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Unanswered questions in language documentation and revitalization

New directions for research and action*

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The last twenty years have witnessed an explosion of research on issues of language endangerment, with the emergence of documentary linguistics and the growth of language revitalization programs, resulting in changes in methodologies and in subfields within linguistics. The present article assesses this work in terms of its impact, focusing on documentation corpora, their contents, and how data are collected, archived, and used. The push to document the "last" fluent speakers has resulted in gaps in our current research, such as a general lack of documentation of variation, few studies of the kinds of change that take place during language shift and attrition, and few studies of the newer forms of language which emerge as the result of revitalization.

1. Taking stock

My comments here are an attempt to capture some general questions and even dissatisfactions that are in the air, emerging in both formal presentations and informal discussions after symposia like the one which have resulted in the present volume, or in a variety of publications which openly engage in these debates. See, for example, Evans (2008), Gippert et al. (2006), Himmelmann (2008), Woodbury (2011), as well as such journals as *Language Documentation & Conservation,*

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published at the University of Hawaii, Manoa; or *Language Documentation and Description*, published at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

In taking stock, I ask key questions about the nature and direction of current work in language documentation. Specifically, we need to consider not only what we are doing, but what we are not doing. What are we missing? What questions are we not asking?

Do we have the right tools? And do we have the right goals? These questions serve as the starting points for discussion. The answers in some cases may be no, but in others yes, that we are in fact doing the best job possible, given current conditions and constraints. Even if some of these questions turn out to be non-issues, it is still important to take stock of things, though we may decide we are doing the right things now. This is in part because the field has developed to a sufficient point that we need to ask these questions; in part because we have reached some twenty years since some of the early cries for work on endangered languages (Hale et al. 1992; Robins & Uhlenbeck 1991); and, in part because some of the key sources for funding language documentation are reaching their limits. (For example, the Dokumentation Bedroheter Sprachen (DoBeS) funding from VolkswagungStiftung has completed its final round, with the last round of applications due 15 September 2011.)

Before proceeding, however, it is important to consider the general situation in which we are presently working. Who is the "we" in language documentation? Language documenters include trained linguists and community members/speakers with little or no training in documentation. Interest in issues of language endangerment extends beyond this group to journalists, activists, and philanthropists. The Sorosoro Program ⟨http://www.sorosoro.org⟩, for example, involves participation from a wide group of people. Here I focus specifically on linguists and community members as those most directly engaged in documentation. Neither the linguistic community nor the community of speakers is homogeneous in its views and opinions and, furthermore, neither community is discrete. More specifically, it is important to bear in mind that not all linguists are alike. Documentation is interpreted differently by different linguists, and not all linguists who study endangered languages are engaged in documentation. In fact, not all linguists consider documentation to be important, although in general most linguists today agree that it is important to document endangered languages. By the same token, *speaker communities are hardly homogeneous*. More specifically, speakers differ in their attitudes toward language and in their commitment to revitalization. Critically, they differ in their levels of knowledge of their language. Furthermore, *neither group is discrete*: there are speakers of endangered languages who are linguists, and there are linguists who have become deeply embedded in communities, through marriage or other deep, long relationships, so the distinction between the two is not always clear. In other words, there are linguists in speaker communities and speakers in linguistic departments. By the same token, there are community activists whose primary objective is revitalization but who are also engaged in documentation, just as there are linguists who focus on documentation but who are actively engaged in revitalization, too. My general sense is that the more we work together, the more the boundaries between these categories become blurred. Still, it is useful to keep in mind that the goals of these two different groups, to the extent that they are different, can be very separate.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to discuss language endangerment and documentation without attention to the needs of language revitalization. Moreover, such considerations are critical to successful documentation. This is not only because community members tend to be more interested in, and more engaged in, revitalization than in documentation. A consideration of the kinds of documentation needed for successful revitalization can shape the documentation itself in new and challenging ways. In order to determine this, we need good information about revitalization, not only what the goals of such programs are, but also how to assess the programs.

In what follows these questions are considered from different aspects of endangered languages, specifically, from the standpoint of goals, content, methodology, format, and what can loosely be called "broader impacts." These areas are all intimately linked but it is useful to consider them separately, in part because the way one is framed can have a direct impact on the other. What is required is not only new research areas, but also deep and multi-faceted collaborations (both intellectual and in practice) to rethink the goals and methods of documentation and revitalization.

