

# The stigma and language revitalization

## Case of Wymysöü

### A bit of history

Wymysorys is a Germanic language that is spoken in Wilamowice. Wilamowice is a small town located in the Vilamovian Foothills, between Lesser Poland and Silesia. The denomination of the language adopted in English is a phonetic simplification of the word Wymysiöeryś [vimisø:ɾɨç], which is used in the language itself. According to the website [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com), Wymysorys is classified as being severely endangered or on the verge of extinction. This likely disappearance of Wymysorys is dictated by two main reasons: the scarcity and old age of its speakers. As far as the number of the speakers is concerned, the most optimistic analyses estimate it as reaching no more than fifty in 2017.

The main part of the users of the language are now more than 80 years old. At the beginning of the 21st century, the younger Vilamovians were generally unfamiliar with the language. However, since 2012, due to efforts of various persons and institutions, especially of the Faculty of „Artes Liberales” of the University in Warsaw, this situation is changing and children of the town have been taught Wymysorys. The language revitalization program deals with the negative language ideologies as well, which are closely bound with the stigma of Post-War history of the town and its inhabitants.

Wilamowice was settled by a group of settlers from Western Europe whose origin cannot be unambiguously determined. They probably came from the region of present-day Germany and the Netherlands and brought with them their specific language and culture. The Vilamovians were farmers, weavers and merchants. They distributed and sold their fabrics all over Europe. Thanks to trade they were growing wealthy and in 1808 they bought themselves out of serfdom. Their main settlement Wilamowice received city rights ten years later.

Residents of Wilamowice have retained a sense of self-identity to this day. Basing their identity on oral tradition, they claim to be descendants of the Flemish. Until the 1940s, they talked to each other in Vilamovian and women wore traditional outfits, characteristic only of this culture.



Vilamovian women at a wedding (1935)

### Persecutions and revival

The situation changed after World War II. The relationship with the German language and culture, and hence its influence, abruptly ceased after the Second World War in 1945. After the fall of the Nazi Germany and during the communist rule – especially during the forties and fifties – Wymysorys experienced a profound Polonization.

As the Communist regime was hostile against any German element that existed in the new Polish territory, the use of Wymysorys was officially banned in 1945 by the local Polish authorities. Since Vilamovians – due to their ethnic and linguistic German(ic) character – were viewed as supporters of the Nazi invaders and their language perceived as identical to German, any expression of the Vilamovian culture was prohibited. Because of the wealth of Vilamovian houses, they were overtaken by the Poles from surrounding villages, who were the main principals of various persecutions of Vilamovians.

Some of them were deported to labor camps in Ural and Siberia. Others were imprisoned in Polish camps in Oświęcim and Jaworzno. Many of them died there. Vilamovians were widely forced to abandon their homes. They were only allowed to return in 1956. However, not all of the person who were expelled could have come back – many had lost their properties for ever as those were given to the Poles from the villages surrounding Wilamowice. Others moved to Germany, where they received German citizenship.

Women walking publicly in traditional costumes were being stripped down and beaten. The informants often recalled: “There was one maid here and some communist took her and beat her up, tore her ymertihla shawl, dropped it to the ground and trampled upon it, and how could she go if she had nothing else?; When it was all gone already, only our [Polish] communists stayed, they stood here while I was walking to the church, dressed in Vilamovian fashion and I had to escape because they wanted to grab me and tear it off, so I run back into the house and dressed casually.” It is not surprising then, that after the war the language and the outfit began to vanish rapidly.

Later, especially in the seventies and eighties of the last century, when the Communist regime was less oppressive, the ban on the Wymysorys language and culture became less strict. Gradually, both started to reappear more openly, although it was not before the fall of Communism in 1989 that Vilamovians began to use their Germanic mother tongue more freely and with less fear. In the last decade of the 20th century and, particularly more recently in the 21st century, the language began to relatively flourish.

In the post-war period, the sociolinguistic context of the Wymysorys language had drastically changed. Apart from the said prohibition, any German influence – be it standard or dialectal – was erased. It should be noted that the entire area became “purely” Polish: The Germans were deported, almost all the local German dialects vanished and the Polish-German border moved many hundreds kilometers to the West. The cultural and linguistic link with German was almost completely lost and, at least at the beginning of Communism, categorically banned. This led to a profoundly Polish linguistic domination. The Wymysorys language has become a marginal linguistic island immersed in a prevailing Slavic linguistic territory. In fact, the young population employs Standard Polish as their only mother tongue. However, the status of Wymysorys has greatly improved in last fifteen years. The culture and language has attracted attention in Poland and on the international scene. Important works on Wymysorys, its literature and socio-cultural context, as well as on Vilamovian customs and history have been published. More importantly, several revitalization projects have been launched and the use of the language has generally been promoted locally and recognized nationally.



