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# Introduction
## Language Lives in Unexpected Places

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"The disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and even rural sociology," José Barreiro told his expectant audience, are "sciences of extinction." It was a morning in late September 2023, in what was once the historic principal town of Tali Tsisgwayahi on the traditional lands of the Anikituwagi (Cherokee)—known for now as Western Carolina University. Barreiro, a Taíno activist and scholar, had been invited to give the keynote address for the annual conference, "Rooted in the Mountains." The year's theme was titled in Cherokee, *Sga-du-gi* (Community). In his opening remarks, Barreiro drew attention to the ways that these disciplines were predicated on the idea of the disappearance of Native peoples, as they sought to document "disappearing" linguistic and cultural knowledge. As he argued, the idea that Indigenous people were always destined for extinction was, and is, key to the settler colonial project.[1] Barreiro called instead for these disciplines to join with Indigenous peoples as allies in building, from the grassroots, a "science of survival." This was a generous invitation to continue work already begun within communities to, as Barreiro put it, "recreate at many different levels." For Barreiro, this was "science of continuing existence," which involved "reconstructing from the inside." He asked the audience, for instance, to consider the question, how do you recover a language—like Taíno—that settler science insisted was lost?

Perhaps more of us will listen to Barreiro's request to create "a science of continuing existence." Despite these overtures to build better relationships, the settler colonial myth that Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages are on the brink of disappearance remains all too prevalent. Even descriptions of the UNESCO's Indigenous Languages Decade (2022–2032) are framed "to draw attention to the *critical situation* of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their *preservation*, revitalization, and promotion" (emphasis added).[2] This frame closely mirrors earlier claims of salvage documentation that Indigenous people and languages were on the brink of extinction, and that they needed to be documented

(preserved) before it was too late.[3] The framing is no doubt well intentioned, but it reinforces a wider message that leads many of our introductory students to conclude that Indigenous peoples are slowly vanishing, a key component of the settler colonial erasure of indigeneity. We—Georgia Ennis and Erin Debenport—as scholars of Euro-American settler descent who would like to accept the invitation to build a different kind of science within anthropology, actively work against this idea in our teaching and research. This special issue of *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* is a similar attempt to think against these ideas of disappearance through the continued reclamation of Indigenous languages, despite their oppression.[4]

Our collection emerges from a conversation begun in 2011, now more than ten years ago, with the publication of the special issue "American Indian Languages in Unexpected Places" in this journal.[5] Then guest editors Anthony Webster and Leighton Peterson brought together two distinct intellectual traditions in their collection. One strand was the work of historian Philip Deloria, which highlights the ways perceptions of the "expected" and the "unexpected" of American Indians serve as "both the products and the tools of domination," that continue to deny Indigenous peoples coeval existence.[6] The other strand was what Webster and Peterson described as linguistic anthropology's attention to the ways "linguistic inequalities are naturalized and circulated."[7] As they argued, one of the principal ways that such inequalities are circulated and naturalized is through articulations of Western language ideologies—here analogous to the external "expectations" of Indigenous people Deloria describes, and what is considered anomalous or not.[8]

The concept of language ideology has had an enduring influence on linguistic anthropology since Michael Silverstein's 1979 definition that it refers to "any set of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use."[9] Judith Irvine later expanded this formulation to include "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistics relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests."[10] Paul Kroskrity, meanwhile, added attention to "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social world."[11] A continued connection between the present essays and the previous volume is their sustained attention to the ways that power and language intertwine through these "moral and political interests."[12]

Kroskrity further suggests that "language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group."[13] In Foucault's well-known formulation, "discourse" takes the place of "ideology," but he remained centrally concerned with understanding how the discourses of science—and other fields—constituted regimes of what counts as truth through power: "It is a question of what *governs* statements, and the way in which they *govern* each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures."[14] The "scientific procedures" of Western linguists once claimed that Indigenous speakers of the Americas suffered from linguistic disorders of "sound blindness," when it was the scholars who were, in fact, incapable of hearing across their own phonological systems to understand the conditions of phonetic alternation.[15] That linguists expected the

speech they documented in the Americas to be "primitive" says more about their expectations of Indigenous peoples—and the moral and political interests of conquest and settlement—than it does about language structure. Our present collection of essays continues the conversation begun a decade ago between linguistic anthropology and Native American and Indigenous studies to explore the ways that linguistic inequalities are naturalized, circulated, and resisted in the face of the structure of settler colonial white supremacy. It also shares a much deeper genealogy with concerns regarding the ways that power is enacted, regimented, felt, and resisted.

