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2015 NEWS ABOUT ENDANGERED LANGUAGES



Why do we fight so hard to preserve endangered languages?

Tehlikedeki diller için niçin mücadele etmiyoruz?

James Harbeck

Kaynak: <http://theweek.com/articles/541609/why-fight-hard-preserve-endangeredlanguages> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

March 2, 2015

The Pitkern language is dying.

Pitkern is the language spoken on Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island, in the South Pacific. It's spoken by only 500 people. Younger speakers are increasingly preferring English, and many of them are moving to New Zealand or other English-speaking places. Even the small Pitkern-language version of Wikipedia has been proposed for closure twice. But if the young people don't want to speak the language, what's the point, right?

The point, as many linguists and others will tell you, is that losing a language is like losing a species. It's a kind of extinction. As the linguist James Crawford said, when languages die the world loses four big things: linguistic diversity, intellectual diversity, cultural diversity, and cultural identity.

There are organizations dedicated to preventing this. The National Geographic Society has created an Enduring Voices Project in collaboration with the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages to help preserve languages, which it sees as preserving culture, ancient knowledge, ways of doing things, and ways of thinking. Many endangered languages have no written form, and with their loss we lose folklore, stories, the views and understandings of countless generations of humans. We also lose knowledge about plants, animals, ecosystems, and geography. Even with the ones that have a written form, if the speakers die out, no one thinks about the world in just that way anymore, dividing it up into those names and categories. Preserving languages is like preserving nature. No one could possibly object to it. Could they?

But some people do sometimes. This includes some of the speakers of the endangered languages themselves. Some speakers see their language as limiting: if they or their children are to be successful, they need to know the language of education, of science, of business, so they can talk to other people and gain the vast stores of knowledge available. How can major languages be insufficient when there's so much knowledge recorded in them? Can't you just take your local knowledge and translate it into English or Spanish?

Even noted linguists aren't always on the language preservation bandwagon. Peter Ladefoged, one of the great names in modern linguistics, once pointed out that in some countries tribalism is a threat to national peace and unity, and pushing preservation of local languages over a national language aids and abets this schism. Is avoiding the death of languages worth causing the death of people? What's more, resources are finite, and sometimes you have to choose which languages to focus on or all of them may be lost.

Another prominent linguist, Salikoko Mufwene, reminded linguists more recently that all languages change all the time, and language death and language birth are not separate things. Linguists fight people who want to pin English to an ideal version from one time and place, so how can they pin any other language down in the same way? A language is not an animal, after all. It is not even a species of animal. It is in constant variation. Each person speaks different varieties at different times, and a given person may speak several languages.

Beyond that, some of the justifications given for preserving languages go against principles most linguists hold to be true. Language shapes the way its speakers see the world? Knowledge is untranslatably encoded in a language? These ideas are, shall we say, controversial.

In any event, if speakers no longer want to speak a language, who are we to tell them that they are wrong? It's their language, not ours, and it's paternalistic of us to expect them to do as we wish just to satisfy our need for authentic cultures to fill the pages of magazines. We may be well justified in wanting to preserve the language for future generations; members of a culture that has lost its language sometimes feel the loss sharply, and may even seek to regain the knowledge. But it's still theirs to keep or lose, not ours. And if they don't want their culture to become our museum piece, that's their right.

But if the speakers don't resist having the language recorded, we can still preserve it. Languages have been brought back from "death" — the Celtic languages Cornish and Manx are often given as examples, with fewer than two dozen new native speakers but hundreds of second-language speakers. It's not quite a linguistic Jurassic Park, but it's more than nothing. And Hebrew, which was no one's home language for a long time, is now the first language of millions of people thanks to a successful revival.

Not all languages have an existing literature, however, and certainly not one like Hebrew has. And linguists aren't available in unlimited supply to travel the world and put together dictionaries and

lexicons and record oral histories. That's where things such as a language-specific version of Wikipedia come in.

Which brings us back to Pitkern.

