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REVIVALISTICS IS NOT DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS

Summary. This article introduces a new field of enquiry called revivalistics, and explores its trans-disciplinarity and various ethical, aesthetic and utilitarian benefits. Revivalistics is an emerging global, trans-disciplinary field of enquiry studying comparatively and systematically the universal constraints and global mechanisms on the one hand (Zuckermann, 2003; 2009; 2020), and particularistic peculiarities and cultural relativist idiosyncrasies on the other, apparent in linguistic reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration across various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe (Zuckermann, 2020; Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011; 2014). The article focuses on the crucial differences between revivalistics and documentary linguistics. It provides examples from the field that demonstrate the complexity of the revivalist's work and how the revivalist's work is distinct from that of the documentary linguist. Too many documentary linguists mislead themselves to believe that they can easily be revivalists too. But there are two crucial differences between revivalistics and documentary linguistics, which are at war between themselves: (1) Whereas documentary linguists put the language at the centre, revivalists put the language custodians at the centre. (2) Whereas in documentary linguistics the Indigenous/minority people have the knowledge of the language, in revivalistics the revivalist is the one with that knowledge. Given that the Aboriginal/minority people are the language custodians, and given that the language custodians are at the centre of the revivalistic enterprise, the revivalist must be extremely sensitive. A revivalist is not only a linguist but also a psychologist, social worker, teacher, driver, schlepper, financial manager, cook, waiter, babysitter, donor etc. A revivalist must have a heart of gold, "balls" of steel and the patience of a saint. Language revival is similar to co-parenting. But the revivalist is only a step-father. The important biological mother is the Indigenous/minority community. If you are the step-father and your spouse, who is the biological mother, makes what you perceive to be a mediocre decision with regard to your children, you cannot just disapprove of it. After all, the children are your spouse's more than they are yours. You must work together for the best possible outcome. Similarly, if the community supports a decision that is not linguistically viable, the revivalist can try to inspire the community members, but must accept their own verdict. That would be difficult for a documentary linguist with poor social skills.

Keywords: language documentation; language revival; aboriginal languages; contact linguistics; language planning; Barngarla; revivalistics; language revitalization.

Revivalistics

Revivalistics is an emerging global, trans-disciplinary field of enquiry studying comparatively and systematically the *universal* constraints and global mechanisms on the one hand (Zuckermann, 2003; 2009; 2020), and *particularistic* peculiarities and cultural relativist idiosyncrasies on the other, apparent in linguistic reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration across

various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe (Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011; 2014).

What is the difference between reclamation, revitalization, and reinvigoration? All of them are on the revival spectrum. Here are my specific definitions:

- *Reclamation* is the revival of a 'Sleeping Beauty' tongue, i.e. a no-longer natively spoken language, as in the case of Hebrew, Barngarla (the Aboriginal language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia), Wampanoag, Siraya and Myaamia.

- *Revitalization* is the revival of a severely endangered language, for example Adnyamathanha of the Flinders Ranges in Australia, as well as Karuk and Walmajarri.

- *Reinvigoration* is the revival of an endangered language that still has a high percentage of children speaking it, for example the Celtic languages Welsh and Irish, and the Romance languages Catalan and Quebecoise French.

Language endangerment has little to do with absolute numbers. Rather, it has to do with the percentage of children within the language group speaking the language natively. A language spoken natively by 10 million people can be endangered (as, say, only 40% of its kids speak it). A language spoken natively by 3,000 people can be safe and healthy (as 100% of its kids are native speakers).

Table 1 describes the difference between reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration:

Table 1

Comparison of Reclamation, Revitalization and Reinvigoration

Reclamation	Revitalization	Reinvigoration
There are NO native speakers when the revival begins.	Severely endangered. The percentage of children within the group speaking the language natively is very low, e.g. 0%, but there are still adults speaking the language natively.	Endangered. The percentage of children within the group speaking the language natively is lower than 100%.

