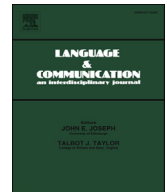




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On recognizing persistence in the Indigenous language ideologies of multilingualism in two Native American Communities

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ABSTRACT

Based on original and long-term research in two ideologically divergent Native American linguistic communities, I want to demonstrate the surprising persistence of Indigenous language ideologies associated with multilingualism and how differences in these ideologies have manifested in divergent patterns of language shift and, more recently, in the nature and scope of language revitalization efforts. The Village of Tewa (NE Arizona) still partially retains a multilingual adaptation in all generations except the youth and young adults (Kroskrity, 1993, 2014). The Western Mono (Central California) of such towns as North Fork and Auberry were traditionally multilingual with neighboring languages of the Yokuts and Southern Sierra Miwok groups (Kroskrity 2009). Though both groups were historically multilingual, the practice of multilingualism was differentially influenced by distinctive language ideologies such as those regarding purism/syncretism and the expressive/utilitarian functions of language. I will demonstrate that divergent indigenous ideological complexes associated with multilingualism have shaped distinctive patterns of language shift—a process significantly more totalizing among the Western Mono. In addition to language shift, these indigenous ideological complexes also appear to significantly influence such language revitalization practices as the private curation vs. publication of language renewal materials (Debenport, 2015). I facilitate this contrast and highlight patterns of persistence by developing the notion of *language ideological assemblage*.

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1. Introduction: recognizing Indigenous multilingualism

As Michael [Silverstein \(1996a\)](#) has effectively demonstrated, many if not most treatments of Native American linguistic communities have been excessively influenced by US linguistic nationalism and its singular, if not obsessive, preoccupation with monoglot Standard English ([Silverstein, 1996b](#)). Such analyses falsify or even erase the multilingualism and pervasive linguistic diversity that was characteristic of most Native American communities. Based on original and long-term research in two language-ideologically divergent Native American linguistic communities, I want to demonstrate the persistence of Indigenous language ideologies associated with Indigenous multilingualism and how differences in these ideologies have manifested in divergent patterns of language shift and current language revitalization practices. The Western Mono (Central California) of such towns as North Fork and Auberry were traditionally multilingual with neighboring languages of the Yokuts

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and Southern Sierra Miwok groups (Kroskrity, 2009a, 2009b). The Village of Tewa (NE Arizona) still partially retains a multilingual adaptation (with Hopi and English) in all generations except the youth and young adults (Kroskrity, 1993, 2014).¹

Though both groups were historically multilingual, their ideologies and practices of multilingualism were and are quite distinctive. These communities were differentially influenced by distinctive language ideologies such as those regarding purism/syncretism and the expressive/utilitarian functions of language. I will demonstrate that divergent Indigenous *language ideological assemblages* (LIA) associated with multilingualisms have shaped distinctive patterns of language shift—a process significantly more totalizing among the Western Mono. By introducing the conceptual framework of LIA, I want to emphasize that the proper appreciation of Indigenous multilingualisms is to understand their component language ideologies as part of a larger complex of relevant beliefs and feelings, both Indigenous and externally imposed, that may complement, contest, or otherwise dynamically interact with each other to modify language ideologies and linguistic practices. Frustrated by language ideological research that often looks at a single ideology—say that associated with purism or standardization—I am attempting to redirect attention to the interaction of clusters of ideologies that occur within or across linguistic communities. Though the notion of assemblage exists in Latour's (2007) network theory, I find more of a basis for analogical extension from ecological theory. As represented by the cultural anthropologist Anna Tsing (2015, 22), "Ecologists turned to assemblages to get around the sometimes fixed and bounded connotations of ecological 'community.'" How do various species inhabiting the same ecozone, for example, influence each other? I ask analogous questions about the coexistence of language ideologies. I am attracted to their assemblages because "They show us potential histories in the making...; they are sites for watching how political economy works" (Tsing, 2015, 23). To rethink the importance of Indigenous multilingualisms within an LIA approach is to assert the necessity of understanding such multilingualisms within the complex of language beliefs, feelings, and practices that actually contextualize them. In addition to the form and extent of language shift, these LIA also appear to significantly influence such language revitalization practices as the "exclusive", or counter-public, curation vs. the more "inclusive" publication of language renewal materials (Debenport, 2015; Kroskrity and Meek, 2017).

But for speakers of Mono and Tewa, as for those of most of the world's embattled Indigenous languages, the need for the continuity represented by the "authenticity" of Indigenous languages and speech practices necessarily confronts the often equally felt need for "adaptability" to political-economic and other historical changes.² Both external and internal advocates of language revitalization agree that any thriving language cannot only "speak the past," it must also "push the envelope" of the language and develop new forms, and contexts of use that fit it to the ever-changing communicative needs of speakers in the present. But certainly some of the most relevant, yet often neglected, contexts and practices are the community's language ideologies about and actual practices regarding multilingualism. Importantly, I contend, though authenticity has been ubiquitously used to understand how speakers confer meaning and authority on particular languages (e.g. Catalan (Woolard, 2016); Corsican (Jaffe, 2001); Galician (O'Rourke and Ramallo, 2013); Welsh (Coupland, 2010)) it has always been applied to one language at a time. What I want to explore here is that for communities with a long history of multilingualism, such as the two Indigenous communities detailed here, their linguistic repertoires may be the more useful locus of authenticity rather than the conventional but limited focus on a single, heritage language. Deferring a more complete discussion of the theoretical implications of this enlargement of scope until the concluding section, I will proceed by delineating the ideological assemblages of each of these multilingual communities and how they have shaped the current patterns of language shift there.

In order to do this, I will explore the importance of ideologies of authentic language use in two Native American multilingual communities—the Village of Tewa in Northern Arizona and the Western Mono of Central California. Due to space limitations, I will emphasize more widely manifested ideologies in each of the communities rather than fully exploring ideological contestation within them. Despite the fact that these communities experienced somewhat similar patterns of political domination and colonization since the late nineteenth century, and more recently a common influence of US hegemonic institutions, their very different Indigenous linguistic cultures have promoted distinctive language ideologies, contrastive patterns of language shift, and more recently correspondingly divergent adaptations to documentation and revitalization. Both Western Mono and Arizona Tewa would be classified as "endangered languages" in typologies like that of Krauss (2007). But whereas Mono is somewhere between severely and critically endangered, Tewa, as spoken in the Village of Tewa, would be identified as "definitively endangered" in that typology because of the greater number of middle-aged speakers and the presence of some younger speakers.

2. Western Mono in context

Western Mono was traditionally spoken in California's central San Joaquin Valley and adjacent foothill areas though members of the group trace themselves back to an earlier homeland on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Mono Lake. Their language, like many Great Basin languages in their previous homeland, is from the Numic branch of the Uto-

¹ In characterizing the youth of the Village of Tewa it would be wrong to assume that they have been somehow irresponsible, insensitive, or disinterested in heritage language and culture transmission. Like the Hopi youth, described by Nicholas (2014) they are "living" Tewa even if they cannot speak it fluently. I agree with Wyman et al. (2014) that the agency and creativity of Indigenous youth who are striving for successful multilingual adaptations needs to be appreciated as a positive development rather than condemned as a form of failed maintenance for which they are responsible.

² I use the notion of authenticity here to signify what members of the Western Mono and Village of Tewa speech communities overtly evaluate as culturally appropriate speech in their respective heritage languages. To further clarify, these are members' evaluations and not some evaluation imposed by a sociolinguistic expert (of the type critiqued by Bucholtz, 2003).

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