1   *Introduction*

GUNTER SENFT

> *When a people no longer dares to defend its language,*
> *it is ripe for slavery.*   Rémy de Gourmont
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> *My culture and my language have the right to exist, and*
> *no one has the authority to dismiss that.*   James Kelman

One of the more positive developments to be observed in the discipline of linguistics over the last 20 years or so is the fact that the topic of language death — up to the 1990s an issue researched by only a few pioneers such as Dorian (1973, 1977, 1981, 1989) Schmidt (1985) and Tsitsipis (1981, 1983) — has finally attracted the general interest of a gradually growing group of linguists. In 1991 Robins and Uhlenbeck edited a volume on 'Endangered languages'. This publication was also meant as a kind of preparation for the 1992 *Comité International Permanent des Lingustes*/Permanent International Committee of Lingusts (CIPL) conference in Canada which centered on this issue. In the same year, Hale edited a set of six essays, all of which explicitly dealing with this topic (Hale 1992a, b; Hale et al. 1992).[1] More and more linguists are becoming aware of the fact that they 'must do some serious rethinking of [their] priorities, lest linguistics go down in history as the only science that presided obliviously over the disappearance of 90% of the very field to which it is dedicated' (Krauss 1992:10).

In the meantime, committees on, and foundations and societies for, endangered languages were founded.[2] There are more and more conferences on the topic, and in 2000 the German Volkswagen foundation started funding a program for the documentation of endangered languages (for information visit the websites http://www.volkswagen-stiftung.de and http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES).[3] In the last few years a number of excellent books were published on the study, documentation and maintenance of endangered

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[1]   These papers were first presented at the 1992 CIPL conference.

[2]   I am one of the co-founders of the 'Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen' (the German Society for Endangered Languages) which grew out of the 'Arbeitsgruppe für bedrohte Sprachen' of the 'Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft'; the members of the 'Arbeitsgruppe' submitted the proposal for funding the documentation of endangered languages to the Volkswagen Foundation.

[3]   For links to relevant organizations, projects, archives etc. see the websites of the 'Foundation for Endangered Languages' and the 'Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen e.V.' http://www.ogmios.org/links.htm; http://www.uni-koeln.de/gbs/e_index.html; and http://www.uni-koeln.de/gbs/Broschure.pdf.

languages (Brenzinger 1992; Grenoble and Whaley 1998a, 2005; Hagège 2000; Janse and Tol 2003; Maffi 2001a; Matsumura 1998; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; see also Mufwene 2004) and the present volume aims to contribute to this endeavor. The probably most influential and widely read book on this topic, however, was Crystal's (2000) monograph 'Language Death'. The following introductory remarks will rely on many of the arguments made there (see also Senft 2001) and in the volumes published by Grenoble and Whaley (1998a, 2005), Maffi (2001a) and Nettle and Romaine (2000).[4]

'A language dies when nobody speaks it any more' (Crystal 2000:1). But is this really such a problem given the world's many languages? Despite the fact that we do not — and probably cannot — know the exact number of languages that are spoken in the world today Crystal (2000:11) comes up with the cautious estimate somewhere in the range of 5000–7000 languages. However, he points out that 'just 4% of the world's languages are spoken by 96% of the population. Turning this statistic on its head: 96% of the world's languages are spoken by just 4% of the population' (Crystal 2000:14). Based on this statistic about 4000 languages can be considered to be endangered at the moment. With respect to the global situation of language endangerment it seems realistic that in the next 100 years 50% of the languages that are still spoken on earth will have died. Nettle and Romaine (2000:8) give even more pessimistic figures (see also Krauss 1992; UNESCO 2003:4). Thus, it has been high time indeed for linguists to respond to this situation, not only because they know that languages are interesting in themselves, but also because they should have realized that languages express identity, that they are repositories of history, and that they contribute to the sum of human knowledge (see Woodbury 1993; Maffi 2001a). Moreover, it seems to be obvious that our species (like any other species) needs diversity to survive (see Crystal 2000:32–54; Harmon 2001, 2002; Hale 1998; Maffi 2001b; Mishler 2001; Mithun 1998). This is actually the central thesis of Luisa Maffi's (2001a) volume 'On Biocultural Diversity': it is argued that the predicted decline in linguistic diversity can only be prevented if the interdependence of linguistic, cultural and biological diversity is recognized (see also Mufwene 2004). In his review of Maffi's anthology Nicolle (2004) succinctly summarized the main argument of the volume as follows:

> One aspect of culture and language which is under threat in many language communities is traditional ecological knowledge: the concepts and terminology which inform a community's understanding of and interaction with the natural world. If a language ceases to be used in this domain, the associated knowledge is lost to the community, and when this knowledge is lost, so — often — is the way of life which it supported. With the loss of a way of life, it is a short step to the loss of other aspects of culture and ultimately to assimilation into the dominant language community, resulting in language death.

A number of the contributors to Maffi's volume for example Pawley (2001) and Moore (2001) provide suggestions for what can be done to maintain biocultural diversity from a linguistic point of view. These suggestions rely on the insight which Dixon (1997:144) unpretentiously formulated as follows:

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[4] An anonymous referee criticized that Crystal's book 'is deliberately popular, and hardly an appropriate source for a summary in this context'. For me Crystal's book is a landmark in the field and I am convinced that the impact it had — and still has — with respect to the support of language documentation, archiving and revitalization projects is unequalled.

> The most important task in linguistics today — indeed, the only really important task — is to get out in the field and describe languages, while this can still be done [...] If every linguistics student (and faculty member) in the world today worked on just one language that is in need of study, the prospects for full documentation of endangered languages (before they fade away) would be rosy. I doubt if one linguist in twenty is doing this.

As well as Dixon, Crystal also points out that 'the analysis of a previously undescribed language is 'the toughest task in linguistics', yet 'the most exciting and the most satisfying of work' (Crystal 2000:65; see also Corbett 2001). In the meantime it seems that this argument has contributed fundamentally to convince many people that we all should care about endangered languages. Moreover, more and more people who are dealing with endangered languages have been realizing that writing a grammar of a so far undescribed language is only a first step in the full documentation of these languages!

'If people care about endangered languages, they will want something to be done' (Crystal 2000:68). However, before we can act, we have to know answers to the question: 'Why do languages die?' There is no simple answer to this question, but there are certain trends and factors that play an important role with respect to language endangerment and language death. Among these trends and factors are those which put speakers of a specific language in physical danger, like natural catastrophes, climatic changes, famines and droughts, imported diseases, desertification, military conflicts and genocide; and those which change the culture of speakers of a specific language, for example cultural assimilation, urbanization, language policies, and the media, especially television. Grenoble and Whaley (1998b) discuss such factors. Based on Edwards (1992) framework for the typology of minority languages, they distinguish between micro- and macro-level variables, rank them, and show how they interact with one another on the community-internal and on the community-external level. In their typology of language endangerment the following three crucial issues influence the fate of endangered languages (Grenoble and Whaley 1998b:51ff.; see also Dorian 1998; Nettle and Romaine 2000:1–23; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000):

- economics;
- a community's access to the indigenous language and culture and access to the majority language; and
- motivation which 'can sway an entire community toward or away from its native language in favor of the majority language' (Grenoble and Whaley (1998b:53).

We will come back to these issues below.

Crystal (2000:78ff.) points out that linguistically we can observe three broad stages in language and culture assimilation situations: in the first stage there is 'immense pressure on the people to speak the dominant language'; the second can be characterized as a 'period of emerging bilingualism'; and in the third stage is a stage 'in which the younger generation becomes increasingly proficient the new language, identifying more with it, and finding their first language less relevant to their new needs'. If a speech community has already reached this final stage attempts to prevent languages from dying have hardly any chance any more. Crystal (2000:79) emphasizes that it 'is the second stage — the stage of emergent bilingualism — where there is a real chance' to slow down, stop, or even reverse the decline of the dominated language because it is still possible to foster positive language attitudes. This is not a simple task, because, as we have seen, '[t]he forces which cause language death are [...] massive' (Crystal 2000:89). Thus, the description and

documentation of endangered languages is just a first step in solving the problem of endangered languages — there are many more issues involved here!