Concentration camp in Jaworzno



Mrs Bibowa (former prisoner of the concentration camp in Jaworzno (above)) is happy that the Vilamovian culture has been reborn after persecutions







# Language planning in sixteenth-century Nahuatl

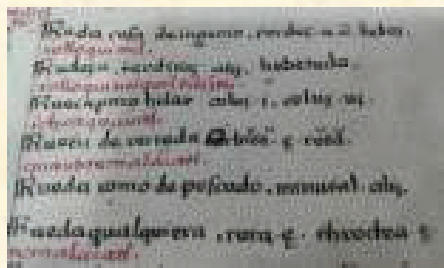


Szymon Gruda, University of Warsaw



## Nahuatl in the sixteenth century

When Cortés and the Spaniards arrived to Mexico in the 1519, Nahuatl was used in central Mexico as a vehicular language of the so-called Aztec Empire. During the following decades the languages of Mexico evolved rapidly in order to be able to cope with the changing reality. The Spaniards imposed new religion—Christianity—and their colonial administration; they also brought innumerable new artifacts, ideas, and living organisms. The secular and ecclesiastic authorities of the Spanish Empire chose Nahuatl—not without hesitation—as a vehicle of Christianization and colonial administration (Klor de Alva 1989). For this to be possible, Nahuatl had to change accordingly to the new needs. This change, which occurred in parallel to the spontaneous linguistic evolution, was an early and extremely successful example of corpus planning.



Fragment of the Ayer *Vocabulario trilingüe* in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl, the oldest extant linguistic work written by a Native American scholar. Photo by Szymon Gruda.

## Nahua linguists

A number of Nahuatl-speaking indigenous and *mestizo* intellectuals created or co-authored linguistic works with elements of language planning, some of which can still be used as models and sources for modern language revitalization by researchers and activists:

- Hernando de Ribas (flourished ca. 1550-1570), citizen of Texcoco, collaborated with Alonso de Molina in the process of the creation of his dictionaries.
- Antonio de Rincón SJ (1566-1601), citizen of Texcoco, author of *Arte mexicana* (Mexico 1595), first grammar of an American indigenous language authored by a native speaker, which served as a model for later grammarians
- don Antonio Valeriano (ca. 1521-1605), citizen of Azcapotzalco, responsible for over 700 glosses in *Sermonario en lengua mexicana* of Juan Bautista (Mexico 1606)
- anonymous (flourished ca. 1540?) author of the so-called *Ayer Vocabulario trilingüe* in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl, the oldest extant dictionary of Nahuatl.

## Alphabetic writing in Nahuatl

Adoption of alphabetic writing in Nahuatl was the first and absolutely indispensable step of the process of adopting the language to the needs of the colonial society. Before the European contact, the Nahuas possessed a well-developed system of semasiographic writing with some glottographic elements. The Latin alphabet in its Spanish variant was introduced with some modifications which made it better adapted to the Nahuatl phonetics, phonology, and morphology. The alphabetic writing soon became widely adopted by the indigenous Nahuatl-speaking population whose members used it proficiently and creatively for their own means often independent, or sometimes even contrary, to those of the Spaniards and *criollos* (Olko 2014).

## Corpus planning in sixteenth-century Nahuatl

The greatest part of it was done in the vocabulary. New lexical items were created in order to express new ideas and describe new phenomena, artifacts and beings. The strategies used to create new worlds were the same which are common cross-linguistically: semantic change, creation of neologism from existing morphemes of Nahuatl, lexical borrowing, and creation of lexical and semantic calques. Perhaps most importantly, the terminology for the new religion, Christianity, had to be created. This was especially challenging due to the theological concerns, which made the collaboration of native speakers indispensable in the process of planning. Particular decisions were sometimes discussed by the contemporaries and the documents preserve traces of such discussions (Sell 1993; Zimmermann 1997). In order to preach Catholic Christianity one needed also the apparatus of theological, anthropological, historiosophical, cosmological and philosophical concepts based on Hebrew, Greek and Latin culture (Burkhart 1998). In this way also the basic concepts of proto-scientific Western European worldview came to be translated to Nahuatl.



Nahua semasiographic writing: page from the *Codex Borgia* (XV-XVI cent.). Source: wikimedia commons.

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish priest and writer, pioneer of cultural anthropology. He taught some of the most renowned Nahua intellectuals. Source: wikimedia commons.



## Who were the planners?

The texts which introduced the newly coined vocabulary to Nahuatl were mostly religious texts written in doctrinal Nahuatl and linguistic works, i.e. grammars and—above all—dictionaries. It was long accepted to think about the Spanish friars as the authors of both categories of texts. Recently, however, this opinion underwent serious revision because of the new findings enabled by the careful philological analysis of the texts. It becomes increasingly obvious that the vast majority of the texts formally authored by Spaniards was written in the close cooperation with the native speakers. A significant portion of texts, including most erudite ones, as the first Latin-Spanish-Nahuatl dictionary, were created by indigenous intellectuals working with little or no supervision (e.g. Clayton 1989).

## Examples

Here are some examples of terms created by a sixteenth-century indigenous language planner: the anonymous author of the *Ayer Vocabulario trilingüe*.

**tlapōhualmachōni** 'algorism,' lit. 'instrument for learning to count'

**pēuhcāyōtl** 'element (in chemistry),' lit. 'something of a beginning'

**tēhuāncāquitzini** 'consonant,' lit. 'something which sounds with something else'

**tēcuiquēhualiztli** 'satire,' lit. 'action of raising a song against someone'

**tlāōlcuicatl** 'tragedy,' lit. 'song of misfortune'

## Consequences for the modern revitalization programs

The challenges faced by the modern revitalization researchers and activists working with Nahuatl are sometimes similar to those with which the sixteenth-century planners struggled. In both cases the goal is to help a language in adopting to the changing reality. The lexical items coined in the sixteenth-century and attested in the sources often have a potential for being useful in the modern times. Especially those sources about which we know that were made by the native speakers of Nahuatl seem promising.

