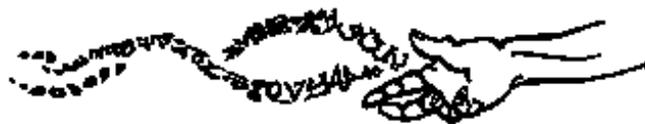


FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES



(UK Registered Charity No 1070616)

OGMIOS



*Navajo dance performance at FEL's 2022 conference
at Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, in Albuquerque, New Mexico*

OGMIOS Newsletter 74: — 31 October 2022

ISSN 1471-0382 Editor: Christopher Moseley

Published by:

Foundation for Endangered Languages,

129 High St.,

Hungerford, Berkshire, England

OGMIOS Newsletter 74

31 October 2022

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OGMIOS

appears three times a year, and is the journal of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, available to members either on-line or in hard copy. Contributions are welcome, and can be sent to the Editor, Chris Moseley, at chrmos50@gmail.com. Subscription details can be found on the Foundation's web-site. www.ogmios.org.

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1. Editorial

Our Foundation has cause to pat itself on the back at the moment in this, our quarter-century year. We've just held another successful conference, this time in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which you can read about below in the words of our Chair, Nicholas Ostler.

Not only that, but we are now contracted with the Dutch academic publisher Brill to make our Proceedings volumes commercially available and professionally produced. This applies not only to the forthcoming Albuquerque Proceedings volume, but also to the proceedings of the last three annual conferences: Sydney, London, and Tirana. (A printed volume of the proceedings was available to guests at the Tirana conference last year, but not more widely.) For various reasons there have been delays in the production of those volumes, and so our contract with Brill can rectify this shortcoming and produce volumes to a high professional standard and make our work more widely available. The difference is that these volumes will no longer be conference Proceedings, but Yearbooks. They will still consist of conference papers, though, and this will apply to our future conferences as well.

And now, in 2023, we are proposing to revisit one of our earlier Conference sites, namely Agadir in Morocco, which we first visited in 2001. Our host at that time, Hassan Ouzzate, will once again be the local organiser, and as we go to press, we are planning to hold it in September 2023, based around the theme of Endangered Languages and the State. More details in the next issue of *Ogmios*.

Chris Moseley

2. Development of the Foundation

Remarks of Welcome to FEL 26, Albuquerque NM, 3 November 2022

Nicholas Ostler
FEL Chair

Welcome to the 26th annual conference, and third in the USA, of FEL, the Foundation for Endangered Languages. This year we are meeting at Albuquerque, New Mexico. This long sequence of successes has been due to a sequence of 26 excellent Local Chairs, of which the latest are Professors Siri Tuttle and Wafa Hozien of the Navajo Technical University. It gives great pleasure to thank them now for the joys we are receiving.

Here you see before you the published proceedings of numbers 2-22. Written versions of 23-26 are also available, but in less convenient form, until we implement a planned system

of annual yearbooks, currently being produced. An agreement has been achieved this year with the *leading international academic publisher* in the Humanities, Brill, of Leiden, the Netherlands. Thus they will be given a much larger audience in future years.

The conference itself will be conducted in hybrid form, with some papers presented here at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, but many others beamed by ZOOM, from and to a world-wide audience.

Overall, our conferences have been FEL's most spectacular productions, but in the same period FEL has conducted 20 grant rounds, resulting in award of 153 grants, with a total value of US\$ 160,000. We have been active too in the publication of a newsletter, *Ogmios*, which has recently reached its 73rd issue. (*Ogmios* is in fact named for the Celtic god of eloquence, with powers comparable to the Greek Heracles, but achieved through the persuasive power of his tongue. Before we gave it this name, we had tentatively called it after *Iyatiku*, a goddess of the Acoma pueblo just round the corner from us here in Albuquerque, who had given humanity the gift of language diversity so they would not quarrel so much.)

Enough, then, to introduce the activities of the Foundation which, with Navajo Technical University is bringing you our conference on Community Ownership of Language Education, and its role in revitalization of endangered languages. After a first day of lectures and discussions, I shall have a chance to tell you a bit more about the people working in FEL, the organization in which all of you have initiated or renewed your membership.

In the meantime, I leave you with the general Navajo greeting, *Yá'át'ééh*, "hello" or "wonderful!"

FEL's Membership Meeting – FEL 26, Albuquerque NM, 3 November 2022

Since this is the only occasion when FEL members other than the executive committee are likely to meet face to face, some account can be given of their activities, and members can ask questions.

The main administrative and constitutional activity in 2021-2022 has been revision of the governing documents for the Foundation, in Executive Committee and various subcommittee meetings largely chaired by the Hon. Sec. (Salem Mezhoud), but also Serena d'Agostino. Others attending most of these admin. meetings have been the Chair (Nicholas Ostler), the Assistant Chair (Christopher Moseley), the Treasurer (Steven Krauwer), the Grants Officer (Hakim Elnazarov), Eda Derhemi, Jaki Troy and Maya David, the latter four all happening to be past Local Chairs of FEL conferences.

The principal activities of these meetings have been to update the rules of the Executive Committee, and define the roles of

the Foundation's Trustees. However, no full and final decision has been reached on any of these matters.

Important decisions have been reached on some points, however. The Chairman will retire and so the role of Chair will require replacement in the course of 2023. The 27th conference of FEL (2023) will be held in Agadir, Morocco, with local chair Prof Hassan Ouzzate. Pueblo Cultural Centre (succeeding to FEL V, which took place in 2001.

[After 45 minutes, the meeting adjourned for the evening activity, which took place at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and consisted of feasting on bison, and watching the incredible endurance of a display of Navajo dancing, arranged by our hostess and Local Chair, Prof Siri Tuttle.]

3. Endangered Languages in the News

Anglicisation pushing Welsh language to 'tipping point'

By Steven Morris, from the Guardian (UK)

The "Anglicisation" of Welsh speaking villages and towns caused by newcomers snapping up homes after Covid, together with the economic stress of Brexit and the cost of living crisis, is pushing the Welsh language to a "tipping point", the head of a new commission established to address the situation has warned.

