

The Linguist's Responsibilities to the Community of Speakers

Keren Rice
University of Toronto
rice@chass.utoronto.ca

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The past thirty years or so have seen dramatic shifts in what is regarded as the responsibilities of linguists to the communities with which they work. I provide an overview of some of the types of changes that have occurred in what is considered to be responsible fieldwork, focusing on work with Aboriginal communities in Canada. A model has developed that involves taking seriously a number of key points, particularly working with the community to determine what should be researched and how, and carrying out the research in a respectful way.

I. The changing world of ethical responsibilities I: the linguistic community

Recent years have seen an evolution in the understanding of ethical responsibilities in linguistic fieldwork.

1. Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, Richardson 1992
 - a. *Ethical research*: "In ethical research ... there is a wholly proper concern to minimize damage and offset inconvenience to the researched, and to acknowledge their contributions. ... But the underlying model is one of 'research *on*' social subjects. Human subjects deserve special ethical consideration, but they no more set the researcher's agenda than the bottle of sulphuric acid sets the chemist's agenda." (pages 14-15).
 - b. *Advocacy research*: "... the 'advocacy position' is characterized by a commitment on the part of the researcher not just to do research on subjects but research *on and for* subjects. Such a commitment formalizes what is actually a rather common development in field situations, where a researcher is asked to use her skills or her authority as an 'expert' to defend subjects' interests, getting involved in their campaigns for healthcare or education, cultural autonomy or political and land rights, and speaking on their behalf" (page 15).
 - c. *Empowering research*: "We understand 'empowering research' as research on, for and with. One of the things we take that additional 'with' to imply is the use of interactive or dialogic research methods, as opposed to the distancing or objectifying strategies positivists are constrained to use. It is the centrality of interaction 'with' the researched that enables research to be empowering in our sense; though we understand this as a necessary rather than a sufficient condition ... we [propose three] programmatic statement[s] and then pose various questions:
 - (a) 'Persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects.'
 - (b) 'Subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them'
 - (c) 'If knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing.'"
2. Hale 2001

"The scientific investigation of a given language cannot be understood in isolation. In carrying out field research, linguists are inevitably responsible to the larger human community which its results could affect." (page 76)

II. The changing world of ethical responsibilities II: Aboriginal research paradigms in the Canadian context

Recent years have also seen an evolution in the understanding of ethical responsibilities in work with Aboriginal communities, and research on Aboriginal languages, like any other research in Aboriginal communities is deeply grounded in ethical principles, and thus defines relationships and responsibilities to the communities.

3. Battiste and Henderson 2000 (quoted from Czaykowska-Higgins 2002)
“Most existing research on Indigenous peoples is contaminated by Eurocentric prejudice. Ethical research must begin by replacing Eurocentric prejudice with new premises that value diversity over universality. Researchers must seek methodologies that build synthesis without relying on negative exclusions or on a strategy of differences. At the core of this quest is the issue of how to create ethical behavior in a knowledge system contaminated by colonialism and racism. Nowhere is this work more needed than in the universities that pride themselves in their discipline-specific research. These academic disciplines have been drawn from a Eurocentric canon, an ultra theory that supports production-driven research while exploiting Indigenous people, their languages, and their heritage.” (pages 132-133)
4. Battiste and Henderson 2000 (quoted from Czaykowska-Higgins 2002)
“Ethical research systems and practices should enable Indigenous nations, peoples, and communities to exercise control over information related to their knowledge and heritage and to themselves. These projects should be managed jointly with Indigenous peoples, and the communities being studied should benefit from training and employment opportunities generated by the research. Above all, it is vital that Indigenous peoples have direct input into developing and defining research practices and projects related to them. To act otherwise is to repeat that familiar pattern of decisions being made for Indigenous people by those who presume to know what is best for them.” (page 132)
5. Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Research (TCPS) involving Aboriginal People (section 6 of the TCPS 1999; currently under revision; based on the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and other documents)
“There is growing recognition that some research involving aboriginal individuals may also involve the communities or groups to which they belong. The Councils affirm that in developing ethical standards and practices, aboriginal peoples have rights and interests which deserve recognition and respect by the research community. In Canada and elsewhere, aboriginal peoples have distinctive perspectives and understandings embodied in their cultures and histories.”
6. Toward new TCPS Guidelines for Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples: The Emerging Process. Marlene Brant Castellano. June 2005.
 - a. Challenges in initiating a dialogue:

power imbalance	cultural divide
distrust	entrenched hegemony
 - b. Some of the major issues:

duty to consult	integrity and validity of research
benefit sharing	management and control of data

