

# An Ecological Perspective on Intergenerational Language Transmission

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## ***Introduction:***

The theme of the 2009 Stabilizing Indigenous Conference was intergenerational language transmission and the part it plays in strengthening families and communities—an appropriate but difficult objective for many of the communities wanting to revitalize their languages. The premise of intergenerational language transmission is language renewal. A language is given new life when children learn it from their parents and families.

But when the language is one of North America's indigenous languages, the outcome can hardly be assured. Myriad forces can intervene and influence the continuation of such a language, whether in individuals or in communities. The hegemonic place given to English in our society is behind all these forces, and is the reason why the question of intergenerational language transmission is even an issue. What form do such forces take, and can they be counteracted or minimized?

This examination of language learning and revitalization look at what is involved in the process, and will argue that socio-political forces play a significant role in language learning and behavior; an ecological perspective on how those forces influence individuals, families, and communities is required for any language revitalization effort to succeed.<sup>2</sup> It begins with a discussion of what's involved in language learning, and describes one family's experiences as they confronted the various forces at work while they socialized their children in the language of their community and heritage. The family's experiences will lead to an examination of the social and political forces at work in our society, which complicate its effort. We will look at educational policies that conflict with, and often override, policies that are meant to protect and preserve Native American languages and cultures.

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<sup>2</sup> My research on second language learning and on the education of language minority children in American schools has convinced me that an ecological perspective is necessary for understanding how circumstances and conditions can influence the outcome of complex processes in teaching and learning. This view of teaching and learning has been apparent to any learning theorist who steps out of the laboratory where these processes tend to be examined in splendid isolation, as learning theorist, Urie Bronfenbrenner, has shown. See Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

The worst conflicts come from educational policies aimed at immigrant students; to many people in our society, immigrants mean more linguistic and cultural diversity, a source of considerable distress to those who believe that the only language and culture that are valid in this society are English and mainstream American culture. Policies regarding language use in education are broadly applied in our schools, and affect any student—immigrant and indigenous alike—who speaks a language other than English. Finally, we look at some strategies that communities have adopted to neutralize the forces working against intergenerational language revitalization, and end by describing the steps one family is taking to tackle them head on.

### ***Why Context and Setting Matters in Intergenerational Language Transmission***

The ideal in reversing language shift and loss, according to Joshua Fishman (1990), is to reestablish the conditions under which children can learn the threatened language in the home from family members. But Fishman recognizes that such a strategy works as an intervention only where there is still some intergenerational use of language, and even more importantly, where parents and grandparents know the language well enough to socialize children in it. In fact, the problem confronting many indigenous communities is that parents and even grandparents do not know or speak the language confidently enough to teach it to the youngest members of their families, or because families do not live in close enough proximity to grandparents to allow this to happen.

But even when they do, language transmission does not always happen. Parents and grandparents may know and speak the language at home, and would like the children to learn and speak it as well, but the younger members of the family nevertheless do not learn the language well enough to speak it. The children may gain some passive understanding of the language, and learn words and even phrases, but not be able to communicate in that language. This is a frequent outcome when the language is an indigenous or immigrant language in societies like ours, in which no language has any validity or power except the societal language.<sup>3</sup>

What thwarts language learning in such situations? The process by which children acquire the language of their family and community ordinarily happens so naturally—so effortlessly, and with such consistency—that most people take it for granted. They do not worry about how it happens, or indeed, whether it will. And yet, it is a process of extraordinary complexity and requiring that all participants

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<sup>3</sup> Consider the many people you know who grew up in homes where a language other than English was spoken, but did not themselves learn it. Most discussions about language background end up with such accounts. The question to ask is this: did these people learn the language as children but lost it over time, or did they learn it at all? And if so, how did that happen?

play well-defined roles for it to take place. The key participants in language acquisition<sup>4</sup> are a child and adult caregivers, prototypically a baby and its parents.

Babies, it goes without saying, have no language initially and can communicate with others only by non-verbal means for a time. Language acquisition begins as the participants in the process come together in the setting of the home, and takes place as parents interact with and care for the child. These are all essential ecological aspects of the process. As long as there are no conflicts in the family that affect the caregivers' language behavior, the process will work just as it should, and be uneventful. Where there are conflicts—for example, where parents are uncertain whether it is a good idea to speak to children in the indigenous language—the outcome of the process will be uncertain. The home and family exist in a cultural and community context, and the community itself exists in a societal context. Each setting or context has many internal and external forces operating on it, forces that can profoundly undermine what the family is trying to do in the home. Each setting is shaped by, and deeply affected by its societal context. As we will see, the outcome of language learning depends on the interplay between the various settings and ecological contexts. The figure below depicts the ecological relationships between participants, settings, contexts and sources of socio-political pressures as I see them:

====Figure 1 here====

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<sup>4</sup> Although some linguists (notably, Stephen Krashen) make a distinction between "*learning*" and "*acquisition*" in talking about the process by which languages are learned or acquired. I do not, because it is an artificial distinction, especially where children are concerned. In this paper the two expressions are used interchangeably.