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# NÁHUATL INDIGENOUS TRANSLATORS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This research proposal, focus on the critical analysis of cultural rights and language revitalization of indigenous peoples in Mexico, especially related with nahua culture. It is a priority to reflect on issues such as: the right of non-discrimination, the right to bilingual education, the right of legal counsel in indigenous languages and the right to healthcare in indigenous languages and with traditional knowledge.

Contemporary issues. Below left. Photography of Juana Martínez González and her daughter in the nahua community of San Francisco Atotonilco in the Acaxochitlán Municipality. She is and indigenous translator specialized in legal counsel.

Historical sources. Below right. Here is possible to appreciate the glyphs of Acaxochitlán and Atotonilco, in the plate 30 of Codex Mendoza. Also is possible to find the amount of textile pieces (*quexquemeh*), that both towns had to give as tribute to México-Tenochtitlan in early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The hole Codex is very useful to understand the arithmetic system used by nahuas.

**PhD Candidate: Osiris Sinuhé González Romero.**  
Faculty of Archaeology. Heritage of Indigenous Peoples.



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**Language, Heritage and Transdisciplinarity.**  
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The social relevance of this research is to address, the demands of recognition of indigenous peoples in Mexico. This recognition of cultural heritage and empowering of native speakers could be considered as a priority due to the systematic implementation of neocolonial strategies that have led to lack of recognition, have threatened ancestral knowledge, endangered languages and the existence of the indigenous communities.

The academic relevance, also lies in the possibility to contribute, through critical analysis of methodologies, strategies and policies involved in the process of language documentation and revitalization. This process must be able to produce alternatives, i.e. new ways of communication and understanding.


**Francisco Morales Baranda.** Náhuatl literature translator, teacher and historian. Born in Santa Ana Tlacotenco, Milpa Alta.



Universiteit  
Leiden







DRESS ME OUT IN WYMOSTORYS OUTFIT –  
FULL OF PATCHWORK OF COLORS AND PATTERNS:  
HORIZONTAL STRIPES, VERTICAL STRIPES,  
IRELLISES, LARGE FLOWERS, SMALL FLOWERS,  
STRIPE, EMBROIDERY, CORALS... IT'S RICH,  
BEAUTIFUL.

COSTUME BECAME ONE OF THE MOST  
IMPORTANT MANIFESTATION OF VILAMOVIAN'S  
IDENTITY. IT WAS A COMMUNICATION ON THE CIVIL  
STATUS, SOCIAL AND MATERIAL POSITION. MATERIALS  
WERE BOUGHT AND SOLD IN VIENNA, BERLIN, PARIS,  
MOSCOW OR ISTANBUL.

The women who dressed up in Vilamovian style were beaten  
and their clothes were ripped off publicly.



# Vilamovian language

## disappearing outfits, language and culture

### Language

In 2004, Józef Gara began teaching Wymysorys at the local elementary school to a group of 6-7 children. Initially, the lessons took place in the school and were seen as extracurricular activities for children, but were later moved to the houses of Gara and Tymoteusz Król. The classes were also attended by other speakers of Wymysorys.

The lessons stopped in 2006. Wymysorys education was, however, reintroduced in 2011, when Tymoteusz Król started teaching the children of the “Wilamowice” folk dance group, with the lessons being hosted by Król and Barbara Tomanek. They continue to this day in the Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre in Wilamowice, Public School in Wilamowice and in private houses, teaching Wymysorys to a few groups of students.

The students are of varying ages: from 8 to 24. Over all, there are two lecture groups in Warsaw University, all on varying levels of proficiency, but all eager to learn. The student's book and some dictionaries have been made. The formal recognition of Wymysorys as a regional language by the Polish government should be the first step to improve and increase the range of teaching.



teaching wymysioeryś in a private house by Tioma fūm Dokter, Wilamowice, 2014



Śmiergusty in Wilamowice (Wet Monday), 2014

Folk Dance Group „Wilamowice” Wrocław 2013



The ‘Wilamowice’ folk dance group was created in 1948 by Jadwiga Bilczewska-Stanecka as a continuation of an earlier group active in the 30's. Thanks to her, the preservation of the songs and traditions still banned by the government was made possible.

Native speakers of Vilamovian and people who know all of the principles of wearing traditional Vilamovian clothing can be found among the members of the ‘Wilamowice’ folk group. Custom and knowledge is passed down naturally, generation to generation, as the group has members of all ages. A great deal of effort is currently being put into teaching old and long-forgotten folk songs. ‘Wilamowice’ is the only folk dance group in Poland dedicated exclusively to the popularisation and preservation of Vilamovian culture.

Folk traditions are still stron among Vilamovian people. There's no need of special ingerence in customs like śmiergusty (Easter Wet Monday) or Corpus Christi ect. People cultivate their heritage, even if they are not involved in language revitalization.

### Traditions

### Cultural activities

The Association for the Reservation of the Cultural Heritage „Wilamowianie” was established in 2000. It began to document and revitalize Wymysioeryś culture. The Association created its own publishing series, database (circa 8000 documents, old photos), collection of exhibits connected with wymysioeryś culture - 2500 pieces of traditional clothing and 800 antique daily-use utensils and examples of folk art. Several exhibitions of Wilamowice's cultural heritage have also been prepared (the largest: „Wilamowice - until the end of life”, the National Museum in Wrocław (2015)

The organization has a full-fledged role in free-time organization of inhabitants: it organizes free lessons and records, meetings, cultural events, various workshops and re-enactments of rituals.