2. Goals in documentation

Himmelmann (2008: 346) defines the goal of language documentation as providing "a lasting, multifunctional record of the linguistic practices attested at a given time in a given speech community and the knowledge speakers have about such practices." He emphasizes the importance of documenting both linguistic practices and metalinguistic knowledge (Himmelmann 2005: 8). Similarly, Woodbury (2011: 159) argues that "LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION is the creation, annotation, preservation, and dissemination of transparent records of a language. While simple in concept, it is complex and multifaceted in practice because its object, LANGUAGE, encompasses conscious and unconscious knowledge, ideation, and cognitive ability, as well as overt social behavior; because TRANSPARENT RECORDS of these things must draw on conceptual understandings and techniques from linguistics, ethnography, psychology, computer science, recording arts, and more [...]. "For Woodbury, then, documentation involves not only language, but also social practices; the two are inseparable.

One of the key questions which emerges from these definitions is exactly how broad the documentation should be, and how to put limits on the enterprise. How does one go about documenting all linguistic practices? One answer is to strive for a diverse corpus, but that is not sufficiently informative. Exactly what areas should be included in documentation and which can (or should) be omitted? There has been relatively little focused discussion about this issue, with a few recent exceptions (Evans 2008; Holton 2011). This speaks to the larger issue of relatively little *corpus theorization*, as defined by Woodbury (2011). Woodbury makes the point that language documentation is still documentation, regardless of whether the records "add up in some way"; corpus theorization is defined as "the ideas according to which a corpus is said to cohere or 'add up'." Lacking rich discussion in corpus theorization, we lack means for evaluating a documentation corpus. When is a documentation sufficient? Complete? Is a complete documentation even possible? From the standpoint of funding agencies, there is pressure to document undocumented or "underdocumented" languages, and such agencies view languages which have been allocated more money as a lower priority for documentation than languages which have received less overall funding. Lacking an adequate theory of documentation, we have no real way of assessing the quality and sufficiency of documentation. Rather, we often turn to quantity and technical standards: sound recorded in uncompressed wav format at a rate of at least 44.1KHz, 16 bit, for example, is seen as "good" documentation. But this completely skirts the question of content. Corpus theorization would aid in answering the question of when a researcher should cease working on one language and move on to the next, if the goal of the research is "adequate" documentation. (I would note that this suggests that the only goal of research is documentation, and many linguists would disagree that one should move from language to language. In fact, that goal is directly at odds with maintaining a long-term commitment to a community. But these issues need discussion.)

The ever-increasing interest in language documentation over the past twenty years has meant a tremendous surge in the amount of documentation which is being done. Still, we tend to prioritize certain kinds of work over others, and to privilege languages which have a set of characteristics. These are, namely, high levels of endangerment, so that recording the last speakers is an urgent priority; features which make them of typological interest, including rare or unusual phenomena from the standpoint of what we currently know about the world's languages; and language isolates for their potential to inform us of historical linguistics. By definition, we thus exclude variation, preferring to document a language meeting any of these characteristics over a variety (dialect, sociolect, or contact form) of an already documented language. These priorities are defensible, but they have far-reaching implications for the kinds of research we are engaged in, as well as for the questions we have thus implicitly chosen to ignore.

2.1 Which languages do we document?

To what extent do current practices in documentation achieve these goals? One result of the current emphasis on endangered languages is that perhaps less attention is being given to the documentation of *not* highly endangered languages or not immediately obviously endangered languages. This is not to say that this work is not being done at all, nor is it to say that only endangered languages are the object of study. Certainly, world languages with large numbers of speakers are the focus of considerable research; English is arguably the most thoroughly studied language today. There are, however, a great many languages which are not currently endangered, although they may be showing initial signs of shift. These are languages with smaller numbers of speakers than languages of wider communication, those in the middle range. Many are under pressure from majority languages and they might shift, or they might not. Possible examples from the regions where I work include Buriat (Mongolic; with 218,557 speakers in Russia, 2010 [ISO 639–3 bxr]; an estimated total of approximately 283,000 speakers for all varieties [ISO 639–3 bua]) and Sakha/Yakut (Turkic; with 450,140 speakers in Russia, 2010 [ISO 639–3 sah]), both under pressure from Russian. There are other reasons to argue against the urgency of documenting these languages, such as the fact that they belong to relatively large and relatively well-studied language families, for example, or the fact that we already have basic descriptions of them. At the same time we have limited studies of conversation, discourse and information structure. Moreover, a brief look at census data suggests that the number of speakers is growing for Sakha, although the figure dips from 2002 to 2010 (from 363,000 in 1993 to 456,288 in 2002 and to 450,140 in 2010), and is declining rather dramatically for Buriat (from 369,000 in 2002 to 218,557 in 2010).[1] Both are spoken in official Republics of the Russian Federation, regions with the largest degree of autonomy possible within the Russian federal system. Thus a focused study of their language ecologies and the measures the two different regions have undertaken to support