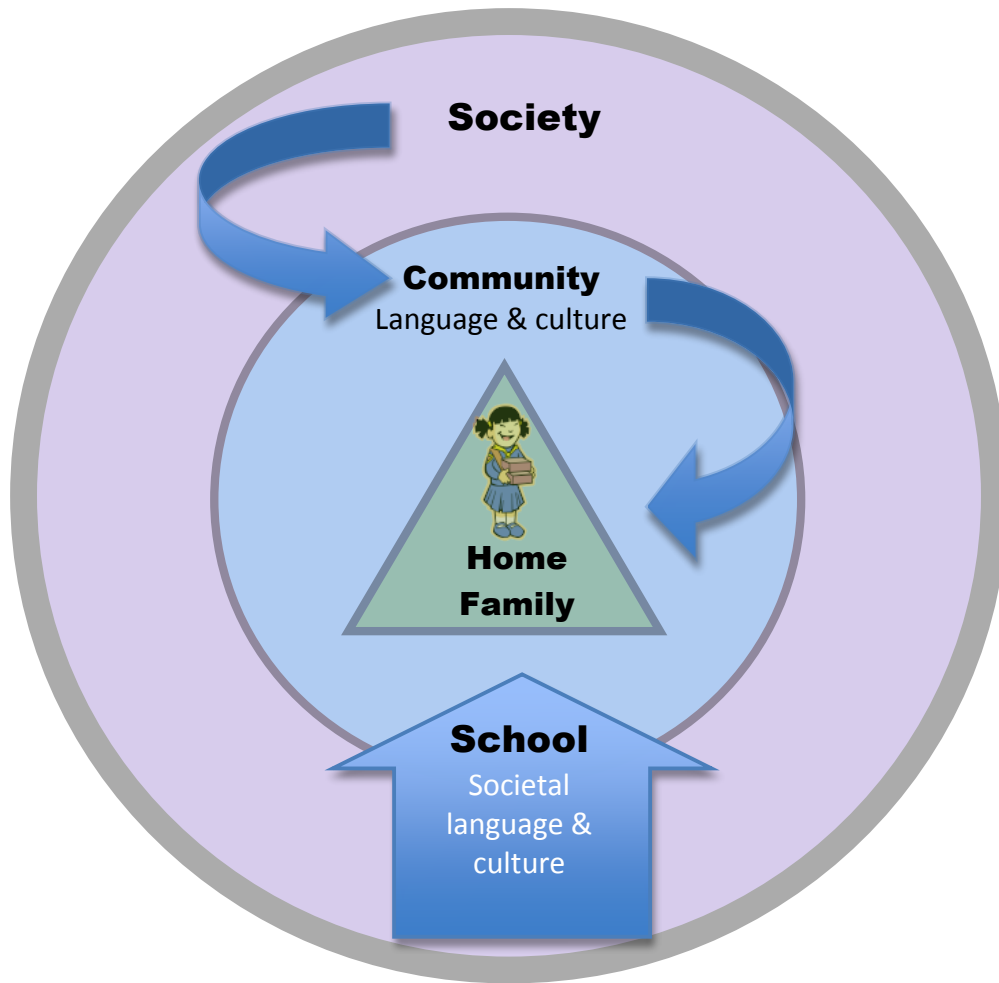


Figure 1. Ecological perspective of main influences on the socialization of children into the linguistic and cultural worlds of the home, community and society. The arrows show the sources of socio-political pressures operating on the process from outside the home and community.

## ***Learning the Language of the Family and Home: An Everyday Miracle***

Between birth and age five, children acquire the foundations of the language spoken in their homes by caregivers, no matter how complex it is. Children come into the world endowed with possibilities and capabilities, but no language. In the months that follow birth, parents and family members will reveal to infants the sounds that will connect them to their heritage and people. And little by little, they will coax them into the patterns of sounds that form words, and connect those words to persons, objects, and situations in the children's growing awareness of the world of the home and family. Before children reach the second year of life, they will be putting words together to express themselves and to communicate with family members. Before that year is over, they will be using more complex language to express their needs, thoughts, and sentiments. By the time they head off to school, they are well versed in the communicative possibilities of their language, and can use their language resources to interact with other members of their speech community.

They are far from done, however, since there is more to learn before they achieve the linguistic competence adults have. But by age five, most children will have acquired the linguistic means to communicate their thoughts, sentiments, and needs to the people they encounter in their everyday lives. What they have acquired is an abstract system of grammar of incredible complexity and subtlety—so complex that hardly any grammar has ever been fully described or understood, and so abstract that few speakers of any language, whether of a grammatically simple language like Mandarin Chinese, or complex ones like Navaho or Yup'ik, can describe what it is they know. By age five, children are clearly and indisputably "native speakers" of their primary language—whatever it happens to be.

The outcome of the process, however, is hardly uniform, whether in the communicative skills or the linguistic resources children have acquired by the time they head off to school. Some of the variation in communicative ability stems from individual differences in children. They may vary in how easily they express themselves in various situations, contexts, or by topic. Some children are, by nature, more verbally expressive than are others. There are ones, who, from early on, can talk to just about anyone on whatever topic comes to mind. Other children are less expressive: they prefer to keep their thoughts to themselves, or they lack the confidence to say what they might like to say. But some of the variation we see across children can also come from differences in early experiences and language environment. The language resources children acquire can vary substantially in richness, variety, and flexibility depending on experiential and environmental factors. Children reared in homes where there is frequent discussion of ideas, experiences, and situations, and there is much give and take, are more likely to gain rich language skills and resources than are children who have been raised in communicatively deficient (qualitatively, or quantitatively, speaking) or dysfunctional (e.g., verbally abusive) home environments. Language development

in children from such backgrounds, sadly, is likely to be delayed, restricted or lacking in specificity and clarity.

The Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, characterized cognitive and linguistic development as both a social and a cognitive process, which is culturally and contextually conditioned. He argued: "Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). In other words, *children grow into the social, cultural, and intellectual worlds we create for them*. From this frame of reference, what goes on in the home and surrounding social environment is as essential to language learning as is what goes on in the learner's head. We will see, however, that the social environment children find themselves in can be greatly impacted by far reaching forces that are in play in the society beyond their homes and community.

### ***Language Socialization into the Cultural World of Home and Community***

When children acquire the language spoken by caregivers, they learn much more than its words and grammatical rules. By the same process, they also acquire a system of beliefs, values, behaviors and a framework for interaction and communication with other members of their speech community. That being the case, why doesn't the process always succeed? If it did, there would be no need to worry about language loss or revitalization.

Languages erode and are lost when parents do not pass them on to their children. Parents who are bilingual can socialize their children in either or both languages. Many choose to do it in English only. Is it just a matter of choice? What prevents families in communities that are trying to stabilize indigenous languages and cultures from choosing to do so in the easiest way possible and in the home? And when families do try to give their children the gift of the indigenous language and culture, why is the outcome so uncertain?

Consider the case of young "Lena," whose parents have done everything they can to insure that their children will be speakers of Keres, the language of their heritage and community. Lena and her parents live in one of the 19 pueblos of New Mexico. Their community is unusual in that the indigenous language continues to be spoken in homes by many young people and adults. This is in sharp contrast to neighboring pueblos where only older community members still speak their heritage languages, and younger members must attend special classes to learn them. Lena's parents realized that even in their own community, the language was in danger. Fewer and fewer young children have been learning Keres at home over the past decade, and many are entering school as English monolinguals.

This young couple realized that an ominous shift had occurred in the community, almost without warning or notice. They knew the problem stemmed from the growing preference for English among the younger members of the community. When these young people grew up and started families, English was the language in which they reared their children. Grandparents and other relatives,

confronted with little ones who spoke only English tended to switch to English just so they could talk with them. It was not surprising then, that the children were English monolinguals when they entered school. This couple decided that when they had children, they would speak to them exclusively in the indigenous language, and would ask the members of their families to do the same. Everything went according to plan when Lena was born. Baby Lena was lovingly nurtured in the family language and culture at home, and she acquired both just as one would expect. She quickly learned the language, and by age three, was about as verbal and articulate in Keres as a child her age could be. Having been reared in a communicatively rich and stimulating home environment Lena had acquired the linguistic resources that would allow her to interact not only with members of her large extended family, but also with others in her community in culturally appropriate ways and necessary ways. Lena could tell stories, ask questions, give coherent accounts of her experiences, show deference and courtesies to adults by inquiring after their health, and listening thoughtfully and respectfully to their responses. She also demonstrated a well-developed sense of her community's pragmatic rules. Lena knew how to greet people properly, and knew what someone her age should or should not say during events and activities that took place in her quite conservative community. It appeared that the young parents' efforts were paying off: by age three, Lena had a native-speaker's command of the language of her heritage, and was beyond her years in linguistic and cultural competence.

But despite their considerable efforts, Lena's parents could not shelter their daughter from the powerful socio-political forces operating on the community to move toward English. Lena was, of course, exposed to English while she was learning Keres. She heard it used on the television, and most of all, from her playmates—cousins and neighbors. These children spoke English almost exclusively although they too lived in the pueblo. Lena's parents, however, had been vigilant and consistent about adhering to and enforcing their Keres-at-home rule: they spoke Keres at home, not only to Lena, but to one another and to other family members as well. And they tried to limit the time the television was on. What the parents could not control was Lena's desire to be just like her playmates. This was especially evident when everyone except Lena began participating in the local Head Start preschool program when they were around three and a half years old.