Pitkern is slowly dying, and some people even want to get rid of the small Pitkern-language version of Wikipedia. Some of the reasons to kill the Pitkern Wikipedia are the same as reasons for fighting to keep the language alive: it's mostly spoken, without much literature; it's losing speakers to a surrounding dominant English culture. Anyway, it looks a lot like a dialect of English with some Tahitian influence.

Oh, yeah. That's the other thing. Pitkern (also called Norfuk) is a creole, a mix of English and Tahitian, and it's been around for just about 200 years.

Have you heard of the Mutiny on the Bounty? In 1789, a group of sailors on the ship *Bounty*, led by Fletcher Christian, mutinied against Captain William Bligh. This actually happened, not just in movies. Some of the mutineers, along with some Tahitians, settled on Pitcairn Island; in 1856, some of their descendants took over an abandoned penal colony on Norfolk Island (3,900 miles to the west), and the rest remained on Pitcairn. The two languages blended into something that still has a lot of resemblance to English.

Or, as the Pitkern article on Pitcairn Island puts it, "T' ofishol laenghwij f' ai Pitkern Ailen es Pitkern. Pitkern (tuu Norfuk) es a'langgwidc tat es spokn i' Norfuk ailen tuu. Es a' miks a' oel Inglish en Tahityan laenghwij, wi' Inglish maeken mor enfluens." Read that out loud and it will sound very much like, "The official language of the Pitcairn Islands is Pitkern. Pitkern (also Norfuk) is a language that is spoken in Norfolk Island too. It's a mix of old English and Tahitian language, with English making more influence."

Do you feel the same about Pitkern now? Why or why not?

The Pitkern language doesn't preserve knowledge from time immemorial, true. But it does have two centuries of cultural history behind it. It may look a lot like a respelled version of English, but it's not actually identical, and it's an expression of a different perspective, a mark of a distinctive culture. And it's interesting linguistic data.

Besides, many endangered languages are similar to other languages, sometimes as similar to a non-endangered language as Pitkern is to English. That's often one reason they're endangered: it's so easy for their speakers to switch to the more dominant local language.

And a creole is still a real language. One of the threatened languages National Geographic highlights is Mednyj Aleut, a creole formed from contact between Aleut and Russian. Being a creole doesn't make a language better or worse. It just means it has mixed origins.

Beyond that, even if you think it's just a dialect, dialects are interesting too. People in some cities are very proud of their local version of English, with its particular accent and special words. Linguists get a lot of very interesting data from them.

So what do we do with Pitkern?

Even if they're mostly not helping much, no one from Pitcairn or Norfolk is keeping anyone else from preserving the language. And Wikipedia is free. If it's not too resource-consuming to preserve it, and if there are people who want to preserve it, why not?

Linguist documents dying languages still spoken in Toronto.**Dil bilimciler Kanada Toronto'da hâlâ konuşulan ölü dilleri belgeliyor.**

30 September 2015

Kaynak: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/09/30/linguist-documents-dying-languages-still-spoken-in-toronto.html> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

Turns out, this diverse city is a hotbed for endangered languages — some preserved better here than in their homeland.

Paolo Frasca speaks the dialect Santonofrese from a town in Italy that resembles Latin more than Italian.

Paolo Frasca speaks the dialect Santonofrese from a town in Italy that resembles Latin more than Italian.

By: Verity Stevenson Staff Reporter, Published on Wed Sep 30 2015

Paolo Frasca's rare Italian dialect "fossilized" in Toronto and found its own community here.

"That is why I speak the dialect probably better than the people in my generation back home in Italy," said Frasca, 24. "It's because I moved here when I was 13 years old."

He speaks a language particular to a small town of about 3,000 people in the region of Calabria in southern Italy. This tongue is closer to Latin than typical Italian because of the region's late Romanization. Back home, younger generations like his don't speak Santonofrese — named after the town of Sant'Onofrio — because it is seen as "lowbrow." He says that thanks to Toronto's large Italian community, there may be several endangered languages and dialects like his preserved in the city as people continue to speak them with their family.