Simon Brooks, the chair of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, said that unless action was taken there was a danger that Welsh as a community language could soon be lost in some of its traditional heartlands.

"You've had a huge economic jolt of Brexit, then the pandemic, which led to a race for space," he said. "Anglicisation has gathered pace. There can be a tipping point in language use. The fear is that a lot of these communities are at that tipping point."

Brooks said the "snowball effect" helped community languages thrive. "When everybody speaks the language, you use it. When another language is introduced you can get to a point where the majority language becomes much more dominant."

Brooks said Welsh would still be spoken across Wales, but without intervention it could be at risk as a community language. He added: "The decline of Welsh as a community language is important to all of Britain in

terms of broader cultural diversity. It's the last Celtic language spoken at the community level."

The commission is launching a call for evidence from citizens and organisations on issues that affect Welsh-speaking communities, from housing and education to community development and regeneration.

The Labour-led Welsh government has been bringing in a raft of measures designed to stop the Welsh language heartlands being hollowed out by the rise in second home ownership.

Brooks, an associate professor at Swansea University, said that as well as second homes, the commission would look at subjects ranging from how tourism should be managed to how the language could be kept alive in the farming community.

Jeremy Miles, the minister for education and Welsh language, said: "It's crucial that our communities are strong and protected so Cymraeg can thrive."

Proportion of Welsh speakers in Wales drops to lowest level ever recorded

By Steven Morris, from the Guardian (UK)

Campaigners, teachers and politicians have expressed concern that the percentage of residents in Wales able to speak Welsh has dropped to the lowest proportion ever recorded in a census. On census day, 21 March 2021, an estimated 538,300 Welsh citizens aged three and over were reported as being able to speak Welsh – about 17.8% of the population.

This is a decrease of about 23,700 people since the 2011 census, a drop of 1.2 percentage points. A century ago 37% of residents spoke Welsh.

The figures are a blow to the Welsh government, which has a target of reaching 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. It has introduced a string of initiatives, including more investment in Welsh-medium schools, setting up a national centre for learning Welsh and appointing a language commissioner.

The decrease is being driven by a fall among children and young people who can speak Welsh, according to the census. There were drops of about 6% in the proportion of children aged three to 15 reported as speaking the languages between 2011 and 2021.

The Welsh education and language minister, Jeremy Miles, said the figures were disappointing but the government was determined to reach its 2050 target.

He suggested the census taking place during Covid may have had an effect. "We were all concerned about the impact on children's and young people's Welsh language skills when they were out of school," he said.

Miles said the profile of the language was given a boost during the World Cup by the Welsh football team, which describes itself as Cymru rather than Wales. The Welsh government has also brought in measures to cut down second homes in Welsh language heartlands to stop local people being pushed out, he said.

Carmarthenshire in the southwest, a traditional heartland for Welsh, suffered the largest decrease in people able to speak the language, from 43.9% in 2011 to 39.9% in 2021.

The highest percentages of people able to speak Welsh were in northwest Wales, with 64.4% in Gwynedd and 55.8% in the Isle of Anglesey.

Lainong: a threatened language in Myanmar

Anui Sainyiu
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Another in our series of introductions to the speech communities represented by Community members of the Foundation

Abstract

This paper aims to present the phenomenon of the Lainong language development program. The auto-ethnography research method was used by the author, and the author's life experiences served as the primary source for this paper. Lainong is a Naga tribe from Myanmar's northwestern region. Due to the influence of the Burmese language and culture, Lainong is losing its language and culture and shifting to Burmese. This paper is based on the author's 15 years of experience working on language and cultural preservation projects. Although

community-based language development programs are ongoing, such as literacy training, mother tongue-based multilingual education programs, and documentation, they are not sufficient. A system of systematic reinforcement in language maintenance is needed.

Introduction

Endangerment of a language can be identified by the decreasing number of its speakers; the replacement of words or mixed use of words; the daily use of bilingual or multilingual speakers; and the failure to pass it on to the younger generation. According to UNESCO, "a language is endangered when its speakers stop using it." Use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains and cease to pass it from one generation to the next" (UNESCO, 2003, p.2). Language endangerment is the result of many forces, such as political domination, economic, religious, cultural, or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by internal forces, such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language (UNESCO, 2003). Many indigenous languages in Myanmar have been threatened by its associated politics since 1962. Consequently, even some of the indigenous people with small populations have voluntarily assimilated into Burmese. Batibo (2005) suggested that if there are fewer than 5000 speakers, then a language is endangered. The purpose of this paper is to share the phenomenon of the Lainong language, with the authors' 15 years of experience serving as the primary source (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015).

Lainong is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken in Burma with a 22,617 population¹. The Lainong language is spoken in 32 villages of Lahe² Township, including town areas, and also in two villages and three wards in Khamti Township, Sagaing Division, Myanmar. 17.11% of the population lives in cities, and the language is rapidly fading. 82.9% live in remote areas, and 34.7% of the remote population only maintain their names and kinship categories but do not use the Lainong language anymore in daily communication. Rather, they speak other neighboring languages because they are mixed with other language speakers. Overall, 41.3% are not using it daily. Most parents do not pass on their culture and language to their children, but instead blend into other people's cultures and languages. It was said that "a language is

¹ Source: the General Administration Department, Lahe Township, Naga Self-Administered Zone, provided in 2021

² "Lahe" is named after the name of Anui Lahè, a Lainong tribe man, the founder of Lahe village. Lahe is the capital of the Naga Autonomous Region, Sagaing Region, Myanmar. The original name of Lahe Village is

Peigu, founded by Anui Lahe. Anui Lahe conquered many areas, including parts of Khamti. He was famous because of his war lordship and conquered many areas, including some parts of Khamti. Although the village name is Peigu, people used to call his name "Lahe" (can be seen also in Sainyiu, 2013)

endangered if there is no transmission of it to the younger generation" (Krauss, 1992). Examining the past, in the 1800s and 1900s, the Lainong language used to be a means of wider communication among Nagas around the Lahe and Khamti areas. It used to be a medium in the meetings of the Burmese government as well.