That was the point at which Lena and her family came face to face with a problem that constitutes a pivotal factor in intergenerational language transmission in societies like ours. It is, however, a factor only when the language being learned at home is a minority language—be it an indigenous language or an immigrant language.

### ***Social Pressure to Assimilate Begins Early***

Lena's parents had decided initially against enrolling her in the community's federally sponsored preschool program because they were concerned about the effect that 5 or 6 hours of English each day would have on her language development. They were aware that the loss of Keres by the pueblo's young

children began just a few years after a Head Start program was established in the community several decades earlier. The young people who were now the parents of children who spoke no Keres at all had participated in the program as children. It might have been a coincidence, but Lena's parents did not believe that was the case. Other pueblos have reported similar patterns of loss following the arrival of Head Start programs in their communities, despite promises that those programs could be used to help revitalize the indigenous language in communities worried about language shift and loss.

Lena at age three and a half, however, cared little about such concerns. What she saw, and what affected her deeply was that her friends and playmates were going off to Head Start each day, while she had to stay at home. There was a new baby sister at home, but that hardly made up for her feeling of separation from her friends and being socially isolated. When she did see her friends, it was evident that they had had shared experiences that had not included Lena. They talked constantly and enthusiastically about things they did at school—in English, of course. Before they started preschool, Lena could understand their English because they talked mostly about experiences she had shared. Now she had difficulty following what they were saying. Lena begged her mother to let her go to Head Start. Some mornings she would stand at the door saying, "*I go Head Start,*" and weep when her mother told her she had to stay at home with her baby sister. We can only imagine how Lena's entreaties affected Lena's parents. How long could they resist her pleas? They visited the Head Start program, which listed as one of its goals, "strengthening the community's language." What they saw was a nice enough preschool program for the Pueblo's three to five year olds, but the only language they heard spoken by teachers or children was English.

Some indigenous communities have adopted Head Start as a means to support language revitalization. These federally sponsored programs are rarely conducted entirely, or even mostly, in the indigenous languages, since whatever else a community might wish, Head Start's mandate is to prepare children for school in an English-speaking society. Revitalization efforts in Head Start sponsored preschool programs are mostly structured as a component of the curriculum, wherein instructors teach children vocabulary and phrases in the target language for a period or two each day through activities, games, stories or songs. The language used in the program the rest of the time is English. It is not difficult for children to tell that English is the "usual" or "regular" language of school, while the indigenous language is treated as an add-on, and should therefore be considered less important than English. This may be the case even where teachers are from the tribal community served by the program. The conditioning Natives experience as children against using their language at school can have long lasting effects. Whether or not they realize it, adults sometimes doubt that the indigenous language belongs at school.

The observation then that Head Start may have led to language shift in many tribal communities is hardly surprising,<sup>1</sup> and Lena's parents were being prudent when they refused to enroll her in the program at first. They held out, at least for a



while. But they eventually gave in to her entreaties, and so Lena went off to Head Start. Shortly after that, her mother reported that she was enjoying the experience and learning a lot of English. Sadly, it took just a few months before English began replacing Keres as her preferred language. At home, her parents insisted that she speak Keres and they used it exclusively when communicating with Lena and her sister. Lena tries to speak Keres, but she often forgets, and uses English more frequently than she does Keres these days. By age 5, she did not always seem to be aware that she was speaking English rather than Keres. She still understands Keres, or at least she does most of the time. But when her parents talk to her using more mature forms of the language as is appropriate for speaking to a 6 year old, she sometimes appears not to understand. This is the first sign of language attrition in children.

### ***Political Forces behind the Social Pressures on Children***

The language policies that led to the loss of many indigenous languages originally spoken in North America no longer exist—officially, that is. When Congress passed the Native American Languages Act in 1990 (Public Law 101-477), it took a decisive step toward repudiating the policies of the late 1800s, which sought to destroy the Native American languages and cultures by schooling children exclusively in English. The Native American Languages Act declared that the official U. S. policy is "to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages,"<sup>2</sup> an important, although largely symbolic act. In 1992, the Act was amended<sup>3</sup> to provide funding to assist Tribal governments and Native American organizations in establishing community language programs, training programs for teachers and other support staff, and create materials for use in such programs. The Native American Languages Act has supported the establishment of many language revitalization programs in Native communities throughout the United States.

This being the case, we should ask—why are people like Lena's parents finding so little external support for their efforts? They have done everything right: they have socialized their children in the indigenous language and the rich cultural traditions of their community. They know that when it comes time for the girls to learn English, the skills and knowledge they have acquired in their primary language and culture will provide a strong foundation for learning English as a second language. But it would seem that there are powerful societal forces operating on their children over which they have little control. What are those forces?

It should come as no surprise to the reader that they stem from essentially the same language policy that dictated how Native American children were to be schooled in reservation and off-reservation boarding schools. That policy was spelled out by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, J. D. Atkins, back in 1887: "*The instruction of the Indians in the vernacular is not only of no use to them, but is detrimental to the cause of their education and civilization, and no school will be permitted on the reservation in which the English language is not exclusively taught.*"<sup>4</sup> The Native American Language Act of 1990 would seem to have countermanded

such a policy, but does it really? It appears that while federal legislation protects the language rights of the Native peoples now, they are nonetheless affected by the harsh language and educational policies aimed at immigrant groups in the society. The English-only policy that came close to eradicating the linguistic resources of countless Native peoples over the past 150 years is now being used against immigrant languages, but it is so broadly drawn and applied that it affects immigrants and Native peoples alike, as we see with children like Lena.

### ***Nativists vs. the Language Rights of Native Peoples***

Over the past twenty-five years, there has been a major resurgence of the old Nativist sentiments in our society—this is the xenophobic movement that has been against immigration to the United States, hostile to the presence of alien cultures and languages brought by immigrants, and against what Nativists regard as the "weakening" of American cultural values and the displacement of English as the language of the society. Various immigrant groups in the past—e.g., the Chinese,<sup>5</sup> Irish, Germans, Italians, and Greeks—were targeted by the Nativists. The main target these days is Hispanic.<sup>6</sup> The continuing influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America had led to Hispanics becoming a sizeable and visible group by 1985. According to the U. S. Census Bureau,<sup>7</sup> people of Hispanic origin constituted 15% of the total population of the United States. Their estimated number as of July 2008 was 46.9 million, making them the United States' largest minority population. The percentage increase of this population between 2007 and 2008 was 3.2%, making Hispanics not only the largest, but also the fastest growing minority group. These facts have led to a new wave of hostility against Hispanic immigrants and their offspring: everyone, documented or not—is regarded as an "illegal." The neo-Nativists would no doubt like to build an impenetrable wall between the United States from Latin America to block further immigration, but that will never happen because prosperity in the United States depends on free access to the marketplaces of the Americas.