Like Webster and Peterson's earlier intervention, we seek "to place linguistic anthropology into meaningful dialogue with contemporary indigenous studies."[16] In doing so, we highlight some of the more recent themes and resonances between the disciplines and how the perspectives of linguistic anthropology can help us to theorize contemporary processes of settler colonialism, racism, and decolonization—both within and outside of academia. Linguistic anthropologists, often in conversation with community scholars, also developed new frameworks for theorizing contemporary practices with Indigenous languages. These include (1) emergent emphases on theorizing white supremacy, abolition, and decolonization in linguistic anthropology; (2) a related and growing movement to theorize and promote "language reclamation" over "language revitalization"; and (3) a shift toward "multimodality" in ethnographic theory. The continued influence of theories of language ideologies—individual opinions that overlap with widespread discourses that evaluate particular languages or their speakers—is also felt, pointing to the utility of these theories for explaining language and power.[17] There has also been a greater acknowledgment of the ways that linguistic and cultural systems and practices have been linked to place-based ecologies of knowledge, which were purposefully interrupted by settler colonial regimes.

By examining some of these new turns in linguistic anthropology and Native American and Indigenous studies, this collection also seeks to extend conversations about language reclamation across areas known (for now) as the Americas. Here we call them Abya Yala (South) and Turtle Island (North), following two of the most prominently adopted terms derived from Indigenous languages and traditions for these regions.[18] There are important differences in the histories, forms, and paths that colonialism took across Abya Yala and Turtle Island, and indeed around the world.[19] As Shannon Speed forcefully argues, however, "Latin American states are settler colonial states, though they are rarely analyzed in this way."[20] Speed, drawing on Wolfe's earlier theorization, suggests that in both areas, colonial invasion "is a structure, not an event," related to the dispossession of native land and resources in which "the colonizers come to stay."[21]

We are struck by the resonances of experience of the "structure" of settler colonialism among many of the communities with whom the authors in this volume work. The explicit suppression of Indigenous language practices by dominant states and the concomitant shift toward dominant languages among local communities is an all-too-common experience, whether the dominant language imposed upon these communities has been English, Spanish, or—though not addressed in this volume—French or Portuguese, among others. Schools, for instance, have emerged as

a key institution through which students across these territories have been socialized into dominant language practices, and remain complicated sites of reclamation in a variety of contexts.[22] Similarly, the oppression of language and lifeways has often gone together with the dispossession and extraction of Native lands and resources across continents. The maintenance of extractive sacrifice zones near Native reservations in the United States and Canada is a form of environmental racism and denial of sovereignty that is mirrored in many regions of South America.[23] Ennis argues, for instance, in her essay that in the Ecuadorian Amazon forms of environmental oppression like mining, hydroelectric projects, and agriculture continue to interrupt Indigenous lifeways and languages. Themes of reclaiming language and place relevant to settler colonial studies emerge throughout our volume, and are particularly prevalent in essays by Bernard Perley, Barbra Meek, Joseph Marks, Karl Swinehart, and Georgia Ennis, though nearly all our authors share an attention to questions of coloniality and decoloniality across these regions. As Meek points out in this volume, "Decolonization is largely about sovereignty and land back, not language." Yet, a key element of the settler project to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their territories across the region has included attempts to dispossess them of their languages.

M. Bianet Castellanos has argued that the application of "settler colonial theory to Latin America is hampered by the nascent relationship between American Indian studies and Latin American studies."[24] The development of a more robust account of linguistic oppression is also hampered by the still nascent relationships among regional scholars of language shift and reclamation.[25] Although often associated with the experience of Indigenous North America, processes of linguistic imperialism, oppression, and shift affect communities around the globe. Language shift and revitalization are also topics of concern within European nations, where deeply entrenched nationalist ideologies linking language and state have contributed to the decline of both minoritized languages and local dialects.[26] Indeed, at the 2022 Annual Society for Linguistic Anthropology Conference in Boulder, Colorado, our panelists were joined by Sandra Keller of Illinois State University, who discussed the decline of Gallo—a Romance variety spoken in western France—in favor of French.[27] Susan Gal's work on language ideology and shift in Austria, Kathryn Woolard's consideration of diglossia between Catalan and Spanish, Jacqueline Urla's exploration of Euskera language revitalization, or Jillian Cavanaugh's discussion of memory and identity among Bergamasco speakers in Italy provide a small sample of the ethnographic research on the relationship between language and power in Europe.[28] In what became English-speaking Britain, Irish, Welsh, Gaelic, Cornish, and Manx were minoritized languages, while Spain witnessed the oppression of Catalan, Basque, and Galician in favor of Castilian, and French-speaking France counted the aforementioned Gallo as well as Breton, Occitan, Picard, and Alsacian among regional varieties.[29] These local forms of linguistic colonialism honed the assimilatory practices of expansive empires.