1. All-Russian Census data; 2012 statistics for language and speakers are available at ⟨www.gks.ru⟩; 2002 at ⟨www.perepis2002.ru⟩. It is difficult to know how to interpret the rise in Sakha speakers from 1993 to 2002 and equally difficult to interpret the decline in 2010. Russian census data rests on self-reporting. There is widespread agreement in Buriatia that the Buriat language is shifting.

their usage would be informative to others. If we base our decisions on which languages to prioritize for documentation solely on scientific criteria, specifically, in terms of typological interest, rarity of certain linguistic structures and so on, we might easily decide to not consider Turkic and Mongolic varieties. Yet studying these specific language ecologies might provide more insights into understanding both the social and linguistic process of language shift. The way we have formulated language documentation means that it provides little data about the very situations which have put these languages at risk.

This raises the next point: that another underdocumented area is the study of *languages in contact*. Of course, most endangered language situations are contact situations: most of today's languages are disappearing due to shift to another language or languages, not because the speakers are themselves disappearing. This is not to say that we do not study contact linguistics: there is a vast body of work on language contact, theoretical and descriptive, and numerous studies of the effects on linguistic structures due to contact. Yet there is very little documentation of contact in process, with the exception here being research on code-switching. But that work is largely grounded in sociolinguistics; few studies of code-switching stem from language documentation, and few documentation projects focus on code-switching. These gaps are due to several factors. One is the ongoing division between sociolinguistics (which studies code-switching, language variation, bilingualism and diglossia, and social networking – all topics of direct relevance to language endangerment) and language documentation. Second, an emphasis on documenting the last speakers of a language – even as problematic as the concept of the "last" speaker may be (Evans 2001; Grinevald & Bert 2011) – has serious repercussions in terms of the kind of documentation we do. It generally means that we may begin documenting only after the processes of shift and attrition are far along, and there is no longer a very large body of speakers who are bilingual, or nearly so, and in some earlier stage of shift. This means that we cannot document (and study) the beginning or middle stages of shift and language attrition. Moreover, there is a strong push to document fluent speakers, since the purported goal of documentation is to create a record of how fluent speakers use it. The net result, however, is an unintentional but clear kind of linguistic purism: non-fluent speakers do not "count" in the documentation, or are not the target of documentation, in an effort to document the last speakers. Not only does this potentially valorize both the variety spoken by one set of speakers as well as the speakers themselves, but it can actually marginalize other speakers and other varieties. In the extreme, these attitudes can further language shift, if speakers come to perceive the variety they speak as not being sufficiently pure or authentic to warrant documentation.

One consequence of this linguistic purism is that there are very few studies or documentation of *emergent languages*, languages which emerge as the result of revitalization. These are in contrast to languages with uninterrupted transmission, learned from birth and carried on from generation to generation. Such languages are inevitably subject to change, and historical linguistics studies this change. But what of languages which are taught after interrupted transmission? These languages have much in common with ones that are taught as second or foreign languages but differ in a crucial respect: learners of the non-endangered language have access to a community of fluent speakers, while the learners of the endangered language often do not. In some communities the number of speakers who are willing and able to teach the language is very limited, and so revitalization in such cases often critically depends on first preparing a cadre of second-language learners to teach the language. It is thus often the case that adult second-language learners take up the task of teaching the language in the schools or elsewhere, as the people who learned the target language as children (and can thus claim first-language proficiency or fluency) are too elderly, too remote, and/or too few. For example, Tlingit revitalization in Alaska depends heavily on the elders who speak it as a first language to work with the teachers who have learned it as a second language. In the extreme, reclamation programs recreate the language on the basis of extant documentation, generally only written materials, often relying on comparative reconstruction using data from closely related and better described (or still living) languages. Prime examples are the reclamation programs for Myaamia (or Miami, ⟨www.myaamiafoundation.com/⟩) and for Wôpanâak (or Wampanoag, ⟨www.wampanoagtribe.net⟩); both languages were resurrected after generations of no speakers. The Myaamia Project for Language Revitalization and Cultural Awareness has relied heavily on the earlier work of linguists who documented the language while it was still spoken, and on the work of modern linguists to extract a description from that documentation (e.g. Costa 1994). In all of these cases, it is hard to imagine that the language spoken by the new generations of speakers matches the one that would have resulted from uninterrupted transmission from generation to generation, but how it differs is an open question. There are interesting scientific questions about the linguistic structures of such emergent languages and the impact of the first language of these speakers, but these questions remain largely unasked.