Additionally, the „Wilamowianie” has created various projects crossing language revitalization, theatre and performance art. A group of youth and adults are participating in different theater productions in the wymysioeryś language, which form and create a contemporary local culture based on the popular mainstream. The newest ones are "Hobbit.Hejn an Cyryk" by J.R.R.Tolkien and "Uf jer wełt" based on the old poem by Florian Biesik. Thanks to this, the contemporary trend of the wymysioeryś culture is referred to as mainstream. Also pop-culture covers are being made - the most popular is "Yh zoh fojer" ("I see the fire" by Ed Sheeran), which went viral, even among people not related to revitalization.



Event: #Wilamowice-mówią, 2015

Outdoor film screening of „Pierzowiec”, 2015



„Uf jer wełt” performance National Theatre, Warsaw, 2016



# Unrecognised languages of Poland?

## The case of nonstandard dialects struggling to protect their identity

### Languages of Poland

After the II World War, Polish population became one of the most ethnically homogenous in Europe. What is left of Poland's former ethnic and linguistic diversity is protected by the law, mainly the *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages*. According to this document, the status of ethnic or national minority belongs only to groups living on the territory of Poland for at least a 100 years. Based on this criterion, the law officially recognises:

- 10 languages of national minorities (Armenian, Belarusian, Czech, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Yiddish);
- 4 languages of ethnic minorities (Karaim, Lemko, Romani, Tatar);
- 1 regional language (Kashubian).

### Dialectal diversity of the Polish language



Polish linguistic terminology distinguishes between large units – dialects (*dialekty*) consisting of many similar smaller varieties – subdialects (*gwary*), the term used often in a degrading manner to describe all non-prestigious language varieties.

Traditionally, the Polish language is divided into 4 main dialects (with 5<sup>th</sup> being the Kresy dialect, used today by Polish minorities in Belarus and Ukraine) and the so-called "new mixed dialects" created as a result of post-WWII resettlements.

However, according to the controversial classification of Slavic languages by Okuka & Krenn (2002), some of those dialects and subdialects can be treated as literary languages independent from standard Polish. Those varieties – Silesian, Masurian (part of the Masovian dialect) and Podhalanian (southernmost Lesser Polish dialect) – are described below.

### Kashubian language / *Kaszëbsczi jãzëk*

With 108,140 speakers (according to the 2011 census), Kashubian is the only regional language of Poland. Until 2005 it was usually classified as the most distinct dialect of Polish, with low mutual intelligibility with the literary standard. The modern discussion over its status began in the 1980's. It led to the gradual change of opinions on the language by the Kashubian people themselves, as well as linguists and politicians. It allowed the official recognition of Kashubian as an independent language closely related to Polish.

The history of Kashubian language serves as proof that whether some variety is to be considered a language or a dialect is mainly a matter of extralinguistic criteria – changes in the identity of its users (bottom-up) and political resolutions (top-down).



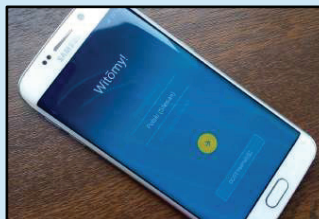
↑"Yes! I'm Kashubian!": 2011 campaign invited Kashubs to declare their nationality in the census – 232,547 people chose Kashubian nationality (mostly together with the Polish one, but 16,377 people chose only the Kashubian identity)

### Silesian / *Ślōnskŏ gŏdka*

According to the 2011 census, Silesians form the largest ethnic minority in Poland (846,719 declarations), with 529,377 people using the Silesian language. Polish government, however, does not acknowledge their existence as anything more than a regional group within the Polish nation. Various foreign institutions (eg. *The Ethnologue*) classify the Silesian language as an independent entity, the language has also its ISO 639-3 code (*szl*) since 2007. Silesian uses various spelling systems, the most popular being Steuer's alphabet from the interwar period and the newly developed "alphabet book spelling" (*śląbikŏrzowy szrajbŏnek*).



↑"Upper-Silesian ABC book" which introduced new writing system in 2010



↑Samsung smartphones offer Silesian translation of their software since 2014

Current Linguistic Situation (Czesak 2015)	
Official recognition	-
Monolingual dictionaries	-
Translation dictionaries	+
Education (in schools)	+/-
Bible translation (official)	-
Language regulator (institution)	+/-
Literary works	+
Mass media (traditional)	+
Digital media (Facebook, Wikipedia)	+

The standardisation and codification are further complicated by the division of the region into 3 subregions with different local identities, rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similar to Kashubia and Masuria, large parts of Silesia were under the German rule until 1918 or 1945. Due to this fact, the literary Polish language was not used at all by the local Slavic population. The official language was German, and the language of everyday interactions was the local non-standard dialect. Those areas have developed strong autonomous feelings. Southern parts of the province, however, until 1918 governed by the Austria-Hungary (with more liberal policy towards the Polish language) tend to adhere more closely to the Polish identity.

