary workshop to the community. The highlight, however, was the Tlacolulans - including the mayor - marveling at the sight of their heritage on big screens and phones. 'The Tlacolula Zapotec are a rural, agrarian community, but they are quickly crossing the digital divide and eager to create digital tools and resources for their language,' says Harrison. 'It's a great example

of how endangered language communities are leveraging new technologies to maintain their heritage languages.'

As important as technology is to the revitalization effort, another of Anderson's highlights was decidedly retro. She relished the opportunity to go into the Colonial Zapotec archives to see and touch centuries-old texts.

'It was incredible to hold them in my hands and see the little details that don't stand out in the PDFs that I've been working from: the decorations on the letters, the differences in ink and handwriting, the bindings,' she says. 'I feel a strong connection to these texts, to the thoughts and emotions and relationships of real people that they reveal.'

So much of the work in revitalizing languages is 'spreading the message that these languages are important and worth caring about,' she adds. 'Putting something in a dictionary, and putting something online, that's something that people can point to as proof that the language matters.'



Immigrants Who Speak Indigenous Languages Encounter Isolation⁶

'New York'ta Doğu Harlem'de yaşayan evli bir bayan. Meksika'dan göç etmiş. Ancak çok az İspanyolca biliyor, İngilizcesi yok. Çünkü Meksika'daki yerli Mixtec dilini konuşuyor. İletişim kuramadığı için kendini çok kötü hissettiğini ifade etmiş. Kocasını iş arkadaşlarının yardımıyla İspanyolca öğreniyor.'

Carmen speaks Mixtec, and has picked up a bit of Spanish. Her husband, Juan Manuel, learned Spanish from co-workers. Credit Ángel Franco/the New York Times.

Laura is a Mexican immigrant who lives in East Harlem, a neighborhood with one of the largest Latino populations in New York City. Yet she understands so little of what others are saying around her that she might just as well be living in Siberia.

Laura, 27, speaks Mixtec, a language indigenous to Mexico. But she knows little Spanish and no English. She is so scared of getting lost on the subway and not being able to find her way home that she tends to spend her days within walking distance of her apartment.

'I feel bad because I can't communicate with people,' she said, partly in Spanish, partly in Mixtec. 'I can't do anything.'

Laura, who asked that her last name not be revealed because she does not have legal immigration status, is among hundreds if not thousands of indigenous people from Latin America living in the New York region who speak neither the dominant language of the city, English, nor the dominant language of the broader Latino community, Spanish.

⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/11/nyregion/immigrants-who-speak-indigenous-mexican-languages-encounter-isolation.html?_r=1 (14 Eylül 2014). Photo: By KIRK SEMPLE, 10.07.2014

These language barriers, combined with widespread illiteracy, have posed significant challenges to their survival, from finding work to gaining access to health care, seeking help from the police and getting legal redress in the courts.

The phenomenon, sometimes called linguistic isolation, affects many immigrant populations to varying degrees. But its prevalence among the fast-growing population of newly arrived immigrants from Latin America, many of working and childbearing age, has made them an increasing concern to local service providers and government agencies.

Partly as a result of this population's isolation, there are no reliable estimates of its size, experts said. In recent years, the Mexican Consulate in New York, seeking to learn more about the local indigenous Mexican population, has surveyed the Mexican citizens who seek the consulate's services. As of the end of 2013, more than 17 percent of respondents spoke an indigenous language, with Mixtec and Nahuatl being the most popular among a total of 16. (Scores of indigenous languages with hundreds of variants are spoken in Mexico alone.)

According to the latest data from the Census Bureau, about 8,700 immigrants from Central America and over the age of 4 in the United States speak an indigenous language and do not speak English very well or at all.

But the Census Bureau's major surveys do not gauge Spanish proficiency, an equally critical measure for the community of indigenous Latin Americans.

Indeed, for many, not knowing Spanish is as big an impediment as not knowing English. Spanish is the lingua franca among immigrants from Latin America and dominates conversation in neighborhoods like East Harlem; Corona, Queens; and Hunts Point, in the Bronx.

After arriving in New York, most indigenous Latin Americans will learn Spanish before they learn English — if they ever learn English at all. The need has driven demand for Spanish language classes around the city. About a decade ago, the staff at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service, an organization in East Harlem that provides services to the poor, noticed that an increasing number of the students enrolling in its English as a second language classes were not only indigenous language speakers from Latin America but were also illiterate.

Reasoning that it would be easier to teach the newcomers Spanish, which they were beginning to pick up at home and on the street, the organization turned the English classes into Spanish classes.

Beyond the critical language and literacy instruction the classes provided, they also helped the newcomers build 'a much-needed social support network,' said Rosemary Siciliano, head of communications for Little Sisters of the Assumption. In 2012, however, the organization had to cut the program because of budget shortfalls.

For those immigrants who have less than a working knowledge of Spanish and English, even basic services can often remain out of reach. While New York City has a progressive language access policy, it guarantees the provision of interpretation and translation services for city business in only the six most-used non-English languages, which do not include any of the indigenous languages spoken by Latin American immigrants.

Sometimes the struggle of these immigrants is simply to get others to recognize that they are somehow different from the Latin Americans who speak Spanish. They are often mistaken for Spanish speakers because of their nationality and appearance and are addressed in Spanish, but may be too shy or confused to interrupt, advocates said.

'They may nod when they don't know what's going on,' said Lucia Russett, director of advocacy at Little Sisters of the Assumption.

Several years ago, Juan Carlos Aguirre, executive director of Mano a Mano, a Mexican cultural organization based in New York, received a call from a hospital official in Manhattan. The official was having trouble communicating with a Mexican family. 'She said, 'I need your help'.' Mr. Aguirre recalled. "I think they're all mentally challenged."

Mr. Aguirre asked the caller if she had asked the family what language they spoke. 'They're Mexican, so they speak Spanish,' the woman replied matter of factly. It turned out that the family spoke Mixtec.

