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REVIEW ARTICLE

PETER K. AUSTIN & JULIA SALLABANK (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of endangered languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 580. Pb. $45.99.

MARI C. JONES & SARAH OGILVIE (eds.), *Keeping languages alive*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv, 269. Hb. $103.

SARAH G. THOMASON, *Endangered languages: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xiii, 229. Pb. $34.99.

JAMES ESSEGBEY, BRENT HENDERSON, & FIONA MC LAUGHLIN (eds.), *Language documentation and endangerment in Africa*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015. Pp. vi, 316. Hb. $158.

PETER K. AUSTIN & JULIA SALLABANK (eds.), *Endangered languages: Beliefs and ideologies in language documentation and revitalization*. Oxford: The British Academy, 2014. Pp. xvi, 429. Hb. $125.

Reviewed by ANNE KRUIJT
Centre of Linguistics, Leiden University,
Leiden, 2311 BX, The Netherlands
a.kruijt@umail.leidenuniv.nl

MARK TURIN
Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia,
Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z4, Canada
mark.turin@ubc.ca

INTRODUCTION

In response to a crescendo of public and scholarly interest, over the last two decades there has been a noticeable and mostly welcome surge in publications that focus on language documentation, conservation, and revitalization. Early and high impact contributions in Hale et al. (1992) included a now seminal article by Michael Krauss which called for urgent action to prevent linguistics from going down in history as the 'only science that presided obliviously over the disappearance of 90% of the very field to which it is dedicated' (Krauss 1992:10). There then followed a discussion on the topic by Ladefoged (1992) and a prompt reply by Dorian (1993) that situated the issue of language endangerment as one deserving of sustained academic attention. Alongside swelling bookshelves that speak to the urgency of this work, major research programs funded by private philanthropic organizations and research councils were also being established at this time. The Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) was founded in 1995, followed a year later by the Endangered Language Fund (ELF). With the establishment of the *Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen* program (DoBeS) in 2000, the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) in 2002, and the Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL) program funded by the US government in 2005, the last two decades bear witness to a steady increase in support, funding, and visibility for the documentation and preservation of endangered languages.

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In terms of scholarly outputs over the same period, many of the most high profile publications have focussed their attention on educating and informing the generally interested nonspecialist public in order to raise awareness about language endangerment and the urgency of documentation (cf. Robins & Uhlenbeck 1991; Brezinger 1992, 1998; Grenoble & Whaley 1998, 2006; Crystal 2000; Nettle & Romaine 2000; Wurm 2001; Harrison 2007; Evans 2010). Within the field of linguistics, this momentum has given rise to both a general discussion of appropriate responses to language endangerment and a more reflective and critical re-evaluation of the goals, partnerships, and ethics that underpin contemporary linguistics (Fishman 1991, 2001; Hinton & Hale 2001; Shaw 2004; Rice 2006; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). The works listed above are just a small selection of the many important publications in this growing field, and we refer readers to a fairly comprehensive and relatively recent bibliography on endangered languages prepared by Rogers & Campbell (2012) for additional valuable references.

This review essay is structured as a critical examination of five recent publications through which we explore the reasons behind the upswell in publications, and ask whether the field is now approaching saturation point. Some linguists have suggested that documentary linguistics is simply a 'fad' (Newman 2010:10, as cited in Essegbey, Henderson, & Mc Laughlin 2015:19), and although we do not share this interpretation, the question of how and why linguistics has responded to language endangerment is certainly worth exploring. To that end, this review article situates the publications under review in the context of the development of the discipline as a whole, and assesses their utility in light of the needs of students, scholars, and community members.

We first offer a brief overview of each of the five publications, their intended readerships, and overall aims. *Endangered languages* by Thomason (2015) is an ideal introduction for readers unfamiliar with the field of documentary linguistics or who may be exploring an emerging interest in endangered languages. The book is comprised of seven chapters, through which Thomason systematically addresses the most central aspects of language endangerment. Not only does *Endangered languages* provide welcome insights into the complexity of the issues that impact and affect speakers of endangered languages, the volume is enriched with helpful examples and insights from Thomason's own vast experience as a linguist. The result is a distinctly enjoyable read, and as theoretically informative (and informed) as it is practically engaging.