III. The Canadian context: development of new research programs

In response to changing research paradigms, new research programs have been developed through the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (and through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research).

7. Community University Research Alliance (CURA)

(http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/cura_e.asp)

a. What is a CURA?

Objectives

The purpose of the program is to support the creation of community-university alliances which, through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning, will foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge in areas of importance for the social, cultural or economic development of Canadian communities.

Specific objectives are to:

- * promote sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise between universities and organizations in the community;
- * enrich research, teaching methods and curricula in universities;
- * reinforce community decision-making and problem-solving capacity; and
- * enhance students' education and employability by means of diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, expertise and work skills through hands-on research and related experience.

Description

A community-university research alliance:

- * is based on an equal partnership between organizations from the community and the university, and
- * provides co-ordination and core support for planning and carrying out diversified research activities that reflect the CURA program objectives, are centred on themes/areas of mutual importance to the partners, and are closely related to their existing strengths.

Each CURA's activities will include:

- * a research component (short-term and long-term projects, action research, etc.);
- * an education and training component (in the context of research projects, apprenticeships, activities credited as part of coursework, etc.); and
- * a knowledge-mobilization component (workshops, seminars, colloquia, policy manuals and other publications, public lectures, etc.) that meets the needs of both academic and community partners.

The project partners jointly define a CURA's research activities as well as the participatory arrangements under which individual researchers and research teams will carry out those activities. The partners should continue to develop and refine the research activities and, in addition to strengthening the original alliance, should, where necessary, also recruit new partners during the period of the grant.

In each CURA, the partners will jointly define and bring together one or more academic disciplines in order to target one or more research themes or areas. These themes or areas should be sufficiently broad to lend themselves to the full range of activities described above. Possible examples include: youth, poverty, culture and the

arts, tourism and recreation, First Nations issues, socialization, integration of persons with disabilities, violence, the aging population, globalization, social justice, local and regional economic development, health and welfare, community capacity, social indicators, cultural heritage management, religion and society, gender issues and environment and sustainable development.

b. The CURA projects related to language

Knowledge and human resources for Innu language development (awarded 2005)

<http://www.innu-aimun.ca/modules.php?name=CURA&p=project>

Marguerite MacKenzie, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Co-applicants/Cochercheurs : Barbara Burnaby, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Marie-Odile Junker, Carleton University, Philip Branigan, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Collaborators/Collaborateurs : Adrian Tanner, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Élizabéth Simms, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Harold Wareham, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Julie Brittain, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Peter Scott, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sandra Clarke, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sharon Taylor, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Partners/Partenaires : Innu Education Authority, Sheshatshiu, NL, Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais, Sept-Iles, QC, Labrador Legal Services, Happy Valley, NL, Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission, Happy Valley, NL, Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council, Sheshatshiu, NL, Sheshatshui Innu Nation, Sheshatshiu, NL

Goals:

- * this website, to serve as an archive of Innu language (Innu-aimun) resources
- * completion of an integrated Innu-French-English dictionary for Labrador and Quebec
- * an Innu-aimun lesson book and accompanying CD (Sheshatshiu, Labrador dialect)
- * an Innu-aimun Conversation CD: English, French, Sheshatshiu-aimun and Mushuau-aimun (Natuashish dialect)
- * Innu-aimun literacy training for community members and teachers
- * workshops to collect and develop vocabulary in the areas of health, social services, justice, education, geology, environment, governance, toponymy as well as traditional culture
- * promoting awareness within Labrador (both with Innu speakers and other Labradorians) of issues around the use, development and maintenance of Innu-aimun as one of the few viable Aboriginal languages in Canada
- * promoting increased use of Innu-aimun in Labrador radio stations
- * developing additional Innu language materials