The animosity towards Hispanic immigrants has found expression in the anti-bilingualism English-only movement over the twenty-five years. If it was no longer acceptable or legal to discriminate openly against or persecute the targeted immigrant groups, it was regarded as reasonable and even laudable to pass laws restricting or abrogating their linguistic rights, for the sake of "societal unity." The use of Spanish in public places was viewed as evidence that the society was in danger of fragmentation and of Hispanicization. English-only proponents defend their efforts to eliminate the use of any language but English in the workplace, in schools, and in public life as patriotic acts. From this perspective, English is synonymous with being American, and bilingualism can be equated with divided loyalties to the American ideal. Theodore Roosevelt famously put it this way in a letter to the President of the American Defense Society on the obligation of immigrants to accept fully the preconditions of American life:

"...We have room for but one flag, the American flag...We have room for but one language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that

the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house; and we have room for but one soul loyalty, and that loyalty is to the American people."<sup>8</sup>

This letter Roosevelt wrote just three days before his death in 1919 may have stated the jingoist position more bluntly than present-day English-only proponents can. Instead they try to disguise the movement's intentions by saying that making English the official language of the society is strictly symbolic; it is as benign as the adoption of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as our national anthem and the bald eagle as our national bird. But is it really? Lena's parents would not agree, nor would I.

The English-only movement has focused on two targets since the mid-80s: *bilingual ballots*, which were mandated for voting areas with substantial proportions of language minority voters, and *bilingual education*, identified as an appropriate way to teach children who did not understand English well enough to handle an English-only curriculum. The ultimate aim of the English-only movement has been to amend the Constitution, making English the one and only official language of the society. The goal is to limit the use of languages other than English in government, ballots, schools, and in public life. Proponents of this movement are working at both the federal and state level to pass "Official English" legislation. Thus far, thirty states have passed such legislation—many as voter initiatives. In addition, voters in three states (California, Arizona, and Massachusetts) have passed referenda banning bilingual education as the preferred approach to educating students with limited English proficiency.

It should be noted that bilingual education programs were meant, not just for immigrant students, but for Native American and Hawaiian and Alaskan Natives as well, including those who speak English only. The law comments on the unique status of Native Americans and of Native American Languages, and suggests that bilingual education can serve as a vehicle for promoting the revitalization and strengthening of tribal language resources. Indeed many Native American and Alaskan Native communities supported materials development, teacher training, and bilingual program development using federal and state Bilingual Education funds. But when the English-only people launched their attacks on bilingual education in the 80s and 90s they hardly discriminated between programs for immigrants and ones for indigenous students. Consider California's Proposition 227 and Arizona's Proposition 203, for example. According to U. S. Census data, California has the largest total Native American population of any state, and Arizona has the third largest total. Neither California's nor Arizona's ban on the use of languages other than English in public schools made any exceptions for Native American languages. California's ban did not greatly affect its Native students who were mostly monolingual speakers of English. The heritage language revitalization programs they were in were mostly tribally sponsored, so Proposition 227 did not affect those programs.

In contrast, many of Arizona's Indian students were in state provided public schools where they were classified as "limited in English proficiency" prior to Proposition 203's passage, and were in bilingual classes. Arizona's statute read, "all

children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English and all children shall be placed in English language classrooms." The children who would be hit the hardest were ones like the children in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian community who were in language revitalization programs to learn Pima and Maricopa as heritage languages. Indeed, Native American leaders recognized the threat Proposition 203 posed to their language revitalization programs, and were vocal in opposing the referendum. They were hardly reassured when the initiative's backers said that Hispanic children, not Native Americans, were the primary targets of this action. And it really did not matter much who the primary targets were since it was not just these public actions working against the use of languages other than English at school.

### ***How Educational Policy Impacts Language Development and Revitalization***

In 2001, the Bush administration made radical changes to the federal legislation providing support for schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 made accountability a top priority, and laid down tough conditions for the long-term survival of schools across the nation. It required that all students, irrespective of background or special needs be tested annually on standardized tests in English language arts and math, given in English beginning in the second grade. Schools had to include everyone in this mandated testing program—or suffer harsh consequences. Schools were required to set annual goals for improving student performance, these annual goals would be tests of a school's "adequately yearly progress" (AYP) towards full proficiency in both areas of the curriculum for all groups of students by 2014. Failure to meet the AYP goal for a year would result in the school being put on a list identifying schools as having problems. Repeated placement over several years on the failure list would trigger external monitoring and externally imposed "remedies." If such remedies and actions do not result in a dramatic improvement in test performance, schools are supposed to offer parents transfers to other schools, and failing schools can be put in receivership—teachers and administrators can be replaced and the schools can be turned over to private businesses to run, or turned into charter schools.

With consequences like these hanging over schools, it is hardly surprising that educators, no matter how strongly they support the use of children's primary or heritage languages in school, will put them aside and move into overdrive with English. It is true that under NCLB, schools can test children in their primary languages for up to three years, before they have to be included in the English testing program. But given how long it takes children to become proficient enough in English to handle a standardized test given in that language, no one is going to delay English instruction.

Since students do not usually fare well when tested in a language they do not know, educators do not relish having language minorities in their schools. Anyone who needs help with language or extra help with literacy or math—immigrant or non-immigrant, and especially special needs students such as those with learning disabilities—are regarded as obstacles to meeting AYP goals. Since Fall 2006,

Arizona schools have been required to provide at least four hours of English Language Development instruction each day for all students who are classified as "English learners."

The emphasis on turning children into English speakers as soon as possible is not focused on children solely from the kindergarten year through high school. It starts much earlier, as Lena's parents knew. The principal goal of the Head Start program is to provide the children of low-income families the skills and experiences that are needed for school. For children from non-English speaking families and homes, it is presumed that one of the skills they will need is English. At the same time, Head Start is meant to be a community development and culturally responsive program—families and community members have a voice in its offerings. Head Start has, from its inception, served children and families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, but it was not until 1998, when Congress reauthorized it, that Head Start's Program Performance Standards listed the need to support bilingual language development for children whose home language was not English. Various Native American and Alaskan Native communities have chosen bilingual models for their Head Start programs, where children learn in and develop their heritage language, and learn English in preparation for school.<sup>9</sup>

That being the case, why were Lena's parents worried about their daughter's participation in Head Start? Why, when they visited the school in their community, did they hear only English and not Keres? What's the relationship that revitalization experts like Christine Sims and Mary Eunice Romero-Little see between participation in such programs and language erosion in indigenous communities? What happened to the requirement that Head Start programs support children's language development in their home languages in addition to English?

### ***"Good Start, Grow Smart"—Bush's Revision of Head Start Policy***

The Bush administration did not limit its efforts to reform schooling by mandated testing to grades K-12. It also tried to refocus Head Start more narrowly to literacy and school learning, abandoning its broader concern with social, emotional, and physical development. In 2002, the administration signaled a change in direction for Head Start when it released its plan for early childhood education, *Good Start, Grow Smart*. Head Start's ultimate goal, from its inception, has always been to promote school readiness in the children of low-income families, but the approach taken was by providing the comprehensive child and family services often needed to insure school success.