Reclamation	Revitalization	Reinvigoration
e.g. Hebrew, Barnjarla, Wampanoag, Siraya, Myaamia; Tunica (Central and Lower Mississippi Valley, USA)	e.g. Adnyamathanha, Karuk, Walmajarri	e.g. Welsh, Irish, Catalan, Quebecoise French

Needless to say, reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration are on a *continuum*, a cline. They do not constitute a *discrete* trichotomy. That said, the distinction is most useful. For example, the Master-Apprentice (or Mentor/Apprentice) method can only be used in the revitalization and reinvigoration, not in reclamation. This method was pioneered by linguist Leanne Hinton at the University of California, Berkeley (see, e.g., Hinton, 1994), who had been working with a wide range of Native American languages spoken or in some cases remembered or documented across California. In many cases, she was working with the remaining handful of ageing fluent speakers of languages such as Karuk. It is a difficult proposition to ask an elderly speaker to come into a school classroom and teach children when they themselves are not trained teachers and, in some cases, may never have had an opportunity to attend school themselves. Even if they were able to teach their languages in a school setting, will this really ensure that their language continues into future generations? Probably not. What is more effective is to ensure that highly motivated young adults who are themselves owners-custodians of the language gain a sound knowledge of and fluency in their language. This is achieved through the Master-Apprentice (or Mentor/Apprentice) approach: A young person is paired with an older fluent speaker – perhaps a granddaughter with her grandmother – and their job is to speak the language with each other without resorting to English. It does not matter what they do – they can weave baskets, go fishing, build houses, or fix cars together – so long as they speak the language with each other (Zuckermann, 2020).

Revivalistics is *trans-disciplinary* because it studies language revival from various angles such as law, mental health, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, geography, politics, history, biology, evolution, genetics, genomics,

colonization studies, missionary studies, media, animation film, technology, talknology, art, theatre, dance, agriculture, archaeology, music (see Grant, 2014), education, games (indirect learning), pedagogy (see Hinton, 2011), and even architecture.

Consider architecture. An architect involved in revivalistics might ask the following 'location, location, location' question, which is, of course, beyond language:

- Should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a natural Indigenous setting, to replicate the original ambience of heritage, culture, laws, and lores?
- Should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a modern building that has Indigenous characteristics such as Aboriginal colours and shapes?
- Should we reclaim an Aboriginal language in a western governmental building – to give an empowering signal that the tribe has full support of contemporary mainstream society?

Why Should We Invest Time and Money in Reclaiming 'Sleeping Beauty' Languages?

Approximately 7,000 languages are currently spoken worldwide. Approximately 96% of the world's population speaks around 4% of the world's languages, leaving the vast majority of tongues vulnerable to extinction and disempowering their speakers. Linguistic diversity reflects many things beyond accidental historical splits. Languages are essential building blocks of community identity and authority.

With globalization of dominant cultures, homogenization and Coca-colonization, cultures at the periphery are becoming marginalized, and more and more groups all over the world are added to the forlorn club of the lost-heritage peoples. One of the most important symptoms of this cultural disaster is language loss.

A fundamental question for revivalistics, which both the tax-paying general public and the scholarly community ought to ask, is why does it matter to speak a different language? As Evans (2010, p. 19) puts it eloquently in the introduction to his book *Dying Words*:

[...] you only hear what you listen for, and you only listen for what you are wondering about. The goal of this book is to take stock of what we should be wondering about as we listen to the dying words of the thousands of languages falling silent around us, across the totality of what Mike Krauss has christened the 'logosphere': just as the 'biosphere' is the totality of all species of life and all ecological links on earth, the logosphere is the whole vast realm of the world's words, the languages that they build, and the links between them.

Evans (2010) ranges over the manifold ways languages can differ, the information they can hold about the deep past of their speakers, the interdependence of language and thought, the intertwining of language and oral literature. Relevant to revivalistics, it concludes by asking how linguistics can best go about recording existing knowledge so as to ensure that the richest, most culturally distinctive record of a language is captured, for use by those wanting to revive it in the future (see also Brenzinger, 1992; 1998; 2007a; Enfield, 2011). Brenzinger emphasizes the threats to knowledge on the environment (Brenzinger, Heine & Heine, 1994; Heine & Brenzinger, 1988), conceptual diversity as a crucial loss in language shifts (Brenzinger, 2006; 2007b; 2018).