Revitalizing two Salish languages on southern Vancouver Island: a multimedia approach (awarded 2003)

Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, University of Victoria

University of Victoria participants: Dr. Tom Hukari, Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk

Partners: University of Victoria, Hul'q'umi'num' Treaty Group, Saanich Native Heritage Society, First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council

The purpose of the Salish Languages CURA is to:

1. Do research to facilitate the revitalization of the two Salish languages spoken on southern Vancouver Island, SENCOTEN and Hul'q'umi'num'.

- * research on the languages that is directly relevant to language learning and teaching

- * research on the process of language revitalization
 - * research on the best methods for teaching and learning the two languages, including how best to use media such as computers, story-telling, etc.
2. Facilitate the development of resources, materials and programs needed to take a large coordinated step toward the revitalization of SENCOTEN and Hul'q'umi'num'.
 3. train HTG and SNHS members in methods of research and teaching/learning which are related to the language revitalization process.

The Daghida Project: Language Research & Revitalization in a First Nations Community (awarded 2000)

Sally Rice, University of Alberta

Heather Blair, University of Alberta; Valerie Wood, Cold Lake First Nation; John Janvier, Cold Lake First Nation

Goals:

I: Dene Language and Research

- * establish Dene House as a learning & resource centre at CLFN
- * standardize an orthography and work towards developing a body of oral & written materials in Dene
- * conduct linguistic and psycholinguistic research with Dene speakers
- * produce Dene-English dictionary
- * develop linguistic and pedagogical grammars

II: Dene Language Renewal and Revival

- * re-establish Dene as important medium of communication & cultural exchange by speakers at & around Cold Lake
- * strengthen Dene language & literacy skills among proficient speakers
- * assist proficient speakers in producing oral & written narratives in Dene
- * teach Dene to youth & young adults through mentoring program with elders
- * integrate Dene language & culture courses into CLFN school
- * establish immersion pre-school in Dene
- * design 2-term, university-level Dene language course for the U of Alberta

III: Dene Language and Culture Preservation

- * develop a Dene Cultural Centre or other interpretive museum
- * produce archive-quality materials (personal narratives, community histories, description of historical photographs, genealogies, songs)
- * develop "culture camps" for the transmission (in Dene) of traditional skills such as trapping, fishing, gardening, crafts, etc.
- * produce cultural materials in print, audio, video, & digital (cd-rom) format for multimedia display

8. Aboriginal Research and Development

http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/aboriginal_e.asp

a. What is an Aboriginal research/development grant?

Objectives

This program has two overall objectives. The first is to facilitate research on a range of policy-related issues that are of concern to Canada's Aboriginal peoples: urban issues, economic development, the environment, education, research ethics, intellectual and cultural property, and languages and cultures.

The program's second broad objective is to build up the capacity of the humanities and social science community to operate within, and to benefit from, the approach to Aboriginal research outlined above.

The specific objectives of the Aboriginal Research pilot program are to support and promote:

- * research that will help develop policy in areas of concern to Aboriginal communities and other stakeholders;
- * Aboriginal leadership and participation in research, and advancement of Aboriginal scholars' research careers;
- * significant research training opportunities for Aboriginal students;
- * new, effective research partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars;
- * better understanding of how research by and with Aboriginal scholars and Aboriginal communities can and should be organized;
- * better understanding of the relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and between their respective intellectual and cultural traditions; and,
- * increased awareness and appreciation of the needs, values, knowledge, experiences and contributions of Aboriginal peoples both in Canada and abroad.

Description

This program seeks to build Canada's capacity, at the postsecondary level, to engage research questions that are of concern to Aboriginal peoples in ways that capitalize on knowledge, experience and traditions developed among and in partnership with those peoples.