The isolation, their advocates said, is particularly widespread among women, many of whom stay at home with young children while their husbands go to work on construction sites and in restaurant kitchens, where they can pick up Spanish more quickly.

'Monolingual women can end up completely dependent on their husbands for communication with the outside world,' said Daniel Kaufman, executive director of the Endangered Language Alliance, a nonprofit organization based in New York.

In the seven years she has lived in New York, Carmen, who is from the state of Guerrero in Mexico and speaks Mixtec, has learned a smattering of Spanish. But, she said, beyond running simple errands, she is not able to do much without the help of her husband, Juan Manuel, who learned Spanish from co-workers at a restaurant where he works as a prep cook. Neither attended school in Mexico as children.

The power imbalance in their relationship was evident in a recent interview with the couple in the East Harlem headquarters of Little Sisters of the Assumption, where they participate in parenting and childhood development programs. He answered most of the questions posed to them, even those directed specifically at Carmen. 'If she goes to the store to buy clothes or whatever, she doesn't know how to buy,' Juan Manuel said in Spanish. 'I always go with her.'

Laura, the woman who avoids the subways, arrived in New York in 2010, joining her husband, who had emigrated from Mexico. They had a son, now 2 years old.

But recently, she said, their marriage took a downward turn. Her husband assaulted her, she said, and a neighbor, hearing the noise, called the police. Her husband was imprisoned and is now facing deportation, she said.

His absence has thrown Laura's linguistic challenges into sharp relief. Insecure about her ability to navigate the city using her rudimentary Spanish, she has relied heavily on her cousin, Catalina, to accompany her to her appointments, including meetings with the prosecutors who are handling her husband's case. But Catalina, who has a family of her own, is not always available.

Laura, who has not been able to find a job, said she wished it had not come to this. 'He's not a bad person,' she said. She now fears being left entirely alone, with her young son, in New York City.

For Rare Languages, Social Media Provide New Hope⁷

'Nadir diller için sosyal medya yeni bir umut veriyor.' Haberde Facebook ve Twitter uygulamalarının tehlikedeki dillere yönelik imkânları ele alınmış.

⁷<http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2014/07/26/333732206/for-rare-languages-social-media-provide-new-hope> Lydia Emmanouilidou, 26.07.2014 7:59 PM ET

At a time when social media users, for no particularly good reason, are trading in fully formed words for abbreviations ('defs' instead of 'definitely'), it may seem that some languages are under threat of deterioration — literally.

But social media may actually be beneficial for languages.

Of the estimated 7,000 languages that are spoken around the world, UNESCO projects half will disappear by the end of the century. But social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter are in a position to revitalize and preserve indigenous, minority and endangered languages, linguists and language-preservation activists say.

One of the reasons some indigenous languages are endangered is that increased connectivity through the Internet and social media have strengthened dominant languages such as English, Russian and Chinese, says Anna Luisa Daigneault of the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages.

Endangered languages stand a greater chance of survival when they are used online.

'Having a Web presence for those languages is super important for their survival. Social media are just another connection point for people who want to stay connected to their language,' says Daigneault, Latin America projects coordinator and development officer at the institute.

Today, Facebook — the world's most popular social networking site — is available in over 70 official languages. The list includes indigenous languages like Cherokee and Quechua. This year, Facebook says it launched 13 news languages, including Azerbaijani, Javanese, Macedonian, Galician and Sinhala.

Facebook users can request a new language through the website; if there is enough demand, the language will then appear in the translations application and the Facebook community can begin translating the interface.

Jaqi-Aru, a community of 16 volunteers in Bolivia, is working on translating the Facebook interface in Aymara, one of the three official languages in Bolivia.

Elias Quispe Chura, the group's Facebook translation manager, says the effort involves young Aymara people from different Bolivian provinces. 'We promote use of our mother tongue on the Internet through translation projects and content creation,' he says. 'With that, we want to contribute and enrich the content of our language in cyberspace.'

He says Aymara native speakers in Peru, Chile, and Argentina are waiting anxiously to see their language as an option on Facebook. The group started the project in 2012 and is more than halfway done translating 24,000 words, phrases and sentences.

But the task hasn't been free of challenges.

'There are many words that there aren't in Aymara, for example: mobile phone — 'jawsaña,' password — 'chimpu,' message — 'apaya,' event — 'wakichäwi,' journalist — 'yatiyiri,' user — 'apnaqiri' and so on,' Chura says. 'In some cases, we had to create new words taking into account the context, the situation, function and their meanings. And in others, we had to go to the derivational morphology.'

Facebook provides some support to the volunteer translators, offering stylistic guidelines on its Language Style Guides page.

The website can be used to revitalize and preserve indigenous, minority and endangered languages in more ways than one.

Pamela Munro, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles, has created a Facebook page to post words, phrases and songs in Tongva, a language formerly spoken in the Los Angeles area.

Munro, a consultant to the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, says the language hasn't been spoken by a native speaker in about 50 years. She hopes to reach people who are interested in learning about the language through the Facebook page.

'We have readers all over the world ... people post on the page from all over and ask questions like, 'I found this word in a book. Can you tell me about it?' A lot of the people that interact with the page are ethnically Tongva but a lot of the people are not,' she says.

The creators and contributors of Ojibwe.net — a website that seeks to preserve Anishinaabemowin, an endangered Native American language from Michigan - use Facebook in a similar manner.

Ojibwe.net contributor Margaret Noodin is an assistant professor of English and American Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The language has 8,000-10,000 speakers, she says. But most of the native speakers are over 70 years old, placing the language under threat.

'That's the most dangerous thing. There are very few young kids that are growing up in a fluent environment,' Noodin says.

Although the group doesn't rely solely on social media to disseminate content, Noodin says that having a presence on websites like Facebook gives the group a chance to reach younger generations.

'It's how kids communicate now. It's little moments here and there. And that adds up.... If we don't use the language creatively into the future then what we're doing is documenting a language that's dying... Our language is alive and it's staying alive,' she says.