That's not always the case, though. Linguist and director of Queen's University's Strathy Language Unit, Anastasia Riehl, who started the Endangered Languages Alliance Toronto, has been documenting which of the world's dying languages are spoken in Toronto, including Frasca's. Some are spoken by just one or two people in the city or even in the world. Without a community to share it, those people stop speaking their language and absorb the regional language instead.

Riehl began the Alliance in Toronto after her Cornell University grad school colleague, Daniel Kaufman, launched one in New York. After years of documenting languages overseas, she discovered the last fluent speaker of a dying Latvian language, Livonian, lived outside Toronto from a relative vacationing in Argentina in 2011. The woman, Grizelda Kristina, was 101 and ailing.

"That's when I was like, 'OK, let's just say we're going to do this,'" she said of the day in 2011 which prompted Kaufman to fly to Toronto to interview the woman who died two years later.

Since then, she's interviewed more than a dozen speakers of eight endangered languages from around the world. She's working on a short documentary detailing the stories of three speakers. Riehl has cut back on some work obligation to devote more time to the project.

Toronto's position as one of the most diverse cities in the world — more than 30 per cent of its residents speak a language other than English or French — makes it an "as good if not better" place to document endangered languages.

The city's website pegs the number of languages and dialects spoken in the city at more than 140, but Riehl estimates there are "dozens" that don't appear in census figures. Any language becomes endangered, according to the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), when its speakers cease to use it and when it is no longer passed on to the next generation.

"The global context we're in has definitely impacted [language loss] because people have all these pressures to speak a more dominant language," Riehl said, explaining that the phenomenon doesn't appear only in English-speaking countries. "It's a sad way to think about it, but it's one of the few things [immigrants] bring with them."

She says the best way to preserve a language is for children to speak it and use it.

"I'm thinking of these refugees, especially the kids who end up in these new places — it just seems like it's so much better for them if there can be a way to support them in their native language."

But the shyness younger immigrant generations, like Frascà's, experience in speaking their language contrasts with the shame indigenous peoples of North America were forced to bear for years under colonization, said Kaufman.

"The tragedy in New York, I would say, is that you can find almost every language under the sun except the indigenous language of New York itself, which is Lenape," an Algonquin language, he said, adding that the only place the language is now spoken and taught is in Ontario.

Riehl interviewed speakers of indigenous languages at the beginning of the project, but says she felt the documentation was already being done by grassroots initiatives.

Bonnie Jane Maracle, who helps run programs that teach the Mohawk language in the Tyendinaga First Nation, believes that what separates the endangered languages of indigenous communities from the rest is nationhood.

"They have a home and a land and a nation to go back to," she said of immigrants speaking endangered languages outside their home countries. "This is our home, but where do we return to, to re-learn our language?"

Correction – October 2, 2015: This article was edited from a previous version that misstated Daniel Kaufman's given name. As well, the article mistakenly said Anastasia Riehl heard of Grizelda Kristina while vacationing in Argentina which prompted her to fly to Toronto to interview the woman. As well, Riehl has kept her director role at the Strathy Language Unit at Queen's University while working on the project.

Brazil project aims to save endangered indigenous languages.

Brezilya'daki proje, tehlikedeki dillerin korunmasını amaçlıyor.

Kaynak: <http://wtop.com/latin-america/2015/11/brazil-project-aims-to-save-endangered-indigenous-languages/> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

By [JENNY BARCHFIELD](#) November 6, 2015 1:53 pm



In this Oct. 28, 2015 photo, a Brazilian Pataxo indigenous woman attends the World Indigenous Games in Palmas, Brazil. Of the estimated 2,000 indigenous languages thought to have been spoken in pre-Columbian times in what is now Brazil, only around 160 survive today...

PALMAS, Brazil (AP) — Guaricema Pataxo's indigenous roots are the cornerstone of her identity. The 53-year-old great-grandmother lives on her Pataxo people's reservation and makes a living by hawking their handicrafts, fully decked out in traditional regalia.

But ask her to speak Pataxo, and she can only stumble through a few basic words and phrases.

Her situation is not unusual.