The program supports, in particular, but not exclusively:

- * international comparative studies;
- * new approaches and methods of inquiry that will build understanding of the dynamics and significance of Aboriginal knowledge; and,
- * effective mobilization of knowledge within Aboriginal and other communities.

b. Language funded grants, January 2005 (first competition)

Nehiyaw'kiskinohama kosiwin ota Alberta: Cree language education in Alberta

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Ellen Bielawski, University of Alberta

Co-investigators/Cochercheurs : Marjorie Memnook, University of Alberta, Dorothy Thunder, University of Alberta

Partenariat pour l'avancement de la recherche et le transfert de connaissances sur la grammaire de la langue innue Montagnais

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale: Lynn Drapeau, Université du Québec à Montréal

Partner/Partenaire : Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais, Sept-Îles, Québec

A new research paradigm for setting down the Cayuga oral tradition

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Carrie Dyck, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Co-investigator/Cochercheur : Amos Key, Woodland Cultural Centre

Partner/Partenaire : Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario

An e-master-apprentice pedagogy for critically endangered languages

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Ethel Gardner, Simon Fraser University

Collaborator/Collaboratrice : Gwen Point, Stó:lo Nation

Partners/Partenaires : First Nations Education Steering Committee, West Vancouver, British Columbia, First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, Victoria, British Columbia, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Merritt, British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia

Itsinikssiisti: remembranced offerings and generous feedings. The role of narrative exposition in Blackfoot knowledge production

Principal Investigator/Chercheur principal : Ryan Heavy Head, Red Crow Community College

Co-investigators/Cochercheurs : Narcisse Blood, Red Crow Community College, Francis First Charger, Red Crow Community College, Duane Mistaken Chief, Red Crow Community College

Partner/Partenaire : The University of Lethbridge

Squamish language documentation

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Deborah Jacobs, Squamish Nation

Co-investigators/Cochercheurs : Kirsten Baker Williams, Squamish Nation, Peter Jacobs, Squamish Nation

Collaborator/Collaborateur : Henry Davis, The University of British Columbia

Partner/Partenaire : The University of British Columbia

L'encyclopédie linguistique vivante du Cri

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Marie-Odile Junker, Carleton University

Co-investigator/Cochercheuse : Marguerite MacKenzie, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Collaborators/Collaborateurs : Luci Bobbish-Salt, Commission scolaire crie, William Jancewicz, Naskapi Development Corporation, John Medicine Horse Kelly, Carleton University, Cath Oberholtzer, Trent University, Ruth Salt, Commission scolaire crie

Partners/Partenaires : Commission scolaire crie, Chisasibi, Québec, Innu Education Authority, Sheshatshiu, Newfoundland and Labrador, Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais, Sept-Îles, Québec, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, La Ronge, Saskatchewan, Saskeweskam Learning Centre, Onion Lake First Nation, Onion Lake, Saskatchewan

mamawe nehiyaw iyinikahiwewin (Together we will heal through the language)

Principal Investigator/Chercheuse principale : Leona Makokis, Blue Quills First Nations College

Co-investigator/Cochercheuse : Patricia Makokis, Blue Quills First Nations College

Collaborators/Collaborateurs : Carl Quinn, pisimoyapi productions, Florence Quinn, Onchaminahos School

Partner/Partenaire : Saddle Lake onicikiskwapowinik First Nation, Saddle Lake, Alberta

c. Some particular projects

East Cree (www.eastcree.org)

The Interactive Cree Language Project is a collaborative effort between Cree Programs, of the Cree School Board and Carleton University linguist, Prof. Marie-Odile Junker. Together they want to try to involve more speakers and Cree youth in documenting the Cree language. By using the many tools offered by the Internet, the process of documenting the language becomes a vehicle for its maintenance and vitality. Other collaborators and advisors on the project are Dr. Marguerite MacKenzie, a linguist with 30 years of experience with East Cree, Bill Jancewicz, an expert in syllabic fonts, and Cree linguists Luci Salt and Louise Blacksmith. The web site is tri-lingual: Cree, English and French. Our hope is to make this interactive web site a forum for promoting Cree language survival. In addition to researching the Cree language, this project also includes technical research for putting syllabic fonts and sound files on the web, in discussion groups and in relational

databases. Every year several Cree students selected by the School Board are offered work-training opportunities on the project.