Where should linguists begin then? First of all we have to establish the top priorities for all the attempts to reduce the threat of language endangerment. We first have to take stock and to establish what the really urgent cases are, of course (see Tryon's paper in this volume). We have to develop a 'theoretical frame to orient the fact-finding and to provide guidelines about assessment and diagnosis' (Crystal 2000:92ff.), because '[s]uch a framework would yield models which could identify and interrelate the relevant variables involved in endangerment, and these models would generate empirical hypotheses about such matters as rate of decline or stages in revival' (Crystal 2000:93). Another important task for projects that aim at the documentation or even at the revitalization of endangered languages consists in fostering positive community attitudes within the endangered speech communities. This can be extremely difficult and quite delicate (as some of the papers in this volume illustrate). Only the speech community itself can save its language! Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998:96ff.) have emphasized this basic insight as follows:

> The reversal effort requires widespread, intense conviction that this is the right thing to do. This ideological clarification must be assumed prior to any successful community effort. The effort requires a community level of commitment, and an awareness that this is a "do-it-yourself" effort. Language reversal cannot be done *to* one or *for* one by others.

Linguists and language teachers can only try to convince members of endangered speech communities that their language is an important part of their culture, cultural heritage, and ethnicity (see also Grinevald 1998). Language preservation always implies culture maintenance — as Woodbury (1993) impressively illustrated in the seminal paper in which he defends the proposition, 'When a language dies a culture dies'. Woodbury (1993:127) points out that

> codes are not really interchangeable: individual codes, and the ways they are practiced in individual communities, *are* linked, indirectly or directly, to essential cultural content. Language preservation is therefore a crucial part of the maintenance of cultural diversity [...] As long as one assumes that cultural diversity is a basic human value and that cultural and linguistic autonomy is a basic human right, it is the social responsibility of linguistics to support endangered languages, as well as its scientific responsibility.

Thus, language preservation is not just about writing grammars and dictionaries of endangered languages and developing educational programs for the speakers of these languages, it is also about preserving the cultures of these speakers! Projects that aim to document and to revitalize endangered languages require not only descriptive and — in the revitalization case — applied linguistic competence, they also ask for ethnographic and anthropological linguistic expertise.[5]

To know something about the 'factors which cause a language to decline' and about 'the effect of this process on people's attitudes' is absolutely necessary in order to put linguists and language teachers 'in a position to make informed decisions about when and how to intervene, in order to reverse language shift — or indeed about whether intervention is

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[5]   It is interesting to note, however, that Foley (1997:395ff.) only very briefly discusses the topic of 'language death'. Duranti (1997) does not even mention it and in his 2004 volume there is just one paper by Mithun on 'linguistic diversity' — but this essay does not discuss 'diversity' from an endangered language point of view.

practicable or desirable' (Crystal 2000:127). Crystal (2000:130–141) isolates the following six factors that 'should be recognized as postulates for a theory of language revitalization':[6]

- An endangered language will progress if speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community.
- An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.
- An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community.
- An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system.
- An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down.
- An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology.

Crystal also elaborates on the role of linguists and their motivation in working with endangered languages. Here the author emphasizes something which should be regarded as a truism for all linguists and other social scientists — and not only for those researching endangered languages (Crystal 2000:145):

> The concept of linguists working on such languages with no interest in the people who speak them — other than to see them as a source of data for a thesis or publication — is, or should be as unacceptable a notion as it would be if doctors collected medical data without caring what is happening subsequently to the patients. This point would not be worth making if it had not often happened.

That a linguist has to emphasize this ethical issue — so basic and central for all linguistic data collection and empirical research — does not shed a very positive light on the ethical standards within our discipline. However, as I already mentioned above, it seems that the programs to document and revitalize endangered languages have already had important implications for our discipline as a whole — even with respect to our ethics!

Fieldworkers, other linguists and social scientists, archivers and technicians engaged in the documentation and archiving of endangered languages, and applied linguists and language teachers engaged in revitalization programs are confronted with many psychological, ethical, and social demands. Collecting a corpus of a language that aims to be representative for its speakers' ways of speaking is not a trivial task at all. Questions of how and where to archive the documented data on what kind of technical medium constitute complex problems. There are questions of copyright issues with respect to the data archived, and decisions that have to be made with respect to who may have access to what kind(s) of data. To come up with curricula for teaching an endangered language is an art in itself. All these endeavors are demanding — and whoever engages in such an enterprise should be aware that it may imply a life-long commitment.