The Bush administration's effort to eliminate or reduce Head Start's popular child and family services failed, but that did not change the administration's effort to narrow down its educational mission. It did so by creating a standardized test to be administered to all Head Start children twice each year, beginning in the fall of 2003. Although Head Start touted the National Reporting System (NRS) as merely a means to enhance data collection, and to allow it to plan better training and technical assistance to local programs, it was, in fact, a high stakes test, which could be used as the basis for determining which programs should be continued, and which

discontinued. Despite the breadth of Head Start's comprehensive program, the NRS focused narrowly on testing English vocabulary, the letters of the alphabet, the English sounds they represented, and early math skills. For example, children were asked to identify, from an array of pictures, which depicted actions such as "awarding," "delivering," or facial expressions, such as "horrified." Consider too, this math item asking four and five-year-olds to interpret a bar graph:

*"This graph shows how many children living on Clark Street have had each kind of pet. Dogs, cats, rabbits. How many have had dogs? How many had cats?"*

Other math items called for children to enumerate, to add and subtract, to judge relative quantities, and to deal with measurement. Did such items assess age or developmentally appropriate skills, knowledge, or understandings? A glance at the curriculum standards for math and English literacy would reveal that they are not. These were skills and knowledge ordinarily listed for school age rather than preschool children. From the test-designers perspective, the inclusion of items assessing first, second, and even third grade skills in a test intended for preschoolers might be justified on the grounds that they were needed to avoid a ceiling effect. Perhaps. Testing and early childhood development experts challenged the appropriateness of a standardized test on literacy and numeracy skills for four year olds, and pointed to the potential harm such a test would have on young children.<sup>10</sup>

The NPR had just the effect that its supporters and critics predicted it would have. While Washington had not said that test results would be used in funding decisions, Head Start grantees had little reason to believe that it would not do so in the future. Head Start Centers are funded by grants made directly to local sponsoring agencies. Given the way high stakes testing was being used in the K-12 sector under NCLB, Head Start operators were justifiably concerned that decisions on continued funding for centers might be based on how children perform on the NRS. It is not surprising that the Head Start curriculum was modified in many centers across the country. The Government Accounting Office reported that "an estimated 18 percent of grantees changed instruction during the first year of NRS implementation to emphasize areas covered in their curricula." It should be added that by the second year of implementation, changes could be seen in most Head Start programs. Elements of the elementary school curriculum replaced the preschool curriculum, with children taught, usually by rote, materials that Head Start was supposed to be preparing them to handle once they were in school. Teachers taught what was on the test, no doubt because they interpreted the test as a guide for what they should be teaching. Preschool activities that were meant to develop foundational skills for learning and to introduce children to the joy of literacy and learning were put aside in favor of drills on materials and concepts for which few four- and five-year-olds were ready to learn. Congress voted to curtail the use and further development of the NRS in its reauthorization of Head Start in 2007, but not before it had done some harm to many programs.

The greatest damage, looked at from the perspective of many indigenous communities was to their efforts to develop and strengthen their languages through

their Head Start programs. Knowing that the NRS would be testing children on basic skills in English, many programs—especially those sponsored by school districts—put aside the other language and emphasized English almost immediately. How did that affect language revitalization efforts? Consider for example, Taos Pueblo's Head Start program, which had been an important part of the Pueblo's language revitalization effort. In 2004, Henrietta Gomez, described how NCLB and the NRS had affected Taos Pueblo's immersion program, which was initiated in 1998:

We had an immersion program where the teachers were teaching the children in our language and using Tiwa only throughout the Head Start day, but now, it's not an immersion program any longer. Now it's part of the day in Tiwa, and part of the day in English in order to teach (English) reading.<sup>11</sup>

Christine Sims notes that the reduction in time devoted to the indigenous language can greatly affect its maintenance and development, given the social forces pushing children towards English, as Henrietta Gomez reported happening in the Taos Pueblo Head Start program:

"Last year, we had a little boy that was speaking in Tiwa. He was so proud of his Tiwa language development. But this year, because of the changes and the English happening around him, he is refusing to speak the language."

In her 2003 testimony before Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Gomez had described how essential the Head Start program had been to Taos Pueblo's language preservation efforts, and noted that participation in the program had benefitted the children.<sup>12</sup> Not only had immersion in Tiwa not delayed the children's academic development in English, it had given them an apparent advantage. Children who had attended the Tiwa immersion preschool tended to outperform children who had been in English-only preschools once they were in school. It appears that English began to displace Tiwa soon after English was given more time in school. Figure 2 shows how preschool programs based on purely on societal goals can overwhelm family and community socialization goals. The socio-political forces that influence the socialization are magnified when children encounter them in preschool during the early years of life. They are particularly influential when preschool is combined with child care, which can mean that children are in an English speaking environment for as much as 8 hours each day.

====Figure 2 Here====

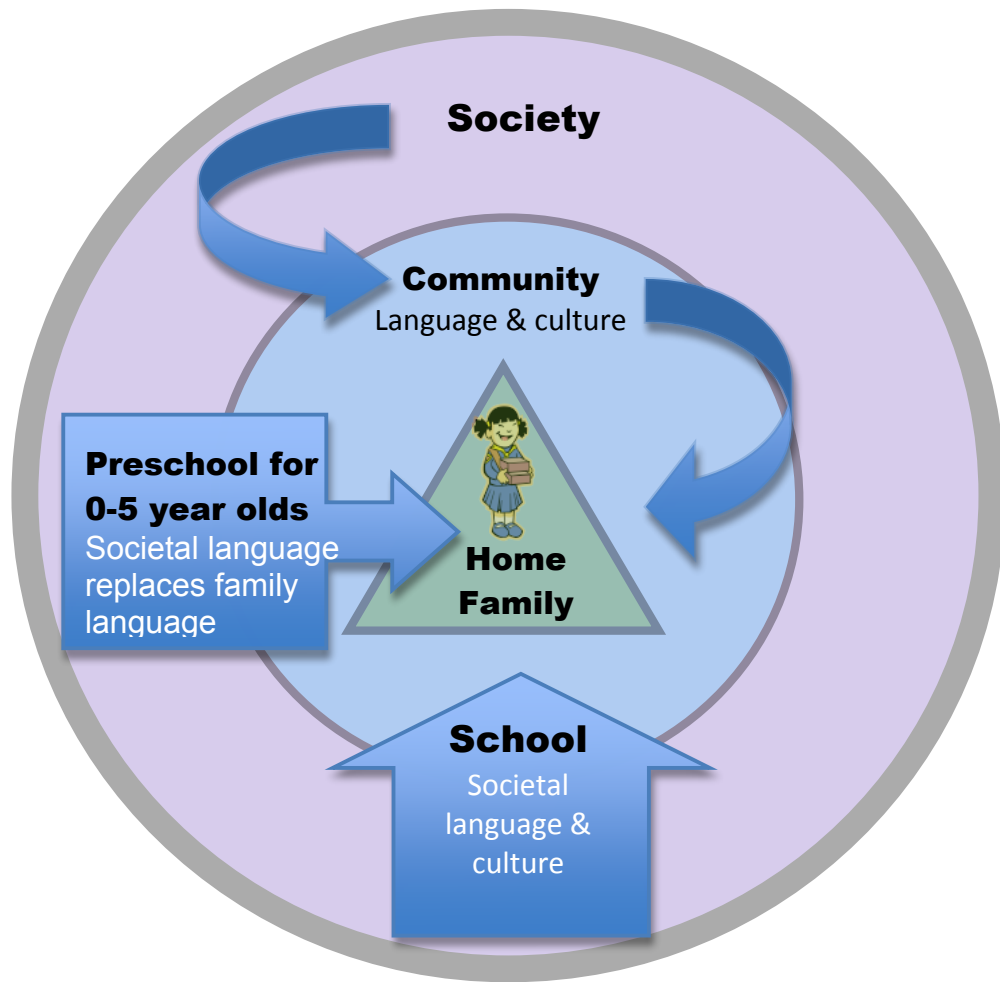


Figure 2. How socio-political forces that work against language revitalization efforts are magnified when children encounter them during the preschool years.