The Lainong language is gradually shifting to Burmese. Most parents and children use "pepe and meme" instead of "pù and nyiù". The Burmese words like "pepe" and "meme" are used instead of Lainong words like "pù and nyiù". Children don't say "nyiu" (mom), but they call their mother "meme". This happened because they were unaware of its impact, which meant that they did not know they were losing their language and replacing it with a foreign language. If the author asks someone in Lainong, "a pù gimo?" (is your dad here), then the answer returns in Burmese, "shi de" (yes). Moreover, Lainong is facing morphological decay. For example, "màimài kētaiga' domluñèng" (it's very delicious) is reduced to "màimài domluñèng". Here, the grammatical reduction is found that /màimài/ (imagination) /kētaiga'/ (neg+affirmative+adverbial) /domluñèng/ (it's delicious). If one uses something like, "màimài domluñèng" makes no meaning. "kētaiga'" is a very important word that clarifies what the speaker means. Many young people of Lainong thus today are not aware of grammatical misuse when they talk in Lainong. The decline of morphemes during language death is a predicable order (Dressler, 1981).

Sasse (1992) stated that a language may be gradually shifting to a dominant language in a contact situation (Sasse, 1992). According to Dorian (1977), in this kind of language situation, there are semi-speakers who do not speak the full range of language functionalities (Dorian, 1977). Wolfram (2004) calls it a continuum of language proficiency that correlates with different generations of speakers (Wolfram, 2004). Most young people in urban areas are more proficient and some do not use it anymore. The Lainong language situation is moderately seen at level 6, where the language is used orally by most of all generations and many parents are transmitting it to their children as their first language (especially in remote areas) (Fishman, 1991). Interestingly, the EGIDS 6b provided by Lewis and Simons (2010) is more relevant to the Lainong situation and is characterized by a "threatened" situation and a downward trajectory (Lewis & Simons, 2010).



During Teacher Capacity Development conducted by Lahe Academy

The language development plan started in 2007. The first edition of the Lainong primer was printed in 2012 and consulted by Dr. Naw Khu Shee. In the early years of 2014, the author finally finalized the Lainong writing system after taking several rounds of tests with diverse groups of Lainong speakers, such as children, teachers, and ordinary community members. In March 2014, the Lainong language was introduced to the ministry of education and developed into the Kindergarten curriculum. Currently, the Lahe Academy is actively working on revitalization programs such as children's and adult literacy, curriculum development, a mother tongue-based multilingual education program, and research. However, there are many challenges to establishing a strong and sustainable development program. Many factors involved in the slowing progress of the Lainong language development program, such as financial, propaganda, and a continuous impression of dominant culture. Although community members are determined to produce resources, they have no funding.



2. Teaching and Learning Materials Produced by Lahe Academy

Conclusion

To sum up, the author observed for 15 years and found that the Lainong language and culture are slowly dying. 20% of the population is lost, for they do not use Lainong in daily communication. Although the language

development program is continuing, compared to outsiders' domination, it is very slow. A systematic response to language endangerment is required to sustain and be effective. Otherwise, the language will be gone in 50 years.

Hand of Irulegi: ancient bronze artefact could help trace origins of Basque language

By Sam Jones, from the *Guardian* (UK)

The Vascones, an iron age tribe from whose language modern Basque is thought to descend, previously viewed as largely illiterate.

The Hand of Irulegi was discovered last year near Pamplona. Photograph: Navarra government/AFP/Getty

More than 2,000 years after it was probably hung from the door of a mud-brick house in northern [Spain](#) to bring luck, a flat, lifesize bronze hand engraved with dozens of strange symbols could help scholars trace the development of one of the world's most mysterious languages.



Although the piece – known as the Hand of Irulegi – was discovered last year by archaeologists from the Aranzadi Science Society who have been digging near the city of Pamplona since 2017, its importance has only recently become clear.

Experts studying the hand and its inscriptions now believe it to be both the oldest written example of Proto-Basque and a find that “upends” much of what was previously known about the Vascones, a late iron age tribe who inhabited parts of northern Spain before the arrival of the Romans, and whose language is thought to have been an ancestor of modern-day Basque, or *euskera*.

Until now, scholars had supposed the Vascones had no proper written language – save for words found on coins – and only began writing after the Romans introduced the Latin alphabet. But the five words written in 40 characters identified as Vasconic, suggest otherwise.

The first – and only word – to be identified so far is *sorioneku*, a forerunner of the modern Basque word *zorioneko*, meaning good luck or good omen.

Javier Velaza, a professor of Latin philology at the University of Barcelona and one of the experts who deciphered the hand, said the discovery had finally confirmed the existence of a written Vasconic language.

“People spoke the language of the Vascones in the area where the inscriptions were found,” he said.

“We had imagined that to be the case but until now, we had hardly any texts to bear that out. Now we do – and we also know that the Vascones used writing to set down their language ... This inscription is incontrovertible; the first word of the text is patently a word that’s found in modern Basque.”

Velaza’s colleague Joaquín Gorrochategui, a professor of Indo-European linguistics at the University of the Basque country, said the hand’s secrets would change the way scholars looked at the Vascones.

“This piece upends how we’d thought about the Vascones and writing until now,” he said. “We were almost convinced that the ancient Vascones were illiterate and didn’t use writing except when it came to minting coins.”

According to Mattin Aiestaran, the director of the Irulegi dig, the site owes its survival to the fact that the original village was burned and then abandoned during the Sertorian war between two rival Roman factions in the first century BC. The objects they left behind were buried in the ruins of their mud-brick houses.

“That’s a bit of luck for archeologists and it means we have a snapshot of the moment of the attack,” said

Aiestaran. “That means we’ve been able to recover a lot of day-to-day material from people’s everyday lives. It’s an exceptional situation and one that has allowed us to find an exceptional piece.”

Despite the excitement surrounding the deciphering of the inscription, Velaza counselled calm study rather than giddy conjecture. After all, he added, the hand hails from one particular moment in time and tells us only that the people in the area then spoke and wrote the Vasconic language.

“That doesn’t mean we know how long they’d been there, nor what their future was after that moment,” he said.

