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# Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies

## Paper 69

**‘Taking up speech’ in an endangered language:  
Bilingual discourse in a heritage language classroom  
LEF SEMINAR DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS**

by

*Robert E. Moore, Lian Malai Madsen, Jan Blommaert et al.*  
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# **‘Taking up speech’ in an endangered language: Bilingual discourse in a heritage language classroom**

## **LEF Seminar Discussion and Comments**

*Robert E. Moore, Lian Malai Madsen, Jan Blommaert et al.*

*edited by Jef Van der Aa (Tilburg University)*

This working paper is the result of the recently held annual e-seminar of the Linguistic Ethnography Forum (LEF), which took place online between May 20 and June 2, 2013, convened by Jef Van der Aa and Frances Giampapa, members of the LEF Steering Group. Starting point was a discussion paper by Rob Moore on heritage education in the United States.

### **1. DISCUSSION PAPER (ROBERT E. MOORE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA)**

*‘Taking up speech’ in an endangered language: Bilingual discourse in a heritage language classroom*

#### **Introduction**

Here I describe community efforts to document and teach Kiksht (Wasco-Wishram dialect of Upper Chinookan) in a heritage language classroom on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation (Oregon, USA). I argue that the discourse strategies adopted in the classroom create new strategies for the capture of speech (Certeau, 1997 [1968]) by younger generations interested in the revitalization of this severely endangered American Indian language. Attention to the participation frameworks and production formats (Goffman, 1981) of classroom discourse shows how participants pool their scarce resources and collaborate to produce new voicings of Kiksht in a new register, one that is emblematic of these adult students’ emergent status as new speakers in a context informed by globalization. Most important of all, these new voicings of Kiksht do not depend for their effectiveness on any assumption that all the forms of linguistic competence associated with fluent native speakerhood need necessarily to coincide in the same person. Indeed, the register itself presupposes a distribution of communicative roles—speaker, (over-)hearer, translator/interpreter, repeater, and scribe, among others—that is instantly recognizable in the organization of other formal speech events in the local community.

The discourse practices developed in the classroom, in other words, enable a set of individuals with dramatically different levels of fluency in the ancestral language nonetheless to use that language effectively in public: to be seen as speakers, not by virtue of their having internalized a complete grammar and lexicon (*langue*), but rather by virtue of their having taken up speech (*parole*) in a recognizable way. The pedagogical approach, modeled on the Community Language Learning framework (Curran, 1976; La Forge, 1977, 1983; Rardin, 1977; cf. Richards & Rodgers, 1986, Larsen-Freeman, 1986), was radically transformed and at least partially indigenized through a series of negotiations that seem, in retrospect, to have

been crucial to the project's success. But before I describe the Wasco Class, as it was known in the community, it is necessary to put this project of language revitalization into a broader context.

## Two Dangers

A descriptively adequate sociolinguistics of 'globalization' might aspire to give a unified account of two developments, both of them widely noticed and remarked upon in scholarly literature and the mass media, though seldom<sup>1</sup> discussed together: (a.) the emergence of new forms of linguistic superdiversity associated since the 1990s with migration (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; cf. Vertovec, 2007, 2010); and (b) the apparent contraction, endangerment, and disappearance of small, indigenous, and other threatened linguistic varieties (e.g., Hale et al., 1992; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; cf. Moore et al., 2011).

Though each is often discussed as if it epitomized the contemporary moment, neither phenomenon is entirely new. Migrants have always been acquiring the linguistic resources that enable them to function in new surroundings; sometimes, e.g., under regimes of assimilation (or its European variant, integration), they have been pressured to avoid public use of their ancestral languages, if not to abandon them altogether (Rumbaut et al., 2006; cf. Espiritu & Wolf, 2000; Zhou, 2000; and Spotti, 2011). Meanwhile, many communities, swept up in changing dynamics of political and economic power at several scales—local, regional, global—have undergone language shift and replacement, a phenomenon witnessed in various parts of the world at least since antiquity (e.g., Swadesh, 1948; Hill, 1983; Dorian, 1981; see Silverstein, 1998 for a synthetic account of recent developments).

Viewed through the language-ideological lens of media discourse in the West, the two developments—sociolinguistic superdiversity brought about by global flows of migration, and language endangerment, framed as “the loss of the world's linguistic diversity” (Hale et al., 1992, pp. 1, 4)—become mirror-images of each other: on one side, the purportedly “free” movement of speakers (and with them, languages) has resulted in, from some points of view, too much linguistic diversity, too close at hand (e.g., in major European and American cities). On the other side, communities imagined as having remained rooted and immobile in their (faraway) ancestral homelands are seen as vulnerable to seemingly external forces of globalization; like endangered species, these endangered languages are simply overwhelmed, and the result is not enough linguistic diversity, on a global or planetary scale (cf. Maffi, 2005).

It is important, of course, to understand that the term diversity is being used here in more than one way. In the endangered languages literature, it is most often conceived in terms of the phylogenetic classification of languages and language families as nodes in a branching family tree (Stammbaum). When the (large) Italian-speaking immigrant population in Australia abandoned the use of Italian and shifted to English within a few generations, for example, the Italian language (as if there were any such thing) was still alive, as it were, elsewhere—in Italy, for example, as well as in books, films, TV shows, and so forth; this is language shift (see Gal, 1979 for a classic account). When the last speaker of Eyak, Mrs. Marie Smith Jones (1918-2008) of Cordova, Alaska, died, a whole language—and, in that case, a major branch of a major language phylum (Na-Dene)<sup>2</sup>—is said to have died along

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<sup>1</sup> See Moore 2007 for an earlier attempt.

<sup>2</sup> The consensus view of historical linguists is that the Na-Dene language phylum is divided into two branches or “superfamilies,” Athabaskan-Eyak, and Tlingit. The Athabaskan language family includes such well-known entities as Navaho and the Apachean languages.

with her: a major loss to Mrs. Jones's family and others of Eyak ancestry, and (albeit in a different way) to linguists interested in phylogenetic classification and/or grammatical typology; this is often termed language death (see Dorian 1981 for a landmark study).

The concentration of speakers of many languages in linguistically superdiverse (and often unsalubrious) neighborhoods in major European cities, on the other hand, is a crisis of a different sort, especially for liberal theorists and (other) elites in Europe and North America who assume that societal cohesion depends on wide acceptance of a single, common (standardized) language (cf. Kymlicka, 1995). Linguistic diversity in this second sense—conceived not in terms of phylogenetic affiliation but in terms of language barriers inhibiting the free exchange of messages (and strategically ignoring the widespread and obvious fact(s) of multilingualism)—is seen to pose a major threat to democracy and an impediment to the development of a fully functioning public sphere.<sup>3</sup>

The discourse of language endangerment has remained largely tone-deaf to the political implications of framing an apparent decrease of linguistic diversity as a loss to science (Hill, 2002; Mufwene, 2002). In fact, this discourse and the moral anxieties of liberal elites in Europe and North America about increasing linguistic diversity in their own backyards rest on similar foundations: specifically, a shared set of assumptions about the speaker and the nature of linguistic competence. In both discourses, speakers who seem to show limited, truncated, or less-than-complete proficiency—in the standard language of the host community or the ancestral language of the traditional community—are a sign, and a source, of trouble.

### **When is a Speaker?**

In this highly charged sociopolitical context, the emerging literature of sociolinguistic superdiversity and the more established literature of language shift and obsolescence converge: both complicate inherited notions of the unitary, fully fluent L1 native speaker as the unmarked case, the baseline, the normal starting-point for description and analysis.

An emerging sociolinguistics of globalization has begun decisively to move beyond certain anchoring concepts of an older languages-and-speakers sociolinguistics, chief among them the notion of unitary, localized and countable ethnolinguistic communities, and the notion that the speech of non-mobile fully fluent native speakers<sup>4</sup> should serve as the benchmark against which all less-than-full fluencies must be measured (cf. Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Moore et al., 2011).

In their call for a sociolinguistics of superdiversity, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) chart a movement, long underway in sociolinguistics, from a study that takes (named) languages and (native) speakers as pre-theoretical givens to one oriented instead to internally differentiated speaker repertoires, and to linguistic resources deployed to various effects in various contexts of use. Instead of “prioritizing the ‘native speakers of a language’, treating early experience of living in families and stable speech communities as crucial to grammatical competence and coherent discourse,” Blommaert and Rampton suggest that we “dispense with a priori assumptions about the links between origins, upbringing, proficiency

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<sup>3</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth, of course. See Gal, 2006 on the anxieties of European elites in the face of new (and old) forms of multilingualism; see Blommaert, 2011 for a sketch of a superdiverse neighborhood in Antwerp; and see Stroud, 2004 for a case study of language-centered moral panic in Sweden.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to the consultants most favored by earlier generations of dialectologists, who sought out ‘Non-mobile Older Rural Males (NORMs)’—“informants who were not only elderly but also uneducated and untravelled, because it was felt that this method would produce samples of the ‘most genuine’ dialect” (Chambers & Trudgill 1998 [1980]: 47).

and types of language,” and focus instead on “individuals’ very variable (and often rather fragmentary) grasp of a plurality of differentially shared styles, registers and genres, which are picked up (and maybe then partially forgotten) within biographical trajectories that develop in actual histories and topographies” (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, pp. 4-5; cf. Blommaert & Backus, 2011).

With this shift of focus, the speaker is no longer positioned as unitary. Blommaert & Rampton (2011) invoke Bakhtin’s (1981) account of double-voicing and Goffman’s (1981) concept of production formats to demonstrate the variety of alignments speakers maintain to their different speech styles, which are often parodic, indirect, or playful. They go on:

So although notions like ‘native speaker’, ‘mother tongue’ and ‘ethnolinguistic group’ have considerable ideological force (and as such should certainly feature as objects of analysis), they should have no place in the sociolinguistic toolkit itself. When the reassurance afforded by a priori classifications like these is abandoned, research instead has to address the ways in which people take on different linguistic forms as they align and disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages. It has to investigate how they (try to) opt in and opt out, how they perform or play with linguistic signs of group belonging, and how they develop particular trajectories of group identification throughout their lives. (Blommaert & Rampton 2011, p. 5)

Certainly in the case discussed below—and arguably in every case of heritage language learning—we see vivid examples of people engaging with “linguistic signs of group belonging,” and “taking on” new linguistic forms and speech practices as part of a broader project of aligning and affiliating themselves with recognized (in the present case, tribal) social groups.

The literature on language shift and obsolescence—especially work based on close empirical observation in contracting linguistic communities—has been complicating the notion of the unitary and fully fluent native speaker since the 1970s, albeit more from a structural (grammatical) than a functional (usage-based) perspective. This work has focused on describing the differential fluencies displayed by remaining speakers in communities undergoing language shift, often creating subgroupings based on characteristic patterns of linguistic change-in-progress. Voegelin and Voegelin (1977), for example, divided remaining speakers of the northern California indigenous language Tübatulabal into four groups: (a) speakers of complex sentences; (b) speakers of simple sentences; (c) speakers who insert Tübatulabal words into English sentences, and (d) “Comprehenders who do not speak Tübatulabal,” claiming to derive their scheme from one used by “current speakers of Tübatulabal in classifying varieties of their language” (Voegelin & Voegelin, 1977, p. 333, footnote 2).

Nancy Dorian, in her landmark studies of the East Sutherland dialect of Scots Gaelic, observed “a continuum of proficiency... from full fluency to the barest skills necessary for conversation in the dying language” (Dorian, 1977, p. 34). With meticulous care, Dorian charted over a number of years people’s differential control of a number of Gaelic phonological, morphophonemic, and constructional features.<sup>5</sup> On this basis, Dorian developed her own classification of speakers into (a) older fluent speakers, (b) younger fluent speakers, (c) semi-speakers, (d) low-proficiency semi-speakers, and (e) near-passive bilinguals. She reported that this system was sometimes at variance with classifications offered by people in the community, who tended to over-estimate the proficiency of speakers who displayed strong language loyalty (Dorian, 1982).

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<sup>5</sup> Vocative plurals, passives, negative imperatives, and obligatory morphophonemic change or “mutation” in the initial consonants of adjectives proved of particular diagnostic value (see Dorian, 1977, p. 25ff).

The inherited notion of the fully fluent native speaker—someone whose ideal and complete linguistic competence becomes a kind of baseline against which actual language skills are perpetually measured—has also been subjected to severe critique in a number of studies in the fields of educational linguistics and second language acquisition. The idea that native speaker competence should be the goal of all language learning, for example, has been in question in the latter field at least since the work of Firth and Wagner (1997; cf. Creese & Blackledge, 2011).

Meanwhile, the ascription to speakers and to whole populations of states of semilingualism—of being able to speak no language tolerably (to paraphrase Bloomfield, 1927)—has been a recurring feature in expert and popular discourses centering on sources of moral panic in contemporary Europe and North America. New versions of this pernicious idea are a robust presence in educational policy discourse and in the media coverage of public education and so-called schools in crisis (Cummins, 1979; cf. Pyle 1996; De Costa, 2010, Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986). With the advent of a new regime of standardized testing, pupils labeled as “low-achieving” in US public schools once again face the likelihood of being categorized as non-speakers of any language (Macswan, 2000, 2001). Similar stigmatization awaits migrant populations in European cities when they are accused of poorly integrating themselves into their host societies, as Stroud’s (2004) study of so-called Rinkeby Swedish clearly shows (compare Spotti, 2011 on Dutch language testing for immigrants). Asylum-seekers who appear—on the basis of antiquated and irrelevant forms of linguistic assessment—not to be fully-fluent speakers of their putative national languages are routinely returned into the hands of their tormentors, as Blommaert (2009) and others have shown.

Closer to home, as it were, Anne Goodfellow in a recent article asks a number of provocative questions about community-based efforts at language revitalization in Native American communities. “When asked about the level of fluency of students coming out of these [community-based programs], presenters [at a conference] claim that the languages are not very strong, that almost everywhere they’re ‘dying out’ and being replaced by English” (Goodfellow, 2003, p. 41). “Why,” asks Goodfellow, “aren’t these programs working when so much is at stake and so much tireless devotion is put into the goal of keeping these languages alive?” She continues:

In many cases, if [students] do begin to be able to speak the language, it is in a ‘pidginized’ form that often combines English grammatical and phonological structures with vocabulary from the Native American language. The problem is that since this pidgin language is not considered to be the ‘real’ language, we constantly hear of the failure of Native language programs to produce ‘fluent’ speakers. (Goodfellow, 2003, p. 42)

She has a provocative suggestion: “Instead of asking why these programs aren’t working ... I’d suggest that we look at the issue of language maintenance in a new way. More specifically, we should accept these ‘pidginized’ languages as new forms of Native American languages” (p. 42). While I am in sympathy with Goodfellow’s attempt to disrupt pervasive narratives of American Indian failure (Meek, 2011; cf. Powell, 1973 for a fascinating discussion of Quileute language teaching), it leaves some important questions unasked—for example, the identity of “we.”