Other social networking websites such as Twitter can also be used in similar ways. The website is currently available in just under 40 languages.

Kevin Scannell, a professor at Saint Louis University, has consulted for Twitter on how to make the website friendlier to speakers of minority languages.

Scannell is also the creator of Indigenoustweets.com, a site that tracks tweets in indigenous languages. It can help people who want to find others who are using their language online.

'Having endangered languages on the Internet has a really strong impact on the youth because it shows that their language is still relevant today', says Daigneault of the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages. 'When people use their language it shows that they're proud of speaking...it.'

At a time when companies like Facebook are trying to grow in the developing world, having the interface available in other languages can be a great benefit.

'Just even making the website itself available in other languages in a huge part of reaching the next billion users,' Scannell says. John Hobson, the director of Graduate Indigenous Education Programs at the University of Sydney, agrees.

'It is... essential that as new technologies are integrated into majority societies and communication, they should be equally integrated into minority ones,' he says.

But Hobson says the best results will come when the conversation continues outside of social media.

'They are not magical devices that will do the learning or communicating for folk,' he says. 'Living languages are those used for meaningful communication between real people So, tweet and Facebook in your language... . But make sure you keep speaking the language when you put the device down.'

Saving vanishing 'tongues'⁸

Many languages disappear every year. In a race against time, language researchers are using digital technology to preserve those tongues from extinction

'Pek çok dil yok olma tehlikesi altında. Araştırmacılar bu dilleri korumak maksadıyla zaman karşı yarışarak dijital teknolojiyi kullanıyorlar. Haberde ABD Swarthmore Koleji'nden David Harrison'un çalışmalarına yer verilmiş.'



Alyssa and Lena Montana with a children's book in English and Hualapai. By encouraging young children to read daily in their native language, such books promote early reading skills. This one was developed in cooperation with Arizona's Hualapai Tribe, the Hualapai Cultural Resources Department and First Things First. *Ong uyan madongo?* You probably don't

know how to answer that question — unless you happen to be one of the roughly 430 people in the world who speak a language called Matukar Panau. Then you would know it means, 'How are you?'

Matukar Panau is one of the world's rarest languages. It is spoken in just two small coastal villages in

Papua New Guinea. This tropical island nation lies in the southwest Pacific Ocean.



Until five years ago, David Harrison, a language expert at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania didn't know much about Matukar Panau either. No one had ever recorded or even studied its words and rules. With so few speakers, the language risked vanishing without a blip. It was endangered.

An animal is endangered when its population becomes so rare that it faces

a serious risk of going extinct. An endangered language has so few speakers that its words soon may never be spoken or heard again. Harrison didn't want that to happen to Matukar Panau. So in 2009, he set out for Papua New Guinea. His goal: use modern technology to help the remaining speakers preserve their native tongue.

⁸<https://student.societyforscience.org/article/saving-vanishing-tongues-3000-world-languages-face-extinction-apps-can-help-save-them> (14 Eylül 2014) Stephen Ornes, 23.05.2014 10:12am,

Greg Anderson and David Harrison, on the left, traveled to India to document a language — Sherdukpen — which is not written down. The researchers interviewed native speakers Dorji Khandu Thongdok and Lamu Norbu, on the right. Norbu says this language ‘is important for our identity.’

Jeremy Fahringer, Living Tongues Institute / Enduring Voices Project

But Matukar Panau is far from the only language facing extinction. Studies suggest that by the end of this century, nearly half of the estimated 7,000 languages now spoken worldwide could disappear. They’re in danger partly because the only people left speaking them are elderly adults, Harrison says. When those individuals die, their language will die with them. In addition, children may feel pressure to abandon a native language and instead adopt more common global languages, such as Mandarin, Hindi, English or Spanish.

As a result, today there are many languages around the world that are spoken by no more than a few dozen elderly people. But some languages with many speakers also are at risk. Often, their descendants aren’t interested in working to learn the language and keep it alive.

Over the last decade, Harrison has traveled the world, finding these languages and helping save them for the future.⁹

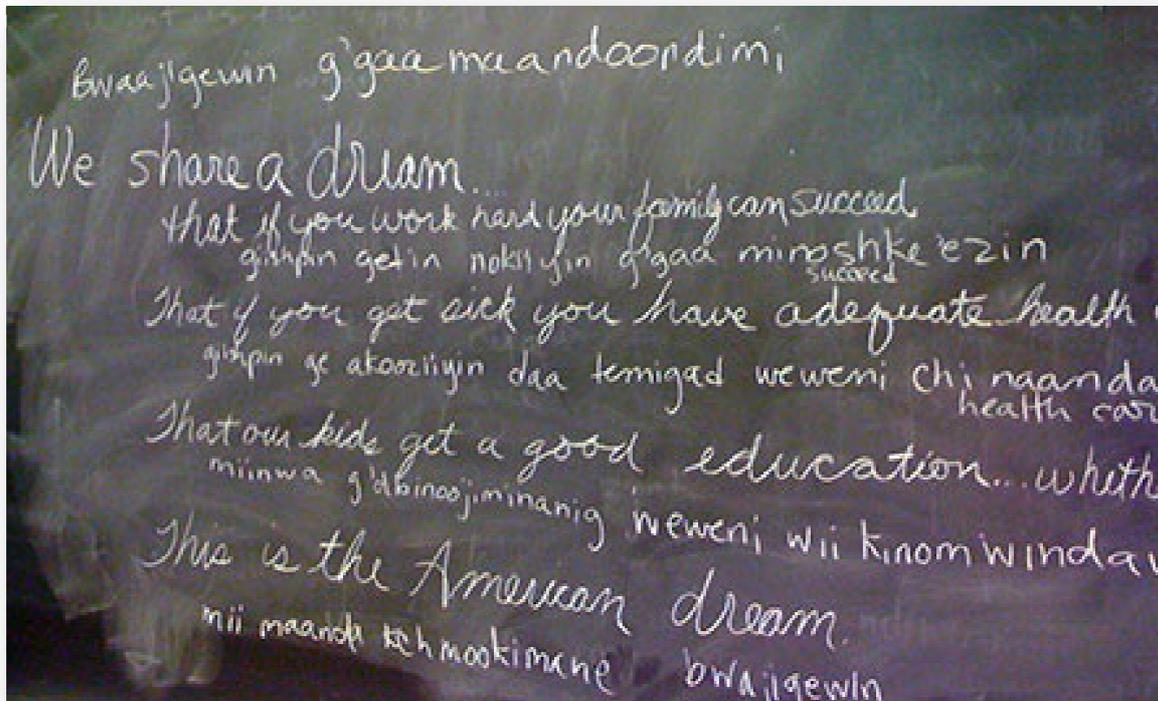
Of all the places, he found, Papua New Guinea has the richest mix of languages. The island nation, only slightly larger than California, is home to 4 million people — and more than 750 languages.