Of the estimated 2,000 indigenous languages thought to have been spoken in pre-Columbian times in what is now Brazil, only around 160 survive today. Experts warn that as many as 40 percent of those remaining could be lost in the next few decades, as elders die off and young people get more access to television, the Internet and cellphones.

The pace of change has been accelerated by big agriculture's push into the hinterland, bringing roads, electricity and outsiders to areas with a high concentration of indigenous people.

A program spearheaded in part by UNESCO, the U.N.'s cultural and educational agency, aims to give a fighting chance to nearly three dozen threatened languages. Over nearly eight years, the program has helped 35 tribes to transcribe their languages, develop dictionaries and teaching tools for children and document their rich oral traditions.

"We used to learn our language and the stories of our people with our elders," said Elly Mairu Karaja, of the Karaja people of central Brazil, a schoolteacher who's worked with the program. "But now, with technology, the youngsters are living in the white world even while they're on our land. There are many now who don't want to be indigenous anymore."

Along with the problem of anemic interest from younger generations, demography itself is playing against the survival of many indigenous languages, said Jose Carlos Levinho, director of Rio de Janeiro's Indian Museum, which ran the project with Brazil's indigenous affairs agency.

While the country's indigenous population is thought to have numbered from 3 million to 5 million in pre-Columbian days, five centuries of disease, violence and poverty have whittled that to under 1 million. Now, Brazil's original inhabitants make up less than 0.5 percent of this country of 200 million.

The indigenous population is splintered into 305 tribes, some with just several dozen or fewer members.

"In Brazil, nearly 40 percent of indigenous nations have fewer than 500 members," said Levinho. "Studies have shown that these days, such small populations aren't able preserve their languages."

"We have several peoples who've completely lost their languages and want to try to recover them; we have some peoples where there are very few speakers left; some where there are generational conflicts; and some where the indigenous language has become the second language," he added.

Portuguese is now the first language of most members of the Pataxo nation, including handicraft vendor Guaricema Pataxo.

"Our people often leave our lands to study outside and they meet lots of people and end up marrying white people, and it all gets more and more diluted," said Pataxo, who has two children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, none of whom speak the tribe's mother tongue.

The Pataxos' ancestral home is along Brazil's Atlantic coast and there are historical accounts of association between the tribe and Europeans dating back to the 1500s. Five centuries of contact, including efforts to "civilize" the Pataxo by removing their children and forbidding them from speaking their language, took a toll. Of today's remaining 13,000 Pataxos, only around 1,600 are thought to speak the group's native tongue.

"I don't feel good" about not speaking Pataxo, the handicraft vendor said as she peddled seed necklaces at the recent World Indigenous Games in the central city of Palmas. "I would feel better if I had learned."

Under the program to save indigenous tongues, specialists were dispatched country-wide to train a hand-picked cadre of tribe members to collect archival materials such as videos of traditional

ceremonies where the old languages are used and to help transcribe languages that were exclusively oral.

Transcription “is a long, tense, difficult process,” said museum director Levinho. “It involved heated internal negotiations among the tribes .. There are lots of fights, lots of discussions.”

The team also faced practical hurdles, such as a flu outbreak near the beginning of a 2008 project that closed indigenous lands to outsiders, and threats of violence from farmers trying to drive indigenous people from their lands.

Despite the difficulties, UNESCO’s director general, Irina Bokova, said the project was a success during a recent trip to Rio de Janeiro.

Still, Levinho says he has little hope of making much of a dent in linguists’ prognosis that dozens of native Brazilian languages could become extinct within 20 years.

“I don’t see much changing this picture,” said Levinho. “We’d need to see a big investment . to grapple with the problem.”

For Yamalui Kuikuro, of the Kuikuro people from the central Mato Grosso state, where soy, cotton, corn and cattle have begun to replace forests, the disappearance of an indigenous language marks the beginning of the tribe’s end.

“When we lose our language, we no longer have any value, no longer have any identity,” said Kuikuro, his forehead glistening with red paint. “Language is the identity of indigenous peoples.”