More recently, Jocelyn Ahlers has examined “the public use of Native American languages by nonfluent speakers” from Northern California tribes, and her argument is

that foregrounding the metacommunicative/pragmatic function of such language use over referential function highlights a broader Native American identity shared by speaker and audience and creates a discourse space in which a subsequent English speech event is understood by audience members to come from, and be informed by, a Native identity. (Ahlers, 2006, p. 58)

Ahlers continues,

The question of how to make use of such limited language knowledge in the performance of cultural identity is thus an important one to communities struggling with language revitalization, especially given the central need to find a role for heritage languages in a world which favors the use of dominant languages. The public use of Native California languages and, indeed, Native American languages more generally, by speakers who are not fluent in their heritage languages, provides an example of one answer to this question. (ibid.)

Accordingly, Ahlers identifies an emerging speech style that she calls Native Language as an Identity Marker (NLIM), which seems to me to rephrase, rather than to answer, the question. It is appropriate, then, to look at a single example in some detail, this from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation community in central Oregon—arguably one of the most-studied such communities in North America.

### **The Warm Springs Reservation community**

Already by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Warm Springs Reservation community in central Oregon was by any standard a site of considerable linguistic and sociocultural diversity. Three indigenous groups, each associated with a distinct and unrelated language—each with a distinct contact history under colonialism—comprise the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs: Sahaptins, Wascos, and Paiutes.

Sahaptins, locally known as the “Warm Springs tribe,” have always been numerically dominant, and have defined the public face of the traditional Indian culture on display at major ceremonials and before tourists (e.g., at the tribally-owned resort and casino). Typically for a culture of the Plateau type (in the parlance of an older culture-area anthropology), their traditional societies were egalitarian and mobile, the traditional economy based on hunting-gathering and fishing.

Wascos<sup>6</sup> have always been a much smaller group numerically than Sahaptins. Traditionally a polyglot, class-stratified and rank-obsessed society of a Northwest Coast type and centered on permanent winter villages along both banks of the Columbia River, the Wascos and their Chinookan congeners were a slave-holding and slave-trading people. Their mercantile economy rested on the surplus wealth generated by fantastically rich salmon fisheries at the Long Narrows of the Columbia (near the present-day city of The Dalles, Oregon). Soon after the establishment of the Warm Springs Reservation, the Wascos settled around the Indian Agency headquarters, positioning themselves as cultural and economic brokers. Already by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wascos were occupying a disproportionate share of economic and political power in the reservation community, especially in roles that called upon their prodigious linguistic skills as interpreters, translators, and—more frequently than among either of the other groups—literate, educated users of English.

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<sup>6</sup> For a report on Upper Chinookan language and mythology, see Sapir 1907; for texts in Wishram, see Sapir 1909; for texts in the closely related dialect of Clackamas, see Jacobs 1958; for a grammar of Wishram, see Dyk 1933; for Wasco-Wishram contact history, see D. French 1961, and for ceremonialism at Warm Springs see K. French 1955; for more recent treatments of Chinookan language and society, see Hymes 1966, 1974, 1981, and Silverstein 1976, 1984; for Kiksht as an obsolescent language, see Moore 1988, 1993, 2009.

A smaller group of Northern Paiutes arrived at Warm Springs in 1872. Traditionally a monoglot, highly mobile, highly egalitarian people of the Great Basin type, Paiutes had been among the slaves captured, owned, and traded by Wascos in pre-reservation times. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, then, multiple displacements of culturally and linguistically distinct indigenous peoples had created a new community at Warm Springs marked by a high level of cultural and linguistic diversity. The three ancestral languages—all of them now considered endangered—are genetically unrelated to each other and typologically very divergent.<sup>7</sup>

Intermarriage between Wascos and Sahaptins has been going on for centuries; intermarriage between either of these and Paiutes took place only rarely until the Warm Springs community became fully established in the 1870s, but extensively since then. The result, of course, is that the majority of people in the community today can claim ancestral ties to at least two, and often all three, of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (if not also to fur-trade era French, Scottish, and Hawaiian ancestors, as well as to African-American, Filipino, and other relatives). It was not until the advent of identity politics in the 1990s, however, that individuals began in a public way to choose which of the three cultural/linguistic traditions to identify themselves with—and this is the context in which the Wasco Class emerged.

Despite all the historical and cultural differences between the three tribal groups, since the 1970s it has been a political necessity to ensure that equal time, space, institutional support, and resources are given to support the teaching of each of the reservation's three ancestral languages. Indeed, a tripartite principle governs everything from the logo of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs—three teepees in a row—to the composition of the various Tribal Committees that are responsible for running much of the reservation on a day-to-day basis.

In 1992 the principle of three co-equal tribes was further enshrined in the Warm Springs public sphere in a new and important way: in a tribally owned and operated Museum at Warm Springs, whose architecture and exhibit spaces are organized in a relentlessly tripartite fashion.

### **The Wasco Class**

In the fall of 1992, new pilot projects were funded for all three languages at Warm Springs. Instruction in all three continues to this day, but from the start the Wasco Class stood out for a number of reasons. One reason was that many people in the community may simply have considered that Kiksht—the Wasco language—was already dead.

Another important reason had to do with its students. Not only was demand for classroom instruction in this notoriously difficult language unexpectedly high; it also came from surprisingly high places in the local community. One active participant was the Director of Economic Development for the Confederated Tribes; another was the president of the tribally-owned Warm Springs Power Enterprises, which operates a hydroelectric dam, and had at the time an annual operating budget of \$30 million; another was Public Information Director for the Tribes, and managed the Tribes' two commercial FM-radio stations; yet another worked as an administrative assistant to the Tribes' CEO and Secretary-Treasurer, who himself had served in Washington, DC as the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the first term of the Reagan administration. Others included the two Wasco members on the Culture and Heritage Committee—about a dozen students in all, ranging in age from

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<sup>7</sup> Sahaptian (the language family to which Sahaptin and Nez Perce belong) and Chinookan were both included by Sapir in his proposed Penutian phylum (Sapir 1929).

22 to 50. All were from families with at least some Wasco ancestry, but a notable handful came from families that most people would not have identified as Wasco until now; these people appeared to have made a personal choice to adopt Kiksht as their tribal language.

Another reason why the Wasco Class attracted notice and comment was the willingness of Mrs. Gladys Thompson—by all accounts (including my own) the best speaker of Kiksht, but someone who had heretofore avoided involvement in language revitalization activities—to take on the role of primary instructor. Mrs. Thompson agreed to do this only if two conditions were met: (1) that her friend and fellow Kiksht speaker—really, a semi-speaker (by her own account and mine)—Mrs. Madeline Brunoe McInturff, be willing to assist her; and (2) that all duties involving writing the language—including teaching the alphabet (a local variant on standard Americanist orthography)—be handled by the reservation's Tribal Linguist, a Brooklynite by birth with an undergraduate anthropology degree who had done graduate work in folklore with Dennis Tedlock at Boston University and had been employed by the Tribes since the 1970s.

The class met Tuesdays and Thursdays over the lunch hour in a double-wide trailer whose interior had been converted for office and classroom use, nestled behind the old red-brick elementary school (a building laden with childhood memories for most of the participants—but itself soon to be replaced by a new \$5 million Early Childhood Education Center). Someone always brought lunch, and before and after the class session itself the students—high-level executives and administrative personnel on their lunch break—engaged in friendly banter and water-cooler conversation.

Classroom activities, as I observed and participated in them in 1992-95, presented a fascinating hybrid. In keeping with the pedagogical framework of Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976), students would come to class with English words and phrases in mind—sometimes written down, sometimes not—for which they requested Kiksht equivalents. They referred to Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff as “the Grandmas,” but in the classroom their primary addressee was Mrs. Thompson. One by one the students would offer up a sentence or two in English, while the Grandmas (with the Tribal Linguist standing behind them) listened intently.

Eventually—sometimes after an extended pause to search her memory, and hushed consultation with Mrs. McInturff in Kiksht—Mrs. Thompson would respond, usually just once, in her impeccable Kiksht, addressing her answer as much to her counterpart Mrs. McInturff as to the student. Mrs. McInturff would then turn to face the student, and repeat for the student what Mrs. Thompson had just said, perhaps more loudly, slowly, or several times—as many times as needed. The student interlocutor would attempt to reproduce the Kiksht utterance, with active coaching and encouragement from Mrs. McInturff, while Mrs. Thompson sat impassively, sometimes chuckling as the student struggled with the notoriously thorny phonology of Kiksht.

The Tribal Linguist, meanwhile, would have been writing the word or phrase out on a large, easel-mounted newsprint pad visible to everyone, which Mrs. Thompson ignored; when I was there she tended to be sitting with her back to the easel, her arms folded across her chest, facing Mrs. McInturff. The whole process was repeated with each student interlocutor in turn.

Before proceeding further into the interactional details of heritage language pedagogy in the Wasco Class, it might be useful very briefly to review the framework of Community Language Learning (CLL), which was the model being emulated there. CLL, it will be recalled, grew out of the psychotherapeutic counseling approach of Carl Rogers, and was designed specifically to address the anxieties and fears of adult language learners (Curran, 1976; La Forge, 1977, 1983; Rardin, 1977). It starts from a radical disjunction between the

role of the language counselor (sometimes termed knower), and a group of students (clients), who sit in a circle, outside of which sits the counselor or knower. As learning progresses, learners gain both language knowledge and self-confidence, moving through several stages; a brisk summary of the account offered by Richards and Rodgers (2001 [1986], pp. 90-99) will serve our purposes here:

#### STAGE 1

The client is completely dependent on the language counselor.

1. First, he expresses only to the counselor and in English what he wishes to say to the group. Each group member overhears this English exchange but no other members of the group are involved in the interaction.
2. The counselor then reflects these ideas back to the client in the foreign language in a warm, accepting tone, in simple language in phrases of five or six words.
3. The client turns to the group and presents his ideas in the foreign language. He has the counselor's aid if he mispronounces or hesitates on a word or phrase. This is the client's maximum security stage.

#### STAGE 2

1. Same as above.
2. The client turns and begins to speak the foreign language directly to the group.
3. The counselor aids only as the client hesitates or turns for help. These small independent steps are signs of positive confidence and hope.

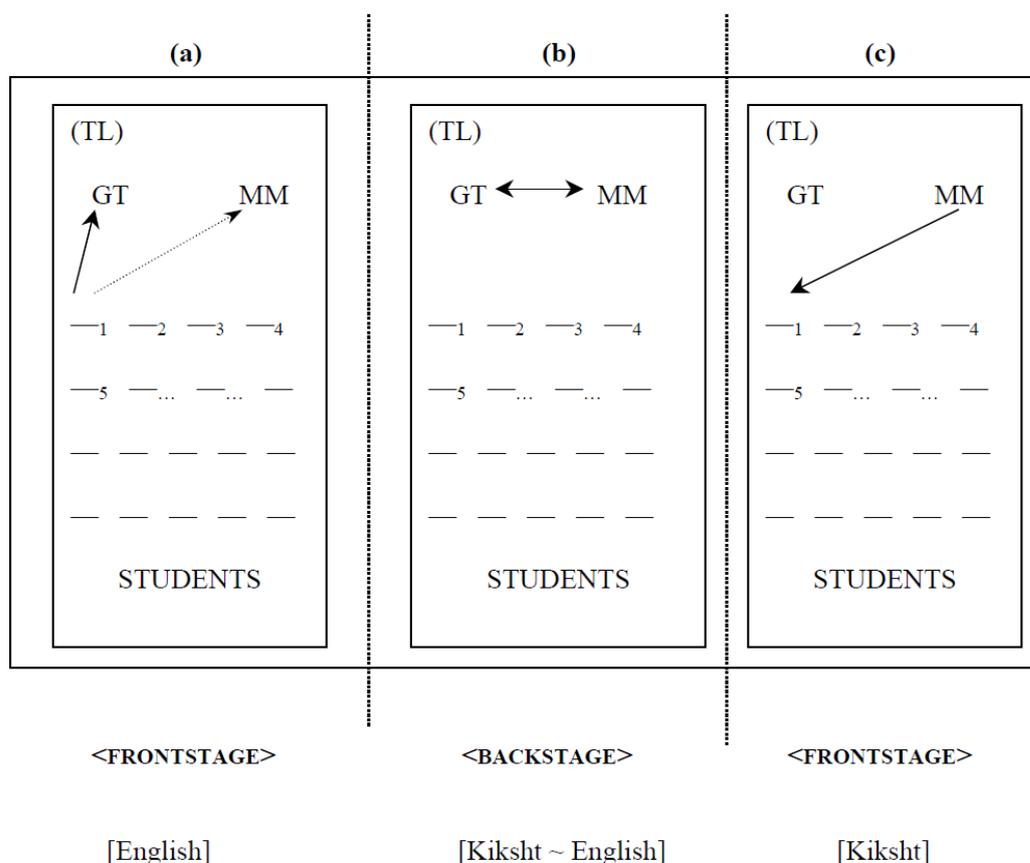
In subsequent stages (3-5) the student/client grows in confidence and accordingly the role of counselor/knower diminishes. In some versions of CLL, individual interactions between each language learner (in turn) and the counselor are conducted in a whisper, out of the earshot of other students/clients.

What first struck me about the procedures being followed in the Wasco Class was the way that the Grandmas' whispered consultation with each other—in what seemed to be a mixture of Kiksht and English—took place backstage (Goffman, 1959): the students, the Tribal Linguist, and I were obviously unratiified overhearers (Goffman 1981) during this phase of the activity, and we all behaved accordingly, munching on carrots or returning to our sandwiches. Here was Kiksht actually in use, and it was not only not being documented, it was being politely ignored by the rest of us. When the Grandmas emerged from their backstage consultation, they would retake the floor in a new kind of role-relationship, with Mrs. Thompson enunciating the phrase or sentence once, and Mrs. McInturff repeating Mrs. Thompson's Kiksht utterance to the student, eliciting—in a second layer of repetition—the student's attempts to reproduce it.