But you don’t have to visit the South Pacific to find dying languages. In the United States alone, 134 Native American languages are endangered, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Harrison says ‘language hotspots’ exist all over the world. These are places with endangered languages that haven’t been documented. They include the state of Oklahoma, pockets of central and eastern Siberia, parts of northern Australia and communities in South America.

⁹ He writes about his experiences in a 2010 book, *The Last Speakers: The Quest to Save the World's Most Endangered Languages*.

Press 'record' to pause extinction

Linguists and other scientists' record, share and study dwindling tongues so the value of the language won't be lost. These researchers use modern technology, including voice recorders, MP3 players, computer software and online dictionaries, to preserve words and sounds that would otherwise vanish.



Written on this chalkboard are alternating phrases in English and their translations into Anishinaabemowin. Margaret Noodin teaches students to communicate in this language. Only about 8,000 people still speak it.¹⁰

'We can't always stop [language extinction] from happening, but we can make recordings of a language for future studies,' says Steven Bird. A computer scientist at the University of Melbourne in Australia, he develops software for recording languages. 'People can preserve these languages now, while there's still time,' he says.

Documenting a language before it goes quiet isn't just an effort to preserve history. Linguists also can study the particular sounds, words and structure of a language to better understand how it is related to others. For instance, understanding how the English language's roots lie in ancient Germanic tells a story about human history.

Languages also can provide unique insights into a *place*. For example, a native tribe may have lived in one remote region for thousands of years. That means its members know their natural surroundings better than anyone else. Their language may contain terms that reflect special knowledge about the local landscape, its plants and its animals, Harrison points out. This can aid scientists who want to study ecosystems near to where the language is spoken.

¹⁰ Margaret Noodin / Ojibwe.net

But Harrison sees his job as more than just aiding science. He appreciates helping members of these threatened cultures preserve part of their heritage. Many young people, he says, want to remember their own history — even as they engage with the rest of the world.

‘I come across many people in their teens and early 20s who want to keep their heritage language because they value it,’ he says. ‘They’re saying, ‘Hey, our language is important to us. If we lose it, we lose our identity.’”

Margaret Noodin can relate to that. She’s a linguist at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Growing up in Minnesota during the 1970s, she occasionally heard members of her family speaking Anishinaabemowin (Ah-neesh-ee-nah-beh-MO-win). It’s the language of the Ojibwe (Oh-JIB-way) Native American people.

Back then, speaking her tribe’s language was a risky move. That’s because the U.S. government had forbidden Native American tribes from practicing many of their customs, including some parts of religious ceremonies. That ban extended to their native languages.

‘It didn’t count as a language in many ways, since it was illegal to teach and publish,’ Noodin says.

Forty years ago, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act became law. It was followed, 12 years later, by the Native American Languages Act. These changed government attitudes. With these laws, the United States now recognized Native American cultural practices as valuable. And it again legalized the teaching and publishing of Native American languages.

That policy inspired a generation of people to preserve tribal heritage. Growing up in an environment where her language had been forbidden left a big mark on Noodin. She has spent decades since then studying the endangered language of her family. She also is working with other Native American tribes to preserve theirs.

John Agid and Hickey Willey flank David Harrison (in the gray shirt at center), while working to record the Matukar Panau language. Chris Rainier / Enduring Voices Project



Get the word out

One of the first things Harrison learned upon his arrival in Papua New Guinea was that the speakers of Matukar Panau wanted to get on the Internet. In particular, they wanted their language to be available online.

‘That was surprising to me and my team,’ Harrison recalls, ‘because no one in this community had heard or seen the Internet.’

However, these villagers knew the Internet existed. They also knew it was a powerful tool for learning and sharing information. So these people wanted a presence online. To help out, Harrison and his team started by bringing out voice recorders, video recorders and computers.

Together with the scientists, these villagers created a ‘talking dictionary.’ This online resource provides translations between English and Matukar Panau. It also includes audio files, so users can

listen to the correct pronunciation of each word. Harrison, along with fellow linguists Gregory Anderson and Danielle Barth, unveiled this online dictionary in 2010. (See 'Further Reading,' below, to visit the dictionary and learn a few words in Matukar Panau.)

That same year, electricity reached those remote villages. In 2011, the villagers at last could log onto the Internet. For many, a first stop in cyberspace was the talking dictionary they had helped create. It now includes more than 4,000 words. It also hosts 171 photos that illustrate those words.

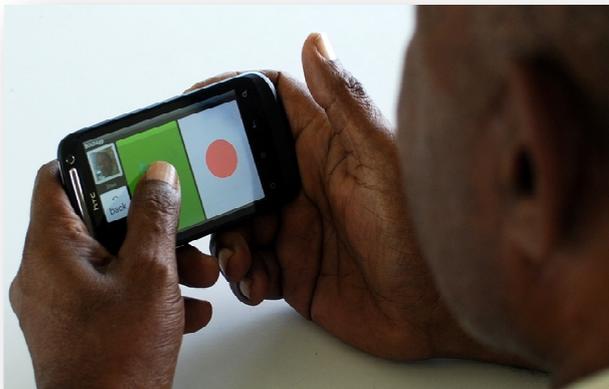
'The first time they ever saw the Internet, they could hear the voices of their elders and see them speaking their language,' Harrison says. The moment was powerful because it showed these villagers 'that their language is just as good as any other.'

