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Borders traversed, boundaries erected: Creating discursive identities and language communities in the Village of Tewa



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Today the Village of Tewa, First Mesa of the Hopi Reservation in Northern Arizona experiences unprecedented linguistic diversity and change due to language shift to English. Despite a wide range of speaker fluency, the now emblematic Tewa language that their ancestors transported from the Rio Grande Valley almost 325 years ago, is widely valorized within the community. However Language factions have emerged and their debates and contestations focus on legitimate language learning and the proper maintenance of their emblematic language. Boundary creation and crossing are features of discourses that rationalize possible forms of language revitalization and construct communities across temporal barriers. The theoretical implications of these discourses on both local and theoretical notions of language/speech community are explored.

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1. Introduction

As in many communities faced with language endangerment, discourses of language and identity have been multiplied and magnified by contemporary transformations in the Village of Tewa. But this is a community wherein language and group identity have an especially long and rich history of linkage in actual practice and in indigenous metalinguistic commentary. Today the Arizona Tewas number around seven hundred individuals who reside on and near the Village of Tewa on First Mesa of the Hopi Reservation in NE Arizona. They are the descendants of those Southern Tewas (or *Thanuuge'in T'owa*) who moved, at the invitation of the Hopis, from pueblos they abandoned in the Rio Grande in the aftermath of the Second Pueblo Revolt in 1696 (Dozier, 1954, 1966). We know, from both historical documents and their own oral history, that their Tewa ancestors played a significant role in the revolt and that they refused to resettle their pueblo, preferring instead to fight a guerilla war against the Spanish until the time of the Hopi invitation in 1700¹

Their descendants, who reside in the Village of Tewa community (and environs), have been studied most intensively by Edward Dozier (1954, 1966) and me (Kroskrity, 1993, 1998, 2000). It is an especially remarkable community for two reasons

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¹ There is, of course, a scholarly critique of "language endangerment" research and its tendency to portray linguistic attrition as a form of linguistic emergency thereby warranting the deployment of a cadre of linguistic and applied linguistic scientists (e.g. Cameron, 2007). Certainly the rhetoric of language endangerment has been over-used and even abused as in the case of some groups claiming that national and international languages as Spanish and English are threatened (Duchene and Heller, 2007). Such claims on behalf of languages that enjoy official status as national languages as well as international currency may use the imagery of endangerment but they are more about a discomfort with linguistic diversity than a true concern for the possible death of a particular language.

that are relevant here. One, they are the only group in a pueblo diaspora of almost one hundred villages and pueblos that managed to relocate yet retain its distinctive language. This persistence despite the likely fate of assimilation into the Hopi majority has won for the Arizona Tewa some notoriety in the literature on language endangerment. In works by both [Dorian \(1998\)](#) and [Crystal \(2000\)](#), for example, there is a tendency to depict the Arizona Tewa as paragons of persistence. This view, however, fails to appreciate their actual linguistic struggles and the real work they do in culturally managing their linguistic and cultural resources. Like so many contemporary speech communities surveyed and reviewed by [Silverstein \(1998\)](#), they have undergone great transformation within the past century. Economic incorporation, urban migration, relocation and the reservation-urban orbit ([Hodge, 1971](#)), the wired and mediated world ([Spitulnik, 1998](#)), the increasingly diverse ethnoscapes ([Appadurai, 1996](#)) now available, and many other consequences of globalization have brought massive change and greater internal diversity to this community than ever before. In my first few summers of field research in 1973 and 1974, First Mesa had no electricity, few radios, and fewer cassette tape recorders. Tewa folks were likely to go off the reservation by car mostly for shopping and to visit kinsmen who might have moved to Winslow, Holbrook, Flagstaff, Tuba City, or Phoenix to find work. Today, with the exception of the conservative Hopi village of Walpi, every home on First Mesa is electrified and many sport satellite dishes that connect the tiny reservation community to the urban centers of the nation and the world. Many upwardly mobile Tewa have sought higher education at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff or Arizona State University in Phoenix and return to the reservation with new skills, degrees, and perspectives.