It’s true that this is an extraordinarily important text but I’d urge a bit of caution about using it to extrapolate too many conclusions about what happened afterwards. But linguistically speaking, it’s going to provide linguists who specialise in the Vasconic language and Proto-Basque with something they haven’t had until now.”

He added: “I think we should be excited – but we should still be very rigorous scientifically speaking.”

Not every recent Basque language discovery has lived up to its billing. Two years ago, a Spanish archaeologist was found guilty of faking finds that included pieces of third-century pottery engraved with one of the first depictions of the crucified Christ, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Basque words that predated the earliest known written examples of the language by 600 years.

Although the archaeologist, Eliseo Gil, claimed the pieces would “rewrite the history books”, an expert committee examined them and found traces of modern glue as well as references to the 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes.

Mexico’s Indigenous rappers find a new voice – on Wakanda soundtrack

By Oscar Lopez, from the Guardian (UK)

A new generation of Mexico’s Indigenous musicians like Pat Boy are using rap to combat prejudice, revive ancient languages and reignite pride

The journey from a quiet Mexican village to being billed on the soundtrack of an Oscar-nominated film has been an epic one for Indigenous rapper Pat Boy.

Born Jesús Pat Chablé, Pat Boy grew up speaking only Mayan until he started primary school; his parents still speak no Spanish.

And like many of Mexico’s 23 million Indigenous people, he has often encountered discrimination.

“People would comment on the videos or on the street, or when you’re on stage,” said Pat Boy in a phone interview.

In a country where Indigenous cultures are often revered in museums but otherwise disparaged, such attitudes are widespread: according to a 2017 government survey, nearly a quarter of Indigenous people over 12 said they had experienced discrimination in the last five years.

But now a new generation of musicians like Pat Boy are using rap as a way of combatting prejudice, reviving ancient languages that are in steady decline, and reigniting a sense of pride among young people in being part of a centuries-old culture.

“Through music, I started researching more about the Maya, and I began to see great things: philosophies, traditions, culture,” Pat Boy said. “I wanted to share that information that I learned to new generations through music.”

Recently, Pat Boy’s music, and Indigenous rap more widely, have reached a global audience through the Marvel blockbuster *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*.

The comic book movie, which features an army of Mayan warriors, includes a number of contemporary Indigenous rappers like Pat Boy on its soundtrack, as well as a title song by Rihanna which received an Oscar nod this week.

“We wanted to create a complete immersive sound world where songs and scores are part of the same DNA,” said Ludwig Göransson, the film’s composer, who found Pat Boy via an Instagram search.

“It’s just really cool to see something like that,” said Göransson, “the Mayan sound, the Mayan language, or an Indigenous rapper from Mexico, hearing that in the scale of this movie.”

But despite the American film’s worldwide success, such a spotlight on Indigenous culture remains rare: of the more than 250 films produced in Mexico last year,

not even 12% were centered on Indigenous or Afro-Mexican characters and storylines.

And along with this lack of representation is widespread racism in daily life: according to the same 2017 government survey, three-quarters of people aged 12 and up said that Indigenous people were valued little by the majority of the population.

“In books they admire us, on the street they push us aside,” said Juan Manuel Martínez Hernández, a rapper from Veracruz state in eastern Mexico who goes by El Kampezino.

Martínez’s own parents refused to teach him Nahuatl, he said, fearing he would face the same discrimination they did, something which is also common among Indigenous families.

Mare Advertencia Lirika, another Indigenous rapper featured on the Wakanda soundtrack, said her grandmother was the last person in her family who fluently spoke Zapotec: after moving from her rural community to Oaxaca city, speaking Spanish was the only way to succeed.

“We didn’t inherit the language,” she said.

That kind of cultural erasure is common when Indigenous people are forced to leave their communities and migrate to cities as a result of violence or poverty.

“If they want to function in the city, they’re basically forced to abandon many of their traditions,” Advertencia said. “They start to have to assimilate.”

As a result of these processes, the dozens of Indigenous languages spoken in Mexico are slowly dying out. Between 1930 and 2015, the percentage of Mexicans aged five and over who spoke an Indigenous language more than halved, according to government figures.

Martínez picked up a few Nahuatl words from his relatives, but it was only when he began working in the fields with other Nahuatl speakers that he began to really learn. And after discovering Mexican rap groups like Control Machete, he began rapping himself.

“Writing in my own language filled me with satisfaction,” Martínez said.

Given the importance of oral tradition to Indigenous cultures, rap in some ways is an ideal fit, according to

Josep Cru, a Spanish lecturer at Newcastle University who has studied Indigenous rap in Mexico.

“Orality is the main channel to transmit knowledge, ancestral wisdom,” not unlike rap, “which has verbal skills as something fundamental”, he said.

For Indigenous rappers like Martínez, rap is a way of making these languages more relevant to a younger audience.

“My idea was to rescue our culture,” he said, “and make sure that our language isn’t lost.”

And beyond its linguistic importance, rap music, with its roots in Black youth culture of the 1970s, has also become a means of political expression, highlighting the discrimination that Indigenous people face.

“There’s this connection with the origins of political rap in the United States, in the Bronx, as a weapon of social protest,” said Cru.

For Advertencia, who only raps in Spanish, this political element has been fundamental to her music, particularly growing up in Oaxaca which has a long tradition of protest. “For me it was a tool to question reality, where I could express my voice,” she said. Pat Boy’s rap tends to be less overtly political, but perhaps his greatest influence has been leading by example. “Young people see that they can create, that they can become artists,” said Cru.

In 2016 Pat Boy founded his own production house, ADN Maya Productions, to help other young Indigenous rappers break into the industry. So far they have produced three albums, and are on their way to a fourth.

More recently, he launched a collective of young musicians called ADN Maya Colectivo, several of whom came together to record a song for the Wakanda Forever soundtrack last year.

“We started to talk about resistance,” said Pat Boy of the rap on the soundtrack, “about the Mayan people and about the resistance of the language.”

After they finished recording, life went back to normal, as the movie wrapped up production. Then in November the soundtrack was released, billing Pat Boy and his team alongside artists like Rihanna and the Nigerian singer Tems.

“It was very emotional, seeing our Mayan name among all those artists,” Pat Boy said.