Noodin also thinks the Internet and other modern tools can give endangered languages a fighting chance. To keep Anishinaa be mowin alive, she's turned to a variety of tools that bring together



people who are interested in the language. Today, she estimates there are about 8,000 speakers of that language.

Abamu Degio (left) watches a recording of herself singing a traditional song in Koro. Her language is spoken by about 1,000 people in western India. Joining her are Anthony Degio (center) and David Harrison (right). Jeremy Fahringer, Living Tongues Institute / Enduring Voices Project.



Most are older than 70. So to help others, she has created a Web page with reading and teaching materials in the language (including a children's book). She's also launched a Facebook page for people who speak the language. There they can post questions and messages for each other. She regularly texts in Anishinaabemowin too. Her typical greeting is *Boozhoo!* That means, 'Hello!'

Digital tools also can make it easier for people to learn a language at their own pace, she notes. 'If I can give someone an MP3 [file], for example, he or she can just play it as many times as they want and it's helpful,' she says. With native languages, early learners often feel like they should easily be able to pick up speaking and writing. When they don't, they can get discouraged. She says tools that let you learn at your own pace can ease the pressure you might put on yourself about learning — and therefore preserving — a native language.

Talking dictionaries and other tech tools

Bird, the University of Melbourne computer scientist, agrees with Noodin. The key to saving a language is to put the right tools in the hands of speakers, he says. Still, he points to one hitch: 'There aren't enough linguists to record all the world's endangered languages.'

But easy-to-use technology might help. While in Melbourne, Bird and his students developed an application, or app, for mobile phones. It's called Aikuma. The app allows users to record a person speaking. Then it plays back the recording, phrase by phrase, allowing the user to also record its translation into English (or any other language).

In March 2013, Bird put his app to the test. He traveled to Brazil, a hotspot that is home to about 200 languages. He traveled deep into the Amazon rainforest, hoping to find speakers of the Temb  language. Only about 150 people speak this endangered language. Once he found village of Temb  speakers, Bird and his companions spent four days using the app to record their stories. And, with the help of a bilingual villager, they also translated those stories.

A mobile app designed by computer scientist Steven Bird enables speakers of endangered languages to record their words and stories.

Steven Bird

Bird visited other regions of the Amazon during that trip. There, he used his app to record and translate stories in two other endangered languages as well. He says this first experiment with the app was mostly successful, though he had hoped to capture even more recordings. Still, it showed that anyone, not just linguists, could use the app to record and translate a story. In the future, he hopes to return to the region, bringing with him even more smartphones loaded with his app. sharing the right tools, he says, can help a small society share its language with the entire world.

'A language that was maybe never before outside a small village in Papua New Guinea can suddenly have a global audience,' says Harrison. He's another believer in the transformative power of technology. 'I see technology as playing a wonderful role in enabling small languages, through texting, social media and YouTube.'

With help and technology, people can amplify their voices. That can be true even if just a few people speak a language. 'If we don't hear them,' Harrison says, 'we don't know what they have to teach us.'

Power Words

Computer science: The scientific study of the principles and use of computers.

Cyberspace: An informal term for the Internet.

Digital: (in computer science and engineering) An adjective indicating that something has been developed numerically on a computer or some other electronic device, based on a binary system (where all numbers are displayed using a series of only zeros and ones).

Endangered: At serious risk of extinction.

Extinction: The state or process of a species, family or larger group of organisms ceasing to exist.

Linguistics: The scientific study of language.

MP3: A type of computer file used to store digital music.

Online: A term that refers to things that can be found or done on the Internet.

Web: An abbreviation of World Wide Web. It is used as an informal term for the Internet.

Native Speakers And Linguists Fight To Keep Kumeyaay Language Alive¹¹

Doğal konuşurlar ve dil bilimciler ABD Güney Kaliforniya ve Kuzey Baja Kaliforniya sınırlarında 100 kişiden daha az konuşuru kalmış olan Kumeyaay dilini canlandırmaya çalışıyorlar.

On a wildy windy day in the Kumeyaay community Juntas de Nejí, about an hour south of Tecate,



Mexico, Norma Meza-Calles watches as her 6-year-old grandson, Matt, cracks open acorns. She gives him pointers in her native tongue.

Matt is Meza-Calles' hope for keeping the Kumeyaay language and culture alive.

'I'm putting all of my efforts into teaching him to speak fluent Kumeyaay,' Meza-Calles said in Spanish. 'I want to make up for not teaching my kids to speak Kumeyaay.'

Norma Meza-Calles is teaching her six-

year-old grandson, Matt, to speak Kumeyaay at home.¹²

Meza-Calles's home language school is one small contribution to the weighty task of keeping the language from going the way of thousands of other minority languages: extinct.

'Out of 6,000 approximate languages that are spoken in the world, only about 100 of them are really safe right now,' San Diego State University linguist Margaret Field said. 'And those are big languages



like Spanish and English, Russian and Chinese.'

All but a handful of Kumeyaay speakers live south of the border. Field said the language has fared better in Mexico than in the U.S. largely because of differences in education policy.

'There's a long history of American Indian people being forced to go to boarding school where their languages and cultures were actively repressed, and they were taught to be ashamed of their language,' Field said.

'That didn't happen in Mexico. Instead what happened is people either didn't go to school or went to school for just a little while,' she said.

Meza-Calles and her three sisters only went to school for a few years as children. She said she didn't learn Spanish until she was 13.