This book deals with the three cornerstones of activities for endangered languages: documentation, archiving, and revitalization. The anthology focuses on endangered Austronesian (mostly Oceanic) and Australian Aboriginal languages.[7]

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[6] Note the relationship between these six factors and Grenoble and Whaley's list of the three crucial issues that influence the fate of endangered languages presented previously.

The first four papers deal with issues of LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION. Vanuatu is the country that 'possibly has the honor of having more indigenous languages per head of speakers than any other country on earth' (Lynch and Crowley 2001:xii). In his contribution, 'The endangered languages of Vanuatu', Darrell Tryon provides us with a tentative list of more than 100 extant vernaculars in Vanuatu today. This list is based on reports of 70 ni-Vanuatu field officers who met in Port Vila for a Vanuatu Cultural Centre Fieldworkers Workshop in 2004 to map extant languages and to exchange their research results with respect to extinct and seriously endangered languages. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre coordinates all linguistic research in the country. Lists like those presented by Tryon enable linguists to establish the top priorities in the documentation of endangered languages. Tryon comes to the conclusion that the next five years will be crucial if we are to obtain records of the endangered languages of Vanuatu. The fieldworkers of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and a number of expatriate researchers try their very best to record these languages before they disappear.

Gabriele Cablitz's contribution is 'A field report on a language documentation project on the Marquesas in French Polynesia'. The author provides a brief introduction to the Marquesan languages, the archipelago, and its speech community and then discusses internal and external causes for language endangerment in French Polynesia. First of all she points out that throughout French Polynesia a shift from the indigenous Polynesian languages to French can be observed. The main reasons for this development are quite obvious: French is the only official language in French Polynesia, the French education system has been introduced to the area ever since the mid-1960s, the media are broadcasting in French, and the language attitudes of the Marquesan speech community itself support this shift to French. Moreover, the author points out that internal dominance and the hegemonic forces of Tahiti have contributed to a loss in distinctive culture and language variety on all French Polynesian archipelagos. Cablitz discusses the Marquesans' language attitudes in some detail and elaborates on the responses of the speech community to the present state of their language and their culture. She emphasizes that despite the changing attitudes towards their own languages many Marquesans 'strongly desire to document their cultural knowledge and language in order to maintain their intimate link with the past'. In 1978 this desire led to a cultural revival movement that culminated in the recently created local language academy *Thuna 'Eo 'Enata*. The paper ends with a presentation of Cablitz's documentation project and with a discussion of the reactions of the Marquesan speech community to this project.

In her paper 'Language endangerment: situations of loss *and* gain' Ingjerd Hoëm points out that the situation of the Tokelau language community was described as language death as early as the first period of missionary activity, that is from the 1860s. The church languages were Latin, later replaced by Tokelauan and Samoan, the latter of which also became the preferred language of literacy. As early as 1913 the atoll population requested for the teaching of English in their schools, and the generations born in New Zealand turn increasingly to English. Even so, the Tokelau language is still the main medium of

communication in the atoll communities these days. Given these facts the author points out that 'it is at this stage empirically correct to describe the language situation both in terms of language loss and in terms of strategic acquisition of new registers'. On this basis Hoëm discusses the concept of loss of language and of culture, as implied by theories of modernization. In a detailed overview of the Tokelau language situation the author points out that video technology, DVD players, and the internet are used to send recordings of important events, for example weddings, to family members elsewhere. Hence, these media are also used to disseminate Tokelauan speaking productions. Hoëm explores how some of these new media of expression, including newsletter and administrative reports, in combination with greater contact with versions of English, can be seen to affect the Tokelau language and the communicative practices of its speakers. In oral Tokelauan the flow of information in discourse varies across text types. This variation is due to factors of social control. Within the text types 'history', 'life-history' and 'administrative report' that are recognizable as having their roots in English text types Hoëm shows that we also observe a considerable variation of information flow — a variation which is common and clearly marked in oral Tokelauan. The presence of this feature in written Tokelauan genres represents an addition to standard English usage. The author concludes that language loss is clearly seen especially in the fate of genres that were central to the Tokelau oral literature. However, she points out that Tokelauan has also gained additional registers, new media and new spaces of expression.