Such an arrangement does seem to establish Mrs. Thompson in a position of authority, as the preeminent source for all things linguistically Wasco. Her presence was necessary, then, but her own speaking role in the classroom was also quite circumscribed. Some of this is represented in schematic form in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

The Wasco Class, 1992-1995



GT = Gladys Thompson  
 MM = Madeline McInturff  
 TL = Tribal Linguist

After several sessions I started experiencing *déjà vu*. Classroom discourse, loosely based on the principles of CLL, seemed to shift between and among a limited set of recognizable production formats and participant frameworks (Goffman, 1981) that in fact recalled nothing so much as the arrangement of speaking roles that would be in place on any important public occasion in the Warm Springs community. In their memory ethnography of traditional Wasco-Wishram culture, for example, Spier and Sapir (1930) identified a named procedure of Chinookan ritual speech called *k'ix<sup>w</sup>ulalix*, denoting the practice of ritual repetition of chiefly speech by a special paid functionary:

Chiefs were provided with spokesmen . . . who repeated to the gathering in a loud voice what their principals said. . . . It is well to note that this is a pattern of Wishram[-Wasco] procedure; a shaman also had his spokesman who repeated aloud what the spirit communicated to the shaman. The characteristic functionary of Northwest Coast chiefs will be recognized here. (p. 213)

Note that the chief here is the principal in Goffman's (1981) terms—the one who has a stake in the utterance qua speech act. The spokesman is perhaps both the author (the one who “encodes” the utterance, puts it into words), and the animator, the physical source of the utterance; primarily, at least, the latter.

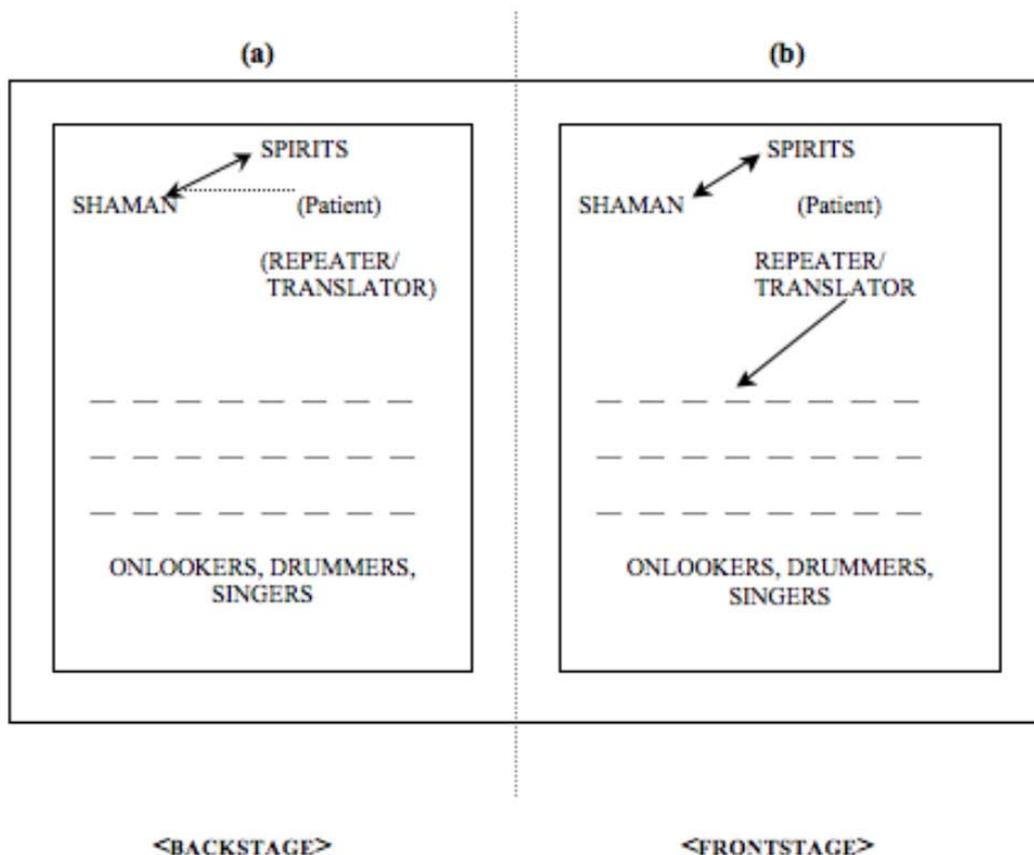
Variants of this participation framework can be observed in what is known about the conduct of shamanistic curing sessions, as David French, drawing on fieldwork at Warm Springs in the 1950s, pointed out:

During a curing session, a shaman no longer speaks directly to the others who are present. His voice is low in volume, and he may make disconnected or seemingly incoherent remarks. A Chinookan term, *qičemlit* (translated ‘he utters’ by an informant), refers to noises made by the shaman that include imitations of guardian spirit animals. . . . At least some of the remarks and noises of the shaman are repeated to the audience by a functionary hired for that purpose. . . . The data indicate that the functionary alternates between taking the role of the shaman and playing the role of an observer who is describing what the shaman and the spirit are doing. (D. French, 1958, pp. 258-259)

Notice how in the shamanistic curing session, discourse moves back and forth between two major phases, each with its own characteristic allocation of speaking roles and participant alignments: a backstage phase in which the shaman imitates the utterance of the guardian spirit animals, and a frontstage phase in which the repeater/translator turns to address the singers and onlookers directly, seemingly alternating between mimetic reproduction of the ongoing dialogue between shaman and spirits (in which s/he is animator only, and the shaman and spirits are authors and principals), and narrating what s/he sees and hears in the third person, as it were (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

**Shamanistic curing sessions**



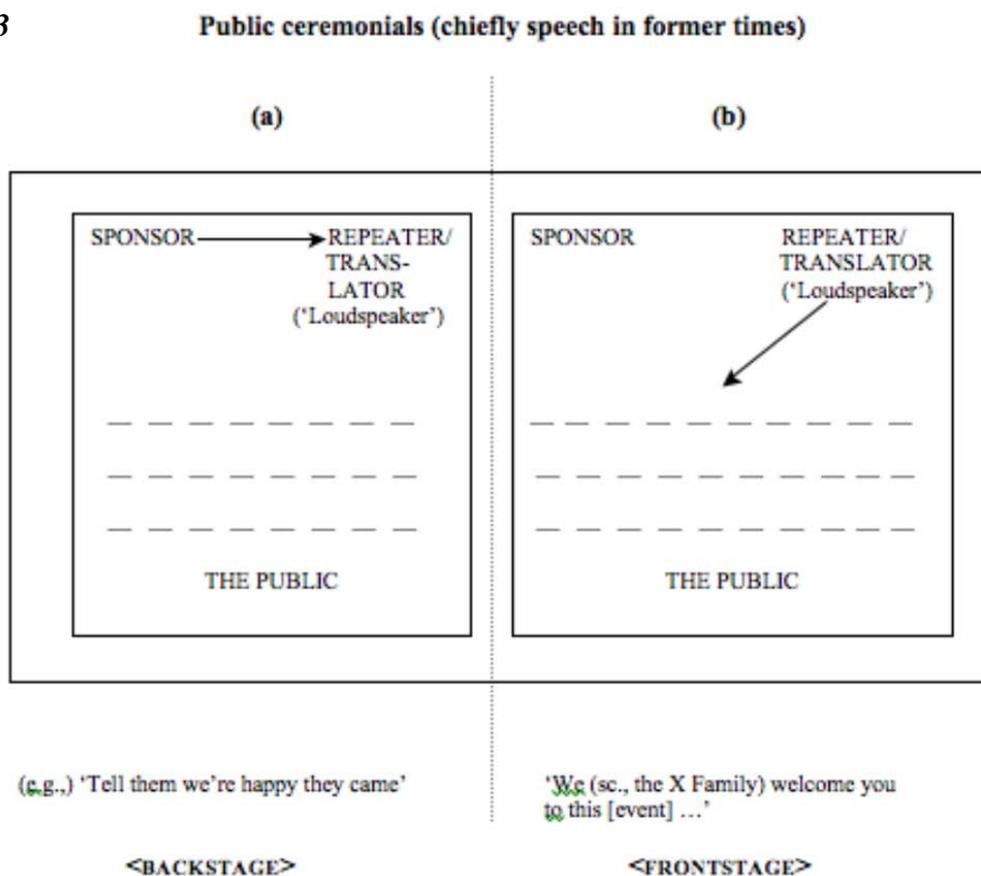
Similar participation frameworks are in place at many public ceremonials at Warm Springs today. At any given time, there are a handful of adults in the community who are known to be available for hire to perform in the role known in local non-standard Reservation English as a Loudspeaker:

When a spokesman is hired for one of these ceremonies, it is customary for a sponsor, or a person desiring that an announcement be made, to speak in an ordinary manner; the functionary repeats the words in a louder voice, employing a characteristic style. . . . An ideal pattern is that neither the sponsoring family, nor any person who is the focus of attention in that family, communicates directly with the public; communications are mediated through a spokesman. (D. French, 1958, pp. 261-262)

Notice again the shifting back and forth between backstage interaction involving the head of the family sponsoring the ceremonial and the Loudspeaker, and frontstage speech in which the Loudspeaker addresses the public. In the backstage phase, the sponsor might instruct the person functioning as Loudspeaker in a perfunctory manner—perhaps, “Tell ‘em we’re happy they came”; the Loudspeaker might then turn to face the audience and, in a clear voice appropriate for an occasion of public speaking, say: “Dear Friends, the X Family would like to welcome everyone to this Memorial Dinner in memory of their dear deceased relative ....”

Today, all such events make use of modern PA systems for amplification. The instructions from the sponsor to the Loudspeaker take place off-mic; the Loudspeaker’s utterances directed at the public are very much on, and through, the microphone and sound system (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**



Now we can see how the Wasco Class ingeniously laminated a participation framework derived from a long tradition of Chinookan ritual speech onto the pedagogical framework of Community Language Learning (CLL).

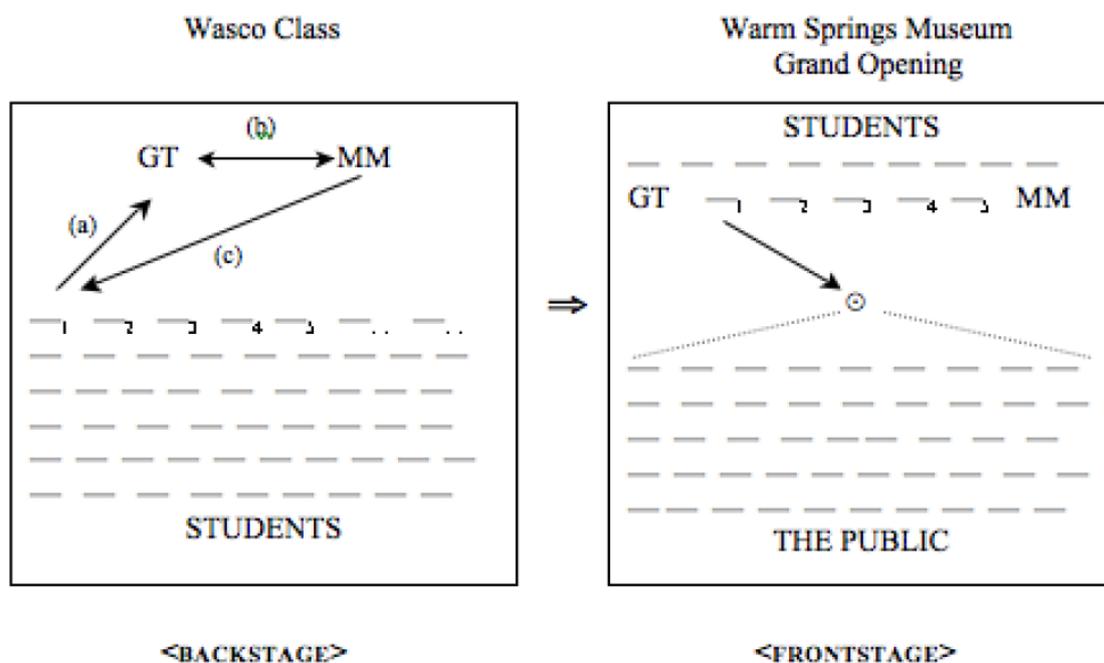
In 1992-95, the Wasco Class was a heritage language class for adults, a practicum on linguistic field methods, a ritual performance, and a networking opportunity. It was also the backstage area and a rehearsal space for another event: the Grand Opening ceremonies for the tribally owned Museum at Warm Springs a quarter-mile down the road. The students in this class would appear onstage at this major public event, flanked by Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff, and would speak Wasco in public in a way that demonstrated, in a locally newsworthy fashion, the continued presence of the language in the community. As the date of the Grand Opening approached, rehearsal efforts became more concentrated.

The Museum's Grand Opening ceremonies, held on March 13, 1993, had three major segments, one for each of the reservation's three tribes. The second, entitled "Welcome," was the responsibility of "the Wasco Tribe," who welcomed distinguished guests and outsiders, including the current and former governors of the State of Oregon, and a US Senator.

During their segment of the ceremony, the students in the Wasco Class took turns stepping up to the microphone, each reciting his or her own Kiksht utterance, together with its English translation. Some used note-cards, others had committed everything to memory (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4 Transformations of event structure and participant roles:**

**From classroom discourse to podium performance**



**Analysis and Conclusion**

The specific case I have discussed involves classroom instruction in Kiksht (Wasco-Wishram dialect of Upper Chinookan), an American Indian language that would be deemed severely

endangered or even moribund by most standards. The students are adult language learners who come to class already heavily invested in learning the language. In fact, for them—American Indian adults on a reservation in Oregon—it is a process of re-acquisition, of re-possessing a language that has in a sense been theirs all along.

The students' predicament—it is their own language, even though they do not know how to speak it—is shared by many who live in communities where one or more ancestral languages is falling rapidly out of use. Their project of reclaiming their own ancestral language—and through it, culture—is not atypical of contemporary indigenous groups caught up in processes of globalization (Silverstein, 1998).

Within the Warm Springs community, the Wasco Class was seen by some—not without justification—as an attempt by a local elite to (yet again) seize the advantage by positioning itself in direct proximity to a new and emerging form of cultural capital: an endangered heritage language. The same people who gained an advantage in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by abandoning their traditional language and traditions and taking up Euro-American dress and language were gaining an advantage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by reclaiming their traditional language and culture. But were they the same people? The purpose of the Wasco Class participation in the Museum Grand Opening ceremony would seem to be to assert, and performatively to entail, just such a linkage. And given the complex history of intertribal relations in the Warm Springs community sketched above, what better evidence of cultural continuity could one wish for?

But conceived more broadly, in the framework of a contemporary sociolinguistics of globalization, the project of taking up speech (Certeau 1997 [1968])—of being seen to deploy a linguistic resource effectively in concrete contexts of social interaction—is one that adult language learners in reservation communities share with millions of others who understand themselves as members of diasporized linguistic communities, as migrants, or as newcomers who discover that their host country has placed the onus of integration on them, and is closely monitoring their speech for signs of its incompleteness (Spotti 2011, Milani 2007). What seems to set American Indians and other erstwhile indigenous peoples apart is that they became displaced people without ever leaving home.