The hegemonic positioning of English in the education of children is hardly new. No one tells children that they must abandon the language they already speak when they learn English; nor does anyone have to tell children they must learn and speak English (although they do). Few children can resist for long, and fewer still can prevent it from crowding out and displacing the language resources of the family and primary community. In the bad old days, children could be and often were physically punished for continuing to speak their primary languages at school, as both Native Americans and immigrants have reported.<sup>13</sup> These days, the prohibitions are less physical, but are equally restrictive. It should be said, however, that the use of force was, and is, hardly necessary. Children who enter school speaking little or no English can hardly wait to learn it, and to use it whenever and wherever they can. What is their motive?

It is the very social forces that drove Lena to want to join her friends at the preschool, and to learn English so quickly once she was there. Children want to be with their friends, to be included in the social life of peers, and to know what is happening around them. When Lena finally talked her parents into letting her attend Head Start in the Pueblo where the family lived, NRS was no longer used, but its presence lived on. Although the community wanted the Head Start program to be supportive of its language and culture, English was the only language in use, no doubt because the school district that administered the program wanted the children to be ready for the NCLB mandated tests they would be taking in English once they were done with Head Start. The language in which activities were conducted in Lena's Head Start class was English. Lena did not speak or understand much English initially. It was not difficult for her to figure out what her teachers and classmates were saying because the activities were tightly linked to the language they were using. And because she did not want to be left out or different from her peers, she did what the others did, said what she heard others saying, and being an extraordinarily quick study, she learned enough English to get by after a few months. But, as noted, not only did she learn English quickly, she is now substituting English for Keres words in her speech—Keres words that she knows very well. Her mother reported that this began after just two weeks in school, and has become more pronounced since then. It would appear that English is beginning to displace Lena's Keres—just as her parents feared it would once she began school.

### ***Age Matters:***

Why does this happen? It is simply not true that the human head can hold only one language at a time comfortably, or that learning two languages leads to confusion. People can learn and maintain as many languages as needed or desired, as long as the conditions are right—otherwise there would be no bilinguals or multilinguals in the world. So why do we so frequently see English overwhelming and replacing other languages in children? This is a question that has occupied me for many years—it being a problem both for immigrant and indigenous families alike. It seems that when the language being learned is a societal language like English, and the learners are speakers of minority languages, the process tends to be

subtractive rather than additive (Lambert, 1964, 1967). From what I have observed over the years, however, the problem is exacerbated by age. The older children are when they find themselves learning English at school, the more likely they are to hang on to their primary languages. The primary language may not develop as fully as English does, but they do not lose it. The outcome is quite different for children who begin learning English in the preschool years. The learning of English in such situations can be quite subtractive, and whether gradually or rapidly, English is likely to replace the primary language. There is evidence that supports that observation.

In 1990, the first Bush administration tried to reduce the need for bilingual education in the K-12 sector by immersing three- to five-year-old preschoolers from non-English speaking homes into English immersion programs. The idea was this: three and four-year old children can learn a second language quickly and with little effort. All that is needed is to take them out of their homes as early as possible and immerse them in English, as would happen in a preschool program. Because there had been many anecdotal reports of primary language loss resulting from children's participation in English-only preschools, colleagues and I decided to conduct a survey of families that had had children in such programs (Fillmore, 1991). Funding for such a politically unpopular question was in short supply, so the study was done without funding.<sup>14</sup> Calling on educators, family advocates, and university researchers across the country to conduct the study, we interviewed some 1,100 immigrant<sup>15</sup> and indigenous<sup>16</sup> families to discover whether there were discernible patterns of language learning outcome depending on the type of program (bilingual, English-only, primary language-only) children had been in. The survey included questions about a) children's ages when they entered and attended preschool; b) the type of programs they had been in; c) language use in their preschool; d) how long it took children to begin speaking English at home; e) their primary language use and behavior while they were learning English; f) the language used by adults and children in the household before, during and after the children's participation in preschool; and, g) judgments about the children's resultant language proficiency in English and in the home language.

The study confirmed what we already knew: children did learn English as a second language quickly during the preschool years, whether in English-only or bilingual classes, and there was evidence of language shift and loss as well. What surprised us, however, was the extent of the loss, and how greatly families had been affected by the resultant changes in family communication patterns. There was a clear relationship between the amount of English used in preschool programs and language learning outcomes. Families whose children had been in English-only preschools reported the greatest incidence of language shift and loss. 64.4% families with children in English-only early education programs reported that the experience had affected communication patterns in their homes negatively. Children in these families often stopped speaking their home languages soon after they entered preschool, and began to use what English they had learned even at home. Some parents reported varying degrees of primary language loss: it was occasionally complete, as happens when children stop using the language they

learned at home from parents once they learned enough of the school language to get by. In time, they can neither express themselves in their primary language, nor do they understand it. An immigrant mother, responding to an interviewer, describes her teen-age son's difficulties with Vietnamese, the only language the mother understands or speaks easily:

Mrs. P. S'e sound ena ena ol' Vietnam. S'e s'e fo'got!

Interv: He's forgotten his Vietnamese words?

Mrs. P. Yeah!

Interv: When he speaks Vietnamese, what does he do, what does he say?

Mrs. P. Uh, s'e talk ena Engli' wor'—he ena "uh, uh, uh, f-fo-fo-fo'ga"! Oh ena mom, wha' wha' wha' uh fo'ga'!"

Interv: I see! So he can't remember the words.

Mrs. P. Yeah.

Mrs. P's son first came into contact with English in his preschool program. Until then, he spoke only Vietnamese, and was reportedly as competent in his primary language as other children his age. In his preschool program, he quickly learned English, and by the time he entered kindergarten, his English was stronger than his Vietnamese. Mrs. P. reported that not long after he began kindergarten, her son stopped speaking Vietnamese altogether. His mother said she and her son communicated with one another in English because he no longer understood any Vietnamese. Her English, as the above excerpt shows, is quite rudimentary, and their ability to communicate with one another was surely affected by their lack of a common language.

Most of these families in our study were immigrants, like Mrs. P. But there were indigenous families as well—9% of the families were American Indians, mostly from the southwest. They reported that their children had been in bilingual preschool programs for the most part. In Indian Country, bilingual Head Start programs were at the time thought to be a solution for the rapid language shift that can take place in English-only programs. But would the use of both the children's home languages and English in preschool prevent such language shifts from taking place? Nearly half of the families we interviewed with children in bilingual programs (47.7%) reported negative consequences on communication patterns in the home as a result of their children's participation in such programs. This was substantially better than the 64.4% reported by the parents of children in the English only preschools; but for families—whether immigrant or indigenous—whose children had abandoned their languages, it hardly mattered. Some of these programs might have been bilingual in name only with English in use most of the time, which would account for the loss reported even in bilingual programs. There was no way of knowing how much time was spent in English, and how much in the children's home language, so that may well have been a factor.