Since then, his profile has exploded, with the rapper appearing in several local and international newspapers.

As for Indigenous rap in general, he said he’s unsure how long its popularity will last. In the decade he’s been working, he has witnessed many ups and downs. But there is one significant change he has witnessed among his peers.

“A lot of people feel proud,” he said. “They don’t feel so ashamed to say, ‘I’m of Mayan blood.’”

Okinawa’s endangered languages are victims of history

From the Economist (UK)

Ikema Ryuichi stands in the museum his mother built on Yonaguni, a coral-reef-fringed tropical island and southwestern outpost of Japan. Large clay vessels, intricate baskets and lavish flower-print textiles fill the shelves. In one display case is a worn book: a dictionary the woman assembled to preserve her local language, known as Dunan. Mr. Ikema is one of a dwindling number of people who can still speak it.

Yonaguni is one of half a dozen indigenous languages spoken on the Ryukyu Islands. The island chain, which includes Okinawa, stretches thinly almost from Kyushu to Taiwan, and was once an independent kingdom. That precarious position has long made the Ryukyus a battleground for the chain’s bigger neighbours. Its languages are among their victims.

Though Ryukyuan languages and Japanese belong to the same family, linguists reckon they have about as much in common as English and German. But when Japan annexed the islands in the eighteen-seventies, it declared the Ryukyuan languages mere dialects of Japanese. They were banned in schools. Students who persisted in speaking them were forced to wear demeaning placards around their necks.

Ryukyuan families kept the languages alive at home. Then, after the second world war, America occupied Okinawa and encountered a return to Ryukyuan languages in a bid to distance the islanders from the rest of Japan. By associating the local languages with its unpopular occupation, however, America probably

hastened their demise. “Speaking Japanese became a tool to free the Ryukyus from the Americans,” says Patrick Heinrich of Ca’ Foscari University of Venice.

The decades of neglect took a toll. In 2009 UNESCO declared all six Ryukyuan languages (which are almost mutually unintelligible) severely or critically endangered. Ryukyuan activists have since made some progress in revitalising their use, especially on Okinawa. Yet the languages are still in peril. And the activists are not helped by Japan’s continuing reluctance to recognise them as distinct tongues. To do so, notes Mr. Heinrich, would involve acknowledging how recently, and in what circumstances, the Ryukyus became part of Japan. “It takes you to the history.”

Dunan is probably the most threatened language. Only around 100 people speak it fluently. Yonaguni’s government has therefore made optional Dunan courses available in schools. Muramatsu Minoru of the local education board, who is from Honshu but has learned the island language, has led an effort to assemble new Dunan dictionaries. There is a Dunan saying that sums up the stakes: “If you forget the language, you forget the island; if you forget the island, you forget your parents.” Yet it is hard to imagine such modest steps saving Dunan. Mr. Ikema is not hopeful. “Dunan will eventually disappear,” he says.

Factors in defining language extinction: Is there a universally applicable standard?

Paper delivered at the International Seminar on the Conservation of Endangered Languages of India, 13-15 July 2022

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The word ‘extinct’, used to describe the status of a language, is increasingly falling into disfavour among linguists, cataloguers and scholars of endangered languages. In the present data-driven age, when more and more languages are stored in archives in digital form after they cease to be spoken on a daily basis, the notion of extinction is far less absolute than it once was. The author, in his role of editor of language encyclopedias and atlases, has repeatedly confronted cases of a contested status for languages that are no longer in regular use, because they are stored in archives, or because their former speakers deny that the language is anything but ‘asleep’. If so, must the sleep be terminal? This paper attempts to examine cases from different

parts of the globe, to try to answer the question: is there a universally applicable standard of 'extinction'?

Can scholars of endangered languages and the custodians of those languages always agree on the endpoint of a language's life? The scholar's and the speaker's, or former speaker's, viewpoint on this issue might be seen as opposite ends of a telescope. The evidence of life that the scholar seeks is daily, creative use of the spoken language (the written language too, if it is written): new sentences and expressions are created rather than old, fossilised ones being repeated. The proof of survival, in the mind of the native speaker, lies in the internalised repository of the language, its vocabulary, syntax and rules, whether demonstrated in use or not. If not being actively used, it can be called 'dormant'.

Somewhere in the overlapping territory between these two viewpoints lies the definition of language extinction.

My own awakening from complacency about the issue of language extinction came in a quite public way at the launch of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Extinction at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2009. Just before the launch ceremony was about to begin, I had a call to my hotel room and was put directly on air to BBC Radio Cornwall, where I was berated by an activist for the language: how dare I call her language 'extinct'? It does have native speakers! There are active second-language learners in Cornwall who are putting the language to use. Later that day I received a similar accusation from the Isle of Man about the so-called 'extinct' status of Manx. I felt forced to retract, and the atlas was duly amended to include an additional degree of vitality: 'Revived'.

At the time of that launch, the process of refining the language vitality index that UNESCO had inaugurated was already going on. Joshua Fishman's original GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) was expanded into the EGIDS in 2010 by Lewis and Simons at the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Later in the decade there was a further refinement, this time provided by the staff at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa who were working on the ELCat (Endangered Languages Catalog) project. UNESCO had devised its own Vitality scale in 2003, which was applied to the Atlas in question; there were only five grades in it, and a variety of factors calculated in arriving at the grade for each language.

Degrees of vitality are one axis of measurement; the factors involved (as identified for the UNESCO Vitality Scale) are another.

Here are the UNESCO parameters, compared with the latest, most sophisticated iteration of the EGIDS.

UNESCO Vitality Scale (2003)

- a) Safe (5): The language is spoken by all generations. The intergenerational transmission of the language is uninterrupted.
- b) Stable yet threatened (5-): The language is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken intergenerational transmission, yet multilingualism in the native language and one or more dominant languages has usurped certain important communication contexts. Multilingualism alone is not necessarily a threat.
- c) Vulnerable (4): Most children or families of a particular community speak their parental language as their first language, but this may be restricted to specific social domains (such as the home).
- d) Definitely endangered (3): The language is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The youngest speakers are thus of the parental generation.
- e) Severely endangered (2): The language is spoken only by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may still understand the language, they do not speak it to their children or among themselves.
- f) Critically endangered (1): The youngest speakers are in the great-grandparent generation, and the language is not used for everyday interactions.
- g) Extinct (0): There is no-one who can speak or remember the language.