Outside of Europe, movements toward decolonization—oftentimes from European powers—have involved the rejection of colonial language politics. In Burkina Faso and Mali, for instance, struggles for decolonization have also involved debates over the use of French as a national language, including in educational settings. In 2023,

the military governments of Mali and Burkina Faso demoted French from national language to "working" language, clearing the way for the use of a diversity of local languages as "official" languages.[30] This is a radical transformation, given Lüpke's 2018 claim that "only languages of colonial pedigree are recognized as official languages and used widely in formal domains."[31] Significantly, he also identifies this lack of official status with the vulnerable nature of many small languages in Africa.[32] Leanne Hinton and colleagues suggest that "the multilingual contexts of Africa should encourage us to radically rethink revitalization practices and their underlying ideologies when transferring experiences from the Global North."[33] Like the Americas, Western language ideologies have influenced many of the approaches to language planning and revitalization, suggesting the need for greater attention to locally meaningful approaches to language pedagogy that supports multilingualism.

As the world's most linguistically diverse continent, Asia is even less frequently considered than other regions in studies of language shift and revitalization. Such ideological erasure of language oppression in Asia mirrors Gerald Roche's description of the ideological erasure of the diversity of languages within the People's Republic of China.[34] Roche shows that the internal linguistic diversity of Tibetans and other *minzu* (ethnic minority groups) such as the Mongols and the Yi in the PRC is intentionally erased to promote a single standard language for each group. These standardized minority languages are in turn subordinated to an artificial national language, Putonghua.[35] A striking similarity across many of these global settings results from the ways that colonial logics of linguistic standardization, unification, documentation, and writing continue to shape the policies used to promote—somewhat ironically—both linguistic assimilation and language revitalization. Despite considerable differences, similar spirits of resistance to varied forms of domination also animate global struggles to claim linguistic rights. A full accounting of the similarities and differences of these different regions and contexts is beyond the scope of this volume and represents an important future direction to explore the expected and unexpected—that is, the ideologies of language—surrounding linguistic oppression and revitalization around the world. As Roche notes, it also represents an important step toward "decolonizing" the expectations of language revitalization by extending beyond the Anglophone (or Hispanophone) sphere.[36]

Some of the terms mobilized within various essays in this volume—Indigenous and indigeneity, colonialism, decolonization—are complex concepts, which we do not attempt to define within this brief introduction. Our authors utilize these terms and concepts in a variety of ways. We remain cognizant, however, that the language of decolonization is, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have cautioned, "superficially adopted into education and other social sciences, supplanting prior ways of talking about social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches which decenter settler perspectives."[37] For Tuck and Yang, decolonization is a necessarily *unsettling* process. They suggest that, "though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve repatriation of land simultaneous to recognition of how land and relations to land have always been differently understood and enacted."[38] An original contributor to the 2010 volume, Barbra

Meek, returns in this issue to offer "relanguaging" as an alternative to the metaphorical discourse of "decolonization" for settler scholars. As she points out, positionality and perspective on decolonization matter, and for settlers, "decolonization" involves an ironic—if not impossible—erasure of self, what Meek calls an "existential paradox."

This collection comes at a time when there has been a significant shift in public recognition of the ongoing existence of Indigenous peoples in the United States and other nations shaped by colonial histories. The year 2020 was an inflection point for many people, in which the interlinked frameworks of white supremacy and settler colonialism and their attendant structuring logics of anti-Blackness and anti-Nativeness were laid bare.[39] Those with the privilege to be stuck at home were abruptly hailed into new publics—dispersed formations that emerge in relation to the circulation of text and discourse—via online spaces, interactions, and platforms, where digital communication intensified awareness of ongoing social injustices and activism.[40] Movements such as Standing Rock, Idle No More, and Black Lives Matter had slowly built digital networks and communication strategies to address wider audiences.[41] Such channels received heightened attention in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd and other highly visible acts of state violence during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

National debates about land acknowledgments and Native mascots were also to be found in our more local communities. Among the digital publics within which we interact, websites such as www.native-land.ca circulated widely across social media platforms as users increasingly encouraged each other to find out "whose land" they were on. At the time, one of the authors, Georgia Ennis, was a visiting fellow in the Center for Humanities and Information at Penn State and an allied member of the Indigenous Faculty and Staff Alliance. A few miles away in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania—a town 92.9 percent white—residents, university members, and allies intensified a divisive campaign to rename and rebrand the local high school, who were known as the "Red Raiders," and whose school logo was a stereotypical, decontextualized image of an Indigenous warrior, seemingly from the Plains. Following extensive public pressure, the school board voted in 2021 to rename and rebrand. However, a newly elected school board rescinded their decision in 2022, citing the costs of the change.[42] At contentious school board meetings—held on Zoom—area residents for and against the change debated the meaning of the word *red* and whether these images were harmful to Native peoples and students.[43] A seemingly collective entry overnight across generations into shared, multimodal digital worlds brought social justice issues to the forefront of many conversations.