Concerning language, a community that once unanimously declared that speaking Tewa was a determining attribute of Tewa identity has now had to confront the fact that the vast majority of its children are growing up with English as the main language of the home and *without* the emblematic language the community had successfully maintained post-diaspora for more than three hundred years. A community that once uniformly rejected the possibility of schools as a site for Tewa language socialization, because they viewed this as exclusively the domain of Tewa homes and their associated kin, now debates—with expected generational and inter-clan variation and contestation—the costs and benefits of tempering its hardline stance on Tewa literacy programs, on schools as a site for Tewa instruction, and on the formal instruction of Tewa more generally. I will return to these debates later.

Certainly in comparison to many other Native American and other world indigenous languages, it would be inappropriate to view the Arizona Tewa language as severely endangered, but the community itself now does appear to recognize that there is a crisis evidenced by the fact that most young people are not growing up speaking the language.¹ Informal surveys conducted during the early period of my research (1973–1985) and my most recent research sojourns from 2007 to 2012 indicate that the perception of a crisis is quite well founded, since the past thirty years have produced a decline in the number of homes in which young people were learning and actively speaking the language from 50% to between 5% and 10%.

I want to emphasize that the alarm and crisis imagery in local discourse in the Village of Tewa—the currently preferred self-designation of Arizona Tewa people for their main village often referred to by Hopis and others as Hano—is more indigenous than imported.² The Tewa, even those with college educations, are mostly unaware of a larger pattern of language endangerment and equally unaware of what other Native communities, other than their immediate Hopi neighbors, are doing in the name of language revitalization. I returned to this community after a hiatus of slightly more than a decade of minimal involvement from the mid-1990s through 2007, following more than 20 consecutive years of research involvement from 1973 to 1994. What prompted me was a series of email requests and later voicemails from Tewa young adults, who asked me to return to more active involvement in their community in order to provide resources for an emerging language revitalization effort. When I accepted their invitation to return, I was hardly unaware of the controversial nature of much if not most linguistic research in the community. But I was still surprised by the 5 year process it took for me to finally obtain official approval from the community in September, 2012—a process involving 4 public presentations at the Village of Tewa Community Center and about a dozen meetings with various configurations of clan leaders, community service workers, and other members of the Village. Whether in public testimony at a community meeting or in private discourse with old friends, I encountered the voices of about 80 Tewas, male and female, old and young – speaking their minds about the importance of the Tewa language and the best way to revitalize it within their community. In this article, I will examine how comparatively recent discourses of language and identity, emerging in an environment of language endangerment, relate to established language ideologies in the community. I also want to examine these language ideologies and the verbal practices that support them as a necessary resource for possibly rethinking the very concept of language or speech community at a time when contemporary social transformations obscure some of their traditional attributes. Like others discussed in this issue—including the Highland Chontal (Mexico) and secular Yiddish communities, Tewa Villagers have responded to social transformation, language shift, and linguistic revitalization through beliefs and practices of selective boundary creation and crossing that reconstruct these communities through patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

The importance of boundaries in processes of ethnogenesis and the maintenance of ethnic groups is a major contribution of scholars of ethnic identity, like [Barth \(1969\)](#), that resurfaces more recently in the language ideological literature ([Irvine and Gal, 2000](#); [Agha, 2007](#)). These boundaries, unlike the ones reified in the early language contact literature, are not objective givens but rather semiotically constructed. For Barth, the critical question was how do cultural groups in regular contact

² The term “Hano”, which still appears on some First Mesa area signage is a Hopi loanword based on Tewa *Thanu(ge'in T'owa)* which was the original self-designation of the group as the Southern Tewa of the Galisteo Basin in New Mexico. It is a strongly dispreferred term for Tewa people for whom even the designation of *Thanu* has become politicized. Community members strongly prefer to refer to their group as Tewa.

maintain themselves as distinct groups even though cultural differences usually diminish over time as a by-product of intercultural interaction. His answer involved an analysis that emphasized the importance of self-ascription and the need to recognize the perspective of group members who selectively attend not to the diminishing inventory of objectively identifiable cultural differences but rather to the “diacritica”—those differences that had become semiotically elevated by members to “emblems” of ethnic identity. Detailing the semiotic system at work, Agha’s (2007:235) discussion of *enregistered emblems* further explicated the linkages between: “(1) a perceivable thing, or diacritic; (2) a social persona; (3) someone for whom it is an emblem ...”. Since languages, dialects, registers, and other linguistic forms are often recruited for identity/community projects, it is important to recognize their productive role in such projects and the way they are selectively constructed to both include and exclude. Providing further semiotic resources for examining these linguistic processes of boundary construction and crossing, Irvine and Gal (2000) examined the role of language ideological processes like iconization and erasure in the creation of national and ethnic boundaries.³ These scholarly contributions provide useful resources for understanding not only the construction of various social identities but also their naturalization to insiders.