In my paper, 'Culture change — language change: missionaries and moribund varieties of Kilivila', I emphasize that with respect to levels of endangerment Kilivila, the Austronesian language of the Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea, can still be classified as a viable but relatively small language. It is 'spoken in [a community] that [is relatively] isolated [and] with a strong internal organization, and aware of the way [its] language is a marker of identity' (Crystal 2000:20). However, I also point out that two of its varieties, the *biga megwa* — the 'language of magic' and the *biga baloma* — the 'language of the spirits of the dead' are highly endangered and now moribund. My paper first presents examples of text genres that constitute these two indigenous varieties of Kilivila and then explains how and why they have to be classified as being doomed to die. It ends with an assessment of this development and its impact on the language and culture of the Trobriand Islanders.

The following three papers deal with issues of the ARCHIVING of documented materials. Nick Thieberger starts his paper 'Linguistic preservation and linguistic responsibility: examples from the Pacific' with the observation that linguists often portray their work to the public as involving preservation. While we see newspaper articles about 'saving endangered languages' describing a linguist writing a grammatical description, it is clear that languages are not preserved by this kind of activity. However, if we take seriously the notion of preservation of even the small collections of material that linguists may make we need to provide a means by which the material can be stored and located into the future. In 2003 a group of Australian linguists and musicologists began to build a digital means to store, describe and locate this kind of data for languages of the region. To date a number of collections of reel-to-reel field recordings from the Pacific, PNG, Indonesia and West Papua have been digitized. By training new fieldworkers and by conforming to international standards data recordings will become much more useful both for linguists and for the descendants of those speakers whose languages were recorded. Thiebergers paper reflects on language documentation and curation of linguistic data from the

perspective of building the 'Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC)' and its methodological implications for fieldwork and relations with host communities and countries in the Pacific.

In their paper 'Digital archiving — a necessity in documentary linguistics' Peter Wittenburg and Paul Trilsbeek first discuss the influence of advances in digital technology on linguistics research, in particular on documentary linguistics. They then describe the creation, analysis, and archiving of language resources. They also focus on the different users of the language resources and describe the architecture of a modern language resource archive. The paper ends with a discussion of some more advanced methods of giving access to language resources via the web. This paper documents the work of the Technical Group at the Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the host of the DOBES (Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen — Documentation of endangered languages) program archive, which is financed by the Volkswagen Foundation.

Over the past few years groups from the University of California, Berkeley, and elsewhere, have set up the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) to connect areas of the world through digital geographic information systems. From these projects scholars have unified a technical information network with parameters to chart global spatial-temporal data. Research data are indexed for retrieval and displayed on a map-based interface on remote servers, maintained by individual scholars or academic institutions, and available by users over the internet. This project combines the generation of a digital version of an older printed language map with the collection of data on contemporary languages areas. In their paper 'Empowering Pacific languages and cultures mapping with applied case studies in Taiwan and the Philippines' David Blundell, Michael Buckland, Jeanette Zerneke, Yu-Hsiu Lu and Andrew Limond present a series of studies relating to the Pacific languages and cultures undertaken by the ECAI and collaborators. The projects presented are:

- a digital atlas of languages of the Pacific,
- a map of Formosan Austronesian languages,
- an interface to Cebuano library catalogue records, and
- fieldwork of language and culture mapping of Lan-yu (Taiwan) and the Batanes Islands (Philippines).

The ECAI approach presents another interesting tool that is very useful for the documentation of endangered languages and the archiving of documented material. Like one of the new tools presented in Wittenburg and Trilsbeek's paper it presents endangered languages via geographic information.

The last five papers deal with REVITALIZATION issues of endangered languages. They all confirm the importance of Crystal's six postulates for a theory of language revitalization quoted previously.