In these communities, a little of the ancestral language goes a long way. What seems to be crucial in a number of cases is not that new speakers control all, or even most, of the resources of the language as it was spoken in previous generations. What is crucial is that they acquire, along with the phonemes and (some of) the morphemes of the ancestral language, a sense of its proper use in display: as a new generation takes proprietary control over their elders' language, it is important that they do so with propriety, and in a way that shows respect for those elders and their traditions (cf. Meek, 2011; Ahlers, 2006; Nevins, 2004; Goodfellow, 2003).

Even knowing a few words or phrases of an ancestral language—or, perhaps, more robust genres of performance such as traditional songs—enables younger people in these communities to think of themselves, and in fact to be, something other than monolingual speakers of English (Ikuta, 2009).

In the process, the endangered ancestral language is neither returned to the status of a primary daily medium of interaction in the community, nor does it completely disappear: it is, rather, transformed so as to take on new and specialized functions. And it is this fact of functional recategorization and (re-)enregisterment of such languages that is reflected in the patterns of structural and grammatical change that we observe in the speech of younger generations of new speakers. What is at issue here and elsewhere, I would argue, are not any putative facts about language attrition in the mental competences of individual speakers and semispeakers, but a set of sociocultural and functional facts, tied to processes of

globalization, that have redistributed the rights and obligations associated with language forms to new kinds of participants, and new frameworks of participation, to none of which the inherited model of the fully fluent native speaker is adequate.

The collaboration and pooling of linguistic resources that can be observed in this case is typical both of small and endangered varieties that remain in use on special occasions, and of language learning in contemporary settings of globalization and superdiversity (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011)—but it only becomes visible when we move beyond the analytic baseline provided by the concept of the unitary fluent native speaker and attend instead to the way that the role of speaker can be decomposed, not only into different kinds of speakers and semi-speakers (based on the differential degrees of fluency observed), but also into speech-event role-fractions like animator, author, and principal. Indeed, the very effectiveness of the utterances I've been describing in fact rests on the presupposition that the role of speaker can be so subdivided. All the participants in the Wasco Class, in other words, presupposed what contemporary sociolinguistics is only now coming grips with: the fact that speaker is not a unitary role or a pre-theoretical given, but a makeshift, a covering label for a range of footings and participant alignments (Agha, 2007, p. 391, footnote 25).

Now, what of the students as second-language learners? Whose linguistic competence was on display that afternoon at the Museum dedication ceremony? My own informal observations suggest that out of 12-15 students, at least 3 or 4 became quite proficient, both in colloquial Kiksht and the public speaking register, and enjoyed using the language informally amongst themselves inside and outside the classroom. Others acquired a more limited range of usage; some had continuing problems with phonology, and on the day of the Museum Grand Opening produced a memorized string of phonemes. Of course, at the public event, all of the students, whatever their degree of fluency in Kiksht, were in one way or another repeating what they had been taught by the Grandmas—but it is essential to see that that is precisely what made their public utterances legitimate and effective, whatever their individual fluencies or internal grasp of the grammar.

This is neither an exotic phenomenon, nor is it specific to situations of language shift and endangerment. The organization of dialogic interaction in the Wasco language classroom is clearly rooted in specific traditions of Chinookan formal speech—but the diversity of participant role-fractions, and the modes of participation they enable, are in fact neither unique nor culturally specific, but typical of multilingual communities.

In his now classic study of language crossing among adolescents, for example, Ben Rampton noted that “Panjabi was suited to interethnic jocular abuse precisely because of its status as a language learner variety among white and black adolescents” (Rampton, 1995, p. 175; emphasis in original). “This might seem surprising in view of the value set on linguistic skill in jocular insult exchanges,” writes Rampton, “but since most young people of Caribbean and Anglo descent were expected to be almost completely ignorant of the language, even a little knowledge could be lauded as exceptional ability” (ibid.). Not only that, but “ignorance of propositional meaning and a pressing dependence on the linguistic models just recently provided by bilinguals also meant that rudimentary utterances in Panjabi as a second language were actually well fitted to turn structure in joking abuse sequences” (ibid.). What is this but the transformation of an erstwhile linguistic variety (Panjabi) into a register designed to take on specialized micro-functions in minimal forms—just what has been observed of so-called endangered languages in continued use?

The performance of the Wasco Class at the Museum Grand Opening in 1993 was a major public success—it wowed the audience. Many people in the community told me that they had not heard so much “Wasco language” spoken in public for decades. After this, many things changed:

- Teaching of Kiksht was expanded to include 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, and continues today. Two younger women—Radine Johnson, Mrs. Thompson’s granddaughter, and Val Switzler—took over teaching responsibilities, and continued their own language learning: Ms. Johnson via an ongoing Master-Apprentice relationship (Hinton 1997) with her grandmother, Ms. Switzler by undertaking graduate study in Linguistics. Both are highly proficient speakers of Kiksht.
- Anglo linguists with easel-mounted pads (or tape-recorders) are no longer a presence in the classroom (both Ms. Johnson and Ms. Switzler are now fully literate in Kiksht).
- A vast archive of recordings of Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff—a much larger sample of the language than any previous fieldworker has ever managed to collect—continues to be amassed via digital audio and video.

“Taking up speech” is an English translation of a French catchphrase, *la prise de parole*. Today it seems to belong to two distinct registers: one having to do with the activity of public speaking—as an internet search term it turns up the web pages of speech therapists and other professionals with expertise in elocution, corporate communications, and media training—and one having to do with the strikes and protests of May 1968 in France. It provides the title of a pamphlet published in October of that year by Michel de Certeau, in which he records his experience of those events: “a throng became poetic,” he wrote; “everyone finally began to talk: about essential things, about society, about happiness, about knowledge, about art, about politics” (Certeau, 1997 [1968], p. 13).

The lessons to be learned from the case discussed here are perhaps less dramatic, but both senses of the phrase seem relevant. The more immediate implications were neatly summed up by Ms. Johnson in a recent conversation with a visitor to her Wasco Class with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders:

Radine Johnson said, “Our language doesn’t work on an agenda. It’s learned by hearing and repeating it, and that’s what we do. It will never work in lesson plans, because there’s always so much to learn, even about a single word.” (A single Wasco verb, for example, can have 40,000 separate conjugations). (Haynes, 2004, p. 95)

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## 2. DISCUSSION (LIAN MALAI MADSEN, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN)

Firstly, thanks to Rob Moore for sharing this fascinating paper on the Wasco heritage language classes in the US Warm Springs reservation community. It is with great pleasure that I open the discussion with a few initial thoughts. Moore points to interesting parallels between the sociolinguistic research on super-diversity and his study of how Kiksht speech is ‘taken up’ by relatively privileged adults to ‘re-acquire’ their ancestry language and notable the cultural capital associated with this. The conception of ‘the speaker’ in this endangered language context is of direct relevance to the shift in recent sociolinguistics away from speakers and languages towards linguistic resources and repertoires, as Moore states: “All the participants in the Wasco Class, in other words, presupposed what contemporary sociolinguistics is only now coming to grips with: the fact that speaker is not a unitary role or a pre-theoretical given, but a makeshift, a covering label for a range of footings and participant alignments” (pp.73). This understanding of being a speaker of course, as Moore also points out, feeds directly into discussions of linguistic competence in the super-diverse urban European contexts where applied- and sociolinguistics have for a while questioned the pedagogical and theoretical relevance of the notion of ‘native speaker’, the assumptions of a one-to-one relationship between language and ethnicity, and the idea that speakers can command ‘a whole’ of ‘half a language’ (e.g. Leung, Harris & Rampton 1997, Blommaert & Backus 2011, Jørgensen 2010).

Indeed, there seem to be clear similarities between the Wasco class case and, in particular, the heritage and ‘mother tongue’ language classes in super-diverse urban environments.

Blackledge & Creese (2010) in their study of such classrooms, observe a contrasting relationship between the practice of ‘flexible bilingualism’ and the ideology of ‘separate bilingualism’. In the context of the heritage language learning in the UK speech is taken up in a similar way to in the Wasco class, but this flexible understanding of language and speaking co-exist with ideologies of pure and whole languages and cultural essentialism. According to Blackledge and Creese, the ideologies of separate bilingualism allows teachers to articulate and assemble resources to counter the hegemony of other ‘mainstream’ institutional accounts of nation, history, culture and language. And this comparison to the UK case points to the two questions that initially struck me as I read the paper:

1) Although the Wasco case is certainly relevant to discuss in relation to sociolinguistic perspectives on super-diversity and globalisation it seems to me that there are also significant differences between the super-diverse city and the case of revitalising an endangered language. Are there not different power relations involved when a language deemed endangered is taken up by elite members of a community compared to the status of the many minority linguistic resources in societies strongly dominated by nationalist, monolingual ideologies?

2) People in the reservation community may “have long since moved on from the idea that all the competences associated with “proficiency” in language need to coincide in a single person” (pp. 57), but ideologies of ethno-linguistic groupness and a close relationship between language and culture still seem to have strong currency in this community (at least when one has decided to claim Kiksht as the ancestry language to be saved and represent one’s culture). How does this relate to the kind of processes referred to as super-diversity emphasising that the connections and relationships between speakers, linguistic resources and socio-cultural affiliations are now more complex and harder to predict?

There are other aspects to discuss, but for now I open with these questions. Later in the week we discuss the paper in our research group in Copenhagen and I hope you will all start discussion on this list and in your local environments.

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### 3. COMMENTS (VARIOUS AUTHORS)

#### 3.1. Jan Blommaert (Tilburg University)

##### THE SECOND LIFE OF OLD ISSUES: HOW SUPERDIVERSITY ‘RENEWS’ THINGS

###### Introduction

Rob Moore’s brilliant paper deserves comments on more than one aspect, because it is relevant to a range of domains and subdomains of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. The aspect of ‘pooling’ of linguistic (and literacy) resources is something that pervades every language teaching and learning environment, and studies of teaching and learning would benefit from approaching events in terms of unequally distributed resources that, gradually and incompletely, can be redistributed in the process of teaching and learning. This is one example. A second example of how Moore’s paper could bring reinvigorate research is in the field of minority languages and language endangerment. Moore powerfully makes the point that many small languages continue to exist in the way he describes: as parts-here-and-parts-there, divided over a population rather than concentrated in an individual, and deployed and displayed in specific (often ritualized) contexts. Seen from this pragmatic and metapragmatic angle, many languages will show great resilience (perhaps this is reassuring to their most ardent language activists), while attention is drawn to language as a sociolinguistic system – more precisely an endangered language in a skeleton sociolinguistic system characterizing the early stages of language revival, as well as more permanent phases of language survival.

The key point made by Moore, however, revolves around the notion of the unified, fully fluent L1 speaker. More precisely, Moore’s case shows how in the language endangerment context of the Warm Springs reservation, we can see phenomena more widely observed in what has gradually grown into a sociolinguistics of globalization and superdiversity. Studies such as Rampton’s *Crossing* (1995) dislodged this traditional view of the ideal speaker-hearer a long time ago; several other studies (Moore reviews them) had already hinted at such phenomena and/or would follow Rampton’s lead in reformulating the ‘native speaker by degrees’. The thing is that these dislodging patterns were not found in what many would call ‘traditional’ societies (Warm Springs and its ‘tribes’ would be seen as such by many; but note Moore’s historical and contemporary qualifications); they were situated in late-modern post-industrial urban centers, and often connected to complex online-offline popular cultural developments. And scholars of the former would rarely mix with scholars of the latter – both ‘worlds’, so to speak, belonged to different scholarly galaxies and *Never the Twain Shall Meet*.

Cutting a few corners, we can see how insights firmly lodged within contemporary developments in the study of language and superdiversity appear, and appear as firmly entrenched, in communities that would not intuitively be labeled superdiverse. A ‘tribal’ area, in widespread imagination, is a homogeneous, let us say ‘subdiverse’ area (one has to ‘belong to’ that tribe in order to reside there), while superdiverse spaces are characterized by intense and intrinsic variation. So: what is this superdiversity all about, when ‘superdiverse’ features can be found in ‘subdiverse’ communities?

New, old or both?

This question can be heard in various corners: what is new about superdiversity? Haven't we seen all of this before? And do we need superdiversity when so much it brings to the surface is a matter of recognition of patterns and processes already long present?

Let me try to answer this question. In Blommaert & Rampton (2011), we described language and superdiversity as a space of synthesis, a point of convergence or a nexus of developments long underway. Moore provides an excellent survey of some of them. We presented superdiversity as a paradigm, not a subdiscipline – it is defined primarily by a theoretical and methodological perspective rather than by a set of specifically 'superdiverse' phenomena. I will return to these phenomena in a moment.

This perspective revolves around the acceptance of uncertainty in sociolinguistic analysis: the fact that superdiversity denies us the comfort of a set of easily applicable assumptions about our object, its features and its meanings. From this acceptance of uncertainty, two other methodological principles follow: (a) we see complexity, hybridity, 'impurity' and other features of 'abnormal' sociolinguistic objects to be 'normal'; and (b) the uncertainty compels us towards an ethnographic stance, in which we go out to find out how sociolinguistic systems operate rather than to project a priori characteristics onto them.

With regard to (a) above, what superdiversity has brought, I believe, is an awareness that a lot of what used to be qualified as 'exceptional', 'aberrant', 'deviant' or 'unusual' in language and its use by people, is in actual fact quite normal. Many of the scholars currently working on language and superdiversity were working on codeswitching a couple of decades ago. Codeswitching was, until the mid-nineties, widely seen as a 'deviant' phenomenon, violating a default rule of monolingual speech, seriously complicating linguistic analysis, and often situated only among bilingual communities (also presented as something rather unusual). People may wish to return to landmark work such as that of Carol Myers Scotton (1993) for evidence of the abnormalization of codeswitching. They will encounter a world of strange bilingual creatures doing strange things with two languages, causing complications in social life and battling grammars in their minds (cf. Meeuwis & Blommaert 1994).

Working on forms of codeswitching and on the particular patterns of multilingualism they suggested meant that scholars came across increasingly 'messy' data – effects, indeed, of the gradual increase of diversity in large urban centers around the world, as well as, somewhat later, the strange new forms of literacy crawling through the internet. Peter Auer's (1998) collection *Code-switching in Conversation* testifies to the engagement of researchers with increasingly complex forms of mixing and shifting, and to the fundamental questions that emerged from it. (The list of contributors includes at least five scholars currently explicitly working on language and superdiversity: Jens Normann Jorgensen, Ben Rampton, Christopher Stroud, Li Wei and Jan Blommaert.)

The thing is that, engaging with such messy materials, questions of 'language', 'community', 'meaning' came up – questions evidently having far wider relevance than just in this field of messy stuff. To be sure, such question did not only emerge from such work. US-based linguistic anthropology had equally questioned the fundamentals of the study of language, and especially since the emergence of the language ideology trend in the early nineties

important critical work emerged in quantities (e.g. Hymes 1996; Silverstein 1998; Gal & Woolard 2001; Bauman & Briggs 2003; Agha 2007).