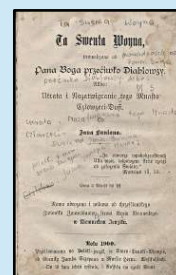
### Podhalanian / *Gwara gŏralsko*



↑Highlander traditions and dialect are cultivated even among the Polish diaspora in the USA (poetry and storytelling contest in Chicago, 2017)

Although the inhabitants of Polish-Slovak border regions in the Tatra mountains are well known for their distinct traditions and language, they have not developed autonomous national feelings. They identify strongly with the Polish nation but preserve their own regional identity. Their language – the southernmost part of the Lesser Polish dialect – is used in spoken and written form, but mainly in traditional, folkloristic contexts, and have not developed a widely adopted writing system (different authors create their own spelling).

### Masurian / *Mazurská gádka*



↑The only known book printed in Masuria in Herne (Westphalia, Germany), 1900: a translation of John Bunyan's allegorical novel „The Holy War”

The variety used by the inhabitants of the Masuria region is traditionally considered a part of Masovian dialect (although influenced by the German language and Baltic-Prussian substrate). Its users have developed their own distinct identity, based on political, regional and religious differences. The region belonged to Prussia (later Germany) until 1945, and its inhabitants were mainly of Lutheran faith. In 2011 census only 1,376 people have declared Masurian identity (most of them together with the Polish). Few authors use the language in their works, and a small number of activists are working on its codification and popularisation.

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# A NAHUA PICTORIAL DICTIONARY

*The practical case for a synergy of emic perspective and modern paedagogy*

## TOTLAHTOL MONO-LINGUAL PUBLICATION SERIES

The faculty of "Artes Liberales" has published several books in various variants of Modern Nahuatl using a standardised spelling system. The series includes poetry, tales and even a monolingual reference dictionary. All books are available on-line [see link in the footer]. The picture dictionary is part of this series.

## RESEARCH BASED AND TECHNOLOGY AIDED DESIGN

- can be easily modified - created in Adobe InDesign
- conforms to the ideas of green Open Access - accessible for free on our website
- uses pictures that are invaluable in language education (they serve to increase vocabulary retention)
- rejects linguistic purism - includes a section on neologisms and loanwords
- takes every opportunity for incidental vocabulary retention - each page number is written as a full word

## WHY IMAGES?

The usage of pictorial dictionaries is a relatively common practice in language teaching and research confirms its efficacy. Pictorial glosses have been proven to help in incidental memory retention [see link to the bibliography in the footer].

## EMIC AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO CREATION

- cooperation with indigenous researchers
- selection of subjects, words, reference pictures represents a native perspective
- standardised spelling using the same orthography as the other books in the *Totlahol* series
  - children-friendly pictures
  - can also be used for Modern Nahuatl as a second language education
  - historical section designed so as to give equal importance to the whole history of Mexico (without marking the conquest as a particular historical caesura) and consulted extensively with Dr Justyna Olko (a specialist in Mexican archaeology and history)

a pictorial dictionary of Modern Huastecan Nahuatl co-created by

Nahua researchers (Abelardo de la Cruz de la Cruz and Eduardo de la Cruz Cruz) and a Polish PhD candidate (Joanna Maryniak).

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

- distribution:
  - in Mexico
  - among the migrant communities in the United States
- reuse of illustrations in teaching materials
- creation of multimedia/blended classroom usage of the materials e.g. flashcards for staged recall programs
- creation of versions in other variants of Nahuatl including community-specific content (already in the planning and development stages for August 2017 distribution in Tlaxcala)
- using this experience for the creation of a Mexico-centric history book written entirely in Nahuatl

Joanna Maryniak MA  
Faculty of "Artes Liberales"  
University of Warsaw, Poland

This poster deals with the inception, creation and dissemination of a pictorial dictionary for Modern Huastecan Nahuatl. The process is studied as an example of practical synergy of emic perspective (especially in the content selection and arrangement) and modern paedagogy (i.e. use of pictorial glosses for strengthening incidental vocabulary growth and multifunctionality/reusability of teaching materials).

Links (in QR codes)

About the author



Dictionary download



Totlahol series



Bibliography and poster





In his plans to re-establish Hebrew as a language of general use, Ben-Yehuda rejected loanwords from European languages. Instead, he took roots from Biblical and Talmudic texts and formed new lexemes on their basis. He and his followers also used many Arabic roots, as they were from a kin language, and 'hebraized' them. With all his concentration on novelty, Ben-Yehuda avoided complete invention of words, always seeking a source for neologisms in the rich Semitic lexical stock.

Aelius Aristides (117-181), the first known adept of linguistic purism



The first institution, which propagated language 'purity', was the *Accademia della Crusca*, founded in **Florence in 1583**. Naturally, it proclaimed the local Tuscan variety as the only true norm of the already widely used Italian language.

*"The main function of the Academy will be to work with all possible care and diligence to give certain rules to our language and to make it pure, eloquent and capable of treating the arts and sciences."*



In 1635, Cardinal Richelieu establishes the *Académie Française*, the principal authority of the French language from then on. The article XXIV of the regulations of the Academy initially maintained:

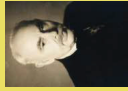
- a) internal:
  - bsolute words
  - neologisms
  - dialectisms
- b) external:
  - borrowings from Latin
  - borrowings from other, 'foreign' languages

The ideology of the Académie Française has experienced little changes since its foundation. In June 2008, its members actively opposed to taking the regional languages of France (Breton, Occitan, Alsatian, Basque, Corsican) under constitutional protection

**Eliezer Ben-Yehuda** (1858-1922) started to work on the revival of **Hebrew** language before there were any plans to build a Jewish state.



ventions stroke root in the language. The school of Avvik's counterpart, **Johannes Veski** (1873-1968), took a more compromising approach to lexical modernization: not only they relied on the traditional Estonian lexicon, but also used borrowings from Germanic and Romance languages. Their work eventually had much more influence on the modern look of Estonian language.