The Cambridge handbook of endangered languages edited by Austin & Sallabank (2011) provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of foundational issues in descriptive and documentary linguistics, language revitalization, and the heated discussion that this intellectual pivot has sparked in the field. Structured in four parts, with a total of twenty-three chapters written by a diverse range of academics and community linguists, the handbook is a wide-ranging and useful reference book for anyone interested in language endangerment.

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Edited by Jones & Ogilvie, *Keeping languages alive: Documentation, pedagogy, and revitalization* (2013) offers a welcome focus on the three aspects flagged in the subtitle. While documentation is prioritized and encompasses half of the volume with eight chapters devoted to its various forms, pedagogy and revitalization are allocated four chapters each. For each topic, multiple case studies are provided that highlight the challenges and issues that can arise in language projects. Although the level of the discussion presupposes that readers are already familiar with the scope of language endangerment and versed in the basics of the field, this important volume provides new perspectives through the introduction of understudied and neglected case studies that include sign languages and whistled languages.

In *Language documentation and endangerment in Africa*, editors Essegbey, Henderson, & Mc Laughlin (2015) address the Western bias inherent in the dominant position taken on endangered languages, and argue for a reorientation away from this 'master narrative' (Essegbey et al. 2015:67) towards a deeper appreciation of the language context in Africa. As such, this edited volume is aimed at readers who are already familiar with the topic of language endangerment and conversant in the traditional discourses of loss and extinguishment. The collection consists of two sections, the first of which comprises most of the book and is composed of eight chapters on the uneven linguistic landscape of Africa. The second section has only four chapters and, though not wholly cohesive, is not without merits, particularly in its welcome discussion of the strong case for language documentation among immigrant communities.

Edited by Austin & Sallabank and published in 2014, *Endangered languages: Beliefs and ideologies in language documentation and revitalization* is a volume that offers the reader a broad examination of the various (and sometimes competing) beliefs and ideologies that can manifest in an endangered language documentation project. Although the basics of language endangerment are briefly outlined in the introduction, the intended readership of this volume would be expected to be conversant with the field and interested in the framing that accompanies a more reflexive stance. The volume's first section is structured around six chapters of case studies that address language contexts ranging from Ladin, an Italian minority language, to Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaray in Australia. The second section explores the 'what and why' of language documentation and revitalization, addressing some of the core concerns that have emerged in the field. Taking a broader view, the final section of four chapters explores the discourse around languages both within and beyond the academy. The volume is successful in bringing new perspectives to the table, such as the role of children in revitalization efforts, and enriches and extends the prevailing discussion.

For the remainder of this review article, we explore these five publications thematically, first by looking at the relationship between language documentation and revitalization, then by addressing ideological differences between communities and

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academia, and finally by reflecting on the diversifying methodologies and practices of endangered language linguistics.

DOCUMENTATION, DESCRIPTION, AND REVITALIZATION RELATIONSHIP STATUS: IT'S COMPLICATED

A central theme that runs through all five publications is how language documentation, description, and revitalization stand in relation to one other. Most of the authors and editors present description and documentation as essentially complementary: one cannot exist without the other. Language documentation is commonly defined as concerning itself with 'creation, annotation, preservation and dissemination of transparent records of a language' (Austin & Sallabank 2011:159), whereas language description focuses on describing the grammar, classification, and arrangement of the features of a language at a given time. While a language project can focus more on one than the other, and some linguists have been known to take an extreme stance on the matter, in general and as Thomason (2015:113) writes, 'the majority view nowadays, however, is that both enterprises are of crucial importance to a research project that includes collecting primary data on an endangered language'. Most linguists are by now familiar with the prevailing orthodoxy of a linear model that moves from documentation through conservation to revitalization. Yet it is becoming ever more clear that this apparently straight and simple path is neither simple nor, in fact, linear. This dawning realization comes across in all five volumes, albeit more explicitly in some of the publications than in others.

A number of contributions in the books under discussion question the need to combine documentation and revitalization efforts in the first place. In Essegbey et al. (2015:53), for example, Gerrit Dimmendaal argues that revitalization should not be 'an inherent (or even obligatory) part of language documentation projects'. To prescribe such an association, he suggests, is 'politically condescending' and the decision should be left to communities themselves to decide whether language revitalization is a path on which they wish to travel. In economically marginalized areas, in particular, Dimmendaal has sympathy for parents who want their children to learn the national and/or official language of the country, and not risk further stigmatization by an adherence to a socially disparaged mother tongue. In Dimmendaal's thinking, language projects are most useful when focussed on producing bilingual or trilingual dictionaries that facilitate access and movement between an endangered language and a dominant language.