In A Turkish Village, A Conversation With Whistles, Not Words

Bir Türk köyünde insanlar kelimelerle değil ıslıkla anlaşıyorlar.

Kaynak: <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/09/26/443434027/in-a-turkish-village-a-conversation-with-whistles-not-words> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

September 26, 2015 7:39 AM ET

Peter Kenyon

Steep hills surround the village of Kuskoy, high in the mountains above Turkey's Black Sea coast. Some villagers here can still understand the old "bird language," a form of whistled Turkish used to communicate across these deep valleys.

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Peter Kenyon/NPR

In a remote mountain village high above Turkey's Black Sea coast, there are villagers who still communicate across valleys by whistling. Not just whistling as in a non-verbal, "Hey, you!" But actually using what they call their "bird language," Turkish words expressed as a series of piercing whistles.

The village is Kuskoy, and it's inhabited by farmers who raise tea, corn, beets and other crops, and also keep livestock. The landscape is unusual by Turkish standards, and the residents are also considered a bit eccentric by other Turks.

Everyone we met in Kuskoy was warm, welcoming and very generous. But when our meeting with Nazmiye Cakir, 60, was interrupted by an eruption of gunfire from across the valley, our hosts smiled reassuringly and paused, as if waiting for more. Sure enough, a few seconds later came an even louder volley – a response from our side of the mountain.

Once that bit of nonverbal communication died down, Cakir explained how she learned to whistle Turkish. She says her grandparents often took care of her when she was young, and they passed it on.

"You might need to ask one of your neighbors, 'Can you help me harvest the corn tomorrow?' Or something like that," she says. "Or, if there's a funeral, the family would whistle the news throughout the valley."

Halil Cindik, head of the Kuskoy Bird Language Association, demonstrates his technique for whistling Turkish words and phrases. The piercing tones can be heard a mile or more away, depending on conditions. Cindik says an annual festival is helping to keep the whistled language alive, but the spread of cellphones is causing villagers to abandon it.



Halil Cindik, head of the Kuskoy Bird Language Association, demonstrates his technique for whistling Turkish words and phrases. The piercing tones can be heard a mile or more away, depending on conditions. Cindik says an annual festival is helping to keep the whistled language alive, but the spread of cellphones is causing villagers to abandon it.

Peter Kenyon/NPR

Don't Whistle Your 'Love Talk'

A cheerful, talkative woman, Cakir also explains what you can't talk about when you're whistling.

"The only thing you never whistle is your love talk," she says, laughing. "Because you'll get caught!"

After Cakir demonstrates her whistling chops with some complex phrases, two other villagers devise a test to show that this isn't some kind of prearranged code, but an actual language.

One villager is given a phone number from Istanbul that neither man has seen before. He whistles it to the second man, Halil Cindik, the head of the Kuskoy Bird Language Association. Cindik dials the number that's been whistled to him, and it's right.

There are other whistled languages in the world, one in the Canary Islands for instance. But the Kuskoy bird language excited the interest of a Turkish-German bio-psychologist, Onur Gunturkun.

"I was absolutely, utterly fascinated when I first heard about it," he says. "And I directly saw the relevance of this language for science."

Gunturkun has been working on brain asymmetry research, which holds among other things, that spoken language is mainly processed by the left hemisphere of the brain, and music by the right. There is some overlap – when it comes to recognizing tones of voice, for instance - but basically they're seen as separate.

So how does the brain process a language in which syllables are rendered as whistled tones instead of spoken words?

Nazmiye Cakir, a 60-year-old "bird whistler," learned the whistled language from her grandparents, and still uses it. "The one thing you don't whistle about is your love talk," she says with a laugh, "because you'll get caught!"

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Gokce Saracoglu/for NPR

Conducting A Field Test

Gunturkun went to Kuskoy to do a field test.

It involved testing villagers using headphones and recorded Turkish, both spoken syllables and their whistled equivalents.

With the spoken syllables, the villagers responded much as other subjects have in similar tests: if you play two different syllables, one in the left ear and one in the right, people tend to hear only the one played to the right ear, which is controlled by the left hemisphere of the brain.