The following is my own trichotomy of the main *revivalistic* reasons for language revival. The first reason for language revival is ethical: It is right. The second reason for language revival is aesthetic: It is beautiful. The third benefit for language revival is utilitarian: It is viable and socially beneficial.

Ethical Reasons

A plethora of the world's languages have not just been dying of their own accord; many were destroyed by settlers of this land. For example, in Australia we owe it to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to support the maintenance and revival of their cultural heritage, in this instance through language revival. According to the international law of human rights, persons belonging to ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities have the right to use their own language (Article (art.) 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)). Thus, every person has the right to express themselves in the language of their ancestors, not just in the language of convenience that English has become.

Through supporting language revival, we can appreciate the significance of Indigenous languages and recognise their importance to Indigenous people and to Australia. We can then right some small part of the wrong against the original inhabitants of this country and support the wishes of their ancestors with the help of linguistic knowledge.

Aesthetic Reasons

The linguist Ken Hale, who worked with many endangered languages and saw the effect of loss of language, compared losing language to bombing the Louvre: "When you lose a language, you lose a culture, intellectual wealth, a work of art. It's like dropping a bomb on a museum, the Louvre" (*The Economist*, 3 November 2001). A museum is a repository of human artistic culture. Languages are at least equally important since they store the cultural practices and beliefs of an entire people. Different languages have different ways of expressing ideas and this can indicate which concepts are important to a certain culture.

For example, in Australia, information relating to food sources, surviving in nature, and Dreaming/history is being lost along with the loss of Aboriginal languages. A study by Boroditsky and Gaby (2010) found that speakers of Kuuk Thaayorre, a language spoken in Pormpuraaw on the west coast of Cape York, do not use 'left' or 'right', but always use cardinal directions (i.e. north, south, east, west). They claim that Kuuk Thaayorre speakers are constantly aware of where they are situated and that this use of directions also affects their awareness of time (Boroditsky & Gaby, 2010). Language supports different ways of 'being in the world'.

Such cases are abundant around the world. An example of a grammatical way to express a familiar concept is *mamihlapinatapai*, a lexical item in the Yaghan language of Tierra del Fuego in Chile and Argentina. It refers to a look shared by two people, each wishing that the other would offer something that they both desire but have been unwilling to suggest or offer themselves. This lexical item, which refers to a concept that many have despite lacking a specific word for it in their language, can be broken down into morphemes: *ma-* is a reflexive/passive prefix (realized as the allomorph *mam-*

before a vowel); *ihlapi* 'to be at a loss as what to do next'; *-n*, stative suffix; *-ata*, achievement suffix; and *-apai*, a dual suffix, which has a reciprocal sense with *ma-* (circumfix).

Two examples of concepts that most people might never imagine are (1) *nakhur*, in Ancient Persian, refers to 'camel that will not give milk until her nostrils have been tickled'. Clearly, camels are very important in this society and survival may have historically depended on camel milk; (2) *tingo*, in Rapa Nui (Pasquan) of Easter Island (Eastern Polynesian language), is 'to take all the objects one desires from the house of a friend, one at a time, by asking to borrow them, until there is nothing left' (see De Boinod, 2005; De Boinod & Zuckermann, 2011); (3) *bunjurrbi*, in Wambaya (Non-Pama-Nyungan West Barkly Australian language, Barkly Tableland of the Northern Territory, Australia), is a verb meaning 'to face your bottom toward someone when getting up from the ground'.

Such fascinating and multifaceted words, *maximus in minimis*, should not be lost. They are important to the cultures they are from and make the outsiders reflexive of their own cultures. Through language maintenance and reclamation we can keep important cultural practices and concepts alive. Lest we forget that human imagination is often limited. Consider aliens in many Hollywood films: despite approximately 3.5 billion years of DNA evolution, many people still resort to the ludicrous belief that aliens ought to look like ugly human beings, with two eyes, one nose, and one mouth.