The point, however, is that a space of theoretical work emerged in which ‘exceptional’ forms of language were increasingly seen as privileged lenses through which a different gaze on all of language became possible. In other words: starting from exceptionally ‘unusual’ language, ‘normal language also started to look different. And as soon as questions emerging from superdiverse contexts were projected onto contexts not often associated with it, the empirical range of language and superdiversity dramatically broadened, and the field became paradigmatic, a different perspective by means of which all facts of language could be redefined and re-analyzed. Moore’s paper is an instantiation of it.

To be sure, I firmly believe that language and superdiversity has a range of specific objects – think of online communication and its hugely complex semiotic forms. Obviously, such objects are new: the internet did not exist when Gumperz and Hymes compiled their *Directions in Sociolinguistics* (1972). Specific forms of urban multilingualism, now also shot through with traces of a globalized pop culture, are also new and could be called specific ‘superdiverse’ sociolinguistic objects. I also firmly believe that the change of knowledge infrastructure – the internet and contemporary popular culture – is often underestimated as a factor of fundamental change (cf. Burke 2000), and that, consequently, we should not too quickly dismiss new e-phenomena as merely a re-enactment of phenomena already known and understood. A change in knowledge infrastructure is a change in the entire economy of knowledge, and even if things look the same linguistically, they can have a very different sociolinguistic role, distribution and function. But I also do believe that the range of specific objects is small and in itself not exceptional: we encounter objects that are more complex by degree, not qua substance, compared to forms of intense mixedness and hybridization recorded in earlier times.

What is truly new, therefore, is the perspective and not the objects. It is the perspective that enables us not just to analyze the messy contemporary stuff, but also to re-analyze and re-interpret more conventional and older data, now questioning the fundamental assumptions previously used in analysis. It’s a new theoretical approach to language, period. And since it is an approach that starts from what earlier was seen as ‘exceptional’, it will explain exceptions better than the theory that produced these exceptions. Quantum theory did not replace Newtonian physics, it explained its exceptions. It also did not need a new universe for that: the universe was exactly the same for Isaac Newton and Niels Bohr. There is no reason to attribute to language and superdiversity the grandeur acquired by quantum theory; but the comparison can show us the usefulness of new perspectives on old issues, how such perspectives can ‘renew’ the old issues and explain some of their previously inexplicable aspects.

Back to Kiksht

What makes Rob Moore’s paper so exceptionally clear and persuasive is its historical framing. We can see how Moore applies a new theoretical instrument to the events he discusses and establishes the core point of his paper: the fact that the Kiksht speakers do not appear burdened by unified notions of the ‘native speaker’. Indeed, if we would take any one of the subjects he describes in his analysis, none of them would be the ideal ‘informant’ in a

classic descriptive-linguistic set-up. While Mrs Thompson and Mrs McIndruff ‘possess’ perhaps most forms in the language, observe the complexities of ‘speaking’ here.

From this ‘renewed’ analysis, in which he applied a new instrument to data gathered years ago, Moore also re-reads statements from classic anthropology – Sapir, Boas, Bloomfield and others also noted the degrees of fluency and the complexities of performing the language. And we can now perceive the methodological problems experienced by these older anthropologists as illustrations of what has now become understandable: the ‘normal’ pattern of unevenly distributed linguistic resources in a community, and the intense ritualizations of performance that revolve around such uneven patterns of distribution. We now have a mature sociolinguistic vocabulary for things previously disqualified and excluded from analysis, and commented on in disparaging terms as ‘speaking poorly’. Needless to say that such quick and damning judgments are widespread today in a broad range of fields, from language education to immigration and the labor market.

We thus have an opportunity here to relax our attitudes towards language and superdiversity as a new development in sociolinguistics. It is not a threat to anyone, it will not snatch away anyone’s data or terrain or expertise. It can be useful to everyone, provided we see it as an intellectual opportunity we ought to be familiar with: the periodic desire to unthank and rethink the things we feel reasonably at ease with – the meaning of ‘re’ in research. Rob Moore provides us with an excellent example of how to proceed with this, and how we can make this new instrument useful for a wide range of difficult old and new questions.

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### 3.2. Lian Malai Madsen & Amager Group (University of Copenhagen)

Jan Blommaert has contributed to the discussion with some inspiring thoughts on superdiversity as a perspective. In our research group in Copenhagen our discussion of Moore's paper centered around the aspect of normativity that we consider significant to a language and superdiversity perspective. So here are the points that were raised in our meeting:

Moore does a fascinating and detailed analysis of the participation framework within the Kiksht classroom. He uses this to argue that, within this community, the forms of linguistic competency associated with being a Speaker do not necessarily coincide in one person, and that communicative roles associated with being a speaker are distributed. We think that this is truly interesting, and we agree with Jan Blommaert that the paper makes a convincing – and compelling – analysis from a superdiversity perspective. However, we also think that the issue of norms / normativities that has been central to the study of language and superdiversity, could be discussed further.

Let us develop this. Moore introduces the notion of *Langue*, and defines it as the internalized complete grammar and lexicon (p.58). Yet, this is not an entirely Saussurean way of using the notion '*Langue*'. Although Saussure did see language as a mental phenomenon, *Langue* in his interpretation was essentially social. The '*Langue*' referred to by Moore is much closer to a Chomskyan, decontextualized, psychological take on language. Here 'competence' + lexicon. The social part is totally erased.

The point for Moore is of course that to the Kiksht learners competence is something different from an internalized and – importantly – complete grammar and lexicon, but we believe that there is something more to the issue. Saussure's *langue* was a social phenomenon, and the norms for appropriate, adequate (and therefore morally good language) were found in a super-individual social agreement. But what about Kiksht in this situation? Where is the center of normativity and where do the learners and speakers orient? Apparently, and curiously, this is situated not within the brains of the students, nor within the 'community', but to some extent it is embodied in Mrs. Thompson. Yet, Mrs. Thompson cannot be the only relevant person with regard to the issue of normativity. One person only peripherally dealt with in the elaborate accounts of the classroom structure is the tribal linguist. The role of this linguist is to write down what Mrs. Thompson & the other Grandma decided as being an appropriate Kiksht answer in their replies to the students. Yet, Mrs. Thompson chose to ignore this linguist and his written interpretations (Mrs. Thompson even places herself in front of the easel on which the linguist writes.) So, first, what is the role of this linguist, and how does his role compare to that of Mrs. Thompson vis-à-vis the students and vis-à-vis the language Kiksht – or should we rather call it the 'register of Kiksht'?

The second issue of normativity concerns the other grandma whom Moore in fact characterizes as 'a semi-speaker' (p. 65) - although, the paper indeed deconstructs such a notion. And even though Mrs. Thompson apparently is 'the' normative center, she still discusses the linguistic issues with her 'semi-speaker' co-teacher. On a general level the structure of the classroom compares to the structure in other culturally loaded activities within the community, as Moore shows, but we wonder about the local function of these discussions – as well as their content. Clearly the relation between the two Grandmas differs

from that between Spirits and a Shaman, and so will the function, meaning, content and significance of their discussion.

The point of all this is, first, that it is not only the role of the Speaker that seems to be distributed but apparently there is also a distribution of norms and normativity – yet this does not really resemble the poly-centricity that we have seen documented in other places. We would very much like to hear Moore’s comments to this.

A different but related point is that we wonder what type of language and of linguistic community this is. The language is clearly an emblem (of cultural heritage) maybe more than a means of communication. But it is an emblem that initially seems the property of one single person. On some level, the heritage language classroom is a community of practice – but in contrast to such, there is a center, namely Mrs. Thompson, and it is also unclear what ‘full participation’ versus ‘peripheral participation’ would mean in this community.

### 3.3. Ben Rampton (King’s College)

Dear all,

Fascinating paper and discussion, prompting comments in a couple of areas:

#### 1. Speakerism and “taking up speech” generally

Moore’s paper reminds me of a 1988 paper by Ray McDermott which explores the relationship between INARTICULATENESS and the kind of ‘breakthrough’ that Moore describes at the end of his paper. McDermott’s paper dovetails beautifully with Moore’s description (and it also kicks off with White Thunder, the Native American described by Hymes, before moving to the Irish literary renaissance via New York City). But in addition, it emphasises how Moore’s analysis leads beyond just the idea of a ‘native speaker of a language’ to the very notion of ‘speaker’ itself. McDermott notes that:

“situations that organise inarticulateness are legion, and it is easy to name the most obvious occasions. Funerals, police inquiries, job interviews, class and race border encounters, tax interrogations, sex talk with children, group therapy, television interviews, and first dates – all are potential tongue-stoppers. A folk account would have it that whenever our words can be immediately consequential and long remembered, the pressure can get to us, and new heights of eloquence and new lows of inarticulateness are frequent” (1988:38)

From there he goes on to argue that:

“...occasions in which people are left without words are systematic outcomes of a set of relations among a group of persons bound in a social structure.... [I]narticulateness is not well understood as an individual disability, but better understood as a well orchestrated moment in which inarticulateness is invited, encouraged, duly noted and remembered, no matter how much lamented.”  
1988:38

Invoking Hymes, McDermott summarises this as moving “from personality to politics as the key category for understanding [both] inarticulateness [and fluency]” (1988:45), and he elaborates as follows:

“Fluency and inarticulateness are not good analytic terms for distinguishing kinds of persons. They are better terms for distinguishing kinds of situations. As we move slowly away from a linguistics of speakers towards a linguistics of participation and from psychology of intelligence and skill to a psychology of concerted arrangements for information dispersal, it will be good to have one less static trait designation for calling each other names (McDermott & Tylbor 1983). Articulateness and inarticulateness are not the properties of persons or of their utterances; they are the properties of situations that arrange for the differential availability of words and ways of appreciating words across persons in a community” 1988:61

Moore’s paper is a marvellous multilayered description of the processes involved in a change in the situated “availability of words and ways of appreciating words”, bringing together political climate (identity politics in the 1990), global and local pedagogies (CLL), the positions and biographies of the people involved, and the specific interactional arrangements (very much as McDermott does in the ‘Inarticulateness’ paper). McDermott underlines the counter-hegemonic implications for education:

“The categories derived from careful description stand in considerable opposition to the commonsense categories that guide our more institutionalised interpretations of our children. Whereas our commonsensically-derived categories [like ‘smart’, ‘fluent’ or ‘inarticulate’] are well-tuned with the educational psychology and competitive sorting machinery of the schools, the new categories are finely tuned to behavioural realities and better aligned with political critiques of schooling in America” (1988:49)

Goffman is undoubtedly one really valuable resource in this deconstruction of ‘speakerism’ (and obviously shows that the reconceptualisation of ‘speaker’ takes more than ‘resources’ and ‘repertoires’ on their own). But indexicality, ideology and history are also crucial, and McDermott emphasises this with Bakhtin:

“any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist – or on the contrary, by the ‘light’ of alien words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgements and accents. The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex relationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile”... [every word] “is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s intention and accents, is a difficult and complicated process” (Bakhtin 1934/35 – 1981:276,294)

All in all, Moore’s paper strikes me as a marvellous illustration, and a fascinating recontextualisation, of the processes that McDermott and Bakhtin write about. I think that Moore 2012 and McDermott 1988 deserve to be read and reread together as major contributions to our understanding of linguistic ability.

But what about the framing of Moore’s paper within ‘superdiversity’? Is it a bit forced?

## 2. Superdiversity as an overarching frame?

I don't think so, and see why not, it's worth comparing Moore's paper with Susan Philips' classic 1972 'Participant structures and communicative competence: Warm Springs children in community and classroom' – a paper which was at the forefront of the 'difference-not-deficit' perspective challenging racism in education. Both Moore and Philips' papers are about participation structures and conditions for speaking, and there are clear continuities in the account of speech and interaction. But there are very striking differences in the *zeitgeist* they're each writing from. Whereas Philips' paper takes the ethnic identity of the informants for granted, Moore's paper is full of details about dynamic processes of mixing, (re-) differentiation and realignment:

“the majority of people in the community today can claim ancestral ties to at least two and often all three of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (if not also to fur-trade era French, Scottish, and Hawaiian ancestors, as well as to African-American, Filipino, and other relatives)...a notable handful [of class participants] came from families that most people would not have identified as Wasco until now; these people appeared to have made a personal choice to adopt Kiksht as their tribal language” p.64).

Philips and Moore are writing at different ends of a period of intense debate about essentialism and processes of social construction, and a term like 'super-diversity' captures something of the shift – yes, diversity is still very important, but so too is the insistent message that ordinary people hand to bureaucrats and researchers: 'you can't put me in a box' (Fanshawe & Sriskandarajah 2010). This is very much in line with Jan Blommaert when he associates superdiversity-as-a-perspective with ethnography and the need to avoid assumptions about the object of analysis.

Okay, so superdiversity flags up rather a major change in how we conceive of people and identity, separating 1972 and 2012. But what about the fact that 'superdiversity' is also often used as an empirical description of the contemporary era, not just as marker of the shift in our perspective. As an empirical descriptor, doesn't 'superdiversity' sound rather vapid and toothless compared with e.g. 'globalisation' or 'neoliberal marketisation'? Whereas superdiversity flags up the 'diversification of diversity', these other terms point to a harsher world:

“neo-liberal globalisation has seen the rise of great fortunes, the growth and spread of poverty, the re-emergence of mass migration, the shredding of social safety nets, and the polarisation of politics across much of the world” (Collins 2011:194)

Worse still, should a 'sociolinguistics of superdiversity' simply be seen as the symptom of a rather *louche* cosmopolitan urbanity?:

“Hybridity is a top-down vision produced [in the formation of new cosmopolitan elites]. Looking down on the new imploding urban zones with their diasporic minorities crowded into ethnic neighbourhoods, the new elites can marvel at new-found cultural globalisation. Here they can consume the entire world, in the form of foods, and feasts of sight, from clothing to language to music. Cosmopolitan desires can be realised in the new internationalised urbanity. The only difficulty lies in the social realities of this celebrated world: the ghettoisation, marginalisation and criminalisation that underlie the more celebratory image. The latter can be circumvented by remaining mere consumers and observers in a world of gated enclaves. What is good for eating might not be so pleasant in the kitchen” (Friedman 1999:188)

Research on language and superdiversity certainly needs to consider the processes that Collins refers to, and the aesthetic perspective described by Friedman can also be a trap. But in actual practice, where and how often does the ‘sociolinguistics of superdiversity’ neglect the former and/or succumb to the latter? This certainly doesn’t happen in, for example, Blommaert and Maryn’s work on asylum. Nor does it happen in Moore’s decentring of the ‘speaker’, which amounts to much more than just some fancy philosophical deconstruction. Once again, Varenne and McDermott state the case:

“Individuals must be the units of concern and justice, but they are misleading units of analysis and reform. The greater our concern with individuals, the greater must be our efforts to document carefully the social conditions in which they must always express themselves. We must look away from individuals to preserve them” (1998:145)

Individuals are real – conscious, flesh-&-blood, sensitive to joy and pain – and there certainly is some ‘wobble-room’ for agentive improvisation (Erickson 2001). But if we prioritise individuals-as-units-of-analysis-and-reform, we simply sing along with the ‘linguistics of speakers’ and the individualising, victim-blaming ideologies of contemporary schooling and neoliberalism. In contrast, Moore provides a vivid empirical demonstration that “words [really] are the systematic outcomes of a set of relations among a group of persons bound in a social structure” (McDermott). And far from being the product of the analyst’s wishful, aestheticising prose, we see ethno-linguistic breakthrough emerging over time in a situation that Moore renders in a (brilliant but also) rather practical nuts-and-bolts description. So to summarise my sense of superdiversity’s relevance to Moore’s paper: (a) yes, there’s been a major perspectival shift over the 40 years since Philips 1972, and (b) don’t worry, there’s no retreat from the hard edge of contemporary developments (even though Moore’s paper itself describes revival rather than immiseration). But is Blommaert right to describe superdiversity as “a new instrument useful for a wide range of difficult old and new questions”? For a range of reasons it’s probably not worth going into now, I think that serious engagement with ‘superdiversity’ is timely, tactical and well-tuned to the ongoing development of a body of research that reaches back through McDermott at least to Bakhtin (via Hymes 1969 and Gumperz 1982 as well - see Arnaut *etc.*). In fact Blommaert himself flags up the complexity of notions like ‘new’, and no doubt this something that we’ll discuss at the Jyväskylä conference in June.