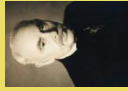
# Introduction: History of purism & National languages

Apparently, linguistic purism in case of a dominant language does not fit well with linguistic rights of minorities...Neologyandlinguisticpurism became associated much closer, when the old colonial order began to shatter and new national languages started to emerge alongside new states - or even before them.

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What are their effects on minority and endangered languages?

## Two basic strategies of modern linguistic purism: purification and neologization.

### QUECHUA (Peru)

In the beginning of 20th century, a group of intellectuals from **Cusco**, Peru, committed themselves to revive the language of the Incas, Quechua, which was heavily marginalized at that time. They called themselves '**indigenists**': They started to speak Quechua within their own circle, but tried to purify it from any words of Spanish origin. They studied colonial dictionaries and used words and expressions, which had long come out of use. They even wrote poetry and plays in Quechua - but since their first language was Spanish, their "pure" Quechua writing was abundant by calques from the dominant language. The 'indigenists' despised the Quechua spoken by Andean rural population as 'inferior' and contaminated language. Their condescending attitude towards common Quechua speakers did not earn them any respect or understanding in the eyes of the latter. Later, the ideology and methods of the Cusco 'Indigenists' were inherited by the ***Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua***, an organ, which claims its priority in all the matters regarding the Quechua language(s). As a result, the *Academia Mayor* is perceived with skepticism and its activities largely pass unrecognized by Quechua-speaking population.



### TIWI (Australia)

Old generation of speakers, who launched a revitalization project, tried to impose on younger speakers a version of the language, which was almost untouched by the influence of English. However, this variety was not spoken anymore - it was replaced by so-called New Tiwi. Although some pre-contact features of Tiwi grammar were lost in New Tiwi, it was still used in households and children learned it with more enthusiasm. In their turn, older speakers did not want to compromise and use New Tiwi in teaching. This created an ideological gap between generations and hampered revitalization efforts to a certain extent.

### ATTITUDES OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

First and foremost, it is important who promote purism, what attitudes they have towards ordinary speakers and their speech.

Purification alone has little chances to find a positive reaction among the speakers. It is doubtful that it can have any practical value for a language in danger. Even when respectable elders advance this strategy, and a community as a whole wills to revitalize their language, such form of purism still meets little understanding (Tiwi).

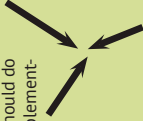
If planners want to modernize a lexicon, they need to make people acquainted with neologisms, explain their pragmatics, emphasize their value and cultural uniqueness.

- Education: neologisms can be part of curriculum in bilingual schools.
- Mass media: Radio San Gabriel in El Alto, Bolivia, speaks Aymara with its listeners and disseminate new Aymara terminology in interactive mode.
- Personal contact: Language activists in Saraguro, Ecuador, organize communal meetings, where they explain new Quichua words and why it is important to create and use them.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mixed reactions to purism and neology from native speakers require a more attentive approach. Probably, the planners should do more surveys before implementing any strategy.

If we do not accept linguistic purism, there is still a need to expand the existing vocabulary - so what is the right way to do it?



What do you think about foreign words in your language? Do you think there must be more of them or it is better to get rid of them? Does it have sense to create neologisms in your language? Do you think you could create new words yourself?

If we find the answers to all these questions, we could also respond to the question in the title.

### KAQCHIKEL (Guatemala)

For the *Comunidad Lingüística Kaqchikel*, operated by linguists and cultural activists, language engineering seemed a proper way to promote Mayan values. In order to counterbalance the influx of Spanish loanwords, the *Comunidad Lingüística* undertook to create Kaqchikel neologisms and introduce them to other speakers. It was revealed that the ordinary speakers accepted most willingly those new terms, which were based on well-known cultural metaphors. Semantic changes of old words from colonial and glyphic sources were also largely approved. On the contrary, some entirely new lexemes, which did not refer to the Mayan culture anyhow, were not accepted. Still, despite the high degree of approval, there was no mechanism to find out, if the neologisms were indeed adopted by a considerable number of Kaqchikel speakers.

### A view of expert in contact linguistics

*"Strongly dominated codes in areas of intense communication with dominant codes may survive owing to their openness and functionality. Copying in general fulfills the communicative needs of the speakers."* (Johanson, 2002).