But Gunturkun found that when he played whistled syllables, the villagers tended to hear both of them, suggesting that they were using both hemispheres of their brain to a much greater extent.

"So in the end, there was a balanced contribution of both hemispheres," says Gunturkun. "So indeed, depending on the way we speak, the hemispheres have a different share of work in language processing."

It's not clear if Gunturkun's work will lead to real-life applications, but he wonders if a whistled language might be helpful to, say, a stroke victim with left hemisphere damage who has difficulty processing spoken language.

The spread of cellphones has reduced the need for whistling, but villagers stage a festival each summer to try to keep it alive.

And as some rather sheepishly admit, it still comes in handy - to warn their gun-toting neighbors when the police are on patrol.

Learn 40 Aboriginal Hand Signs Used to Communicate Across Western Australia's Desert.

Batı Avustralya çöllerinde 40 Aborjin el işareti öğrenerek iletişim kuruyor.

Kaynak: <https://globalvoices.org/2015/07/27/learn-40-aboriginal-hand-signs-used-to-communicate-across-western-australias-desert/> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

Posted 27 July 2015 13:07 GMT

With its rough terrain and harsh climate, the Great Sandy Desert in Western Australia can be a challenging place to live. For those carving out a life in this sparsely populated region, the vast distances of Australia's second largest desert can also prove to be challenging for those wanting to communicate with neighbors.



Balgo, Western Australia

Hand signs have traditionally served as a way of communicating for the Aboriginal peoples who have been on this land for centuries, long before the arrival of mobile and digital technologies.

To recognize this practical means of communication, local producer Willi Lempert partnered with a group of enthusiastic Aboriginal women elders from the community of Balgo. Together, they created a video that told the story of 40 hand signs.

Lempert had been working in the area when the idea for an explanatory video came up. He explained the importance of these hand signs:

While many visitors quickly learn the standard “what now?” sign, it is easy to miss the dozens of diverse hand signals being subtly exchanged in conversation. As in all languages, some elements are traditional and others are recent innovations... hand signs are not only a way of communicating information, but also serve as full-bodied ways of expressing nuance, humor, and individual personality.

The video, which is part of the “Mother Tongue” project organized by ABC Open and First Languages Australia, also serves to promote the local language of Kukatja, a vulnerable language with less than 1,000 current speakers. In the video, for each hand sign that the women demonstrate there is the corresponding word in Kukatja along with its English-language translation.

Lempert wrote about how much fun he and the women had during the making of the video in a blog post.

The women elders, such as Payi Payi and Manaya who are featured in the video, play a central role in the life of the community. As members of the Kapululangu Women’s Law and Culture Centre, they are instrumental in determining the way forward for the community. The website for the centre states, “Nothing that happens at Kapululangu can happen without the Elders.”

Kapululangu’s Elders were born in the desert, and grew up and were trained in the Old Ways before the arrival of Kartiya/non-Indigenous people in their ancestral countries. This makes them custodians of an immense wealth of stories, skills and cultural knowledge. They want to share this wealth [...] The Elders want their young people to grow up strong and resilient, proud of and knowledgeable in the ways of their people, secure in their peoples’ Law and Culture knowledge, so that they can better cope with the changing world. A peoples’ own Law and Culture is the glue that holds life together.

By teaming up with local producers committed to helping them tell their own story in their own language, they are ensuring that this wealth of knowledge is shared with the next generation.

Copenhagen man revives Viking 'forest' language.

Kopenhag Viking 'orman' dili yeniden canlandırılıyor.

Kaynak: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20150505/copenhagen-man-revives-viking-forest-language> (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

Published: 05 May 2015 08:37 GMT+02:00

A rare Nordic language used by a tiny forest community in Sweden is a hot topic at an international linguistics conference in Copenhagen this week, as Scandinavian language experts campaign to stop it dying out.

It might sound like something from Lord of The Rings or The Local Sweden's recent April Fool's Day prank but Elfdalian is a real language currently used by around 2500 people in central Sweden and is understood to date back to Viking times.