### **3.4. Julia Snell (King’s College)**

Dear all,

Many thanks to Robert for sharing this paper and to Jef, Lian, Ben, Jan and Copenhagen’s Amager group for sparking discussion. Here are a few additional comments to add to the debate.

First some specific comments on the analysis in the paper. Like the Amager group, I also wondered about the role of Mrs McInturff and her relationship to Mrs Thompson. Mrs Thomson is described as ‘the best speaker of Kiksht’ and Mrs McInturff a ‘semi-speaker’. I wondered on what basis these evaluations were formed, and further if there was any indication as to why (given this hierarchy of perceived ‘competence’) Mrs Thompson should insist on the addition of Mrs McInturff and the linguist in the classroom? Is Mrs McInturff simply an animator of Mrs Thomson’s words in the interactions with the students (taking on

the role of the spokesman evident in other public ceremonials in Warm Springs)? Or is she in some sense co-author of these words? What kind of negotiation of meaning and co-construction of Kiksht knowledge goes on in the back-stage consultations? And if the Grandmas are in some sense co-authors, why is it important that the words are first uttered by Mrs Thompson? Do the words gain cultural legitimacy when they come from her? Is she the sole legitimate source of knowledge on Kiksht (thus making it important that she appears as 'principal' of the Kiksht utterances)? It would be great to hear more of the ethnographic detail that clearly underpins Robert's analysis. Perhaps more generally these comments raise the issue of how to make this sort of implicit ethnographic knowledge explicit for the reader.

More generally I found Jan Blommaert's thoughts on superdiversity as 'a perspective' very helpful, especially the idea that this 'new' perspective can 'renew' the old issues. For example, I've found the theoretical and methodological perspectives outlined in Blommaert & Rampton (2011) useful in my work on language variation in children in the north-east of England – an area of the country that cannot be categorised as 'superdiverse' in any sense. One 'old' issue I've been concerned with is the problematic view of working-class children's language as deficient, which has unfortunately re-emerged in media and educational debates. In a recent attempt to challenge this view (and in light of the fact that the old 'different-but-equal' approach no longer seems to work), I drew upon notions such as 'resource' and 'repertoire' and tried to problematise the idea that there exist discrete bounded linguistic varieties/dialects. I don't want to divert the current discussion by outlining my argument in any detail here, but mention it simply as an example of Jan's point that what is truly new is 'the perspective not the objects' of analysis. I wonder if there are more examples of this?

### 3.5. Laura Ahearn (Rutgers University)

Dear All,

Thank you, everyone who has contributed to this wonderful seminar so far, and especially to Rob Moore for his insightful and stimulating paper. I wanted to agree with many of the points made by Jan, Ben, and Lian, and also to raise some additional questions.

It seems to me that one of the main contributions Rob makes is to note that the same theoretical concepts (such as superdiversity) can -- and indeed *should* -- be used to analyze linguistic practices as different from one another as Rwandan asylum seekers in Europe and Warm Springs adults in a language revitalization class. Another contribution both Rob and the superdiversity scholars make is to put into conversation scholars who are working in Europe and elsewhere in "linguistic ethnography" with those working in the U.S. under the rubric of "linguistic anthropology." These two schools/groups could very profitably engage more often with one another's work, and I'm delighted to see it happening here.

As some of the other commentators mentioned, I, too, heard echoes from the work of scholars from earlier decades, especially from U.S.-based linguistic anthropology but also cultural anthropology. In terms of the latter discipline, there was a moment 20 or 25 years ago (maybe longer?), when everyone stopped assuming that "cultures" were homogeneous and started to assume instead that heterogeneity and diversity were the norm or default conditions in their analyses. Many cultural anthropologists, in fact, stopped using "culture" as a term altogether because of its associations with boundedness and homogeneity. Something similar has

happened to "speech community," of course, which is why "community of practice" has become so popular.

Okay, on to some questions that occurred to me as I read the article and commentaries:

1) What social theorist(s) -- and therefore what understandings of power, hierarchies, and social interactions -- are best suited to underpin a superdiversity approach? Blommaert and Rampton in their 2011 "Language and superdiversity" piece, draw on Bakhtin, Williams, Bourdieu, and others; what do folks think about which social theorist(s) should bolster one's analysis?

2) I've been thinking quite a bit about language endangerment lately, and I've been struck by the difficulty of communicating the complexities and nuances Rob manages to convey in his article. For example, the Smithsonian's annual Folklife Festival on the National Mall will feature an exhibit on speakers of endangered languages this summer ([http://www.festival.si.edu/2013/One\\_World\\_Many\\_Voices/index.aspx](http://www.festival.si.edu/2013/One_World_Many_Voices/index.aspx)), curated by a Smithsonian employee and a linguist, K. David Harrison. What can such an exhibit, which will be seen by thousands and thousands of people, do in order to avoid reinforcing essentialistic notions about language, culture, and the speakers of endangered languages? In our scholarship, we have the luxury of conveying nuance and complexity to our relatively small audience of other scholars; how do we communicate nuance and complexity in a large public exhibit? Is it even possible?

### 3.6. Ben Rampton (King's College)

Really good questions, and vis-à-vis the second - "What can such an exhibit, which will be seen by thousands and thousands of people, do in order to avoid reinforcing essentialistic notions about language, culture, and the speakers of endangered languages?" - how about presenting an object, a recording etc and then simply unpacking the multi-layered processes coming together in its production - presenting something like Rob's paper alongside the video of the Museum Opening? Could Rob's paper and the elements it refers to be turned into a interesting exhibit? I think they probably could...

### 3.7. Karel Arnaut (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Goettingen)

Dear all,

My answer to Laura's first of two very pertinent questions would be, first of all that it is indeed crucial to embed super-diversity in social theory. In a paper of mine ([Arnaut 2012](#)) which is published in the UNESCO journal *Diversities* (and which will be available on-line very soon), I see at least three groups of theorists that could be brought in to 'underpin' superdiversity:

- Cultural Studies: obviously Hall, for his 'new ethnicities' but that is already in Rampton's & Harris's work; but also others like Mercer and Diawara. In yet another paper of mine (with the artist Chokri Ben Chikha for Critical Arts) ([Ben Chikha and](#)

[Arnaut 2013 forthcoming](#)) to which I will return soon, I mention these guys together with Gilroy and Mbembe.

- Post-modernists like Bauman (liquid modernity) and Deleuze for obvious reasons.
- A number of people from different disciplines (media, security, public space, philosophy) who have developed ideas concerning the new polycentric globe, what I call, the 'post-panopticon'.
- Also in Urban Studies there are a number of interesting authors. I particularly like the work of AbdouMaliq Simone who constantly tries to conceptualize diversity through complexity and flexibility, mainly in everyday urban contexts in the global south.

In answer to Laura's second question, I again totally agree that cultural/anthropological exhibitions often sell essentialisms in a big way. And that is obviously not new. One of the exhibitions I was involved with at the Quai Branly museum in Paris dealt with the 'prehistory' of showcasing races and ethnic groups in the format of the 'human zoo' (roughly between 1850 and 1930). Although in my contribution ([Arnaut 2011](#)) I tried to show continuities between old and present-day cultural essentialism in cultural performances, according to some the exhibition itself somehow fell victim to this. In this forthcoming paper I mentioned above ([Ben Chikha and Arnaut 2013 forthcoming](#)), we talk about such continuities in the work of South African artist Brett Bailey.

## References

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### 3.8. Jan Blommaert (Tilburg University)

I would like to make a peripheral remark prompted by the questioning of Moore's notion of 'semispeaker' here. The term sounds 'old fashioned' and out of sync with the kinds of sophisticated ethnographic analysis and appraisal we wish to promote.

The fact that it's been questioned reminds me of a recent critique by Sifree Makoni of several of the terms we now use: languaging and supervenacular being his prime targets. Makoni argues that when we describe 'supervenaculars' as something NEW, we fall into the trap of what Roy Harris called "segregationist linguistics" - the classic autonomous object called 'language', seen as denotationally-organized form-over-function centered around lexicosyntactic operations. His critique is based on the fact that, first, we do use a term such as 'language', and more precisely that we use grammatical and orthographic templates of 'normal' language in the description of supervenaculars.

What is missed here is ideology, and more specifically: an understanding of the exercise known in philosophy as 'critique'. In such a critique, one examines the limits of a set of conceptual tools by stretching them into areas for which they were not designed or apply

them to objects with which they seem incongruous. The use of such conceptual tools - "language" and its classic attributes in this particular case - leads to an exposure of their fallacious character (i.e. it exposes their ideological structure), and thus generates a new conceptual structure. It's dialectics.

Concretely: when we demonstrate that supervernaculars such as texting codes behave according to the lexicogrammatical order of (what is ideologically understood and constructed as) "language", this was done as a way of exposing the limits of the classic ("segregationist") concept of language, because the new object - supervernaculars - lacks crucial SOCIOLinguistic features of other "languages" while sharing the basic LINGUISTIC features with them. Simply put: phone texting codes share the linguistic structures of, say, English, but they do not share its sociolinguistic features: there is for instance no speech community describable in terms of location and numbers of speakers. Thus, applying the old-fashioned notion of "language" to supervernaculars shows the weakness of this concept - we get an anomaly - and pushes us towards another conceptual structure: supervernaculars as objects that invite primarily SOCIOLINGUISTIC definitions of 'language' if you wish.

This point was entirely missed by Makoni, but he is easily forgiven because his comments, like the questioning of 'semispeaker' here, reveal the intrinsic struggle in defining things as 'new'. Newness can only be witnessed by setting it off against 'oldness', and the description of new phenomena requires usage of old concepts in such a way that at the end of the exercise, the old concepts have been 'renewed'. Dialectics again. And dialectics is not a readily understandable mechanic of thought because it is built on paradox and contradiction, on "productive destruction" to use Schumpeter's term.

So when Rob uses terms such as 'semispeaker' (with their Bloomfieldian undertones), I read this is a way of questioning the validity of that very notion. It descriptively refers to someone whose control over linguistic and sociolinguistic resources appears less extensive or developed as that of the 'full speaker'. But, see, what Rob eventually demonstrates is that such notions - as INDIVIDUAL qualifications and appraisals - don't make much sense because we witness in effect the COLLECTIVE achievement of communicative goals by means of the pooling, combining and trading of each individual's resources. The 'semispeaker' in Rob's account is, eventually, FULLY FLUENT, if you wish, because she is part of a fully developed network of collaborating actors.

Rob may correct me on this - Rob, please do - but that is how I see it. And having said that, heavens what a great conversation this has turned into. Thanks to all.

### 3.9. Brian Street (King's College)

Ben Rampton asks how does the field of 'New Literacy Studies' (NLS) respond to this debate? One question I have indeed found myself raising, as I read this lively exchange, is similar to that in the field of literacy: exactly why the dominant perspective, that the authors here and in that field are challenging - of single, uniform, autonomous language features - has remained so powerful against the years of research demonstrated by these contributors. Indeed, that is a question we have been asking in the Literacy field for the past 25 years. Researchers such as Cole and Scribner (1981), Shirley Brice Heath (1983; 2012) and myself (Street, 1984) in that earlier period, and more recently Barton (2000), Bloome (2005), Collins (1995), Gee (1990), Pahl and Rowsell (2010) etc., have challenged the notion of a single

uniform thing called Literacy, with a big L and a single y. My own research in Iran and subsequently, argued that the dominant approach evident, especially in education and policy circles but also in some research fields, assumed an ‘autonomous’ view of Literacy – similar to the view of Language being criticized by colleagues in this discussion. An alternative view was termed ‘ideological’, in the sense that there were power issues underpinning why and how one particular set of literacy practices were favoured and promoted over others. The work of ideology is to deny such a power position and instead to claim that the view being put forward is simply ‘true’ - in the case of Literacy often meaning neutral, universal, ‘autonomous’ of social and cultural meanings. The reason I am raising this in the context of the discussion on Rob Moore’s paper is that very similar perspectives are being put forward by colleagues in the superdiversity field of language as those in the ideological model of literacy; and yet they seem not to cross refer very much. Perhaps this offers one explanation for how the dominant models can remain so powerful – when researchers do challenge the dominant perspective, their research perspectives remain diverse, creating separate fields or silos and making it easier for the dominant, autonomous model to overpower such disparate challenges. And, a sort of footnote on the terms we use to describe our emerging approaches, the use of the term ‘new’ is also laden with problems, as a number of people have indicated in this discussion and may also be diverting attention away from challenging the dominant model. In the case of ‘New Literacy Studies’ it has, perhaps, diverted attention away from the strong underpinning theory of literacy as social practice and generated instead claims and counter claims about how ‘new’ the approach is and indeed whether it is ‘new’ at all (cf Street, 2003). We are currently moving to terming the approach to literacy practices indicated here as not so much NLS as LSP – Literacy as Social Practice. Perhaps drawing on the earlier scholars highlighted in much of this discussion – Bakhtin, Hymes, Gumperz etc – we could refer to this debate likewise as simply ‘Language as Social Practice’? Would the use of the same acronym – LSP - meld the silos more effectively than the continuing use of different terms?