In sum, our very goal of documenting languages while they are still spoken has arguably led to a monolithic and limited view of what the goals and content of documentation projects should be. The push to record the best speakers, defined in terms of speaking the ancestral language most fluently, and the push to document languages with very few speakers, can both stem from and result in linguistic purism. The fact that we have very limited time and resources, coupled with the increasing requirements of documentary linguistics (see especially Evans 2008: 342–343), means that certain languages will not be documented, and certain aspects of language use will not make it into documentary corpora. Under this view, no documentation can ever be complete. Regardless, purism in language documentation has resulted in a lack of research on how languages change in contact, on the very processes of attrition, and on fundamental questions as to differences in change due to shift and attrition on the one hand versus change due to stable contact on the other, or even whether such differences exist.

3. Goals in revitalization

It would seem to be a truism that the basic goal of language revitalization efforts is the creation of new speakers. Although this would most obviously appear to be the case, much centers around the issue of how "new speakers" are defined. On one end of the scale, the goal might be to create fully fluent, monolingual speakers who use the target language in all domains. For most, if not all, programs, this is an unrealistic goal. And perhaps on the other end of the scale is a primarily symbolic use of key phrases, sayings, greetings and possibly songs. Such symbolic use keeps the language present in the public sphere but does not entail real communication. In such cases it rather serves as an index for identity, but does not mean that speakers achieve, or even strive to achieve, fluency. Just which goals are appropriate depends on a nexus of factors, and different goals may be appropriate for different members of one and the same language community.

Thus setting appropriate goals in language revitalization is a complicated and ongoing task. Lindsay Whaley and I have argued that revitalization goals need to be realistic, determined with close attention to existing resources and to the overall willingness and commitment of those who will be engaged in revitalization efforts (2006: 21–49). This position is championed by Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998: 62–63) who, following Fishman (1991), argue strongly for prior ideological clarification before embarking on language revitalization programs. Similarly, Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 160–176) call for assessment before beginning a revitalization program, on the basis that any group needs to know what the current situation is before determining how to change it. Such an assessment requires an evaluation of *resources: financial, language, and human*. *Financial resources* encompass the sources of money available within the community, the likelihood of obtaining external funding (from the federal government or humanitarian organizations for example), as well as the kinds of resources available for education and programming, the use of media, etc. *Language resources* include access to existing language materials, such as grammatical descriptions and dictionaries, textbooks, pedagogical materials, written and oral literatures, and so on. Moreover, language resources include available speakers of the target language who can serve as teachers, create pedagogical materials, and so on. *Human resources* comprise the number of people who could be involved in creating and promoting language revitalization, and the skills they could bring to the process. This aspect of assessment necessarily includes language vitality and variation. It also includes the general level of interest of community members, both speakers and non-speakers, in using, teaching, and learning the language. Finally, it refers to the availability of experts, inside or outside the community, to assist in technical aspects of revitalization. In addition to all of these, it is important to determine the attitudes of the people potentially involved. First are the attitudes toward the local language versus one or more languages of wider communication. Second are the attitudes toward different variants of the local language. These are relevant in a host of ways in revitalization efforts: in choosing a basis for a standard or potential standard variety, it is important to assess these attitudes.

This discussion would seem to presuppose first complete assessment, and then the development of an overarching revitalization program before beginning any of the actual work. In reality this is often not the case. In many cases, multiple activities (assessment, resource development, teaching) begin at once. Still, many people report that the assessment process itself is instructional, and that often people are surprised to learn that their community is undergoing shift. Child acquisition of language is so natural that it is often taken for granted. Bona fide assessment of language vitality is critical in this regard.