Previously regarded as a Swedish dialect, leading linguistics experts now consider it a separate language and are battling to save it, after figures emerged that less than 60 children can currently speak it.

"Often Norwegians, Danes and Swedes can understand each others' languages and dialects. But Elfdalian can't be understood by any Scandinavians apart from the ones that grow up with it, and that is why we consider it a separate language," Yair Sapir, a linguistics expert who lives in Copenhagen and teaches at Lund University in Sweden, told The Local.

The Israel-born professor has dedicated his career to studying the language after initially spending two weeks living in Älvdalen in 2002 and eventually teaching himself Elfdalian.

"The people of Älvdalen are wonderful but they are different to the city folk I am used to. They are in general less educated but more connected to nature and each other than people in urban areas," he explained.

On Thursday and Friday this week Sapir is hosting an international conference on Elfdalian at the University of Copenhagen, designed to raise awareness of the language.

The event comes as the small isolated central Sweden town where it is spoken, Älvdalen, prepares to start teaching it in one preschool from September. Pupils who begin learning it aged six are set to keep it as part of their curriculum until they turn eighteen.

"It's a highly threatened language and so it is great that the municipality is going to experiment with teaching it to children in preschool," said Sapir.

"In the past, children from this area didn't go far beyond the farms they lived on but now they go to school and consume so much other media that it is hard for them to keep Elfdalian as their main language," he added.

"The language was suppressed for centuries by the authorities. They need more books on their language and more recognition and validation of their culture. Hopefully the lessons in preschools will be the start of that."

Sapir admits that Elfdalian sounds like a mystical or other-worldly language but insists its name "isn't supposed to sound Tolkien-like" and has nothing to do with elves. It translates as 'river valley' in Swedish.

"It was just a word designed to sound more English than Älvdalian to help with international recognition and writing about the language."

Through studying Elfdalian experts have also increased their understanding of the Viking language Old Norse, with which it shares some words, features and expressions.

"Elfdalian is a goldmine. It works almost like a linguistic deep freeze, where one can get a glimpse of Old Norse traits that have long since vanished in the other Nordic languages," language historian Bjarne Simmelkjær Sandsgaard Hansen, co-organizer of the University of Copenhagen conference told Politiken.

"It has preserved many old features, which we may not even know existed if we didn't have Elfdalian," he added.

For more news from Denmark, join us on Facebook and Twitter.

Maddy Savage (maddy.savage@thelocal.com)

Ktunaxa language revitalized through smartphone app.

Ktunaxa dili akıllı telefon uygulamaları kullanılarak yeniden canlandırılıyor.

Kaynak: http://www.cranbrooktownsman.com/breaking_news/303288851.html (e.t. 19 Nisan 2016)

Christopher Horsethief is the developer behind a new KtunaxaFont app intended to help promote the ancient First Nations language.

Breanne Massey/Columbia Valley Pioneer

Christopher Horsethief is optimistic that a newly released smartphone iOS app will help the future generation keep the Ktunaxa First Nation's ancient language alive.

He developed the "KtunaxaFont" app with a phonetic keyboard option that allows users to write on Facebook, Twitter and iMessage in traditional Ktunaxa characters with full and small glottal stops (a sound made by obstructing air flow in the middle of a word), hard consonants (ç, k, m, n, p, q and t) and the raised dot (a, i and u) for long vowels.

"It was intended to empower Ktunaxa speakers to utilize their language in tech environments such as Facebook, Twitter, texting and iMessage," said Mr. Horsethief. "Previously Ktunaxa speakers had to cheat by using English characters, which means they were actually learning an inaccurate writing convention at the same time they were trying to learn to write Ktunaxa — this has an adverse impact on second language acquisition."

The app was ported to Android, which made the Ktunaxa font available on the top two mobile operating systems representing about 95 per cent of the mobile device market, according to Mr. Horsethief.

"The Ktunaxa app was the prototype for a series of keyboard apps that could empower mobile users from other Indigenous speech communities," he said. "Currently, the Ktunaxa keyboard app is the Number One download, with Maori as Number Two and Interior Salish Number Three."