More generally, the project investigates how to drive the development of new technologies in culturally appropriate ways.

What will you find in this site?

- * Stories

- * Reference Grammar

- * Forum

- * Lessons

- * Dictionary

- * Resource Section

This site is intended as a resource for Cree language teachers, literacy instructors, translators, linguists, and anyone who has an interest in the nuts and bolts of the Cree language. We hope that the live possibilities of the internet will encourage participation. We are seeking support from all who value linguistic diversity and want the Cree language to be alive and well in the 21st century and after.

There are two major dialects of East Cree: the Southern and the Northern dialects. Some, but not all pages are available in both dialects, depending on whether its author is a Southern or a Northern speaker. There is room in the databases to also include Inland and Coastal variations. Know that our intention is to find a balance between standardization and respect of speech diversity.

A new research paradigm for setting down the Cayuga oral tradition

Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy (COOL) <http://www.mun.ca/cayuga/index.php>

Carrie Dyck and Amos Key, Jr.

Language is amazing! We can talk to people we can't see, whether they are in another room, across the road, or around the world! But think about it: just as soon as we say something the sound disappears, leaving only a memory in our minds. "Can't we make speech more permanent?" "What about writing? And recording equipment?" Our research project asks that same question about the Cayuga language: "Can we make spoken Cayuga more permanent?"

"Can we make spoken Cayuga more permanent?" ...It sounds like a simple question, but it raises many others!

- * What kinds of spoken Cayuga exist? Longhouse speeches? Creation Stories? Conversations? Anecdotes? What else?

- * How do we record and preserve spoken Cayuga?

- * Who gets to listen to the recordings? Everybody? Just Longhouse followers? Just Six Nations community members? Who doesn't get to listen?

- * What can we do with the written versions? Can we make web pages? Books? Curriculum materials? CDs? Can we translate Cayuga?

Can we make spoken Cayuga more permanent? And how will COOL answer this question?

COOL will be directed by Amos Key, Jr., Carrie Dyck, and a Steering Committee.

Are you interested in being on the Steering Committee? Contact us! Answers to our research questions will arise in workshops or focus groups. Focus group members

will include Cayuga Elders, students, and speakers, community members, and academics, all working by consensus.

We will also create answers by doing.

- * Cayuga language students will write down Cayuga recordings.
- * Cayuga translators will work from Cayuga to English. At least one translator will be a student, and some will be Cayuga Elders.
- * Linguistic research will be undertaken by Carrie Dyck (a linguist), guest consultants, linguistic students, and Cayuga researchers. Linguistic research tentatively includes:
 - An on-line dictionary of particles, tentatively to be produced with the help of the National Library of Canada.
 - A publication that explains Cayuga linguistic terminology. Carrie Dyck and Hubert Buck (a Cayuga researcher) will collaborate on this.

One of the major aspects of this proposal involves consensus-based research on epistemology and ethics. This will be accomplished through a series of workshops for developing consensus on the object of study, the research methodology, and the control of the research results. The workshops will also train students to conduct research on the Cayuga language.

IV. Consequences for archiving

9. Archiving is not the primary focus of these projects, but it is at the same time core. creation of materials

orthography standardization
dictionaries
curriculum materials

creation of oral and written material
grammars
representation of dialect diversity

storage of materials

cultural centres

web-based archives (oral and written)

V. The linguist's responsibilities to the community of speakers

Responsibilities include a focus on process, grounded in principles of respect for individuals, groups, and epistemologies, responsibility, reciprocity, and relationships, with an openness to enter into negotiation and work in a community-based framework.

Research on Aboriginal languages in Canada probably cannot take place today without taking respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relationships as prerequisite – the responsibilities to the community of speakers, and worldviews, are large, and rewarding.

Some references on community responsibilities:

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