Tioma Fum Döktör conversing with Wilamowicean women



Tlaxcalchihualiztli, or tortilla-making. Doña Constantina's kitchen



The dance of Śmiergust participants

# Engaged Humanities in Europe

## Capacity building for participatory research in linguistic-cultural heritage

- fostering academic collaboration in Europe in support of the revitalization of endangered languages
- bridging collaboration and knowledge-transfer gaps between academics, members of ethnic minorities, and non-academic organizations

## MAJOR GOALS

- constructing a collaborative network in support of community-based programs of language revitalization and providing extensive capacity building for academics and non-academics
- developing participatory action research and community-based participatory research

## APPROACH

- multidisciplinary capacity building
- creating new collaborative spaces from marginalized groups in Europe and beyond to promote self research and agency
- development of strategies for revitalization, including minority language curricula development
- development of participatory action research and community-based participatory based on direct participation of language communities / ethnic groups as stakeholders and partners

## MINORITY LANGUAGES

- Wymysiöryś (Wilamowice, Poland)
- Guernesiais (Guernsey)
- Nahuatl, Tu'un savi / Tnu'u ñuu savi / Mixtex and Ayuuk / Mixe (Mexico)
- Sámi (Sámi allaskuvla / Saami University College, Kautokeino, Norway)
- Лемко / Lemko and Kaszëbsczi / Kashubian (Poland)
- Basque / Euskera (Spain)
- Sylheti (Bangladesh / London)
- Hałcnöwian (Hałcnów, Poland)



The ENGHUM field school in Wilamowice. Left: groups present their work to community members. Right: Jüšja Fum Biötut presents to the school participants.

## ACTIVITIES

Support for minority languages is crucial for multicultural development in Europe and elsewhere; research institutions should play an active role in such support. The ENGHUM project aims at constructing a collaborative networks and community-based programs for language revitalization and providing extensive capacity-building, both for researchers and for members of minority ethnic groups, including activists, teachers, social workers and indigenous researchers. An essential framework for our project is participatory action research and community-based participatory research, based on direct participation of language communities as stakeholders and partners in research projects. The capacity building we are developing includes investigation and training in: (1) transdisciplinary studies on language and culture, (2) formulation of language policy and language attitudes, (3) promotion of multilingualism, and (4) development of practical and theoretical strategies for revitalization, including curricula and methodologies for teaching minority languages. To achieve this we have designed and are running an integrated program of activities.

- series of thematic workshops in Warsaw
- summer school in London
- field school in Wilamowice
  - addressing Parliamentary commission of National and Minority Languages
  - launching museum project
  - broad media coverage
- mother tongue day in Wilamowice
  - engagement with surrounding villages
  - record number of language learners & new speakers
  - toward establishment of amateur theater in Wilamowice
- summer school in Leiden
- general impact
  - constructing bridges
  - mobilizing materials and capacity building in teaching, revitalization activities and community-oriented programs
  - raising awareness
  - providing useful solutions and knowhow

## FUTURE EVENTS

- continued workshop series in Warsaw
- field school in Mexico (2017)
- European language and culture diversity week at the University of Warsaw
- Engaged Humanities conference at the University of Warsaw (2017)
- field school on the Isle of Man (2018)

## RESULTS

- documentary on the Wymysorys language
- ELDP publication based on the field school in Mexico
- practical, collaborative guidebook for language revitalization
- models for teaching curricula
- didactic materials and language documentation in Open Access



# Encoding TEK in Language

A Case Study from the Náhuat-Pipil Language of El Salvador

Ebany Dohle

e\_dohle@soas.ac.uk

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is an important aspect of the Náhuat-Pipil indigenous identity. Such knowledge provides food and shelter, improves well-being through the use of medicinal plants, and is the primary source of income for the majority of households. This PhD research project investigates how knowledge of the environment is encoded in the language and the extent to which this knowledge has an impact on the formation of identity.



Plants and their produce feature heavily in the everyday lives of the Náhuat-Pipil. They form part of the mythology; humans are believed to have been born from the gourd pictured below. Furthermore, it has been found that some foods such as maize and beans have their own extended and specialized vocabulary which encodes information about the the different stages of cultivation and preparation. Both crops are considered staples within Náhuat-Pipil speakers diets and have been for many centuries.

## World View

The Náhuat-Pipil speakers live in a small town called Witzapan in El Salvador. They have a very practical relationship with the earth which is different to the spiritual and ritualistic relationship that other indigenous groups have in other parts of the country. While knowledge and the ability to work the earth is central to indigenous identity, it is not driven by a need to become spiritually connected to the earth, but rather, by a more basic need to survive. Historically, being indigenous in El Salvador has meant being marginalized, living in harsh conditions, often on unfertile lands. Thus the need to possess knowledge to survive under such conditions is great, and this ability is a core element of indigenous pride and identity.

*"...me crié trabajando en el campo. Cuando puedo busco donde trabajar. Yo trabajo en el campo sembrando, haciendo abono, cortando maíz y masillo."*

*"...I grew up working in the countryside. When I can, I look for work. I work in the fields sowing and fertilizing the land, harvesting corn and millet."*  
Felipe García (69) 23/05/2016



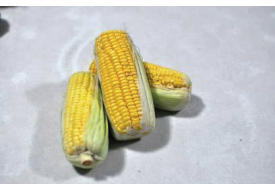
## Categorization

One of the ways in which knowledge is encoded in language is in the way words or concepts are grouped or categorized. In much of the Western world for example, the edible products produced by plants are grouped into fruits, vegetables, nuts and so on. Náhuat-Pipil uses distinct categories, preferring instead to categorize in accordance to how the human must interact with the plant in order to consume it. These categories offer an insight into the cultural values of the Náhuat-Pipil speakers. Categories include:

- Medicinal
- Spiritual
- Economically valuable products
- Processed vs. Unprocessed.