In addition, he has designed Apple Store Fronts for Eastern Cree, Western Cree, Cheyenne and the Navajo Nations.

Mr. Horsethief received a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from Western Washington University's Fairhaven College, a Masters in Applied Economics from Washington State University's School of Economic Sciences and a Ph.D. from Gonzaga University's Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies.

He is an assistant professor at the Union Institute and University in Ohio, U.S.A., an adjunct professor at Gonzaga University in Washington, U.S.A. and has been an instructor of Ktunaxa Language at the College of the Rockies since 2011.

The Ktunaxa Nation Council sponsored the project to make the information available free of charge.

"The Ktunaxa language is thousands of years old, a unique language not related to any other in the world, it connects us to each other, to the earth and to our ancestors," said Donald Sam, Ktunaxa National Council Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector. "Speaking the Ktunaxa language, we honour our ancestors and commit to perpetuating our traditions and culture on to future generations. The Ktunaxa recognize that we live in two worlds. We are taught to hold onto our traditional ways, but also live in a world of hustle and haste, a world of electronics and material things. Revitalizing the Ktunaxa language and protecting it from extinction is of utmost importance to me, and utilizing the latest in technology makes it relevant to the youth I am trying to inspire."

Mr. Horsethief believes it's critical to embrace modern technology as a way to preserve First Nation history and culture.

"The Ktunaxa speech community has been a leader in using tech to drive language revitalization efforts," he said. "Several projects, dating back to 2005, have pushed the envelope of coding languages and network architectures to gain insights into speech community activity. This work has driven academic scientific research in the fields of collective intelligence, leadership science and group dynamics. We will continue to use new tech in new ways to ensure beginner speakers can speak old words and live traditional values."

Mr. Horsethief is working toward building relationships with each nation to have each community sponsor the development of their language's keyboard app so the information can be free to the community, which means the apps are downloaded twice as often as the \$5 apps he initially creates.

Jailed in Mexico: Thousands of Indigenous Behind Bars Due to Language Barriers.

Meksika'da cezaevlerinde yerel dilleri konuşan 8 bin civarındaki yerli, iki dilli çevirmen yokluğu sebebiyle mağdur oldu.

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Rick Kearns

3/8/15

There are more than 8,000 indigenous people in prison in Mexico who do not know the charges against them due to a lack of bilingual personnel in the criminal justice system according to human rights activists who addressed this issue in a seminar in late February.

The Director of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (NCDIP), Nuvia Mayorga, hosted a seminar in Mexico City entitled "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Inter-American System" aimed at training bilingual attorneys to work on defending and freeing imprisoned indigenous people, especially indigenous women.

In 2014 the NCDIP sent researchers across the country to interview indigenous prisoners and discovered that over 8,000 of them did not speak Spanish, did not receive help from a translator or bilingual attorney and that the majority of them did not know why they were in jail.

Mayorga pointed out that the indigenous prisoners were from the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Chihuahua, Guerrero and the Federal District (Mexico City), and her colleague Lia Limon, Undersecretary of the NCDIP, underscored the severity of the situations confronting the indigenous men and women.

"Any violation of human rights is serious, but when one is dealing with denying access to justice or due process to people who already are confronting social and cultural discrimination it is doubly grave," Limon asserted.

"Not only are they in a vulnerable position with constant violations of their rights, but that they end up being deprived of their liberty for the fact that they may not have had an adequate defense or simply that they did not understand the legal procedure due to not having a translator who can explain to them what are their fundamental rights," Limon said.

Mayorga added that currently there are only 28 bilingual public defenders in the judicial system in a country with 68 indigenous communities, 11 linguistic branches and 364 variations on those languages, making it "an enormous task" for the federal government.

She noted that in 2013, the NCDIP assisted in freeing 1,089 indigenous prisoners, and 1,693 indigenous people in 2014, all of them innocent of the charges leveled against them.

The seminar brought in close to 160 bilingual attorneys according to Mayorga.