EGIDS scale in its 2010 iteration (developed in 2016 into the Language Endangerment Index, LEI)

0 International: The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange and international policy.

1 National: The language is used in education, work, mass media and government at the national level.

2 Provincial: Use in the above fields within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.

3 Wider communication: Use in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a wider region.

4 Educational: In vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.

5 Developing: In vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some.

6a Vigorous: Used for face-to-face communication by all generations in a sustainable situation.

6b Threatened: Used for face-to-face communication by all generations, but losing users.

7 Shifting: The child-bearing generation uses it among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.

8a Moribund: The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.

8b Nearly extinct: Members of the grandparent generation or older have little opportunity to use the language.

9 Dormant: The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no-one has more than symbolic proficiency.

(9 Reawakening: The ethnic community associated with a dormant language is working to establish more uses and more users for the language, creating new L2 speakers.)

(9 Second language only: The language was once vehicular, but is not the heritage language of an ethnic community and no longer has enough users for a significant vehicular function.)

10 Extinct: The language is no longer used and no-one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with it.

These parameters should hold good for all languages in all situations. But it is in the final, or weakened stages of a language's development that we encounter controversy. The Australian linguist Michael Walsh has drawn attention to the implied finality of the term

'extinct' when applied to Australia's indigenous languages. In the forthcoming second edition of the Routledge Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages, he takes issue with this finality, and calls Australian language 'a special case'. He takes his cue from the Endangered Languages Catalogue, which avoids the term 'extinct', preferring 'dormant' instead, which implies the possibility of revival.

To quote Michael Walsh:

The application of the term "extinct" to any of the Australian Languages is not only objectionable on the grounds of community sensitivities but is also highly questionable based on a range of factors to follow.

Actually this implies that the self-identifying descendants of the speakers are still in existence, so if the term 'dormant' replaces 'extinct', the 'extinction' is being deferred by at least one generation and probably several, until there is no-one left to acknowledge the heritage.

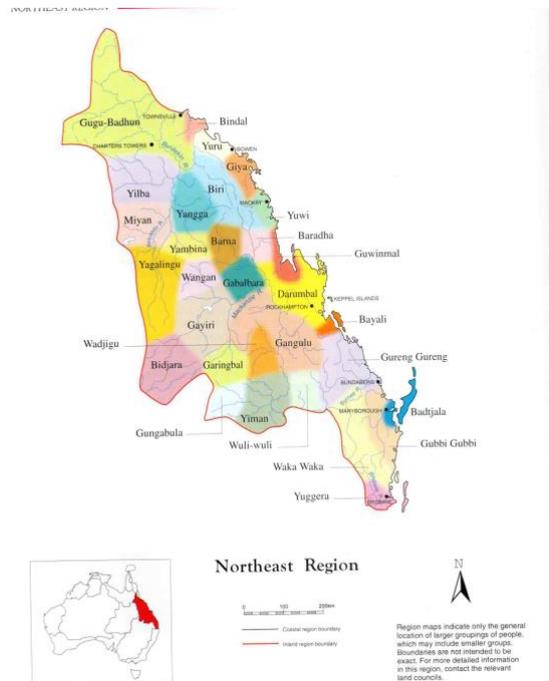
According to the EGIDS, a language is said to be extinct when: The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language. By this definition it would seem that there are no Australian Indigenous Languages that can be said to be extinct. This may be a unique situation in the world and can be attributed to what is possibly a unique sociolinguistic phenomenon found in Indigenous Australia: language ownership.

In Indigenous Australia, a person inherits a range of properties as a matter of birthright. This can include: membership in a clan; the totems associated with that clan; membership in a moiety, section or subsection; and, a language. In the past the norm was to inherit these properties through one's father: he in turn had inherited them from his father who had inherited them from his father. This language ownership is not dependent on use of the language in question. Indeed sometimes the only known speakers of a particular language do not own that particular language. It follows that there could be a language for which there are no known speakers even though there are people who retain 'a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language'.

The refined EGIDS scale does allow for distinction and definition within the range from 'dormant' to 'extinct', and it is one of my aims here to explore that distinction. To do this, I'm taking a single test case: Gubbi Gubbi, or

Kabi Kabi, a language of the Sunshine Coast region of Queensland.

The Wikipedia entry for Kabi Kabi / Gubbi Gubbi makes it clear that some sort of clarification of the extinction idea is needed:



Kabi Kabi, also spelt Gabi-Gabi/Gubbi Gubbi, is a language of Queensland in Australia, formerly spoken by the Kabi Kabi people of South-east Queensland. The main dialect, Kabi Kabi, is extinct, but there are still 24 people with knowledge of the Butchulla dialect (also spelt Batjala, Badyala, Badjala, and variants), a language spoken by the Butchulla people of Fraser Island as of the 2016 Australian census.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies lists an entry for E29 Gubbi Gubbi which makes a distinction the so-called 'extinct' and the 'surviving' dialect of the language:

Its location is the coastal region from Caboolture in the south (perhaps including Bribie Island) to Childers in the north, and inland to the Jimna Range. Inland from Maryborough; north to Childers and Hervey Bay; south to near the head of the Mary River and Cooroy; west to Burnett and Coast Ranges and Kilkivan; at Gympie; not originally on Fraser Island although Curr (1886) mentions them as there. Thus it's difficult to distinguish Gubbi Gubbi from Badtjala as to territory, even in the times when both dialects were regularly spoken.

As to codification of the language, there is a dictionary which makes a non-committal distinction between Gubbi Gubbi and Butchulla: the Dictionary of the Gubbi-Gubbi and Butchulla languages, compiled by Jeanie Bell, with assistance from Amanda Seed

The dictionary contains separate Gubbi-Gubbi and Butchulla vocabularies with an English finder-list; sources of words given; notes on phonology, morphology and syntax. This dictionary is a culmination of over a century of contact between the white man and the Gubbi Gubbi people.