This introduction's other author, Erin Debenport, also witnessed increased visibility surrounding Indigenous responses to white supremacy and settler colonialism at her home institution, UCLA. UCLA has a long history of Native activism, evident in the creation of the American Indian Studies Center in 1969, which resulted from pressure put on the administration by members of the American Indian Movement working with Indigenous students, faculty members, and their supporters. More recently, activism has centered around holding accountable the University of California's Office of the President—which governs all ten campuses—for increasing Native enrollment at these

high-profile land-grant institutions. Direct actions, including a student occupation of UCLA's administrative building in 2021 combined with ongoing efforts by faculty members resulted in the university planning a multiyear hiring initiative for Native faculty members, creating a special advisor to the chancellor on Native American and Indigenous affairs, and waiving tuition for all students who are California residents and members of federally recognized tribes. In addition, the former Interdepartmental Program in American Indian Studies, recently departmentalized, will provide another avenue for increasing the influence of Indigenous scholars and scholarship.

While there is still a great deal of work to be done—UCLA still has far too few Native students, especially considering it is located in the US city with the highest number of Indigenous people—these examples show how combating white supremacy and the need to hold the settler state accountable have become public sphere issues present in our schools, workplaces, and mediascapes. As scholars continue to show, the ways these issues are structured by white supremacy and settler colonialism can be productively explored using the perspectives of linguistic anthropological analysis.[44]

Returning to land acknowledgments, these have emerged as another way of highlighting the complicity of institutions with the settler colonial state and calling for their accountability. However, as these statements began popping up in more e-mail signature lines and at the start of conference presentations, a significant number of people have come to doubt the sincerity with which they are delivered, or the actual effects of their performance. Michael Lambert, Elisa Sobo, and Valerie Lambert have written, for example, that "too often, land acknowledgments are little more than highly performative, feel-good empty gestures."[45] Linguistic anthropologists have long been concerned with the conditions that must be met for a linguistic performance to be successful.[46] In this tradition, "performative" utterances are ones that accomplish something or create a change in the world. While more commonly "performative" means insincere, the view from linguistic anthropology can help to tease apart the effects of these seemingly empty utterances. Rather than simply being unsuccessful or infelicitous at creating a performative change in the world, the discourse of such acknowledgments may have unintended effects. For Lambert and colleagues, the framing of many of these acknowledgments around ideas of stewardship and custodianship erases Native claims to land—and sovereignty—"tacitly affirm[ing] the putative right of non-Indigenous people to now claim title."[47] They suggest, instead a different sort of performative utterance, one that calls for "a clear statement that the land needs to be restored to the Indigenous nation or nations that previously had sovereignty over the land." Such concerns have led the American Anthropological Association in consultation with the Association of Indigenous Anthropologists to "pause" the use of land acknowledgments at conferences.

These ongoing, everyday debates—over mascots and land acknowledgments—are often questions about language and how the colonial states occupying Turtle Island and Abya Yala linguistically recognize—or not—histories of settler and extractive colonialism that have led to the dispossession of land, culture, and language. At the same time, visibility has also been heightened through trends in entertainment and popular culture, with high-profile television and film projects depicting Native

stories. These examples are also political, with Indigenous creators insisting on an all-Native writer's room (*Reservation Dogs*) and tribes insisting on meaningful, ongoing consultation with non-Indigenous filmmakers (*Killers of the Flower Moon*). The public sphere discussions about these and other instances of cultural production made by or depicting Indigenous people themselves constitute an important site for examining dominant and emerging discourses about colonial dispossession and the reassertion of sovereignty and self-expression in new domains.

Such questions of acknowledgment and recognition are central to Barbra Meek's essay, which suggests that they are also questions of "language-ing difference and difference-ing language."[48] In the article "On Relanguaging: From Documentation to Decolonization," Meek considers how scholars might "move ahead" in ways that go beyond simply recognizing or acknowledging settler coloniality and white supremacy in their research, writing, and teaching. Meek revisits many of the earlier preoccupations of her research to suggest new orientations for linguists and anthropologists interested in Indigenous languages by borrowing what Krystal Smalls terms a *rasanblaj* approach to ethnographic sources.[49]

This *rasanblaj* methodological approach is also decidedly multimodal and multimedia in its orientation. Meek's essay deftly switches between and among analyses of her own ethnographic research with Kaska speakers to transcripts of the film *Maverick* to further representations of Indigenous speech in books and television. Meek thus provides a "reflective walk" on many of the central questions of her research on language endangerment and revitalization, as well as the naturalization of linguistic racism in "Hollywood Injun English." In doing so she also speaks to some of the other central concerns of this volume—the dialectic relationship among white supremacy, linguistic racism, and academic scholarship and the production of semiotic ideologies of difference.[50] Through the concept of "relanguaging," Meek suggests multiple ways in which both scholars and broader publics might redefine the semiotic relationships of marginalization that naturalize conceptions of linguistic difference and disappearance.