Linguist Margaret Field works with three of the Meza-Calles sisters on documenting the Kumeyaay



¹¹[¹² May 14, 2014.](http://www.kpbs.org/news/2014/may/27/native-speakers-and-linguists-fight-keep-kumeyaay-/(14Eylül 2014) Photos: Jill Replogle.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

language.¹³

Now, as adults, the sisters have a rare expertise in their endangered language and culture. Field has met with them regularly for the past five years to record and document the language.

Together they produced online Kumeyaay language lessons, a request from Baja California teachers. Now Field and fellow linguist Amy Miller are working on a dictionary of all five dialects of Kumeyaay spoken in Baja California.

Documenting an endangered language is a painstakingly slow process. Field met three of the Meza-Calles sisters recently at the Kumeyaay museum in Tecate. They took several hours to go over just a few sentences of a Kumeyaay creation story that the sisters had previously recorded.

'For me the most important part is getting down every morpheme on every word,' Field explained. 'Every little piece of a word.'

The Meza-Calles family on their land in the Kumeyaay community, Juntas de Nejí, Baja California, Mexico.¹⁴



Back in the Kumeyaay communities of Baja, the real work of keeping the language alive takes place. Meza-Calles' grandson, Matt, is shy about speaking Kumeyaay, but he seems to understand when his grandmother speaks to him in the language.

'We really started at zero,' Norma said. 'Our grandkids didn't even know they were Kumeyaay. Now they know and they're proud to be Kumeyaay,' she said, 'because we were the first inhabitants

of Baja.'

If Norma succeeds in making her grandson a fluent speaker of his ancestral language, it'll then be his turn to keep the language alive, and eventually to pass it on to his own children. That, at least, is his grandmother's hope.

Saving the Comanche language¹⁵

Komançi dilinin korunması üzerine bir haber;

Billie Cable-Kreger, 61, teaches at the 'Comanche Children' day care center in Lawton, Oklahoma, where she is trying to pull her language back from extinction by teaching it to children. Billie Kreger teaches student to speak Comanche at the Early Childhood Development Center in Lawton.¹⁶

¹³ May 12, 2014.

¹⁴ May 14, 2014.

¹⁵ <http://newsok.com/saving-the-comanche-language/article/4875448> (14 Eylül 2014)

Photo: Juliana Keeping <https://plus.google.com/106739443311904526041?rel=author> Modified: June 3, 2014 at 10:00 am • Published: June 3, 2014

LAWTON — an industrial park full of beige corrugated steel buildings seems an unlikely place for the resuscitation of a dying language.

Yet in a small day care center there, a dedicated Comanche speaker is breathing life into her ancestral tongue.

Each work day, Billie Cable-Kreger, 61, arrives at the center. The words on the center's sign mean 'Comanche Children.' Inside, Cable-Kreger makes herself a cup of coffee before she and other workers pass out cereal and milk to the children. The day care caters to children from low-income families; most of their parents are casino and industrial workers, and a number of the children live nearby in a tribal housing complex.

A little more than a century ago, the Comanches were known as Lords of the Great Plains, renowned for their horsemanship. Today, Cable-Kreger is trying to pull her language back from extinction.

Her reason is simple: 'I don't want the language to die,' she said.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization lists as endangered 16 American Indian languages within Oklahoma's borders. Even languages from some of the state's largest tribes, like the Cherokees, are on the brink of extinction. There are at least six additional native languages once spoken in Oklahoma that are now extinct, according to UNESCO's list.

Comanche is listed as a severely endangered world language.

Ten years ago, the Lawton-based Comanche Nation had an estimated 100 speakers. It's not known how many speakers are left in the 15,000-strong tribe today, but Cable-Kreger said she can count fluent speakers she knows on one hand.

A recent Friday afternoon at the day care, children enrolled in a weeklong summer language program there sat on a colorful round rug.

Cable-Kreger stands at a white board and leads the children, five girls 7 to 13 and a 9-year-old boy, in a review of the Comanche alphabet.

Preserving a threatened language

The day care language program stems from the efforts of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, which formed in the 1990s.

Ronald Red Elk was among those involved from the beginning.

'Once the language is gone completely, so goes the Comanche people,' Red Elk said.

'To me, it is the heart of our very existence. Our culture can't adequately be described through the English language, or any other language, except for Comanche.'

Efforts to preserve Comanche over the years have included the creation of a dictionary, language courses and CDs of Comanche songs.

Tribes throughout Oklahoma have launched like-minded initiatives in an effort to preserve their languages.

¹⁶ Friday, May 30, 2014. Photo by David McDaniel, the Oklahoman.

'It stopped when they stopped speaking Comanche to us'

While both of her parents are Comanche, they sent Cable-Kreger and her siblings away when they spoke their native tongue at home, Cable-Kreger said.

She always thought her parents were just gossiping.

Barbara Goodin, a secretary and treasurer for the language committee, said the reasons Comanche people stopped speaking their language at home and passing it down to their children go much deeper.

White authorities sought to eradicate Indian languages at government schools. At boarding schools in Oklahoma and across the country, Indian children were punished for speaking their language.

'They did not want their children to suffer that,' Goodin said.

Red Elk added that the 'brainwashing' worked.

'You were taught that you didn't need the language,' he said.

'That was totally false. Anybody knows a bilingual or multilingual person has a great deal of advantages when education is concerned. The federal government didn't want that to happen.'

Red Elk's parents attended Fort Sill Indian School and eventually stopped speaking Comanche at home.

'The traditional way of learning the language stopped with my parents,' said Red Elk, 74. 'It stopped when they stopped speaking Comanche to us.'

That's why Red Elk's two oldest siblings learned Comanche, while he and four younger siblings did not.

The government found an advantage for the indigenous language it had tried to extinguish.

Roderick Red Elk, Ronald Red Elk's older brother, served as a Comanche code talker in World War II, landing at Utah Beach during the Normandy invasion. He and 12 others sent secure messages via telephone and radio in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany. Roderick Red Elk died in 1997.