As with so many Aboriginal populations, the people became subject to missionary activity, which involved their mass removal to mission stations, with the inevitable fracturing of intergenerational transmission. This might be seen as a crucial phase in the decline of the language, but it was a gradual process.

Pedagogical material in the language is minimal; even a children's storybook published as recently as 2013 introduces only ten native words.

Collection of material in Gubbi Gubbi began informally over a century ago, however. The first identifiable word list is an unpublished manuscript from 1902, created by Edward Armitage.

Another word-list relates to Butchulla/Badyala on Fraser Island, and dates back to as recent a date as 1970.: Sound recordings in the language have existed since 1964 and 1967, consisting of elicited items in this among three languages in one recording, and several in the other, with multiple oral contributors.

Nils Magnus Holmer, the compiler of the 1964 recordings, was a linguist and ethnographer who also wrote about Delaware, Iroquoian, Basque, Seneca, Irish and other languages.

So, what reliable information exists about the number of speakers of Gubbi Gubbi, if any, today?

Even from the Endangered Languages Project, information is inconclusive about current speaker numbers. But the circumstantial evidence from recent years is that the language has very limited use in public discourse – emblematic or ceremonial – and no consistent use in private discourse. Even so, enough resources exist already to classify it as a 'dormant' still in process of revival.

But what is the function of 'revival', in the face of overwhelming pressure toward assimilation? Here's an example of official acknowledgement of the language's existence:

"Say G'day" in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language! Introduction The State Library of Queensland in partnership with Yugambah Museum, Language and Heritage Research Centre, Indigenous Language Centres and other community groups would like to invite you to: "Say G'day in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language!" UNESCO has proclaimed 2019 the Year of Indigenous Languages. During this year we encourage Queenslanders to say 'g'day' in their local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language; it is a timely reminder of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. [Note: Gubbi Gubbi: Hello: Ngara; Welcome everybody: Wunya ngulum]

Beyond, 'G'day', though, the effort falls silent, and beyond 2019 there have been no further large-scale ventures.

John Mathew, who lived among them, described the Gubbi Gubbi lands as roughly coextensive with the Mary River Basin, though stretching beyond it north to the Burrum River and south along the coast itself. He estimated their territory to cover 8,200 square miles (21,000 km²). But writing in 1906, he described the surviving Gubbi Gubbi, relocated to Barambah, in the most abject terms, compared with those he had known forty years earlier.

According to Norman Tindale, however, the Gubbi Gubbi people were an inland group living in the Wide Bay–Burnett area, and their lands extended over 3,700 square miles (9,600 km²) and lay west of Maryborough. The northern borders ran as far as Childers and Hervey Bay. On the south, they approached the headwaters of the Mary River and Cooroy. Westwards, they reached as far as the Coast Ranges and Kilkivan. Gubbi Gubbi country is currently located between Pumicestone Road, near Caboolture in the south, through to Childers in the north. Their country was originally rain forest, with cleared areas created by regular firing of the scrub.

The neighbouring tribes were the Turrbal to the south, the Taribelang north, Goreng Goreng to their northwest and the Wakka Wakka westwards.

A landmark in legislation was the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897, long name A Bill to make Provision for the better Protection and Care of the Aboriginal and Half-caste Inhabitants of the Colony, and to make more effectual Provision for Restricting the Sale and Distribution of

Opium, an Act of the Parliament of Queensland. It was the first instrument of separate legal control over Aboriginal peoples, and was more restrictive than any contemporary legislation operating in other states. It also implemented the creation of Aboriginal reserves to control the dwelling places and movement of the people.

Amendments and various pieces of replacement legislation were passed in the 20th century, but it was not until passage of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and Torres Strait Islander Act 1991 that the main features of the 1897 Act regarding control of land and people were replaced.

Public servants rather than politicians oversaw much of the decision-making. The individual appointed protectors for various communities had substantial autonomy in how they implemented the Act.

Under the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act 1965, protection as a policy was abandoned. The new policy of assimilation began. The Act retained many elements of control of Indigenous people. Under this legislation, the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was created.

Cherbourg. formerly known as Barambah, Barambah Aboriginal Settlement and Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement, is a rural town and locality in the Aboriginal Shire of Cherbourg, Queensland.

In the 2016 census, the locality of Cherbourg had a population of 1,269 people, of whom 98.7% identified as Indigenous.

It was known as Barambah Aboriginal Settlement from c.1904 to 1932 and then Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement until 1986. The name was changed to avoid confusion with the Barambah pastoral station. Other names include Barambah Aboriginal Mission, Barambah Aboriginal Reserve, Barambah Mission Reserve and Barambah Mission Station.

It was initially populated with a few local Aboriginal people, but others from the Esk region and further afield were soon sent to the reserve. Many were forcibly removed from their land and "settled" at Barambah. People from 109 different areas were mixed together and they were not allowed to speak their own languages. The effect of mixing these different groups of people together and forcing them to learn to speak a foreign language (English) has been an almost total loss of their cultural heritage. Many of the languages are considered to be extinct, surviving only in notes and recordings stored at the University of Queensland. Until the referendum in 1967, the Indigenous people at Cherbourg were not even counted in the census.

The reserve was administered by the Aboriginal Protection Society, Ipswich, until February 1905, when control passed to the Government of Queensland and a Superintendent was appointed, who reported to the Chief Protector of Aborigines. There were approximately 2079 documented removals of Aboriginal people to Barambah between the years of 1905 and 1939.

As a result of the so-called Mabo legislation on native title, there have been several land claims by groups of Gubbi Gubbi. Language is often a crucial factor in an Australian indigenous land claim.

Evidence of Kabi Kabi activity in the Noosa area includes shell middens, stone tools, scar trees and Bora rings. Middens were formed from the discarded shells from the seafood eaten by the Kabi Kabi and were common along the banks of the Noosa River and Weyba, Doonella, Cooroibah and Cootharaba Lakes. These large accumulations of shell material were considered a ready resource by the European settlers and were used as road base in the early days of Tewartin settlement.

