LDTC Workshop 1

Language Documentation Training Center

Introduction and Language Endangerment

What is LDTC?

Language Documentation Training Center

- 8 week long workshop
- Began in 2004
- Goal: train native speakers to document their own language
- 100 participants & 88+ languages: Spring '12
- Mentor-mentee relationship

Requirements

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Required Pages for Basic Workshop:
1. About me and my language
2. Orthography/Writing system
3. Wordlist
4. Recording and translation
5. Dictionary entries (~25)
6. Syntax/morphology

Attendance:

    Attend 6 workshops

Goals for our Participants?

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- Participants will receive a general introduction to the subjects of language endangerment and documentation

- Participants will think about where their language fits into the larger picture of language endangerment

- Participants will be introduced to basic levels of linguistic analysis, documentary methods, software, and practices.

- Participants will consider how they can apply the skills, techniques and knowledge gained in LDTC to their own unique language situations

Other Activities

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Get to Know Your Mentor

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- Now, you will be paired off into your mentor/ mentee pairs
- Get to know each other!
  - Where are you both from?
  - What languages do you both speak?
  - What are your favorite foods? Etc.

Introduce your partner to the group!
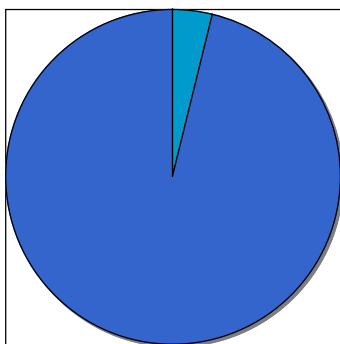
Language Endangerment

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- How many languages exist in the world?
  - Almost 7,000
- Linguists estimate that as many as **50-90%** of the world's languages will become **extinct** within the next century.
- According to the Index of Linguistic Diversity (ILD) calculated by those at Terralingua, **global linguistic diversity has already declined by at least 20% since 1970.**

Language Endangerment

- **96%** of the world's population **speaks just 4%** of its languages.

  - ■ 96% of all languages
  - ■ 4% of all languages

Why Document your Language?

- Language is a valuable cultural asset. Every language gives unique insight into the society's culture and understanding of its environment
- Language describes a society's world views
- Learning more about your language allows you to reconnect with other generations
- Language can reveal much information about the past
- When a language with little or no written record disappears, it is as if it never existed. There will be no way to revive it or learn from it

Where does your language fit in?

- With your mentor, Complete page 3-4 of your handout.
- First, you are going to assess your language's vitality, as **you** have observed it
- Using the Endangered Languages Project measurement tool

Endangered Languages Project (ELP)

- What is it?
  - Online repository of the most up to date and accurate information on the world's endangered languages.
- What information does the ELP collect?
  - Classification information
  - Language vitality statistics
  - GPS coordinates
  - Video, Audio, and Textual samples

Assessing vitality

- The ELP (and all similar organizations) use a specific **rubric** to score languages and calculate vitality

- Why use a rubric?
  - (mostly) Quantitative way to assign vitality
  - Ensures uniformity across all language ratings

Problems with vitality rubrics

- **All vitality rubrics have problems!!**

- Often times, languages don't fit neatly into the categories designated by the rubric
  - Which means the rubric scorer has to make a judgment call

- Often information for only a few sections of the rubric is available

- Numerical rubrics will never quite be able to capture the unique situations of each language.

Level of Endangerment	5 Critically Endangered	4 Severely Endangered	3 Endangered	2 Threatened	1 Vulnerable	0 Safe#
Intergenerational Transmission	Few speakers, all elderly	Many of the grandparent generation speak the language.	Some of child-bearing age know the language, but do not speak it to children.	Most adults of child-bearing age speak the language.	Most adults and some children are speakers.	All community members /members of the ethnic group speak the language.
Absolute Number of Speakers	1-9 speakers	10-99 speakers	100-999 speakers	1000-9999 speakers	10,000-99,999 speakers	>100,000 speakers
Speaker Number Trends	A small percentage of community members or members of the ethnic group speaks the language;, the rate of language shift is very high.	Fewer than half of community members or members of the ethnic group speak the language; the rate of language shift is accelerated.	About half of community members or members of the ethnic group speak the language; the rate of language shift, is frequent but not rapidly accelerating.	A majority of community members or members of the ethnic group speak the language; the numbers of speakers is gradually diminishing.	Most community members or members of the ethnic group are speakers; speaker numbers are diminishing, but at a slow rate.	Almost all community members or members of the ethnic group speak the language; speaker numbers are stable or increasing.
Domains of use of the language	Used only in very few domains, (for example, restricted to ceremonies, to few specific domestic activities; a majority of speakers supports language shift; no institutional support.	The language is being replaced even in the home; some speakers may values their language while the majority support language shift; very limited institutional support, if any.	Used mainly just in the home; some speakers may value their language but many are indifferent or support language shift; no literacy or education programs exist for the language; Government encourages shift to the majority language; there is little few outside institutional support.	Used in non-official domains; shares usage in social domains with other languages; most value their language but some are indifferent; education and literacy programs are rarely embraced by the community; government has no explicit policy regarding minority languages, though some outside institutions support the languages.	Used in all domains except official ones (i.e., government and workplace); nearly all speakers value their language and are positive about using it (prestigious); education and literacy in the language is available, but only valued by some; government and other institutional support for use in non-official domains.	Used in government, mass media, education and the workplace; most speakers value their language and are enthusiastic about promoting it; education and literacy in the language are valued by most community members; government and other institutions support the language for use in all domains.

How to calculate vitality from ELP rubric scores

- Equation: $$\frac{[\,(IGT)x2 + (S\#) + (TRNDs) + (Domains)\,]}{\text{Total possible points}}$$

- Percentage equivalents:
  - 100-81% = Critically Endangered
  - 80-61% = Severely Endangered
  - 60-41% = Endangered
  - 40-21% = Threatened
  - 20-1% = Vulnerable
  - 0% = Safe

Level of certainty

- computed based on the percentage of factors that are known and entered.
  - A language which has information entered for all four factors will have 25 total points available-- absolute speaker #: 5, speaker trends: 5, domains of use: 5, intergenerational transmission: 5x2 = 10
  - Languages with info for all categories will score 25/25, or 100%

- Percentage equivalents:

  25 points possible = Certain
  20 points possible = Mostly Certain
  15 points possible = Fairly Certain
  10 points possible = Mostly Uncertain
  5 points possible = Uncertain

Examples:

	Intergen. Trans. (x2)	Abs. #	Speaker Trends	Domains	Total	Levels of endangerment and certainty
Language A	6	4	3	3	16 / 25 (64%)	Severely Endangered
Pts. possible	10	5	5	5	25	Certain
Language B	8	5	No Info	No Info	13 / 15 (87%)	Critically Endangered
Pts. possible	10	5	0	0	15	Fairly Certain
Language C	No Info	3	No Info	No Info	3 / 5 (60%)	Endangered
Pts. possible	0	5	0	0	5	Uncertain

NOW YOU TRY!

Where does your language fit in?

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- Next, with your mentor, you will be researching what other websites, concerning language endangerment, have to say about your language
- Finally, we want to know what you think! How do you feel about your language now that you have done this activity?

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- Questions?

Thank you for your time and attention. We
   look forward to this semester at LDTC!