Closely connected to Meek's and others' focus on decolonization, an additional set of themes that have risen to prominence since the publication of the 2011 volume have focused on reframing discourses around responses to Indigenous language shift, describing such efforts as language reclamation rather than revitalization, while at the same time asserting that acts of reclaiming are necessary parts of liberatory political projects. Miami linguist and Miaamia language activist Wesley Leonard summarizes this distinction, saying

> I have in previous work characterized *language revitalisation* as a process focused on language itself, wherein the goals and measures of a given effort revolve around variables such as the number of speakers, and differentiated *language reclamation* as "a larger effort by a community to claim its right to speak a language and to set associated goals in response to community needs and perspectives" (Leonard 2012: 359, see also Leonard 2011: 141). Reclamation is thus a type of decolonisation.[51]

A casual glance at grant applications, job announcements, and academic papers (including many in this volume) indicates that the term *reclamation* is being used more

frequently, and that all stakeholders—not just community members—are now widely recognized as being responsible to the original caretakers of Indigenous languages (to borrow a phrase often used in land acknowledgements). In her *Oxford Encyclopedia of Anthropology* entry for "language revitalization," linguist and community language collaborator Sarah Shulist identifies the "difference lying in the definition of what the central object of intervention is. For 'revitalization,' the concern is with language itself (again, as a bounded and defined entity, a noun); for 'reclamation' it is with relationality, community, and identity that are experienced and expressed through language (as a practice, a verb)."[52]

Indeed, the shift from revitalization to reclamation is evident across these papers and beyond. Every author in this volume contributes to projects that can only be described as existing within a reclamation model, many in their home communities. As such, each paper offers specific examples of how acts of reclaiming are imagined, debated, and practiced. In some contexts, this means reclaiming how Indigenous peoples and Indigenous languages are represented in popular media (Meek), the built and sonic environments (Swinehart and Ennis, respectively), and social media (Newhall). Other papers describe local control of private sphere practices with language, asserting the need to consider local language ideologies governing public oratory when analyzing a linguistic text (Marks), the circulation of language materials (Debenport), and the ways that local forms of sociality can be reintroduced as part of community language projects (Kroskrity and Barreras, Perley). An orientation to language reclamation is also present in Jenny Davis' decision to submit a poem as a response to our editor's invitation to contribute to a volume about Indigenous languages in unexpected places, defying the generic conventions of linguistic anthropology journals and offering us instead a glimpse into "the Indigenous languages slipstream."

The shift from language revitalization to reclamation is palpable in broader contexts, as well. For those of us who can remember applying for extramural funding to support community language projects in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there is a notable shift in the ways funding organizations discuss linguistic data. The idea of "universal ownership" that Jane Hill and others warned linguists to avoid was alive and well the first decade of the millennium, with requirements to make linguistic data public foreclosing the possibility of centering community control.[53] While the National Science Foundation's Dynamic Language Infrastructure grant program ministers to "endangered" language documentation, its call for proposals still centers research over community needs (as can be seen in the wording: "The program supports projects that contribute to data management and archiving, and to the development of the next generation of *researchers* [emphasis added])." The list of recent awards does include projects that are community-driven and seek to build capacity to analyze and archive languages according to local needs.

In her article "Business as Usual? Crises and the Futures for Indigenous Language Work in the Age of COVID," Erin Debenport moves across in-person and mediated examples to explore these shifting disciplinary expectations. Surveying the different ways that the Pueblo tribes she works with have utilized digital tools as part of community language projects both before and after the pandemic, she shows how

the disinclination for using web-based technologies hinged on a view that such tools were always centered on circulation rather than their ability to provide more control over access. Her Pueblo colleagues connected the use of new approaches in the face of constraint and hardship as part of a longer arc of survival and creativity that they had been adopting since European arrival.

Alongside these ongoing ethnolinguistic projects, Debenport also recounts the other kinds of language work she was involved in during the pandemic, focusing on two digital platforms for storing and (potentially) disseminating Indigenous language materials: Ethnologue and Mukurtu. As her examples show, despite an increased focus on community control and centering the needs of heritage speakers and learners over academics, incentives still exist—both within and outside of academic institutions—to decenter community control of Indigenous language data.