The deaths of elders like Red Elk and the advanced age of speakers like her mother prompted Cable-Kreger in the early 2000s to aggressively pursue her own native tongue. She took a course offered through her tribe's language committee on how to learn and speak the language of her ancestors.

She and her mother, Gloria Wermey-Cable, a native speaker, would drive and talk together for hours. Cable-Kreger asked her mother questions, which she would answer in Comanche.

The Comanche people lost another native speaker when Cable-Kreger's mother died in 2009, at 84.

'I have spent years working with our elders, I have no words for it,' Goodin said. 'They are our true treasures of the Comanche Nation. And, with each, with the passing of each one, we lose more of our language and our culture. And that's very disturbing.'

Cable-Kreger doesn't consider herself fluent in Comanche. She said she knows basic phrases, enough to carry on a simple conversation.

Revitalizing a dying language has been difficult. The language committee has gone so far as to offer families financial incentives to learn Comanche.

The next generation

Lottie Deere, 13, is among the group of children at the day care reciting the Comanche alphabet.

Her parents started speaking some basic Comanche at home after participating in an incentivized language committee program for families. Deere wants to keep up.

'It's really fun to learn,' Deere said. 'Usually, I get confused of what my mom is saying. I don't understand what she's saying to me. I have been here for a long time, and I still don't know my Comanche Nation language. Now, since the summer program has opened, I get to learn.'

At the day care, after practicing the alphabet and vowel sounds with the students, Cable-Kreger moves on to numbers.

'Who wants to write No. 1?' She asks.

Three hands shoot into the air. The children take turns writing out the words for numbers zero to 11.

The words for seven and eight are particularly challenging. The Comanche word for seven has 10 letters, two letters that are silent. The word for eight is even more intimidating, with 14 letters.

The children at the center consume and repeat her words with smiles on their faces.

Brimming with enthusiasm, Kierra Brown, 9, wanted to know how she could find out more.

'How would you find these words in the Comanche language?' asked Brown, who everyone calls KiKi.

She had repeated the Comanche words for zero to 11 the best of all the students, from memory, and with her eyes closed for good measure.

'I learned these words from my mama,' Cable-Kreger answered.

'Did she learn from your grandmother?' Brown asked.

'A-haa,' Cable-Kreger said. It is Comanche for 'Yes.'

After the Friday lesson, Cable-Kreger left to attend a birthday party for her granddaughter.

She hopes the little girl will speak as much or more than she does one day.

When will she stop teaching Comanche?

'When I can't stand up any more,' she said.

Why the language of Jesus is at risk¹⁷

Habere göre çatışmaların devam ettiği Suriye'de Hz. İsa'nın dili Aramice risk altında!

¹⁷<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/language-of-jesus-still-spoken-in-syrian-village-but-at-risk/article18064248/> (14 Eylül 2014).

Kinda Jayoush, Special to The Globe and Mail, Published Thursday, Apr. 17 2014, 10:06 PM EDT, Last updated Friday, Apr. 18 2014, 5:30 PM EDT

Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ, has survived for centuries and is still spoken in one place on Earth: the village of Maaloula in Syria, about 60 kilometers northeast of Damascus. But Maaloula has not been immune to the civil war that has torn the country apart, and experts are worried that Aramaic, already designated as ‘definitely endangered,’ will be a casualty.

Since late 2013, Maaloula has been held by the Nusra Front, an Islamist extremist organization affiliated with al-Qaeda, which prompted a number of Christians to flee the village. This week, after an intense battle, Syrian forces reclaimed the town. The civil war has taken its toll: The once-picturesque tourist attraction for pilgrims is now full of charred homes and bombarded churches and monasteries.

The damage – and continuing violence in Syria – could mean that the refugees do not return, which would be a significant blow to Aramaic.

‘Aramaic, which has been transferred from one generation to another for thousands of years through the inhabitants of Maaloula and their collective memory, could die today because the villagers fled their homes heading toward different destinations as refugees,’ says Monsignor Makarios Wehbi, a priest at Ottawa’s Sts. Peter and Paul Melkite Catholic Church who hails from Maaloula and has been active in preserving his language.

The Village of Maaloula

It is a beautiful village, carved in the Qalamun Mountains in Syria. Maaloula is more than 2,000 years old and is home to a number of ancient Christian sites and monasteries, including two of the oldest monasteries in the history of Syria and Christianity – St. Sergius and St. Thecla – making it a tourist destination for pilgrims.

Its population of 10,000 drops in the winter to fewer than 5,000 people, as many residents move temporarily to Damascus and Beirut to escape the cold.

But in the Syrian civil war, Maaloula is also strategically significant. The village is located near the main road that links Damascus to Homs, which is considered an essential supply route. That is why the government was eager to retake Maaloula from rebels – to cut off their supply routes and give the government more control of central Syria.

The exodus of Christians over the past year has worried experts, who fear that Aramaic speakers will integrate into their new communities and eventually the language will disappear. And although the village has been recaptured, many believe that the residents will not return because their homes have been destroyed, they are not wealthy enough to rebuild and the insecurity of the civil war continues.

‘The village is badly damaged and security is very limited,’ says one Maaloula resident who did not want to be named for safety reasons. ‘I do not think we will be able to go there to settle in a long time.’

‘We are so happy [Maaloula] is free now, but the village is littered with land mines, many parts of it are destroyed and some homes have been torched,’ says a former resident named Ward, who fled in late 2013 and has taken refuge in Damascus. ‘Most villagers are poor and I doubt they would have the means to rebuild their homes. And those who have the means are afraid that the general security situation is not stable yet or safe,’ she added.

There are isolated communities around the world that still speak Syriac or Aramaic, but Maaloula’s Western Neo-Aramaic is considered the closest to the language of Jesus. Two small communities near Maaloula – Gubbadine and Baxa – speak a version that is almost the same.

'It is a very critical time in the history of the language,' Father Wehbi says. 'If the residents of Maaloula finally decide to take refuge and settle in Damascus, Lebanon, Egypt or elsewhere, then we will be facing a risk of losing the language. It would be easier for them to speak Arabic or any other language that their children may use in schools and hear on television or on the streets of the new places where they resettled and lived.'