How greatly these shifts affected families depended on the extent to which the parents themselves knew English. If they knew English well enough, they could accommodate the change. The language patterns in their homes changed, but the parents could still communicate with their children. If the parents did not speak or understand English well, they soon found that communication was hampered by the linguistic changes taking place in their children. The most poignant situations were those reported by non-English speaking parents of adolescents who had lost their primary languages during their time in preschool. These parents commented on the linguistic alienation within their homes: their inability to keep track of what their children were doing or going through, or who their friends were. They described their sadness at being unable to teach their children the things that they believed they would need to know to participate in the cultural life of their own communities.

### ***Beating the Odds: How Families and Communities Can Fight Back***

So what can Lena's parents do? How does a family fight the powerful forces operating in our society against languages other than English, or cultures other than mainstream culture? The short answer is that it would be tough for any family to prevail against these forces on its own. It needs the help and support of other families in their communities to beat the odds.

A look at the two highly successful language revitalization programs will show what a difference collective action makes. These are the language nest programs of the Maori people of New Zealand, and the Hawaiian immersion programs in Hawaii. Both began as grassroots efforts, and owed their success to the insight of community members who realized that the only way they could counteract the corrosive effect of the assimilative policies of the society's schools had had on their linguistic and cultural resources was to create and operate their own educational programs. The Maori leaders involved in this effort saw that the society's educational policies had affected the every aspect of life in their communities. The situation was a dire one: there had been a precipitous decline in the use of Maori language, especially among children. In 1919, 90% of school children were fluent in Maori. In 1975, the percentage had fallen to less than 5%.<sup>17</sup> The Maori Language Board of Wellington, the group that brought the suit before the government cited compelling population statistics<sup>18</sup> indicating that the language would be irretrievably gone in less than a generation if something drastic were not done to halt its loss. The only fluent speakers left (about 20-25% of the Maori population) were members of the older generation—older parents and grandparents living in rural tribal communities. The younger parents and their children (about 75-80% of all Maoris) lived in the urban centers, far from the linguistic and cultural influence of the older generation. The most worrisome indicator was the fact that 50% of the total Maori population was under the age of 15, and none of them spoke or understood the language at all.

The Maori people prevailed in this case, and as a result, Maori was made an official language of New Zealand under the Maori Language Act of 1987.<sup>19</sup> Well before then, however, Maori leaders had begun to take numerous steps to revitalize

their language through education. *Te Kohanga Reo*—the language nest program—was both innovative and obvious: Maori elders established childcare and early education centers for the children of young Maori families. The elders cared for the children, guided their development lovingly, taught them all the things that families teach children, including the sense of responsibility to the family and the cultural values that bind children to their community. All this is done in the Maori language, and because young children acquire language readily, it does not take them long to gain fluency in Maori.

The true genius of the *Kohanga Reo* program was that it was a Maori program for Maoris by Maoris, and were based in the *whānau*—the family or kinship group: it is a matter of honor among Maoris that the program did not depend on the government for funding, approval or permission.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the people raised the funds in a variety of ways as people do—bake sales, donations, car washes, rummage sales, etc. The most important way the people supported the many programs that sprang up almost overnight was by helping out. When the government saw how much the Maori people had invested in the effort and how the energy generated by these children's programs was coalescing into a movement, it was eager to provide funds. The Maori elders who started this program were a savvy group, however, and saw that accepting government funds might mean giving up a measure of community control. One *Kohanga Reo* director<sup>21</sup> said she refused to go after the "paltry sum" that her center might have gotten just by putting in an application, because she did not need anyone making decisions on how the center should be run from afar.

The Hawaiians had to be equally savvy and tough-minded when they began their language revitalization effort. The Hawaiian language was close to extinction when they began their language nest program shortly after the Maoris did in 1984.<sup>22</sup> They started with almost no funds, and with massive opposition from state and local school officials, but the leaders of this movement beat the odds. There had been Hawaiian language classes at the University of Hawai'i but the language had not been used as a language of instruction in the public schools. During the 70s and 80s—bilingual education's heydays—there were some 30 federally supported bilingual education programs in Hawai'i for immigrant students!<sup>23</sup> Those programs, however, were for children who needed help learning English, and not for those who spoke English but were in need of learning the language of their heritage. When the founders of the Hawaiian language nest program attempted to reestablish Hawaiian as a language of instruction for children of Hawaiian ancestry, they were rebuffed by the state legislature.

The people came together and created an educational program that began with a language nest program for preschoolers, and grew gradually into a K-12 program in which children could receive all of their formal education through the language of their heritage. The result was an unparalleled linguistic and cultural renaissance for the people. The language program allowed children not only to learn the language but also to be fully immersed in their cultural heritage. These programs were supported by funds provided by parents and other community

members, and some grants. The early education programs eventually led to the establishment of Hawaiian immersion programs in public schools where Hawaiian children might continue their education. The Native American Languages Act of 1990, which was sponsored by Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawai'i, endorsed the effort by providing funds for some necessary activities, but on the whole this was a Hawaiian program created and sponsored by Hawaiians for Hawaiians. There was considerable excitement in 1999 when the first class of young people who had received all of their formal K-12 education in the Hawaiian language graduated from high school. Many of those young people have gone on to college, and have in the past decade, grown up and started families of their own. The dream, of course, is that they will be socializing their children in the language and culture in which they themselves have been immersed. That is the hope and expectation of any intergenerational language revitalization effort.

### *Conclusion*

Lena's parents have shown us that families can and must do everything that is in their control to preserve their languages and cultures at home, but they cannot by themselves counter the enormous forces at work against the survival of indigenous languages in our society. They marvel at the accomplishments of the Maoris and Hawaiians and are trying to discover how they overcame the obstacles to revitalizing their languages and cultures. They know they are not alone in their struggle: there are other young families right in their own community and throughout Indian Country who would like to teach their children their language, but are not finding it easy to keep English out of their homes until their children's command of the indigenous language is solid enough to withstand the withering influence of English. They are learning all they can about what communities and families are doing to keep their languages going, and agree with Jon Reyhner's (1999) observation that "No one person, community, school, university, tribe, or government program has all the answers to keeping any indigenous language alive. It is only through sharing successes and learning from failures that the extinction of indigenous languages can be prevented."

Lena's parents realize that without the support of the other young families in the community, their efforts to continue their children's development of the indigenous language will continue to be a struggle. They have begun to work with other young families to encourage them to teach the language to their children, and to think about ways to increase awareness of the language shift that has taken place in their community over the past decade or two. Some but not many of the adults in the community are aware of the danger: after all, the language is in daily use around the community, and most of the adults are fluent speakers. To see the problem, they would have to recognize the seriousness of the split that is already occurring. The language is in constant use by the adults in the community, and the children hear it spoken, but they are not speaking it themselves. The children seem to regard the indigenous language as adult language, and believe that English is the language children normally and naturally speak. They might even believe that when they are

adults they too will speak the indigenous language, but when they are adults, they will discover they do not really know that language well enough to speak it.

Lena's parents hope that they and the other young families in the community will find ways to counteract the forces that draw children away from the language and culture. They hope that someday there will be educational programs in their community, a school even, where children can be educated in both Keres and English, and where they can be sheltered for a time from the relentless forces that draw young people toward English monolingualism. Not that it will be easy, but then nothing worthwhile is.