Wesley Leonard's point that language reclamation is a type of decolonization is echoed in many of these papers, in that many of these authors describe projects of resettling language, dismissing dominant or imposed ways of learning or being. Accompanying this vibrant emphasis on the decolonizing possibilities inherent in language reclamation efforts is a continued critique of salvage approaches in linguistic anthropology, with authors recounting examples of new domains of creative possibility. Such decolonizing possibilities imbue Bernard Perley's essay, "Documenting the Unexpected: Repatriating Native American Linguistic Sovereignty in Northeastern Ancestral Lands." Here, Perley provides a critical ethnography of the historical erasure of Indigenous languages across contexts. Tracing linguistic colonialism in the writings of Columbus and other documentarians, the author illustrates how the discursive erasure of Indigenous languages in colonial documents resonates with contemporary discussions of language endangerment and loss. Powerfully counteracting extant discourses of disappearance, Perley highlights multiple emergent "vitalities" and forms of language life for Maliseet and other languages of the Northeast, with a special focus on how ways of interacting and being are taught alongside words, phrases, and sounds.

At the same time, Perley also demonstrates the fruitful relationship between one of the most foundational topics in linguistic anthropology, language ideologies, and an important methodology, close textual analysis, by tracing how ideologies about Indigenous languages and their speakers developed and what the consequences are for contemporary communities. By showing how Native people and their languages were depicted by European colonizers (and, like others in this volume, including Meek), Perley is able to critique the ideals and methods that governed the salvage era. Not only do European language ideologies center practices of schooled literacy and the importance of single-language nation-states, but this Western language ideology that holds that languages can be removed from their cultural contexts and documented carefully by members of the scientific community is found in many of the contemporary work on "revitalization" that Perley interrogates.

The centrality of theories of language ideology to the subfield of linguistic anthropology is felt across all of the other papers as well, including the essay coauthored by one of its originary theorists. Paul Kroskrity and Cesar Barreras provide an uplifting example of an emergent vitality for the Yo'eme language in their article "An Indigenous

Language and Culture Board Game? Serious Play and Yo'eme Language Reclamation." Language shift and revitalization are often seen as "serious subjects," but their study shows how play is also an important aspect of language life. They explore the development and use of a Yo'eme board game and the ways that the game was able to incorporate cultural values and knowledge alongside language.

Like many of Perley's examples, the game is designed to promote forms of language transmission through storytelling, creating materials that keep speakers and hearers engaged, nudging them toward culturally relevant forms of interaction. Similar to Perley's three-dimensional, accordion-shaped comic strips, language in its material form (here, a board game) mediates culturally resonant forms of interaction and belonging a decolonizing intervention that fosters "language ideological clarification."

This collection of articles also highlights a burgeoning interest in multimodality within anthropology and related disciplines. Multimodality is a complicated term that brings together several distinct intellectual traditions concerned with the multiplicity of communicative modes and media involved in interaction,[54] which Ennis [55] has reviewed elsewhere. Here we touch only upon the relationship between multimodal data and methods and the turn toward more collaborative and engaged ethnographic praxis. We see this as most directly related to the turn in linguistic and anthropological research to engage in frameworks of language reclamation, emphasizing collaboration and community-direction.

Visual anthropology—once a somewhat niche subdiscipline focused on ethnographically textured, experimental, and documentarian film—has increasingly been reimagined as a multimodal and collaborative anthropology that brings together multiple media forms. In 2017, the flagship journal *American Anthropologist* renamed the section "Visual Anthropology" as "Multimodal Anthropology," a performative act intended to reconfigure the subdiscipline, as Collins, Durington, and Gill called for "an anthropology that works across multiple media but one that also engages in public anthropology and collaborative anthropology through a field of differently linked media platforms."[56] This was an explicit offer to rethink the stakes of ethnographic engagement through the rich media ecologies in which we—anthropologists and interlocuters alike—live. It was also a call to imagine an anthropology that Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón describe as "yet to come: multisensorial rather than text-based, performative rather than representational, and inventive rather than descriptive."[57] Contributor Bernard Perley's emphasis on multimodal communication through his "Going Native" cartoon series published in *Anthropology News*, as well as textual-visual projects creating emergent vitalities for Maliseet are just one way our contributors integrate multimodality into their larger ethnographic and applied practices. As Meek describes in her essay, "two of [her] favorite projects, neither of which would ever have been included in [her] tenure and promotion dossier, are a multiauthored, community-driven alphabet book and the first Kaska translation of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Eric Carle, initiated by the former Aboriginal Head Start Kaska language teacher." Such multimodal and collaborative forms of anthropology inform the work of many of our contributors. Although our collection is largely textual, all our authors utilize data that is multimodal or otherwise mediated in various ways—archives of text, board

games, public signage, digital forums, memes, movies, live performances, and radio broadcasts all emerge as fruitful sites of analysis for understanding the places in which Indigenous languages live.