The Central Malukan islands in eastern Indonesia are characterized by high linguistic diversity and the most serious language endangerment in Indonesia. Despite the urgent need for documentation (perhaps as many as 50% of the languages of Central Maluku are endangered), research was suspended through recent years (1998–2002) of civil unrest (*kerusuhan*). Researchers returning to Maluku are noting a remarkable upsurge in interest in indigenous languages (*bahasa tanah*), and concomitant concern about language endangerment. Margaret Florey and Michael Ewing's paper on 'Political acts and language revitalization: community and state in Maluku' explores the link between civil unrest and

recent changes in attitudes toward indigenous languages, which may have an impact on language survival. In the post *kerusuhan* era, the past is re-imagined to raise the status of *bahasa tanah* and other cultural attributes vis-à-vis local identities and reconciliation. The authors discuss an innovative training program which is being developed and piloted with speakers of Malukan languages and their descendents to empower individuals and communities to undertake language documentation and implement language revitalization or maintenance at the grassroots level.

By 1991 the heavily settled south east of Australia had been characterized as a disaster area for indigenous languages: just one language still alive and that with only a few aged speakers. However, Jakelin Troy and Michael Walsh argue in their paper 'A linguistic renaissance in the south east of Australia' that this perception is flawed and needs to be re-evaluated in the light of recent activities. The last 20–25 years have seen a series of remarkable developments in a considerable variety of languages which have been described as 'extinct'. The authors focus on such activities and developments in the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. They end their paper discussing three essentials for the politics of language revitalization:

- indigenous consultation and control;
- resources: material – human – moral; and
- appropriate involvement of the academy.

The last three papers report on language revitalization activities in New Zealand. Sophie Nock's paper '*Te reo Māori* — Māori language revitalization' focuses on Māori responses and initiatives in Māori language revitalization, the birth of *Te Kohanga Reo* (Language Nests), the *Kura Kaupapa Māori* and *Wharekura* (Māori Language Schools) and the inevitable step into the tertiary arena of *Te Whare Wānanga* (Māori Universities). Nock discusses the history of *Te reo Māori* from its earliest recordings, the impact of colonization, the progress made by Māori in the revitalization, maintenance and retention of their indigenous language, language acquisition programs and finally the status of the language today.

In her paper 'Learning style preferences and New Zealand Māori students: questioning folk wisdom' Diane Johnson reports on the preliminary findings of a research project whose aim is to determine whether there are any significant differences between learning style preference patterns in the case of students from different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The study focuses on Māori versus non-Māori students in years 7–10 (aged 10–14 approximately) of schooling in New Zealand. In particular, the research aims to address the frequently articulated claim that Māori students as a group are more inclined than other student groups towards oral, interactive, task-centered learning. The implications of research of this type for the teaching and learning of endangered languages such as Māori are discussed.

In her paper 'Classroom-based language revitalization: the interaction between curriculum planning and teacher development in the case of Māori language' Winifred Crombie reports on a draft curriculum guidelines document for the teaching and learning of the Māori language as a subject in New Zealand schools. Crombie prepared this document in 2003 together with James (Hemi) Whaanga under contract to the New Zealand Ministry of Education. That draft curriculum document was then trialed in a number of schools and discussed by a curriculum review team set up by the Ministry of Education. The development of the draft curriculum document itself, briefly outlined here,

was relatively straightforward. Some of the issues that arose out of the review process, were, however, more complex. These issues, together with the author's responses to them, are the main focus of attention in this paper. They and other aspects of the curriculum development process are especially of interest to those persons who are engaged in language revitalization efforts involving classroom-based learning.

The thirteen papers of this anthology illustrate the complexity of its topic. Although this complexity with respect to language documentation projects, archiving and revitalization programs is exemplified in the main with studies on Austronesian and Australian Aboriginal languages, linguists, other social scientists and pedagogues working with other endangered languages of the world face and have to overcome basically the same problems. The selection of the contributions presented here may be eclectic, but they are certainly representative for all the activities in the field all over the world. Thus, we are engaged here in a wide field, indeed. However, its multifarious challenges — addressed in the contributions to this volume — should incite all of us to get engaged in the endeavour to document and archive, and, if possible, to revitalize as many endangered languages as possible. There is much to do — so let us do it before it is too late!

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