Children are a family's link to the future, just as families are a community's promise for the future. It will take families working with communities to give new life to indigenous languages and cultures.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Christine Sims and Dr. Mary Eunice Romero-Little, private communication. Dr. Sims, tribal member of Acoma Pueblo and faculty member of the University of New Mexico, and Dr. Romero-Little, tribal member of Cochiti Pueblo and faculty member of Arizona State University, are experts on indigenous language revitalization.

<sup>2</sup>Native American Languages Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-477, Title I, 25 USC Sec. 2903 (1). Retrieved, 11 February, 2010 from NABE.org Website.

<<http://www.nabe.org/files/NALanguagesActs.pdf>>

<sup>3</sup> Native American Languages Act of 1992, Public Law 102-524. Retrieved, 11 February, 2010. Thomas Website of the Library of Congress.

<<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c102:S.2044.ENR:>>

<sup>4</sup> Commissioner of Indian Affairs, J. D. Atkins, response to "Missionary Societies against Action of Indian Bureau of Affairs relative to Teaching Indian Languages in Schools." Records of the Indian Division, Office of the Secretary of the Interior, Special Files, 1848-1907. Microfilm, Reel 10: 0298.

<sup>5</sup> Many immigrant groups were discriminated against, and targeted for harsh treatment during the 19th and early 20th century. Chinese people, especially, were persecuted and reviled as uncivilized and uneducable. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, thereby restricting them from further immigration to the United States (U. S. Department of State. "Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts." Accessed, 15 February 2010.

<<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/gp/82014.htm>>. They were the only group singled out for exclusion until 1924 when Congress passed the Asian Exclusion Act, excluding the immigration of all Asians (U. S. Department of State. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)." Accessed, 15 February 2010. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/id/87718.htm>>.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, S. Buchanan & D. Holthouse. 'Shoot, Shovel, Shut Up: 144 Nativist Extremist Groups Identified. Intelligence Report, Spring 2007, Issue Number 125, Southern Poverty Law Center. Retrieved 11 February 2010, from SPLCenter.org Website: <<http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2007/spring/shoot-shovel-shut-up>>

<sup>7</sup> "Hispanic Americans: Census Facts." Infoplease.© 2000–2007 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2010

<<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, in a letter dated January 3, 1919 to Mr. Richard K. Hurd, President of the American Defense Society. Accessed: 16 February 2010, Theodore Roosevelt Web Book,

<[http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/tr%20web%20book/TR\\_CD\\_to\\_HTML280.html](http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/tr%20web%20book/TR_CD_to_HTML280.html)>



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<sup>9</sup> See *Head Start Research: A Summary of Research and Publications on Early Childhood for American Indian and Alaska Native Children*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved, 17 February 2010.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/aian/index.html#reports>

<sup>10</sup> See Samuel J. Meisels, W. Steven Barnett, and S. Lynn Kagan, letter dated February 28, 2003 addressed to Congressional Representatives, co-signed by a long list of experts in child development and assessment. Retrieved from Fair Test Web site, 28 February 2010. <http://www.fairtest.org/head-start-letter>. For a thorough analysis and critique of the NRS, see S. J. Meisels and S. Atkins-Burnett, "The Head Start National Reporting System," *Beyond the Journal. Young Children on the Web*, January 2004. Retrieved from NAEYC Web site, 26 February 2010, <http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200401/meisels.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> "Our Language, Our Spirit," a video produced by Arcie Chapa for the Center for Regional Studies, University of New Mexico, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> See Transcript of the Hearing before the U. S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, on the Reauthorization of the head Start Program Serving Indian Country, September 25, 2003. Retrieved from U. S. Government Printing Office via GPO access on March 2, 2010.

<http://ftp.resource.org/gpo.gov/hearings/108s/89672.txt>. "Written Testimony of Henrietta Gomez before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on the Reauthorization of the Head Start Act and on Native American Indian Language and Culture," is appended.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Caskey Russell's "Language, Violence, and Indian Mis-education," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 26:4 (2002), pp. 97-112. In addition to structural and psychological violence against Indian children in boarding schools, Russell describes a practice reported at a missionary-run school in Douglas, Alaska: When a missionary "heard an Indian student speaking Tlingit, he would soak a sponge with hot peppers and bitter-tasting resin and then rinse the verboten vocabulary from the offender's mouth." See also J. H. Peacock, "Lamenting Language Loss at the Modern Language Association." *The American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 30, Number 1&2, Winter/Spring 2006, pp. 138-152.

<sup>14</sup> Some 300+ community and university based educators participated in the NABE (the National Association of Bilingual Educators) No-Cost Study, in which a convenience sample of 1,100 families from across the nation with children in preschool programs were interviewed. See L. W. Fillmore (1991), "When Learning a Second Language Means Losing the First." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 323-346.

<sup>15</sup> 46% of the families were Latinos, 13.6% were East and Southeast Asians, 5% were Arabs, and 3.5% were from other backgrounds.

<sup>16</sup> 9% of the families in our sample reported that they were American Indians.

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<sup>17</sup> From evidence presented at the 1978 Waitangi Tribunal on the claim made by Maori leaders that te reo, the Maori language, was a taonga—a cultural treasure that was being lost after a century of ruthless suppression, especially in the society's schools. The leaders argued that under the Treaty of Waitangi the government had agreed, among other things, to protect the people's cultural treasures, in exchange for the people acceding to the government's sovereignty over once was tribal lands. They asked that the Maori language be made an official language of the society, along with English. The statistics they cited in support of this claim were based on two studies: B. Biggs, 1972. The Maori language past and present, in E. Schwimmer (ed.): *The Maori People in the Past and Present: A Symposium*, pp. 65-84. Auckland: Longman Paul; and Benton, R. (1979). *Who speaks Maori in New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Council of Educational Research.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the te reo Maori Claim (Wai 11). Second edition. Wellington, NZ.: the Tribunal, 1989. Retrieved from the New Zealand government's Waitangi-Tribunal Web site, March 28, 2010. <http://www.waitangi-tribunal.govt.nz/scripts/reports/reports/11/2580F91B-5D6F-46F4-ADE0-BC27CA535C01.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> History of the Maori Language—Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori. Retrieved from the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage History Website, March 31, 2010. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/maori-language-week/history-of-the-maori-language>, updated 9-Jun-2009.

<sup>20</sup> See Joseph Selwyn Te Rito, "Struggles for the Maori language: He whawhai mo te reo Maori." *MAI Review*, 2008, 2, Article 6. Retrieved from the MAI Review Website, March 30, 2010. <http://www.review.mai.ac.nz>. The MAI Review is an online journal on Maori and Indigenous development.

<sup>21</sup> A Maori elder, private communication, September 14, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> History and Timeline of 'Aha Pūnana Leo, retrieved 10 February 2010, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo Website: [http://www.ahapunanaleo.org/eng/about/about\\_history.html](http://www.ahapunanaleo.org/eng/about/about_history.html).

<sup>23</sup> J. Pablo, B. Ongteco, and S. Koki (no date). Title VII Bilingual Education in Hawaii: Lessons Learned. A briefing paper (Product # PB9901, OERI Contract number RJ96006601) Retrieved 10 February 2010 from Pacific Resources for Education and Learning Website: <http://www.prel.org/products/Products/bilingual-education.htm>