Several senses of multimodality can be found in Georgia Ennis' article "Reweaving Language and Lifeways in the Western Amazon," which explores the interconnections between radio media and live performances as well as face-to-face interactions. Ennis' essay emphasizes the intersection of linguistic and cultural revitalization through embodied community media as well as collaborative performances organized with research participants. Arguing that linguists have overemphasized language in revitalization, Ennis analyzes Amazonian Kichwa community media programs such as radio and live performance as a multimodal method—utilizing multiple media platforms and communicative modes—for reclaiming language and associated forms of interaction grounded in place-based knowledge. In doing so, she argues that Amazonian Kichwa language activists are "re-membering" or rejoining linguistic and cultural practices in the face of language standardization that has produced what Perley might call their "academic dismemberment."[58]

Christina Laree Newhall's analysis of Native American memes brings attention to multimodal forms of communication embedded in this genre of visual and textual images that "circulate over social media," to echo a line from Jenny Davis' poem. In "'N8Vs Be Like . . .': Processes of Authenticating Modern Indigenous Identities within Electronic Communal Spaces," Laree Newhall explores how the circulation of memes creatively and performatively constructs insider and outsider publics of Indigenous-produced social media. Grounded in her perspective as a consumer of memes produced by Native American and Alaska Native peoples, Laree Newhall explores the ways that the multimodal intersection of text and image in memes allows Indigenous authors to create emergent, pan-Indigenous publics, places, and identities online. Laree Newhall thus provides a view of Indigenous media practices through memes that "relanguage" (as Meek calls for) expectations that these are "inauthentic" or "unexpected" ways of utilizing media or language. Through Laree Newhall's discussion of the capaciously humorous and creative linguistic and visual practices of Native American meme makers, she shows the ways this multimodal media form allows for the creation of both pan-Indigenous and more "private" Indigenous discursive spheres.

Another strand that this collection seeks to weave together between a multimodal linguistic anthropology and Native American and Indigenous studies is an emerging emphasis on the entanglements between place and language (or linguistic variety), particularly in the context of territorial dispossession and climate change.[59] Philosopher Kyle Whyte describes that "settler colonialism refers to the complex social processes in which at least one society seeks to move permanently onto the terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial places lived in by one or more other societies who already derive economic vitality, cultural flourishing, and political self-determination from the relationships they have established with the plants, animals, physical entities, and ecosystems of those places."[60] The perspectives of linguistic anthropology add that language is an important way that these relationships of "cultural flourishing" were mediated, which is why they were explicitly interrupted by settler colonialism.

The title of our issue alludes to the ways that languages "live" in unexpected places, somewhat indirectly recalling the title of Keith Basso's ethnography of place and language, *Wisdom Sits in Places*: *Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*.[61] Basso explored ways that Western Apache place names encoded deep moral lessons through their relationship to stories that made those places meaningful. The original conference panels–turned–Zoom workshops[62] upon which this collection is based nodded to Basso's idea, with an emphasis on understanding the relationship between language and place. Ennis' essay, for instance, concerns the use of embodied performance media to transmit place-based environmental knowledge in the Amazon, which many speakers link to the regional linguistic varieties of their elders. Karl Swinehart's essay is likewise concerned with the link between Indigenous languages and place, albeit in somewhat different ways, as he explores the ways that public use of Aymara reconfigures space in Bolivia.

In "Text, Transit, and Transformation," Swinehart teases apart semiotic ideologies of place and language in the context of decolonial social transformations wrought under Bolivia's first Indigenous president, Evo Morales (2006–19). As Swinehart explains through a discussion of the film *Chuquiago* (1977), the larger metropolitan region of La Paz has historically been spatially divided by race and class. Swinehart explores the transformation of this semiotic ideology of space through what Meek might call a "relanguaging" of place during Morales' presidency, which saw major investments in infrastructure and Indigenous rights, as well as an expansion of the Indigenous middle class. The inauguration of a new citywide gondola system in 2014 sought explicitly to transform the city and reframe it semiotically as an Aymara space, utilizing Aymara language and Andean iconography. This linguistic landscape performatively reconfigures the relationship between Aymara and Spanish, as Swinehart argues, "with Aymara situated as textually superior to and graphically more prominent than Spanish."[63]