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### 3.10. Sabina Vakser (University of Melbourne/Birmingham)

Dear all,

Many thanks to UKLEF for organising this seminar, and to Robert Moore for an insightful paper.

In her opening to the discussion, Lian Malai Madsen asks how 'ideologies of ethno-linguistic groupness and a close relationship between language and culture' relate to the analytic 'uncertainty' informing superdiversity (Blommaert, 2013). This is an interesting point of departure, and similar to Laura Ahearn's question about whether it's possible to 'communicate nuance and complexity' to a larger crowd. An equally important challenge, I think, would be to understand what appeals about essentialising tendencies in the first place.

Another point raised by the Amager group and by Julia Snell regards the ethnographic content of the discussions, and my own curiosity also gravitated towards the classroom practices outlined by Moore, including the role of the Tribal Linguist.

Moore describes the local classroom scene as one in which students initiate the learning, arriving with words and phrases that undergo a ritualised translation process via two authority figures – Mrs. Thompson and her friend/assistant Mrs. McInturff. In an intermediary phase, the two instructors may exchange whispered negotiations of meaning between the English request and its Kiksht equivalent.

In a symbolic public display, the students present their phrases, gaining admiration from their audience and validation as 'competent' members of the community. While I'm not familiar with endangered language contexts, Moore illustrates that it's ultimately about local social actors who make use of available resources in "circumstances not entirely those of one's own choosing" (Erickson, 2004: 167) for specific social projects. How those resources (and not others) become models of appropriation is the bigger question.

With this in mind, it would be interesting to know just which words and phrases the students came to class with and then displayed for their audience. What exactly did they wish to learn, and who else might they have been addressing besides their teachers, peers and audience members? What comprised the "new voicings of Kiksht" (Moore, 2012: 57) and to whom were these directed as the Wasco group resignified ancestral ties?

#### 4. FINAL REPLY (ROBERT E. MOORE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA)

##### **Superdiversity, Endangered Languages and Education: A Response\***

###### **Introduction**

I'm very grateful for such a thoughtful and—dare I say—diverse set of comments on my paper. I'm grateful also to Jef Van der Aa and Frances Giampapa for organizing the UKLEF e-seminar, and to Lian Madsen for acting so effectively in the role of discussant. After some general comments I'll attempt to respond to a few of the specific questions raised by participants in the UKLEF e-seminar. In various places I try to identify some of the commonalities and contrasts between the material discussed in my paper and the kinds of discourse practices described by others working in more obviously 'super-diverse' locales.

I did intend to use the Wasco Class material as the basis for a critique of inherited concepts of 'speakerism' (to use Ben Rampton's term)—to "examine the limits" of such conceptual tools by, as Jan Blommaert puts it (in his second set of comments), "stretching them into areas for which they were not designed or apply[ing] them to objects with which they seem incongruous" (cf. Burke 1964). But this, I think, is probably not the paper's most original contribution. Notions of the native (or "mother-tongue") speaker as a taken-for-granted analytic category have been subjected to extensive critique in the literature for some time (e.g., Davies 1997; Leung, et al. 1997: 555-556; Harris 2006; Jørgensen 2010).

And yet one purpose of the Wasco Class was in fact to create new speakers.<sup>8</sup> I argued that it succeeded because it created an environment in which (quoting Jan Blommaert again) "INDIVIDUAL qualifications and appraisals don't make much sense because we witness in effect the COLLECTIVE achievement of communicative goals by means of the pooling, combining and trading of each individual's resources."

The collective achievement of communicative goals in the classroom was indeed based on dramatic asymmetries in participants' linguistic resources, power, and knowledge. And this, it seems to me, is the point that needs to be emphasized: it was the participation framework of classroom discourse—a blend of Community Language Learning (CLL) pedagogy with an interactional format based on local forms of speech—that created a structure of "occasion" in which speaking (Kiksht) became possible for all the participants, albeit in different ways:

- for the two Grandmas, one playing the Delphic oracle, the other the patient explainer; in fact, the two Grandmas themselves embodied the ideological contrast between 'flexible' and 'separate' bilingualisms (Blackledge and Creese 2010)—Mrs Thompson as a practitioner of 'separate bilingualism', Mrs McInturff of a much more 'flexible' approach;
- for the students, who gradually and variously became 'speakers' insofar as they had already been addressees;
- for the Tribal Linguist, mostly in a citational mode—pointing to a word written down, noting the presence of a tense prefix, etc.

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<sup>8</sup> 'New speakers' are an emerging topic of interest in sociolinguistics, the subject of recent conferences ("New Speakers of Minority Languages: A Dialogue," 30-31 March 2012 at the University of Edinburgh) and thematic panels ("New Speakers in the City," Sociolinguistics Symposium 19, Berlin, August 2012; "New Speakers: The Sociolinguistics of Boundary Crossing," American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, November 2012); see also O'Rourke 2011; O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013; Costa Wilson 2012; Brenzinger and Heinrich 2013.

The participation framework enacted in the classroom must be seen in its multiple relationships of interdiscursivity (Silverstein 2005) with respect to other participation frameworks enacted at other times and in other places, within and beyond the local community:

- To local forms of ceremonial speech that involve similar arrangements of ‘sponsor’ or principal, repeater (or ‘loudspeaker’), and an assembled Public,<sup>9</sup> with respect to which the discourse enactment in the classroom stands in a relationship of ‘reference’ or renvoi;
- To the Wasco class performance at the Grand Opening of the Warm Springs museum, with respect to which the discourse enactment in the classroom stands in a proleptic relationship, as backstage to frontstage (and quite explicitly as a rehearsal for a future performance);
- To other forms of “classroom discourse” (including CLL)—the Wasco class met in an actual classroom, after all.

In order to understand what was happening in the Wasco class, then, we need a systematic way of dealing with “semiosis across encounters” (Agha and Wortham 2005).

Notice first that the sign-vehicle whose indexical function allows it to “point” from the Wasco classroom to these other events is not an individual utterance or turn-at-talk, nor an utterance-partial (e.g., a sub-phonemic variant deployed as a shibboleth in a performed stylization of ‘accent’), nor a word or phrase (perhaps associated with a lexical register or a named ‘language’), nor even a stretch of discourse “entextualized” in some recognizable way, but a fact about the arrangement of multi-party talk, about the allocation of different (kinds of) speaking roles to different (kinds of) participants—a participation framework (Goffman 1981). The sign-vehicle that is centrally important to my analysis is not anything anybody said, nor the way—phonologically or lexically—they said it, but rather the format in which discursive interaction took place. Needless to say, there were many other layers or levels of indexicality in play in the Wasco classroom; my purpose was to highlight one of the multiple pragmatic and ethno-metapragmatic dimensions of such a self-conscious attempt to engage with ‘heritage’ language and culture.

The participation framework of the Wasco class, enacted recurrently over the time-course of any individual class meeting, and recurrently across meetings over the few years of the class’s existence, is the analytic unit in terms of which these relationships of interdiscursivity<sup>10</sup> were projected, and in terms of which the communicative goals of the participants in the Wasco class were collaboratively achieved.

And this in turn is the key to the success of the Wasco class, by which I mean its legitimacy in political terms within the Warm Springs community: when the adult students took to the stage at the Warm Springs Museum grand opening celebration, local people in the audience knew they were repeating (once more) utterances that they had learned from the Grandmas. It was precisely this, and not any putative facts about their interior mental capacities, that legitimated them as (new) speakers (and, thereby, as ‘Wascos’).

All of which is to repeat what I take to be the main point of Ben Rampton’s marvelously incisive comments, in which he builds on the insights of Ray McDermott: just as “occasions in which people are left without words are systematic outcomes of a set of

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<sup>9</sup> See French 1955 for details.

<sup>10</sup> Type-sourced interdiscursivity, in the terminology of Silverstein (2005: 9).

relations among a group of persons bound in a social structure,” so too are occasions in which they are left with words.

The Wasco class produced, among other outcomes, ‘new’ speakers, who—as one might expect in any language classroom—displayed varying levels of “language expertise” (Leung, et al. 1997: 555-556). What they were enabled to do with that expertise—beyond the classroom and the Museum grand opening celebration—was mainly to insert words and phrases of Kiksht into their everyday (English) speech: discourse practices that look very much like those documented in the literature as ‘polylinguaging’ (Jørgensen, et al. 2011) and ‘stylisation’ (Rampton 2006).

### **Registers of speakerhood**

Julia Snell asks a number of interrelated questions: On what basis were my judgments of Mrs Thompson as “best speaker” and Mrs McInturff as “semispeaker” formed? If her “competence” in Kiksht was so full and complete, why did Mrs Thompson insist on the presence of Mrs McInturff and the Tribal Linguist in the classroom? Is Mrs McInturff simply an Animator of Mrs Thompson’s words, or is she in some sense a co-author? Finally, what went on in the whispered “backstage” consultations between the two Grandmas in the classroom?

The second question is the easiest to answer. Mrs Thompson insisted on the presence of Mrs McInturff in the classroom because ‘speakerhood’ at Warm Springs has never been, and is not now, a concept that pertains to biological (or even biographical) individuals. Mrs McInturff’s presence—and her performance in the role of repeater/‘loudspeaker’, interpreter, and explainer— was essential, because it allowed classroom discourse to become self-legitimizing by virtue of enacting the participation format (with its interdiscursivities) described in my paper. Having worked part-time for decades in the local clinic of the Indian Health Service, translating, interpreting, and explaining medical procedures to older Indians, Mrs McInturff was, in a sense, professionally trained for the role. As for the Tribal Linguist, Mrs Thompson did not insist on his presence in the classroom; she tolerated it.

To answer Julia Snell’s other questions a bit of context is necessary. When I first arrived at Warm Springs in the early 1980s, the (twenty or so) people who spoke Kiksht—virtually all of them women—seemed to form two groups: a small set of quite elderly people, born around 1900, and a set of late middle-aged people born, say, between 1920-1930, who had active lives and families and socialized with each other. Members of the younger group would frequently describe their own Kiksht to me as fragmentary or “broken.” So ‘semispeaker’—though that actual term was not in use on the reservation—was in the first instance a self-description.

Eventually it became clear that the younger speakers had at least in part internalized the negative judgments of their speech made by members of the older group. So I became interested in trying to find out what it was about the younger people’s speech that the older folks were judging negatively, and realizing that much of “the best speech” of earlier generations had already been documented, I decided to focus on “broken Wasco” (ʔap’ap’a kikšt, as one of the younger speakers labeled her own speech). I devised a set of elicitation questions probing a number of specific derivational processes (based on Silverstein 1984); to say that the work was exceedingly slow would be an understatement (Hymes has noted in print several times the Wasco aversion to answering any question on the same day it is asked).

The results are in an article (Moore 1988), but the startling finding was that the speech of the two groups diverged markedly in respect to their control of these processes of lexical

and syntactic derivation. When asked how to say ‘I’m working’, all the speakers provided the same form, a single morphologically complex verb. When asked how to say ‘I’m working for him’, the older speakers again produced a single (morphologically more complex) verb, now containing an ‘incorporated’ pronominal prefix in the dative case (‘him’) accompanied by a new postpositional element specifying the oblique relation (‘for’). The younger speakers, however, produced a new sentence containing the ‘I’m working’ verb unchanged, together with an independent personal pronoun (yaxka) ‘he/him’ to which they attached a Sahaptin-derived enclitic (#bama) ‘for’—a pattern of morphosyntactic change that Sapir had already noticed in his 1905 fieldwork, and which he described in a three-page treatise inserted into Boas’s 1911 sketch of Chinook grammar (Sapir 1911). In the 1980s, heavily under the influence of Nancy Dorian’s (1977, 1981, 1982) work on Scottish Gaelic, I referred to the younger speakers’ sentence constructions as ‘semispeaker’ forms. Today I would choose different terminology—perhaps ‘synthetic’ (short for ‘polysynthetic’) for the older people’s forms, ‘analytic’ for the younger people’s.

The point is that the two groups of speakers seemed to be working with two somewhat different forms of language expertise. Viewed in terms of these (and other) grammatical processes, Mrs Thompson’s Kiksht matched that of speakers a decade or more older than herself, even though she socialized with speakers her own age and younger, like Mrs McInturff, who habitually used the younger people’s ‘analytic’ forms.

But here’s the interesting thing: What kind of Kiksht were the adult students in the Wasco class actually being taught? They were being taught Mrs McInturff’s ‘analytic’ younger people’s Kiksht (Schmidt 1985), which was being quasi-codified as a new register (just as the Amager group intuited) in and through activities in the classroom. This suggests that Mrs McInturff was at least a ‘co-author’ of the forms being taught in the class, and that their whispered consultations may have involved Mrs Thompson asking Mrs McInturff how she would say whatever the students were asking for.

### **Contexts of (super-) diversity**

Lian Madsen asks if there are not significant differences between the super-diverse city and the case of revitalizing an endangered language in a small rural community. This question is echoed by Jan Blommaert, who notes that I seem to have found certain features and practices associated with superdiversity “entrenched” at Warm Springs, a community “that would not intuitively be labeled superdiverse” (and might even be called “subdiverse”).

There are of course many differences between a classroom in a small rural reservation community in the US, where adults—mostly members of a local indigenous elite—gather to reclaim their heritage language, and the kinds of settings in which most of the work on the sociolinguistics of superdiversity has been carried out: the schools and sidewalks of large urban centers in western Europe. As Lian Madsen points out, the power relations that are involved when an “endangered” language is taken up by members of a small community must be quite different from those in terms of which the status of minority linguistic resources gets defined and re-defined in societies “strongly dominated by nationalist, monolingual ideologies.”

And indeed they are. The asymmetries of power and knowledge most salient to the teaching of ancestral languages at Warm Springs, as in many other indigenous communities, are generational. In communities like these, cultural heritage—particularly as emblemized in and by language(s)—has become a form of value (a cultural ‘asset’) just at the moment when it is concentrated in the hands of a small and contracting segment of the society: Elders. Barbra Meek has described how, in a Northern Athapascan community in Canada, the local

indigenous language has been re-valORIZED, in part because of support from a governmental agency called Aboriginal Language Services—but this revaluation has had a number of ironic consequences. The language, at one time a “taken-for-granted code of everyday communication,” has now become “the proprietary domain of elders such that achieving a position of linguistic authority has become contingent upon attaining the status of elder” (Meek 2007: 31). Speaking an Indian language, in other words, means talking like an old person.<sup>11</sup> I think the Wasco class at Warm Springs succeeded partly because it was able to work around, or through, these difficulties.