## Different Stages of Maize Cultivation

NAHUAT	ENGLISH
MIL	Maize field
SHILUT	Green corn (not ripe)
UKSIKAT	Yellow corn (ripe)
ELUT CHAMAJKA	Ripe corn
SINTI	Harvested corn, unpeeled with flower and leaves still attached
ELUT	Harvested and peeled corn, uncooked, still on the cob
TAWILIAL	Husked corn (grains removed from the cob)
SINTI WAJTU	Dried corn
TISHTI	Maize prepared as dough
TAWIAL TAMALTU	Cooked corn
TAMAL	Tortilla – another of the many corn based foods. Like the 'rigua' but made with dried corn.
ELUTASKA	Rigua – one of the many corn based food products. This is one made with fresh corn.



**SOAS**  
University of London  
— 100 Years —



# Buryat language and culture in Russia, Mongolia and China.

## The problems of integration and revitalization

Ayur Zhanaev, PhD student, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw

The events of the Civil War and policy of the newborn Soviet state triggered waves of mass migrations all over former Russian Empire, including the ethnic Buryatia. We can accept that after two centuries of common experience in the Russian state the groups of Buryat-Mongols managed to construct the feeling of national solidarity, which they kept in different degree throughout the XX century.



Two Buryat women on horses, Transbaikalia, Russia Web source



The carriages, group of lamas.  
beg. XX century Transbaikalia, Russia Web source

The poster traces language of Buryats who due to the mass migration of the first half of XX century were divided by the state borders of three countries – Russia, Mongolia and China – and the way these countries and political context affect their identity and culture. The relations between the groups used to depend much on the policy of the great powers, which in different periods would or would not tolerate those relations.

Buryat language	Russia (Buryatia, ethnic Buryatia)	Mongolia (Eastern provinces, Ulaanbaatar)	China (Hulunbuir)
Quantity	460 thousands	50-100 thousands	10-30 thousands
Status	Language	Dialect of Mongolian language	Dialect of Mongolian language
Competitive languages	Russian	Khalkha-Mongolian	Chinese, other Mongolian dialects of Inner Mongolia
The degree of being endangered	Severely endangered	Shift to Khalkha dialect	Not endangered
Writing system	Cyrillic (from 1939)	Cyrillic (1943)	Classic Mongolian script Chinese characters
Language of education	Russian (from the 60-ies)	Khalkha-Mongolian	Chinese, Inner Mongolian dialects
Language policy	The general policy of Russification of vocabulary	Still strong projects of modernization of vocabulary by “native resources”	strong projects of modernization of vocabulary by “native resources”, uninterrupted tradition of the Classic literary style, Chinese influence
The projects of integration	Festivals (Altargana etc.) Internet webpages Social networks Family reunions		

The Buryats in the three countries have different ideas of their ethnicity, culture development and their language. The general impression is that there is a great gap between different versions of Buryatness, formed during the most part of the XX century in completely different political, cultural and ethnic environment; the integrity withhold cohesion merely on the level of symbols. Together with rapid loss of the language in ethnic Buryatia and cultural transformations of Buryats in Mongolia, China, the gap seems to be enlarging.



Flags during Altargana festival, Dadal, Mongolia, 2014, fieldwork



Buryats from China during Altargana festival, Aga okrug, Russia 2012, fieldwork

### The challenges and advantages for language revitalization:

- The problem of the “proper” version of the Buryat language (vocabulary changes appeared in the XX)
- The problem of writing system (the disappearance of unified writing system for mutual communication)
- The gap between the continuity of literary traditions (Literature on Classic script, Soviet literature on Cyrillic etc.)
- The language barrier (Russian, Chinese)
- The advantage in use of intellectual resources worked out in different contexts



# Maya Revival

21st century:

- Human rights: Indigenous weavers in Guatemala launch a legal battle to have their collective intellectual property recognized
- Environmental issues: In the defence of Mother Earth – *2do Festival Artístico en Defensa de la Madre Tierra*, 7 May 2017, San Andrés Semetabaj, Sololá
- Cultural identity: *FicMayab 13° Festival Internacional de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas* (FicMayab.org)
- Reclaiming heritage and history: Workshops on glyphic writing and calendar for indigenous peoples who later teach it to others (@discovermam.org)



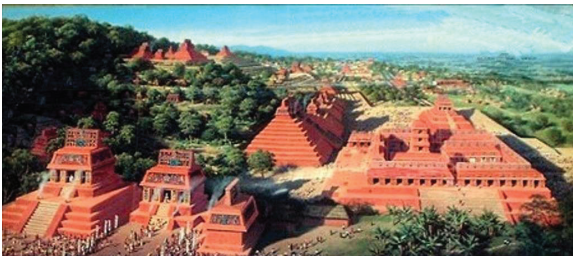
Elena – an indigenous artist who weaved and embroidered the fabric with glyphic signs (photo: 3stonesplace@facebook)



Spanish conquest (1524-1697) enforced Christianization and bilingualism, glyphic writing forbidden, codices burnt (fragment of surviving Dresden Codex describing eclipses)



Detailed glyphic historical records for many cities (Panel 3 from Cancun, photo Authentimaya / Wikimedia Commons)



The Classic (250–909 AD) – Urban architecture, royal kinship, rich material culture (reconstruction of Palenque, National Geographic)



The Preclassic (2000 BCE–250 AD) – Complex societies, agriculture, writing and calendar (fragment of San Bartolo mural, drawing Heather Hurst)



4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u – Beginning of current era in the Maya calendar (11 Aug 3114 BCE); mythical origins of many Maya dynasties

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