Successful language revitalization depends on assessment in a variety of other ways. Revitalization programs themselves need to be assessed, to see if they are achieving their goals and using resources appropriately and if those goals need to be recalibrated. There has been little theorizing about revitalization as a specific endeavor and, concomitantly, little discussion of how to assess revitalization programs. There are at least two key parties which have a vested interest in such assessments: the funding agencies and communities themselves. Here the notion of community needs to be broken down into the various stakeholders: teachers and other educators, language learners as a whole, parents and teachers in school-based programs, community leaders, activists and linguists, to name just a few. Even very fundamental questions about assessment still need wide discussion, such as how we determine when a program is successful. What criteria are used? How do we know when to shift goals and refocus, and when to stay the course? When do we move from revitalization to maintenance?

This is not to say that there have been no attempts to assess revitalization; see Gordon (2009) for Anishinaabe adult immersion; Hornberger and King (1996) for Quechua programs; Johansen (2004) for a survey of a number of North American programs; King (1999) for Quichua; Nyika (2008) for minority languages in Zimbabwe; Person (2005) for Bisu in northern Thailand; Walsh (2005) for

Australian aboriginal languages; and Wetzel (2006) for a survey of needs assessments for Potawatomi. These references indicate the geographic and linguistic richness in the range of both revitalization and assessment. They are quite honest, speaking not only of strengths and successes but also of failures and challenges. Some rely on quantitative measures and others on participant-observation; some study school programs for children, others adult immersion programs. But much more could be done, as many programs are not assessed (or the assessment is not readily available) and many of the assessment studies center around individual case studies, so it is at times hard to determine whether the findings are generalizable to other situations or represent idiosyncratic, or local, specifics. More data are needed with both quantitative and qualitative information to provide a fuller picture.

Finally, there are larger meta-issues which can be addressed by evaluating existing revitalization programs. First, it would be useful to know if revitalization has had any effect on language pedagogy. With the exception of the Master-Apprentice model (Hinton et al. 2002), most models of language revitalization are school-based. (I include pre-school program and language nest models in this category.) School-based models run the risk of creating language usage in one and only one domain: the school. Programs generally focus on the creation of new speakers, overlooking the need to create new domains as an inherent part of creating language vitality.

One major issue is whether revitalization programs affect the language attitudes of people inside a speaker community. Anecdotally, they seem to have a positive effect on community members, improving attitudes and prestige, and perhaps no effect otherwise. Is this true? Can these changes in community attitudes (if they in fact exist) be leveraged in some way? Can external attitudes be changed? This is potentially very important: there is broad agreement that language attitudes and language prestige affect vitality and usage. Can community-internal changes in attitude and prestige be mobilized to have a similar effect on other populations? This is a critical question, as changing attitudes and prestige are fundamental to reversing the situations which led to language shift in the first place.

4. Uniting documentation and revitalization

If documentation were to be reformulated so as to be driven by the goals of language revitalization, how would that change the nature of documentation, if at all? In some ways, most certainly; in others, not so clearly. For example, a fundamental part of documentation is what is referred to as "core linguistic work" by Comrie (2007), who notes that documentation of a traditional language is required even when a linguist is committed to work on language revitalization. He focuses his claims around the centrality of potential contributions to linguistic science, arguing specifically that "the revitalization of a language does not obviate the need for documentation of the traditional language, since a revitalized language may differ quite extensively from the traditional language to which it corresponds, in particular through the loss of precisely those distinguishing features that make the traditional language of such paramount importance to linguistics" (Comrie 2007: 34). This frames the need for basic description in terms of advancing linguistic science. It is possible to conceive of another view, one that is not necessarily at odds with the needs of linguistic science but rather frames the issues from the standpoint of revitalization. For revitalization, core linguistic work is essential if the language is undescribed, or even underdescribed: learners need to know phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and more. (This presupposes that the learners are not children learning it from birth but acquiring it as a second language.) They need to know the spirit of the language, how these pieces come together in actual use to create real communication. In this view, descriptive and documentary adequacy is achieved when a learner can extract sufficient information from the documentation to become a fluent speaker. Note that this provides an answer to the problematic question of when a documentation is complete, and further note that most (if not all) documentations are incomplete by this measure.