Others situate themselves at the other end of the spectrum and envision 'documentary linguistics as a revitalization-driven practice' (David Nathan & Meili Fang in Jones & Ogilvie 2013:42–55). Nathan & Fang argue for a re-evaluation of documentary linguistics and its relationship to revitalization, addressing what they provocatively call the 'tyranny of interlinearization' and the unidirectional

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methodology of language documentation. From their standpoint, documentary linguistics often disregards or even discourages the creation of pedagogical materials and they argue that the field should be held accountable not only to formal linguistics, but also to communities and speakers. For scholars such as Anthony Woodbury, documentation and revitalization exist as two entities that can be comfortably and appropriately separated. In his chapter in Austin & Sallabank (2011), Woodbury 'recognizes that in the wider field of language activism, language planning, and language revitalization and maintenance, documentation need not play a central role or even any role at all' (Austin & Sallabank 2011:171–72).

To most students, scholars, and community-based language activists, however, the separation between documentation and revitalization seems ever less relevant and helpful. While both tasks can be undertaken independently, they are increasingly joined together in productive and generative ways. Four of the five volumes under discussion precede their discussion of revitalization with an often lengthier section on documentation; the one outlier being Austin & Sallabank (2014), which conflates the work in one section and, perhaps quite intentionally, does not clearly separate one from the other in the accompanying chapters. The authority and importance accorded to documentation over revitalization should not come as a surprise: these volumes were written, compiled, and edited by linguists for a readership of other emerging and imagined linguists. We should also consider that outside of North America, very few field-based language projects are primarily aimed at revitalization and still focussed primarily on language documentation. Even when conducted in ways that are informed by community-based methodologies (e.g. Czaykowska-Higgins 2009), linguistic projects are still mostly just that: linguistic projects. This is not to say that such projects cannot participate in or catalyze revitalization, or create important pedagogical and curriculum material along the way, but rather that traditional structures of funding, reward and academic recognition have long dictated that the creation of community-based resources are rarely the primary impetus for the start of a project nor its principal products. In the current scholarly and funding climate, documentation and revitalization are by necessity tethered to one another, at times rather like estranged siblings. How they interact is contingent not only on the sociopolitical and economic circumstances of the speech community, but also the perspective, capacity, and orientation of the linguist. The ensuing negotiations are both inevitable and necessary.

THE IDEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

Another core theme that transects all five publications is the way in which diverse and increasingly diverging ideologies shape the field, the work in the community, and relationships with the outside world. Linguistic ideologies are 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use' (Silverstein 1979:193). The theoretical beliefs, ethical

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positions, and deeply held ideologies of linguists, speakers, and communities are central in determining how research is presented, how projects are designed, and what kinds of outputs are created. The most comprehensive exploration of the issue is, rather unsurprisingly given its title, the volume edited by Austin & Sallabank (2014). By settling on one primary topic as the focus for their volume, the editors have the time and space to address this complex issue from a refreshingly wide range of perspectives that might otherwise not receive such deliberate attention. James Costa's chapter, for example, offers insight into children's discourse on language and community in the Provençal and Scottish language revival movements. Costa's contribution is particularly valuable as children's discourse is rarely discussed in the revitalization literature, yet is a vital element towards the eventual goal as children are often the centre around which revitalization efforts are designed and implemented. Costa clarifies how children's discourse can lay bare the ideologies that underlie a revitalization project, how these are presented and how this then impacts the way that children think and speak about their language and its current status. The Provençal children in his study appear highly focused on their language as an object and mindful of the power differences that exist between languages, believing 'that it is a pretty language that should be saved' (Costa in Austin & Sallabank 2014:206) and '(we shouldn't let) … french invade all of France' (Costa in Austin & Sallabank 2014:200), yet they have very little to say about the speech community in which their language operates. Scottish children, on the other hand, focus mainly on language use and the speaker community, displaying some linguistic insecurity about how to refer to or speak about their language variety. By comparison, then, Scottish children mainly connect their language to their own lived experience and describe their language as being 'popular noo at school' (Costa in Austin & Sallabank 2014:202).