2. Discourses of language and identity

To enter the current discourses and to understand their intertextuality, we need to briefly review some of the critical cultural resources regarding language and identity that the Tewa community has acquired throughout its unique history. Their own awareness of their history, and their discursive consciousness of language and identity issues makes it impossible for most to ignore the situation as anything but a major crisis—one which, for many, requires immediate action. Evidence of this discursive consciousness regarding their “beliefs and feelings” about languages surfaces most prominently in the Tewa expression *Naa-im-bí hiili naa-im-bí woowatsi na-mu* ‘Our language is our history.’ Most Arizona Tewa know their language is related to languages spoken in such Eastern Pueblos as San Juan, Santa Clara, Nambe, and San Ildefonso. They also know that the comparative lack of Spanish lexical and phonological influence in their Tewa language distinguishes it from those of other Tewa-speaking pueblos. The Rio Grande Tewa languages, for example, have words like *kofesa* (from Spanish *confesion*) “confession” and *pinsipa* (from Spanish *principales*) “political leaders” and sounds like /x/ and /f/ (Dozier, 1964 [1956]:514), all of which are alien to Arizona Tewa and viewed by its native speakers as evidence of the linguistic impurity and cultural inferiority of the New Mexican Tewa pueblos. In a published biography, Tewa elder Albert Yava (1978:1) denigrated other Tewa languages in accord with the local language ideological preference for indigenous purism when he says, “In New Mexico the Tewa language has been corrupted by other pueblo languages and Spanish.” Thus the combined ideologies of indigenous purism and language as historical product both contribute to an additional project of constructing the Arizona Tewa language as an emblem of ethnic identity. Another local notion that weaves language, identity, and history together is the “linguistic curse” placed upon the Hopis by the ancestors of the Arizona Tewa (see Fig. 1). The continuing presence of this curse is powerfully manifested in two important and enduring “sites of collective memories” (French, 2012:340). As a physical presence, the curse is commemorated by a small shrine located between the Village of Tewa and the Hopi Village of Sichomovi which is only a few strides away. It is also memorialized in narrative form both in tribal initiation ceremonies which occur every few years as well as in the transmission of clan histories from elders to younger members. The “curse” is one of the few folk historical events that is recognized in each clan history without significant variation in detail or interpretation. In recent years I have had this basic narrative provided to me more than a dozen times in both public and more personal spaces. According to the folk history of the Tewa, their ancestors responded to Hopi failure to live up to an agreement in which their military service to the Hopis would be repaid by the granting of land use rights and other concessions. An obligatory part of tribal initiation ceremonies, Arizona Tewa narratives of the events leading up to the curse depict the cruel and unfeeling treatment by Hopis of victorious but starving Tewa warriors after they had vanquished Hopi enemies (Kroskrity, 1993). In Dozier’s (1954:292) translation, the clan chiefs of the Tewa responded with this curse: “Because you have behaved in a manner unbecoming to human beings, we have sealed knowledge of our language and our way of life from you. You and your descendants will never learn our language and our ceremonies, but we will learn yours. We will ridicule you in both your language and our own.” Apart from the continuing belief in the efficacy of this curse more than three centuries after it was originally uttered, the curse is especially remarkable for two reasons. One, it represents the Tewa as agents in the production of an asymmetrical bilingualism that would have been the expected outcome of their minority status. Two, it celebrates the maintenance of the Tewa language as a cultural victory, further laminating the language with significance as an enregistered emblem of ethnic identity (Agha, 2007:235), as a “diacritic” of Tewa ethnic identity (Barth, 1969).