Beyond the need for basic descriptive work which can form the basis of revitalization materials – dictionaries, descriptive and pedagogical grammars, textbooks and exercises – most speakers are interested in how language is used. This argues for documentation which focuses on communicative practices, conversational structures and discourse, and varying registers and genres. To the extent that speakers desire to speak the language of their ancestors, they are interested in linguistic practices, in language which is situationally and socially anchored. Here I focus on bi- or multi-lingual situations of language shift, where use of the ancestral language tends to be limited to a few domains, primarily in the home.

To that end, documentation of contextually-situated language use is beneficial to linguistic theory and language revitalization alike. This includes linguistic etiquette, daily routines, and politeness mechanisms. All of these are directly relevant to people wishing to learn how to speak a language, and knowledge of culturally appropriate ways of verbal interaction. Note that this kind of documentation is also relevant to the study of semantics and pragmatics, not just anthropological linguistics. Similarly, the documentation of conversation is critical. Broad documentation of differing linguistic practices requires not only linguists, but other kinds of specialists who can understand and contextually situate such language use. Potential partners include, for example, musicologists for understanding, interpreting and even accurately transcribing song and dance. Ethnobotanists are essential to the study of indigenous plant knowledge: they can identify plants and relate Western knowledge to local knowledge about plant habitats, uses and histories. They collaborate with linguists to understand the indigenous taxonomies, some of which are accessible through the plant names themselves (Si 2011; Whitecloud & Grenoble 2014). In Arctic regions, for example, sea ice engineers partner with linguists, anthropologists, geographers and Inuit hunters and fishermen to study changes in sea ice and climate. Krupnik et al. (2010) present compelling examples of the need for such collaborations in order to understand the multiple facets of environmental and social changes. These are just two examples out of a multiplicity.

Yet another avenue of linguistic research of benefit to revitalization is the study of languages in the early stages of shift. Documentation of the full range of register use is still possible, and such languages could presumably provide evidence for variation among fluent speakers as well as among shifting speakers, raising completely unanswered (and often unasked) questions about the latter category. Such documentation could serve as a pre-emptive social measure against further shift, prompting communities to recognize its incipience and prodding them to action. From the standpoints of both linguistic science and revitalization, it makes no sense to wait until languages shift to start documenting them. Even if our focus is shift and attrition, we can understand shift better if we know about pre-shift, conditions prior to shift. Current funding and research priorities rest on an implicit value system: we value more highly endangered languages over understudied but robustly spoken languages. If we actually care about revitalization and maintenance, we would be well-advised to study languages with smaller numbers of speakers that are not (yet) shifting. This may sound like pure heresy but, as Himmelmann (2008: 343) argues, the push to document the most endangered linguistic varieties "is obviously counterproductive and demoralizing when seen from the point of view of speakers and communities struggling to maintain their heritage language." I am not advocating that we abandon all work on endangered languages; obviously, that is very important work. But research on understudied and as-of-yet-unendangered languages is also imperative.

Finally I note that this claim – that we should expand documentation to other understudied, pre-shift speech communities – is based on the belief that the description and documentation of languages and linguistic structures is itself an incomplete and insufficient enterprise; our real goal should be a description and documentation of language ecologies. That is, we need to study languages as they are culturally and socially situated, in a full social context of production and use. And frankly, they always are. Abstractions out of that context are the products of linguists, not speakers. I am not sure that we often achieve the goal of studying language ecologies and not just languages. I am not even sure what it looks like. Recordings and documentary corpora are essentially flat and linear. Actual language usage is multi-dimensional and multi-modal. How do we capture that? How do we transcribe and analyze it?

5. Conclusion

In the present article I focus on overall trends in language documentation and revitalization. In so doing, I ignore exceptions to these generalizations. That said, there is a general sense that it is time for documentary linguistics to further develop a theoretical basis to advance it beyond the definitions outlined by Himmelmann (1998, 2008), and a general sense that we need fresh conversations about how linguists and communities might better collaborate. One is for the intersection of community and research efforts; revitalization is considerably more challenging with more highly endangered languages and therefore not the place to begin.

In sum, I advocate that we work hard to avoid (intentional and unintentional) linguistic purism. We need to rethink some of our research targets and document not just ancestral languages but languages in the process of shift; to work with all kinds and varieties of speakers, at all levels of proficiency, and in all kinds of situations. We need to engage in lively, ongoing discussions and debate about corpus theorization and theories of documentation. Finally, we linguists need to aim for new collaborations, which will drive documentation from different viewpoints and will incorporate different research methodologies.

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