General discussions on (conflicting) ideologies are commonly centred on how the ideologies of speakers may clash with those of academics, how within any given language community a range of diverse and competing language ideologies are present, and how even within academia consensus is hard to find. The tension between the goals and beliefs of community members and those held by outside linguists is well-documented and often highlighted, and more collaborative models of research emerge out of a shared understanding of this mismatch (cf. Pine & Turin 2017). Even so, fundamental conflicts in language ideologies can be difficult to resolve. Lise Dobrin, in Austin & Sallabank (2011) and Austin & Sallabank (2014), discusses how the relationship between ethnicity and language differs across cultures, a decoupling that disrupts Western views of ethnicity and language as at least fundamentally aligned if not in many cases coterminous.

Another important issue that emerges from this discussion is that community language ideologies are neither static nor uniformly held. The beliefs held by community members and by outside linguists change over time, in response to changing political contexts and new theoretical alignments and paradigms. In the publications reviewed, there are numerous examples of such changing ideologies. In

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Austin & Sallabank (2014), Chryso Hadjidemetriou examines the complicated fluidity of the language status of Kormakiti Maronite, while Colette Grinevald and Michel Bert offer a detailed account of the ideologies surrounding Rama. In Jones & Ogilvie (2013), Yan Marquis and Julia Sallabank draw on Guernésiais as a case study to illustrate how revitalization efforts can help to shape and change language ideologies. Through a complex feedback loop, ideologies function as both cause and effect, shaping the revitalization efforts and existing discourse on the language, language use, and its speakers. In the same publication, James Costa and Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus discuss a particularly revealing case of competing language revitalization movements in Provence and address the relationship of these movements to the greater speech community in which they occur. Last but not least, Anahit Minasyan's contribution to Austin & Sallabank's (2014) volume provides an opportune exploration of the international realm of language endangerment through treaties, agreements, and ratifications, which will serve as a helpful baseline for those interested in compliance and legislation.

Examples of dissent among and between linguists are most notably present in Essegbey et al. (2015), and such narratives help to shape the volume. In the editors' own words, the book addresses why it is that, for the most part, 'Africanists are not swayed by the moral arguments for revitalization the way, for instance, their colleagues working on Australian Aboriginal languages are?' (Essegbey et al. 2015:3). Felix Ameka discusses the prevailing scepticism within the Africanist tradition towards language endangerment, what Newman (1998:15) would refer to as 'linguistic social work' and Ladefoged (1992) calls, somewhat dismissively, 'political considerations'. It is important to acknowledge and address the differences of opinion in the linguistic community head on, and to be mindful of strong regional traditions and historically situated beliefs. To that end, since the perspectives and grievances of Africanists are not explicitly addressed in any of the other publications, the focus provided by Essegbey et al. (2015) is particularly timely.

WHAT ARE WE DOING? PRACTICE AND METHODOLOGY

The final theme to be discussed here concerns the practices and methodologies of language documentation. Interventions such as orthography development, lexical standardization and curriculum development are increasingly accepted in documentary linguistics and language revitalization to be not only important—but even essential—components in projects relating to endangered languages. Practical engagements, however, can have unexpected and unwanted consequences, and some linguists remain concerned about the impact—both positive and negative—that greater involvements can have on linguistic diversity and oral traditions.

Essegbey et al. (2015) contains a number of chapters that directly address these issues in the context of traditionally oral-orientated communities in Africa. In this volume, Felix Ameka argues that some of the practices generally associated with

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language documentation can do more harm than good, where attempts to 'save' languages can become the very force that threatens them. Ameka takes particular aim at the development of practical orthographies, literary (and literacy) production, and (prescriptive) standardization, arguing that the introduction of text-based curriculum materials is in some cases entirely inappropriate for oral languages and the usage domains in which they traditionally function. According to Ameka, forcing a language into a new domain may result in a loss of original domains of use and even result in the loss of the language itself. Ameka's position, then, is to promote the comprehensive documentation of different registers and genres of the language using multimedia tools to fully capture all oral and gestural aspects. He is not alone in calling for a multi-modal, nonprescriptive, and interdisciplinary approach to language documentation. Emmanuel Ngué makes the case for the use and adoption of multimedia for situated language documentation in multilingual settings, while James Essegbey offers an endorsement of orthography design and the importance of vernacular writing rather than investing time in the development of a standardized 'correct' system. In short, many of the contributions in Essegbey et al. (2015) draw attention to how the African linguistic context is not comparable to the postcolonial linguistic situation of Australia or North America. As Gerrit Dimmendaal points out in the same volume, even when African speakers lose their heritage language, this does not necessarily result in the creation of monolingual speakers as has mostly been the case in North America or Australia. Within the African linguistic context, the contributors to this volume contend that the notion of multiple mother tongues that exist alongside multiple dominant languages for various domains must be taken into consideration, and that the complexity of this multivocality is neglected in more traditional forms of language elicitation and documentation.