Utilitarian Benefits

Language revival benefits the speakers involved through improvement of wellbeing, cognitive abilities, and mental health (see Zuckermann & Walsh, 2014; chapter 9 of Zuckermann, 2020); language revival also reduces delinquency and increases cultural tourism. Language revival has a positive effect on the mental and physical wellbeing of people involved in such projects. Participants develop a better appreciation of and sense of connection with their cultural heritage. Learning the language of their ancestors can be an emotional experience and can provide people with a strong sense of pride and identity.

There are also cognitive advantages to bilingualism and

multilingualism. Several studies have found that bilingual children have better non-linguistic cognitive abilities compared with monolingual children (Kovács & Mehler, 2009) and improved attention and auditory processing (Krizman et al., 2012, p. 7879): the bilingual's 'enhanced experience with sound results in an auditory system that is highly efficient, flexible and focused in its automatic sound processing, especially in challenging or novel listening conditions'.

Furthermore, the effects of multilingualism extend to those who have learned another language in later life and can be found across the whole lifespan. This is relevant to the first generation of revivalists, who might themselves be monolingual (as they will not become native speakers of the Revival Language). The effects of non-native multilingualism include better cognitive performance in old age (Bak et al., 2014), a significantly later onset of dementia (Alladi et al., 2013), and a better cognitive outcome after stroke (Alladi et al., 2016; Paplikar et al., 2018). Moreover, a measurable improvement in attention has been documented in participants aged from 18 to 78 years after just one week of an intensive language course (Bak et al., 2016). Language learning and active multilingualism are increasingly seen as contributing not only to psychological wellbeing but also to brain health (Bak & Mehmedbegovic, 2017), with a potential of reducing money spent on medical care (Bak, 2017).

Further benefits to non-native multilingualism are demonstrated by Keysar et al. (2012, p. 661). They found that decision-making biases are reduced when using a non-native language, as following:

Four experiments show that the 'framing effect' disappears when choices are presented in a foreign tongue. Whereas people were risk averse for gains and risk seeking for losses when choices were presented in their native tongue, they were not influenced by this framing manipulation in a foreign language. Two additional experiments show that using a foreign language reduces loss aversion, increasing the acceptance of both hypothetical and real bets with positive expected value. We propose that these effects arise because a foreign language provides greater cognitive and emotional distance than a native tongue does.

Therefore, language revival is not only empowering culturally, but also cognitively, and not only the possibly-envisioned native speakers of the future but also the learning revivalists of the present.

Revivalistics Vis-À-Vis Documentary Linguistics

Too many documentary linguists mislead themselves to believe that they can easily be revivalists too. But there are two crucial differences between revivalistics and documentary linguistics, which are at war between themselves:

1. Whereas documentary linguists put the *language* at the centre, revivalists put the *language custodians* at the centre.

2. Whereas in documentary linguistics the Indigenous/minority people have the knowledge of the language, in revivalistics the revivalist is the one with that knowledge.

Given that the Aboriginal/minority people are the language custodians, and given that the language custodians are at the centre of the revivalistic enterprise, the revivalist must be extremely sensitive.

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Consider the following real examples from Aboriginal Australia:

1. Seat of emotions: Although the professional revivalist knows, with ample evidence, that the seat of emotions in a specific Aboriginal language is the *stomach*, contemporary indigenous custodians – influenced (subconsciously) by the colonizers' English – tell me that they feel, as the traditional owners of the languages, that the *heart* is the seat of emotions within the traditional language.

2. Neologization: Although the revivalist may think that neologisms would be beneficial for the revival (for example, as children would like to have a word for 'computer' or 'app'), an Aboriginal tribe told me that they decided not to neologize (for the time being) until everyone knows all the traditional words being reclaimed.

3. Swear words: Although the revivalist may think that swear words would be beneficial for the revival (for example, as people would like to express frustration), an Aboriginal tribe asked me to censor such words from the dictionary.

4. One-to-one correlation between signifiers and referents: Although the revivalist has no problem with homophony and polysemy, an Aboriginal custodian told me that she wanted a system of one word – one meaning.

5. Spelling: Although an Aboriginal tribe decided to stick to B, D and G (knowing that P T and K are not distinct phonemes in their language), some opted to continue to use P and K in a specific name within that language.