The contrast with the status of ‘minority’ linguistic resources of immigrant populations in large European cities could hardly be more stark—or so it might seem. In societies “strongly dominated by nationalist, monolingual ideologies” centered on a national Standard language, it is precisely the continued use of non-Standard and ‘minority’ languages—especially by young people—that often becomes a focus of anxiety and moral panic in “heavy national romanticist public debate about language” (Møller and Jørgensen 2012: 13; cf. Stroud 2004). In these settings, it is the perceived absence of language shift (away from ancestral languages and toward the Standard) that is often seen as a problem requiring policy intervention: continued use of ‘minority’ linguistic resources is seen as evidence of continued inter-generational transmission of these resources within families and social groups, which in turn bespeaks a lack of “integration.” Or so the story goes.

The two kinds of situations, then—the status of indigenous ‘minority’ languages in Native communities in North America, and of immigrant ‘minority’ languages in European cities—might seem to present mirror-images of each other. Close empirical observation of actual discourse practices (and of the metalinguistic consciousness of language users themselves) in both kinds of settings, however, tells a more complicated story.

The strongly centralized Standard language ideology that dominates sociolinguistic life in a city like Copenhagen, for example, is reflected in youth language practices in more than one way: negatively, as it were, in the evident pleasure that young people take in the seamless transgression of otherwise assumed language borders (see, e.g., the remarkable Facebook exchange in Jørgensen, et al. 2011: 24); and positively, in the equally evident self-monitoring and strongly normative orientations of these same young people, who have very definite ideas about when and with whom it is appropriate to use one or another of the enregistered varieties in their repertoires (see Madsen, et al. 2013: 5-23; Møller and Jørgensen 2012: 11-14). I’ve seen nothing like this at Warm Springs, but then the language-ideological regime of variation-around-Standard that obtains in the US generally is far less centralized and powerful (and the ‘Standard’ variety itself far less codified) than in Denmark (see Silverstein 1996 [1987]).

Harris (2006), on the other hand, observed that young Londoners growing up in superdiverse conditions in that city routinely “used the proprietary pronoun ‘my’ when they wanted to refer to Panjabi, Gujarati and other languages besides English, which were strongly associated with their families and communities,” just as young people in Copenhagen do (Møller and Jørgensen 2012: 11)—and just as Anglophone young people at Warm Springs do, when they want to refer to Wasco (Kiksht), Sahaptin, or Paiute. The “apparent paradox” that Harris observed, “between their proprietary claims and their simultaneous disavowal of a high level of expertise in the use of these languages,” fits Warm Springs perfectly as well (Harris 2006: 11).

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<sup>11</sup> And for anyone who is not elderly, it becomes tantamount to ‘crossing’, defined as “the use of a language which isn’t generally thought to ‘belong’ to the speaker” (Rampton 1998: 291).

It is also worth noting that, in both kinds of situations, schools—classrooms—are important sites where the status of such linguistic resources are being negotiated in environments marked by asymmetries of power and social inequality. Ongoing research in Copenhagen under the auspices of the Amager Project focusing on State-sanctioned ‘mother tongue education’—“non-compulsory classes in which minority children are taught the [Standard] language and culture associated with—or attributed to—their ethnic and national background” (Madsen, et al. 2013: 27-28) may enable a deeper and more informed comparison between situations like heritage language education at Warm Springs and those more normally considered under the heading of ‘superdiversity’.

In all of these situations, people are “evidently in possession of a range of linguistic resources” which they “organize into ways of speaking,” in terms of which “sets of [linguistic] features become associated” with recognizable social personae and interactional roles in types of speech events (Møller and Jørgensen 2012:13)—which is only to say, these linguistic resources come to have a social existence not primarily as abstract grammatical rules associated with named ‘languages’ but as enregistered forms of conduct involving speech (Agha 2007).

If the foregoing is true, as I believe it is, of all human communication involving speech, it raises a number of questions: What, if anything, is distinctive about the sociolinguistic conditions labeled ‘superdiverse’? What are the criteria for deciding that a situation is not merely diverse, but ‘super-diverse’? Is the difference one of kind, or of degree (cf. Silverstein 2013)? How can ‘superdiversity’ be applied to social groups that are smaller than, say, the population of London?

## Conclusion

In their position paper on language and superdiversity, Blommaert and Rampton summon us to address “the ways in which people take on different linguistic forms as they align and disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages,” to investigate “how they (try to) opt in and opt out, how they perform or play with linguistic signs of group belonging, and how they develop particular trajectories of groups identification throughout their lives” (2011: 6)—all of which seems relevant *inter alia* to the Wasco case described in my paper.

Sharpening the contrast between their own approach and those that presuppose the sharedness both of a denotational code and a set of (indexical) norms for the production and interpretation of speech as the “normal” state of a(ny) ethnolinguistic community, Blommaert and Rampton identify four “sharp empirical challenges” that “diversity itself” poses to “traditional ideas about the achievability of mutual understanding and the centrality of shared communication” (2011: 8):

- (1) When people “with very different backgrounds, resources and communicative scripts” are brought together in situations of (super-) diversity, “non-shared knowledge” becomes salient, limits to intelligibility can become acutely felt, and shared understandings achieved in the here-and-now appear vulnerable to “more fluent interpretations formed elsewhere” (*ibid.*; emphasis in orig.). The Warm Springs case discussed in my paper illustrates how social boundaries not of ethnicity but of generation—in which age becomes a proxy for closeness to, or distance from, traditional forms of indigenous knowledge (including language)—throw into sharp relief the community-internal dynamics of non-shared knowledge: a condition the Wasco class was designed to address.
- (2) In superdiverse situations, “non-standard mixed language practices that appear to draw on styles and languages that aren’t normally regarded as belonging to the speaker”—practices that are “strikingly different from dominant institutional notions of multilingualism as the ordered deployment of different language” (2011:8; cf. Blackledge & Creese 2010 on ‘separate

bilingualism')—become prominent. Studying such practices allows us “to observe linguistic norms being manufactured, interrogated, or altered” in and through (micro-) interactional patterns (2011: 9). While most (though not all) of the adult students in the Wasco class were from families locally identified with the Wasco (tribal) group, none of them were “normally regarded” as speakers of the language. Further, the language expertise they acquired by participating in the class enabled them to insert words, phrases, and short utterances in Kiksht into their otherwise Anglophone speech to achieve a range of interactional effects (though for reasons of space, these usages weren't documented in my paper).

- (3) In situations of diversity, where “shared knowledge is problematized and creativity and incomprehension are both at issue, people reflect on their own and others' communication” (2011: 10); here, the centrality of what Blommaert and Rampton (perhaps redundantly) call “metapragmatic reflexivity” becomes inescapable—even though, as they point out, such reflexivity “is actually pervasive in all linguistic practice” (ibid.; and cf. Agha 2007).
- (4) Extending our empirical focus beyond “habit, regularity and system” to include “distinction and spectacle” gives a central place to the study of performance, and an understanding of the need to move “beyond the workings of language and text within specific events to the projection of language and text across them” (2011:10).

My paper illustrated the last two points by showing how the discourse practices observed in the Wasco classroom gesture “backward,” as it were, to more traditional forms of ceremonial (and related) speech, “sideways,” to other forms of classroom discourse, and “forward,” to the Museum's grand opening ceremony, for which the classroom became a kind of rehearsal space.

In this case, the participation framework in the classroom was the sign-vehicle in terms of which all this “gesturing” became possible: the participation framework of the classroom was (performatively) made to resemble the participation frameworks in place in other kinds of events, in other places, at other times. The material only makes sense if we have the analytic machinery that enables us to understand how discourse practices can establish these kinds of indexical linkages across speech events in social space and time (Silverstein 2005).

Other work in the sociolinguistics of superdiversity has documented the indexical potency of sign-vehicles at other levels of linguistic form. When Hanif, a fifteen-year-old in a London school, reads aloud the title on the cover of a book of exercises at the beginning of a lesson on astronomy, and renders the words on the cover, *Stars and Galaxies*, in a Cockney ‘accent’ (as [sta:z n galaksei::z]), he is “managing the transition between chat and study, peer group and school”; the Cockney stylization allows him to “combine a display of ‘being on-task’ with signs that he is not a nerd and is still in tune” (Rampton 2006: 299). In cases like this, it is sub-phonemic variants functioning as shibboleths of ‘accent’ that cue circulating images of recognizable social types (Agha 2007)—just as the addental pronunciation of [s] in Copenhagen evokes “oppositional, streetwise, minority masculinity” (Jørgensen, et al. 2011: 31), whereas the same (or similar) pronunciation of [s] in the US and elsewhere evokes very different associations. Great—but what is qualitatively new about the situations termed ‘superdiverse’?

Perhaps the differences between the sociolinguistic conditions that obtain in a small rural community like Warm Springs and large multi-ethnic urban centers like London, Antwerp or Copenhagen are differences of degree and not of kind. Perhaps people living in superdiverse cities inhabit a more differentiated “linguistic market” (to use Bourdieu's unfortunate metaphor), and thus have available to them a greater range or variety of linguistic resources, than people living in more marginal locales.

This certainly seems to be the case in Copenhagen, where teenagers, when asked about “the languages they meet” in their daily lives, are able to list a large number of named languages—Danish, English, Arabic, Spanish, Farsi, Polish, and Thai; to this list some add languages like French, Italian, Greek, Latin, and Portuguese, which they encounter mostly “in books” (Møller and Jørgensen 2012: 6-7). But they also list a number of other named ways of speaking, which researchers associated with the Amager Project have found to be associated with particular types of practices, situations, settings, and interlocutors. These young people’s linguistic resources, then, seem to exist in a stylistic continuum of registers, anchored at one end by ‘Integrated’ or ‘Nerdy Language’ (Integreret sprog; Nørdet sprog), a politeness register of lexically pure Danish emblematic of teacher-student interaction in school, and at the other end by a lexically “mixed” register or registers emblematic of peer-group interaction, and variously termed ‘Street Language’ (Gadesprog), ‘Perker Language’ (Perkersprog; Perker < non-Std English Paki), ‘Slang’ (Slang), and/or ‘Ghetto’ (Ghetto), and characterized by “slang, swearing, affricated and palatalized t-pronunciation, polylingual mixing practices, what they refer to as ‘strange accent’, and linguistic creativity and innovation”—a heterogeneous cluster of linguistic means by which young people communicate (emblemize) “toughness, masculinity, youth, pan-ethnic minority ‘street’ culture and academic non-prestige” (Madsen, et al. 2013:12). Notice how an attempt to make an inventory of the linguistic resources available to young people in Copenhagen inevitably becomes a description of what they do with those resources.

‘Superdiversity’, a relatively new term/concept in sociolinguistics, exhibits in its use a very revealing semantic instability: sometimes it is used as a descriptive term to label a set of actually existing—and (arguably) relatively new—conditions in the world; sometimes it is used as a kind of cover-term for a set of emerging approaches to the study of discourse practices wherever they occur. Blommaert and Rampton, for example, propose it as the name for an emerging paradigm with its own “agenda for research” (2011: 13 et passim).

If we take it in the first sense, as a descriptive term used to label the sociolinguistic conditions found in large cities, quite apart from the actual discourse practices that take place there, we run into two difficulties, one methodological, the other empirical or historical. The methodological difficulty is that ‘superdiversity’, framed as a descriptive label for a set of sociolinguistic conditions, retains (or at least invites) an emphasis on the multiplicity of named languages—e.g., there are 300 languages spoken in London, or so it was claimed in that city’s successful 2012 Olympics bid (Vertovec 2007: 1032)—just at a moment when most of the sociolinguistic researchers involved in the study of superdiversity have insisted on moving beyond ‘languages’ as analytic givens, to an emphasis on “resources and repertoires” (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 5-6), or “features” that may or may not be associable with named languages (Jørgensen, et al. 2011: 23).<sup>12</sup>

The historical difficulty, pointed out in some detail by Silverstein (2013), is that diversely plurilingual environments, “complex social formations in which denotational codes themselves have come into intimate contact, people controlling a repertoire of variants enregistered across more than one ‘language’,” are in themselves nothing new. Conditions like these, that used to be observed at the “peripheries of colonial expansion, of globalization, and of empire,” have now in effect “moved to the centre of the politico-economic north,” much to the consternation of policymakers, educationists, and other inhabitants of “language-

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<sup>12</sup> Vertovec, note, measures the superdiversity of London (2007: 1032) or of its neighborhoods (e.g., Newham; 2007: 1033) in terms of people’s (non-UK) country or region of birth. But no straight line can be drawn from a person’s country of origin to a language—and indeed, many of the countries and regions contributing large immigrant populations to the UK (e.g., the Indian subcontinent, Africa, and the Caribbean) are themselves extremely complex and internally differentiated (plurilingual and pluri-lect-al) sociolinguistic environments.

facing institutions” in the “receiving” societies (Silverstein 2013). The referent of ‘superdiversity’ construed as a descriptive term, then—as a way of describing the conditions under which speech takes place, rather than any particular acts of speaking—keeps receding from view.

If we construe ‘superdiversity’ in the second sense—as a research paradigm—its outlines become blurred in a different way. Superdiversity research in sociolinguistics clearly emerges from an inter-animation of ideas and research problems derived from a number of (by no means mutually exclusive) scholarly traditions associated with North America (e.g., the work of Gumperz, Hymes, Silverstein), continental Europe (e.g., the influence of Fabian and Bourdieu), and the UK (e.g., the concern with class and the influence of Raymond Williams, Basil Bernstein, and others), to say nothing of the far-reaching influence of figures like Bakhtin or Erving Goffman. But scholars working in all of these traditions had begun to converge around a shared set of methodological and theoretical commitments long before superdiversity emerged as a topic. All four of the “empirical challenges” listed by Blommaert and Rampton and discussed above—roughly speaking, the idea that shared understandings are to be achieved (through discourse practices) rather than assumed, the importance of language “mixing” of various sorts, the centrality to all of these practices of “metapragmatic reflexivity,” and an interest in performance and verbal artistry in the everyday—have been front and center in linguistic anthropology for at least thirty years. The fascinating discussion in the UKLEF e-seminar, which I’ve barely done justice to here, testifies to this coalescence of empirical and theoretical concerns.

Maybe like Moliere’s *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* we’ve been studying ‘superdiversity’ all along without quite realizing it. Or maybe we should take to heart the really major theoretical developments at the intersection of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology over recent decades, and realize that neither sense of the term will quite do. Sociolinguistic conditions cannot be treated as separate from or external to the discourse practices that create them, any more than “language ideologies” can be treated as external to the speech practices that shape and are shaped by them—unless we want to (re-) subscribe to the language ideologies that underwrite the idea that there are “300 languages” in “London,” which, judging from the responses to my paper in the UKLEF e-seminar, none of us does.

If people create the sociolinguistic “environment” in which they speak, by speaking, then the sociolinguistic conditions in which utterances qua social acts take on recognizable social meanings can’t be separated from the acts themselves, any more than ‘languages’ can be separated from the people who speak them. This insight should not—and so far, has not—resulted in a retreat into the infinite regress of ethnographic particularism.

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