The Topic: this seminar treats the topic of language endangerment by identifying a worldwide problem and examining the possible responses that might partially rectify the situation. By some estimates, less than 10% of the world's languages will survive beyond the present century. Global economic forces and other political economic factors are clearly responsible for a pattern of language shift that threatens most of the world's indigenous and subnational languages that are not identified with particular nation-states or have international currency. But what is the human cost of such language death both to the speakers of these languages and to us as thoughtful world citizens? In this seminar we discuss what are the consequences of language death and what can be done to provide alternatives for those communities who seek to preserve their distinctive linguistic resources. By examining case studies of language death and language renewal we obtain a ground level view of the processes that lead to language death and those that are involved with language revitalization. The seminar will examine several different responses to the need for revitalization including the use of so-called master-apprentice programs and the application of multimedia technology.

Meetings:

#1 April 6 Introductions

Introduction of Topics, of Class Personnel

#2 April 13 Language Death

#3 April 20  What is at risk?

Read: Nettle, Daniel and Suzanne Romaine. 2000. Lost Words, Lost Worlds (Chapter 3 of) Vanishing Voices, the extinction of the world's Languages., pp. 50-77. Oxford University Press.

#4 April 27  What should we do (…. or not)?


#5 May 4  Strategies for Language Revitalization


#6 May 11  New Technologies and Language Revitalization

Presentation of Taitaduhaan: Western Mono Ways of Speaking by Paul V. Kroskrity, Rosalie Bethel (Western Mono), and Jennifer F, Reynolds. (CD-ROM). U Oklahoma Press. 2002.

#7 May 18  Our Unconscious (?) Compliance

#8 May 25  Language revitalization III: case studies


#9 June 1 Rethinking the Language of Language Endangerment and Revitalization


#10 June 8 Language Rights and Linguistic Revitalization and Self-reflection


Discuss: What changes if any have I undergone via my participation in this course.

Grading: Grading is obligatorily S/U. There are no written assignments. Students earn passing grades by 1) attending seminar meetings (and missing no more than 2 meetings) and 2) by engaging in full and informed participation in the discussion of readings. For students who do not participate in seminar discussion on a regular basis, written reviews of the assigned articles will be required to earn a passing grade. Also the second permitted absence must be accompanied by a 1 review of the work assigned for discussion.