While it might not be immediately apparent to their Africanist colleagues, linguists working in other parts of the world are not unfamiliar with these issues. In Austin & Sallabank (2011), Gary Holton explores the role of information technology and multimodal documentation in endangered language research and Friederike Lüpke reflects critically on orthography development and its risks. Yet, as Thomason (2015:35) puts it: 'in many or most cases, preservation and revitalization of an endangered language cannot happen without standardization'. Multimodal documentation, particularly in relation to its role for language revitalization, is an emerging trend. In Jones & Ogilvie (2013), chapters 9 and 10 discuss the use of new technologies in language classrooms, and underscore both the importance of multimodal methods for teaching and the possibility of documentation through pedagogy.

As many of the contributions in these volumes underscore, not only must the HOW of fieldwork be critically re-examined, but also the question of WHERE fieldwork takes place. More traditional textbooks on language documentation advise students that 'serious' fieldwork can only be conducted in the field and in the community itself, with the implication that working with speakers outside of

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the traditional territory is suboptimal. Thomason (2015) points out that fieldwork is often portrayed as 'describing language as it is used by actual speakers in NATURAL SETTINGS' (Newman & Ratliff 2001:1 as cited in Thomason 2015:117; emphasis added), reflecting an ideology around the notion of the centrality of in situ fieldwork and 'natural' language use. Brent Henderson, in Essegbey et al. (2015), challenges this assumption and argues that a traditional notion of documentary linguistics 'in the field' is not only no longer always possible but should also not be considered to be the only acceptable way of working. Across the globe, war, colonization, and poverty have dislocated many speakers of minority and endangered languages and forced them to move far away from their traditional and ancestral territories. Working with immigrants in urban settings is increasingly the only avenue for documenting historically underdocumented and endangered languages, and the dislocation of the speech community does not delegitimize either the language data or the process. Organizations like the Endangered Language Alliance (ELA) in New York are actively working with diaspora communities from the standpoint that 'while the connection between land and language cannot and should not be denied, there are many components of a language that are more computational than cultural' (Endangered Language Alliance 2012). Of course, there are important differences between in situ fieldwork and research with diaspora communities that need to be addressed and made explicit, but these differences should not restrict language documentation to imagined 'traditional' settings and preclude engagement with immigrant communities. To do so would be to introduce yet another hegemonic language ideology.

COURSE ADOPTION AND READERSHIP

Thomason (2015) offers a clear introduction to the topic of language endangerment and will be accessible to students of all backgrounds. The book is written for readers with little or no background in linguistics, uses very little linguistic terminology, and covers issues relating to endangered languages in a comprehensive and appealing manner. Each chapter ends with a section on resources and further readings, making it easy for both instructors and students to locate resources that relate to the specific topic of the chapter. While Thomason (2015) appears to be unavailable as an e-book, the paperback edition is affordably priced at $34.95.

Austin & Sallabank (2011) is a strong and affordable reference book at $45.99, and also suitable for classroom use. At points, the volume risks being a little repetitive, with three chapters on language documentation and archiving covering related ground, but in general the book provides an effective introduction to language endangerment and lesson plans can certainly be formed around individual chapters. While the volume presumes more linguistic background than Thomason (2015) and contains less of an overall narrative, it remains an adept introduction to the many different topics that together contribute to language endangerment. The assumed target readership are early-career linguists or advanced students looking

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to deepen their subject-specific understanding and orient themselves in a fast-growing field.

The remaining three publications are not designed for introductory courses, and are better suited to graduate students or professionals already active in the field. Essegbey et al. (2015) is particularly valuable for the different perspectives that it offers and the way in which it works to stimulate a critical re-examination of the main narratives of language endangerment as they are presented in most publications. Such a perspective will be particularly helpful to readers who are already familiar with the prevailing narrative and the established discourses in the field. While this valuable book will certainly help to spark critical discussion and debate among graduate students and professionals working in the field, its high cost of $158 (with an e-book available at the same price) makes it practically unaffordable for the 'African linguists and their African students (that) do the work' (Newman 1998:18), and even a stretch for well-heeled university libraries in the global north whose acquisitions budgets continue to decrease in real terms.