Perhaps no other article in this volume is as intimately connected to theorizing the relationship between language and place as Joseph Marks' "History Becomes Present: Constructing Worlds for Past, Present, and Future Ancestors through Tlingit Oratory." Like Perley, Marks turns to historical documents to consider the ways that Indigenous language documents may become hopeful examples for future action. However, instead of focusing on colonial and salvage-era historiography, Marks closely examines a text whose impact is still felt within his own family, clan, and community: a speech performed by Jessie Dalton in 1968 to explore the ways that Tlingit speakers understand space and time and engage in healing through oratory. By including reflexive commentary about how such documents must be approached appropriately, including his own struggle to adequately and respectfully explain the text, this article embodies his assertion that linguistic documents can become resources for contemporary speakers to promote decolonization.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope" as taken up by linguistic anthropologists, Marks shows how Dalton deftly constructs a Tlingit space-time within her narrative, one spacious enough to contain the audience for her story, the ancestors she invokes, contemporary Tlingit speakers and community members like

Marks himself, and, through his reanalysis, now the readers of this volume. Like Judith's Berman's (1994) reanalysis of a Franz Boas–recorded text "Oolachan-Woman's Robe" or Paul Kroskrity's (2013) reconsideration of salvage-era analysis of Yokuts and Western Mono Narratives, Marks' contribution elucidates prior analyses, but in his case also does so from a singular vantage point.

Attention to Indigenous languages in "unexpected places" can challenge representational expectations of where and how Indigenous languages are used and made meaningful in both the past and the future. Linguistic anthropology is well-positioned to address the remediations and recontextualizations of contemporary Indigenous linguistic practices, through its long emphasis on the ways in which verbal artistry, poetics, and performance produce culturally contextualized meanings, publics, and place-worlds (Basso 1996; Tedlock 1983; Kroskrity and Meek 2017). As we've highlighted in this introduction, reviewing contemporary Indigenous media, performance, activism, and scholarship demonstrate ways in which what is old may be made new again, or what is new can be made old and invested with the authority of the past for future action.

Bringing together scholars involved in the past issue of this journal ("American Indian Languages in Unexpected Places") with new voices, this special issue traverses the seemingly unexpected and regenerative linguistic and media practices of Indigenous-language speakers across the Americas. Our essays also examine the unexpected ways Indigenous languages are appropriated and circulated by non-Indigenous actors, raising important questions about the effects of new forms of circulation and interaction on enduring linguistic and social perceptions. The volume is bookended with papers by two senior Indigenous scholars, Barbra Meek and Bernard Perley, who have both been influential leaders within the discipline of linguistic anthropology as a whole. While both Meek and Perley include discussions of language reclamation projects they continue to contribute to (with Kaska and Maliseet people, respectively), each of these pieces takes a more expansive view, geographically and linguistically. Following Meek's contribution, the essays focus on Indigenous languages of Alaska (Marks) the US-Mexico borderlands (Kroskrity and Barreras, Debenport), Abya Yala (Ennis, Swinehart), and the social media sphere (Laree Newhall). As cultural and linguistic activists work to decolonize and indigenize various spaces and media, both old and new, the essays in this collection suggest that language remains a significant means through which Indigenous peoples confront dominant stereotypes, imagining and creating new possibilities for the future.

Perhaps one of the most stubborn and consequential settler expectations of Indigenous languages—and peoples—is that they are "vanishing" or "endangered." No one would deny that the linguistic worlds of many communities have been profoundly ruptured by settler colonialism. But a view that only acknowledges loss misses the significant ways that languages live on. At the same time, histories of colonial dispossession mean that many speakers—and their languages—are the most vulnerable to imported diseases, as well as the early effects of climate change. But Indigenous languages continue to thrive in the Anthropocene in ways that challenge expectations

and assumptions of what "count" as Indigenous language practices, and even how we should conceive of the fields of language revitalization and language endangerment.

We bring the idea of Indigenous languages in unexpected places into dialogue with contemporary work on Indigenous language futurism, what linguistic anthropologist Jenny Davis describes as "the imagining of Indigenous languages in Indigenous perspectives of the future."[64] We thus begin the collection with Davis' poem, "Welcome to the Indigenous Languages Slipstream." Davis, an ethnographer of Chickasaw language reclamation efforts in her own community,[65] whose research interests also center on two-spirit identity and community, is also a leading activist in efforts to repatriate human remains from university museums. She provides us with an unexpected, if very welcome, contribution to this collection of papers. In her poem, she creatively highlights the central tension of our volume—that even though Indigenous languages are still seen as outside of the time and place of the present, they can still be found in films, memes, the voices of community members, and now, thanks to our contributors, in this special issue of *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*.

## Notes

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