Gubbi Gubbi/Kabi Kabi is only one case among many of an ethnic group dispossessed of its language and its social cohesion, as well as its land. The same story is repeated across the world, wherever colonisation has taken place. Yet the Gubbi Gubbi people are manifestly still present in modern Queensland. Their language is largely restricted to uses that might be called 'ceremonial', but it is certainly not extinct. It remains, shall we say, for optional use.

Let me close by quoting from Phil Jarratt's 2021 volume, *Place of Shadows: the history of Noosa*, most of which deals with the successful economic development of Noosa Shire, the area around the modern tourist resort of Noosa Heads. This is the area from which the Gubbi Gubbi were displaced. In a rueful final chapter, Jarratt says (p. 304):

"...anyone who has studied Indigenous history knows that without doubt we European Queenslanders stole, not only the lands of the First Nations, but the identity that went with it. We stole their sense of belonging, and nowhere is that better exemplified than in the lost history of Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire, the third biggest Aboriginal community in Australia."

4. New publications

Three large new Australian bilingual dictionaries. and two more somewhat older

By David Nash, abridged from a blog posting on paradisec.org.au/blog/2022

In recent months three large Australian bilingual dictionaries have been published, after decades of preparation. Some of their attributes are compared below.

First, consider what the three works have in common. All were begun more than half a century ago, by trained linguists in collaboration with many named native speakers of the particular language. There are many cross-references between entries, and there is extensive use of example sentences to illustrate senses.

Pintupi-Luritja Dictionary.

Fourth edition. Begun 1966 by Ken & Lesley Hansen. Arrangement: alphabetical, with English alphabetical finder. 10,970 entries (no subentries). Scope: Old and Young language; includes pronouns, demonstratives, many suffixes, some placenames. Pages: 2273 (in two volumes A-P and R-Y) Price: \$135

Warlpiri Encyclopaedic Dictionary.

Begun 1959 by †Ken Hale. Arrangement: alphabetical, with English alphabetical finder, and scientific name index. 11,152 entries and subentries, and a further 1362 senses. Scope: 4 varieties; includes bound pronouns, nominal suffixes, about 450 placenames

Pages: 1447. Price: \$59.95 hardcover; ePDF and epub TBA

A New Grammar of Dyirbal. Supplements.

Begun 1963 by Bob Dixon. Arrangement: thesaurus of nominals (b) and verbals (c), with Dyirbal alphabetical finder (d). 430 pages

Entries: (b), (c): too complex to count; (d): over 4000. Scope: 10 dialects; **not** included are pronouns, noun markers, verb markers, demonstratives, etc.; proper nouns. Pages: 927. Price: free download

A couple of other sizeable bilingual dictionaries also appeared in the last months of 2022. after many decades' work:

Gija Dictionary, ’

begun in the 1970s by Frances Kofod 1321 pages in two volumes:

Words of Waya: a Dictionary of the Wayan Dialect of the Western Fijian Language,

by Andrew Pawley and Timoci Sayaba; begun in 1967; the 6th and final version 430 pages

We can expect it will be a long time before any of these dictionaries are ‘refreshed’, to use Nick Thieberger’s term. Even so, we note Nick’s appeal for ‘dictionary creators to archive their primary files’.

5. Obituaries

Bernard Dov Spolsky

Our Foundation has lost a loyal friend and a distinguished member, the scholar Bernard Spolsky. Bernard was most recently a participant in our 2021 conference in Tirana. The following appreciation appeared on the website of the American Association for Applied Linguistics on 23 August 2022, which we gratefully acknowledge.

The American Association for Applied Linguistics is deeply saddened to announce that Professor Bernard Dov Spolsky passed away on August 20, 2022. He was surrounded by family in Jerusalem. Our condolences go to the Spolsky, Amaru, Sterne, Thomas, and Wulkan families in this time of great loss. Bernard was a founding father and a seminal voice in several subfields of applied linguistics, including language policy, language testing, second language learning, sociolinguistics, and linguistic landscape.

Born in New Zealand in 1932, he completed his BA and master’s degrees in New Zealand and went on to work as a high school teacher in Australia, and later received his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the Université de Montréal in Canada. He took his first academic position in 1961 as an Assistant Professor of Education at McGill University, also in Canada. In 1964, he moved to the United States for a position at Indiana University and eventually became Assistant, Associate, and then Full Professor at the University of New Mexico. In 1980, he relocated to Israel and became a Professor at Bar-Ilan University and Director of its Language Policy Research Center.

With Professor Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University, he developed the first language education policy in Israel in 1996. With Professor Tamar Levin, also of Tel Aviv University, he conducted an exemplary 1998-2002 national study on academic achievement of immigrants in Israel. He frequently traveled internationally as consultant and researcher, spending many times as a visiting scholar in Washington DC at the National Foreign Language Center and collaborating with the Center for Applied Linguistics. He retired officially in 2000, and as Professor Emeritus at Bar-Ilan University he continued making vital contributions to the field, participating in projects and shaping ideas with his many writings. His contributions and achievements in language testing garnered him the Cambridge/ILTA Distinguished Achievement Award in 2005.

All along his 22 years in retirement Professor Spolsky remained the prodigiously prolific and influential writer he always was. His most recent publications include the book *The Languages of the Jews: A Sociolinguistic History* (2014, with Cambridge University Press) and a study of the semiotics of public signage (2020, in *Linguistic Landscape*), and two more titles which appeared this year: a masterful discussion of individual language advocates and managers (2022, in *Language Policy*), and the important book *Rethinking Language Policy* (2022, with Edinburgh University Press). Professor Spolsky served the profession tirelessly, including as editor-in-chief of *Applied Linguistics* (1979-1986) and as co-founder, with Elana Shohamy, of *Language Policy* and first sole editor-in-chief of this journal (2002-2007). He was President of TESOL International Association (1978-1979) and ILTA, the International Association of Language Testers (1994-1995). He held several offices at AILA, the Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée or International Association of Applied Linguistics. He also served AAAL most generously as Secretary Treasurer (1977-1980) and he was a regular presenter and attendee at the Annual Conference. He was a mentor, friend, and supporter to many AAAL members.

Bernard Dov Spolsky was a visionary scholar, an engaged public intellectual, and an invaluable human being. He is sorely missed, and his legacy will live on.