Workshop ID :   13

Workshop Duration :   Workshop - 1 Day

Workshop Title :   **The Sociolinguistics of Language Endangerment**

Workshop Leader :   David Bradley, La Trobe University

We propose a one-day workshop on this topic, following up on previous similar workshops held in the UK in 2009, the US in 2011, Thailand in 2013 and China in 2014. While many scholars have been active in documenting endangered languages, and concern about language endangerment has become very widespread among linguists, there is still an incomplete understanding of the sociolinguistic factors which are related to language shift. These include both linguistic factors (structural, genetic, acquisition and contact) and extralinguistic factors (identity and attitudes, demography, geography, history, religion, economy, politics and policy, and so on).

While there have been various attempts to establish overall scales for language endangerment, such as Fishman's GIDS scale and its revisions, the Wurm/UNESCO scale and its revisions and the ELCat scale among others, all of these are oversimplified and do not adequately reflect the actual diversity and complexity of the processes involved.

Scholars from various countries will present case studies and theoretical overviews within a new framework under development. In particular, a number of scholars working on language endangerment in Africa as well as from other continents will be involved.

In addition to crosslinguistic documentation and discussion of the sociolinguistic factors related to language endangerment, the workshop will also discuss and exemplify some actions which communities and the scholars working with them have successfully taken to achieve resilience and reclaim linguistic diversity.

As we do not wish to be the generation of linguists who were active while much of humanity's linguistic diversity was disappearing, it is very important for us not just to document languages, but also wherever possible to assist communities in their language maintenance efforts. This workshop will discuss and attempt to establish best practice for such activities, which must be based on a clear understanding of the sociolinguistic factors involved.