Concluding Remarks

Language revival is similar to co-parenting. But the revivalist is only a step-father. The important biological mother is the Indigenous/minority community. If you are the step-father and your spouse, who is the biological mother, makes what you perceive to be a mediocre decision with regard to your children, you cannot just disapprove of it. After all, the children are your spouse's more than they are yours. You must work together for the best possible outcome. Similarly, if the community supports a decision that is not linguistically viable, the revivalist can try to inspire the community members, but must accept their own verdict. That would be difficult for a documentary linguist with poor social skills.

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KALBOS ATGAIVINIMAS NĖRA DOKUMENTINĖ LINGVISTIKA

Santrauka. Šiame straipsnyje pristatoma nauja mokslinių tyrimų sritis - kalbos atgaivinimas - ir nagrinėjamas jos tarpdiscipliniškumas bei įvairiapusė etinė, estetinė ir praktinė nauda. Kalbos atgaivinimas (angl. revivalistics) – besiformuojanti pasaulinė tarpdisciplininė tyrimų sritis, kurioje lyginamuoju ir sisteminiu aspektais tiriama visuotiniai apribojimai ir globalūs mechanizmai (Zuckermann, 2003; 2009; 2020), specifiniai ypatumai bei kultūrinės reliatyvistinės idiosinkrazijos (Zuckermann, 2020; Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011; 2014), pasireiškiantys kalbų atkūrimu, atgaivinimu ir aktyvinimu įvairiose sociologinėse aplinkose visame pasaulyje (Zuckermann, 2020; Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011; 2014). Straipsnyje nagrinėjami esminiai skirtumai tarp kalbos atgaivinimo ir dokumentinės lingvistikos; pateikiami pavyzdžiai demonstruoja kalbos atgaivintojo darbo kompleksškumą ir skirtumus nuo dokumentinio paveldo lingvistų darbo. Per daug dokumentinio paveldo lingvistų apgaudinėja save, manydami, kad jie taip pat lengvai gali tapti atgaivinimo kalbininkais. Vis dėlto yra du esminiai tarpusavyje kovojančių kalbos atgaivinimo ir dokumentinės lingvistikų skirtumai: (1) dokumentinio paveldo kalbininkai į pirmąją vietą iškelia kalbą, o atgimimo šalininkai – kalbos saugotojus; (2) dokumentinio paveldo lingvistikoje čiabuviai / mažumos naudoja turimas kalbines žinias, o atgaivinimo lingvistikoje tas žinias sukaupia atgaivintojas. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad čiabuviai / mažumos yra kalbos saugotojai, ir į tai, kad kalbos saugotojai yra kalbos atgaivinimo centre, kalbos atgaivintojas turi būti ypač tikslus. Pastarasis yra ne tik kalbininkas, bet ir psichologas, socialinis darbuotojas, mokytojas, vairuotojas, prašinėtojas, finansų vadybininkas, virėjas, padavėjas, auklė, aukotojas ir t. t. Kalbos atgaivintojo širdis turi būti auksinė, „raumenys“ plieniniai, o kantrybė kaip šventojo. Kalbos atgaivinimas primena abiejų tėvų auklėjimą, tačiau kalbos atgaivintojas yra tik patėvis. Svarbi biologinė motina yra čiabuvių / mažumų bendruomenė. Jei esate patėvis, o jūsų sutuoktinė, biologinė motina, priima, jūsų manymu, vidutinišką sprendimą dėl jūsų vaikų, negalite tam tiesiog nepritari. Juk vaikai labiau priklauso jūsų sutuoktinei nei jums. Tad siekdami geriausių įmanomų rezultatų, turite dirbti kartu. Panašiai, jei bendruomenė pritaria sprendimui, kuris yra lingvistiškai neperspektyvus, kalbos atgaivintojas gali bandyti įkvėpti bendruomenės narius, bet privalo atsižvelgti ir į jų pačių sprendimą. Tai būtų sudėtinga prastus socialinius įgūdžius turinčiam dokumentinio paveldo lingvistui.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: kalbos dokumentavimas; kalbos atgaivinimas; čiabuvių kalbos; kontaktinė lingvistika; kalbos planavimas; Barngarla; atgaivinimas; kalbos gaivinimas.