Preserving the Language

The closeness of the Aramaic of Maaloula to the language of Jesus was first discovered around 1850 when linguists visited the village. This version of the Aramaic language used to be transferred orally, but that changed over the past four decades when George Rizkallah, a professor at Damascus University, began to write poetry in it. Several years ago, the Aramaic Language Institute was established in Maaloula.

Prof. Rizkallah lives in Damascus, where he gives lectures and holds activities with the aim of protecting the language.

Father Wehbi's voice chokes with frustration as he describes the importance of protecting Aramaic, one of the Semitic languages that have various branches, including those spoken east of the Euphrates River – modern-day Iraq and North Syria – and those spoken to the west of the Euphrates, in Syria, in periods of history that predate Christianity.

UNESCO recognizes Aramaic as a 'definitely endangered' language, and has called for the protection of Syria's heritage against damages by the civil war.

Father Wehbi is working hard to co-ordinate efforts between Canada and Europe to protect the Aramaic language from extinction. He set up a Facebook page this year – Learn the Aramaic, JESUS language – to teach the language.

He began the individual effort with some of his close relatives to post short lessons and translations of Arabic, English and Aramaic.

He also connected with a Spanish Facebook page on the subject. 'Sometimes we post items of the Aramaic heritage of Syria, we post articles and research. We have friends from all over the world,' he says.

Arnold Werner, a professor of Semitic languages at Heidelberg University in Germany, has also researched the Aramaic language for several decades – including spending two years in Maaloula in the 1980s – and has written a dictionary of the language.

'We hope [the violence] ends very soon,' says Prof. Werner, who is currently in Turkey carrying out research on languages. 'This is a treasure of the world and it needs our help today.'

Prof. Werner has set up a charitable association, hoping to raise money to help residents of Maaloula rebuild and resettle there when the violence ends.

'This is my duty,' Prof. Werner says. 'My children lived in Maaloula and loved it. They are determined to help in whatever way they can. It was a shock for us to see what is happening in beautiful Maaloula. We used to attend its famous festivals and religious celebrations. It is carved in our hearts and minds.'

The Canadians Who Speak It

George Haddad, a Canadian of Syrian origin from Maaloula, is proud of his village and its grand history. Some of his extended family still lived there when the village was attacked in September.

As he speaks of Maaloula, his voice fades and he collapses into tears. 'I feel the pain is crushing my heart of all that happened,' he says from Montreal, where he has been living for more than two decades.

Mr. Haddad and several members of his family have been living in Canada for many years, but they never stopped visiting Maaloula. 'I always tried to go there regularly in the summers. I love my beautiful ancient village, our summer religious festivals and the tourists. I love everything about it,' he says. 'I wish I can go back and visit. We all pray that we will have the chance to go back to our homes and to visit Maaloula.'

There are about 10 families from Maaloula in Montreal and a few others in Ottawa and Calgary.

Mr. Haddad tries to teach the language to his grandchildren. 'For example, I would ask one of them to bring me water in Aramaic words. Sometimes they laugh with excitement that they are trying to speak the language their grandfather speaks.'

Linguists record endangered Indigenous Goldfields language Tjupan in bid to save it¹⁸

Avustralya'nın Goldfields bölgesi yerlilerinin konuştuğu Tjupan dilinin Yale Üniversitesi'nden bir öğrenci tarafından kayıt altına alındığına dair bir haber;



A linguist from Yale University is recording an endangered Indigenous language in Western Australia's Goldfields region in attempt to stop it from dying out.

There are only six fluent speakers of Tjupan, a complex language which originated in the northern Goldfields near Wiluna.

Yale linguistics student Andy Zhang has been making recordings of the language during the past month to take back to the United States, where students will develop resources such as a dictionary, grammar sketch and pronunciation guide.

'These are the true Australian languages - English is an imported language,' he said. 'That's why it's so important to step in and help the speakers record their language, perhaps create educational materials, whatever the community wants out of the language.' Mr. Zhang said the number of Indigenous Australian languages spoken has dwindled to 20, down from an estimated 600 a few centuries.

Edie Ulrich, a Tjupan woman, says the language holds a lot of cultural significance for her and the Tjupan people.

'I know that our language is one of the few that's spoken by us, just a few people and it's been really exciting having Andy come and work with us,' she said. 'We lose it if we don't try and preserve it.'

'It's good for our kids and that to learn to speak it as well.' *Tjupan has much more complex verbs and kind of special language - so language describing direction and location - than we do in English.* Yale University linguistics student Andy Zhang.

¹⁸ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-24/linguists-concerned-indigenous-language-will-be-lost/5692746>
Rebecca Curtin, Updated 24 Aug 2014, 4:14pmSun 24 Aug 2014, 4:14pm; Photo: Edna Sceghi is one of only six speakers of Tjupan. (ABC News) Map: Kalgoorlie 6430

Ms Ulrich said some of her fondest memories were of her mum, Edna Sceghi, telling her traditional stories in Tjupan.

'Mum would sit there and tell us stories, she's done this all through our lives, like she's spoken in Tjupan and telling us all the stories,' she said

'Just learning those words and just picturing everything that's happening as she's telling us the stories, it brings everything alive.'

Mr Zhang has spent four weeks working with the speakers each day, trying to record as much material as possible.

'A lot of people, because they haven't delved deep enough into these languages, they think they're very simple,' he said.

'But Tjupan has much more complex verbs and kind of special language - so language describing direction and location - than we do in English.'

Ms Ulrich said the linguistic work had been intellectually challenging.

'At first it was nice and easy, you know think of words and stuff,' she said.

'But Andy has been really pushing us to get all the different parts, the different endings and bits and pieces all working together.

'I've seen mum sitting at the end of the table halfway through the sessions with her eyes closed and she's sort of nodding off and she's saying, 'Yeah, I'm tired!'