Austin & Sallabank (2014) is a thoughtful and very extensive publication, and an excellent addition to any course on language ideologies. It is not designed to introduce the topic of language endangerment, but rather to extend the issue through a set of instructive case studies alongside more general chapters that explore a number of situations a linguist might wish to take into consideration when interacting with speakers and communities. This volume is also valuable for underscoring that language work is complex and intricate, and requires considerable skill, insight, and advanced training. Regrettably, Austin & Sallabank (2014) is only available in hardcover format and priced at $125, with individual chapters not independently available for download, likely restricting its uptake by practitioners and community members not affiliated with a large research library.

Jones & Ogilvie (2013) is wide-ranging, valuable, and not for the beginner. It is the only publication under review that provides concrete examples of pedagogy for and in endangered languages, and thus serves as a particularly important contribution for those interested or involved in the more practical aspects of revitalization. While the collection is at times a little uneven—as is somewhat inescapable with edited volumes of this nature—there are many thought-provoking chapters that focus on unusual case studies. The book is expensive at $103 for a physical copy, with the e-book priced at $80.

Taken together, these five books provide the reader with a comprehensive and wide-ranging perspective on language endangerment, and the scholarly response through documentation and description. As reviewers, however, we found some topics to be underexplored in these publications and the general discussion.

First, applied linguistics forms the cornerstone of many revitalization projects, yet is rarely addressed in concrete terms in the existing literature. Apart from the case-study pedagogy section in Jones & Ogilvie (2013) and the overview of different revitalization formats (e.g. master-apprentice programs, immersive programs) in Austin & Sallabank (2011), a concrete exploration of the disciplines of

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applied linguistics and second language teaching is absent from all volumes. It is generally agreed that successful revitalization efforts rely on multidisciplinary teams, yet it is also commonly acknowledged that this rarely occurs. As a result, the responsibility for creating a curriculum and associated teaching materials often falls on the shoulders of a linguist who trained neither in pedagogy nor in second language teaching. With limited resources and diminishing time, getting things right on the first try is of vital importance for communities whose endangered languages outside linguists have the privilege of working with. This is no trivial responsibility, and linguists would be well served to view other disciplines—such as curriculum development and second language pedagogy—as distinct professions with demanding accreditation procedures and a strong emphasis on empirically informed best practice. To that end, practical and concrete examples of exercises, lesson plans, and appropriate teaching methods, especially when paired with evaluative results and metrics, would be a very welcome addition to any publication on language revitalization and documentation.

Another notable absence is the lack of a general introduction to law, governance, and global politics in the field of language use, language planning, and language rights. Policies, treaties, and legislation are rarely discussed in either the many case studies showcased in these volumes or in the more general articles. With the sole exception of Minasyan in Austin & Sallabank (2014), many of the contributors acknowledge that the wider context of global politics and national policies relating to language planning and status play a foundational role in framing the work, but few accord it much time and attention. While policy discussions can make for dry reading, they play a crucial part in shaping the dialogue around endangered languages and language attitudes for both governments, communities, and speakers. Similarly, it is important to devote time and space to discussing the legal intricacies and ramifications of copyright law, intellectual property rights, and traditional knowledge rights, all of which could have been further developed in these five publications.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the five publications discussed in this review provide the reader with an excellent foundation in language endangerment, documentation, and revitalization. All five offer valuable insights, novel perspectives, and welcome context that will appeal to students and scholars both within the field of linguistics and beyond it.

In our introduction, we set out to address why there are so many publications on language endangerment and what role they play. The harsh reality is that language endangerment remains as pressing and relevant an issue as it was thirty-five years ago when Hale et al. (1992) reenergized the contemporary scholarly discussion, and we can only envisage that more research will (and should) be published over time. To this day, while the issue of language endangerment is becoming better known to

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the general public, it still features very low on the list of priorities of most governments. And we should remember that community members and speakers need no reminding from outsiders that their languages are under threat and losing ground. Within linguistics, at least, consensus on the urgency and importance of the crisis facing many of the world's languages is slowly emerging, even if the response is by no means uniform. As many of the contributions in these five volumes underscore, a coordinated response will require cooperation and collaboration—across disciplines, regions, and communities of practice—in order to be effective and decisive in the long run.

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