A final point of discussion regarding the intimate association of the Arizona Tewa language and its use as a means of expressing ethnic or tribal identity might be described as “the cultivation of difference.” Some members use their agricultural experience as a source of imagery to naturalize their language ideologies and linguistic practice and provide a cultural rationalization for the language ideologies behind such practices as “compartmentalization,” indigenous purism, and even

³ Note that both Irvine and Gal have relabeled the process formerly known as “iconization,” changing it to the more precise “rhematization.” Gal sees the conceptual refinement as one that builds on “Peirce’s notion of ‘rheme’ as an indexical sign that the interpretant takes to be an icon” (Gal, 2005:35). In this article, though I quite agree that rhematization is more faithful to the Peircean notion, I will nevertheless use “iconization” in recognition of the currency of the term. Regardless of terminological detail, this is the process that results in “diacritica” of ethnicity or enregistered emblems of identity in the work of Barth (1969) and Agha (2007) respectively.



Fig. 1. Shrine, positioned at the border of the Village of Tewa, commemorating the linguistic curse placed on Hopis so that they could not speak the Tewa language. Note that the shrine is not the stand of firewood but is instead centered on the large pieces of petrified wood to the right (from [Yava, 1978](#)).

the iconization of specific languages to corresponding social identities. Like the Hopis, the Arizona Tewas plant many small fields consisting of a single color of corn (e.g., blue, red, yellow) in order to eliminate the hybridization and mixing of color that would occur if two colors of corn were planted in the same field. One senior consultant explained: “that’s why we have so many fields far from one another. Same way our languages. If you mix them they are no longer as good and useful. The corn is like our languages—we work to keep them separate” ([Kroskrity, 2000:330](#)).

Clearly one can see how the Tewas find a common pattern in their agricultural practice and in the dispreference for loanwords mentioned above. But one of the consequences of culturally proscribing mixing is that it keeps the linguistic repertoire of each language as distinct from the other as possible. Within this context of a deliberate cultivation of linguistic difference, and aided by a Tewa language ideology that sees language as a means of creating various social and personal identities ([Kroskrity, 1993:44–47, 193–212](#)), code switching between the languages of their linguistic repertoire often provides a means for signaling relevant social identities by selecting their iconized and otherwise indexed languages (Tewa, Hopi, and English). Since there is a cultural recognition of a multiplicity of identities and the role of languages as a means of expressing them, the “cultivation of difference” further enhances the consubstantial relationship of Tewa language and identity. But after centuries of keeping Tewa free of Hopi, it is English that now poses the bigger threat. Ironically, it was better English language skills that helped the Tewa community experience substantial economic success as cultural middlemen and innovators on the models provided by Euro-Americans. But the language that helped the community ascend to significant economic and political success now blares from the televisions in most homes in the Village of Tewa high atop First Mesa as well as in the single Tewa family houses in Polacca and Keams Canyon. It is the language of most if not all intergenerational interaction in Tewa homes—“They need it for school” you hear parents say in partial justification for not speaking more Tewa to their children.⁴

3. Traversing borders

The tropes of crossing borders as well as erecting boundaries provides an extremely useful image for examining the Tewa “linguistic community”. To date, I would contend, notions of speech and linguistic community have been so preoccupied with “objectivist” projects of demarcating phenomenal interactional boundaries and actual linguistic sharing that they have tended to ignore a phenomenological approach more rooted in members’ experience of their community. In an effort to locate and lend social substance to a linguistic enterprise often more concerned with language and mind relations rather than those of language and society ([Collins, 2012](#)), linguistic scientists of all stripes have tended to fetishize an imagined, overt linguistic sharing and coupled it with an assumed network analysis to produce much of the definitional infrastructure behind notions of the speech community. But border and boundary imagery provide useful tropes for conceptualizing various linguistic practices and projects that are happening in many transforming communities throughout the world including the Village of Tewa. In his overview of historical changes in the scholarly treatment of speech communities, [Rampton \(2009:703\)](#) views a focus on socially constructed boundaries as a contribution of the language ideological research that is part of a move to a post-modern treatment of speech communities, following earlier periods in which tradition and then modernity were focal.

⁴ [Leap \(1993:179\)](#) noted a similar justification for using English as the language of the home in the Tiwa speaking pueblo of Isleta. For both the Tewa and the Tiwa, this parental belief reflects both the hegemonic status of English as well as the destructive impact of denigrating indigenous languages as part of the colonization of these communities. See also [Gomez de Garcia et al. \(2009\)](#) for an example of more recent ideological change involving valorization of indigenous languages.

But it is especially important in following this ideological emphasis on speakers' beliefs and feelings about their languages to observe that such boundary construction is also accompanied by border crossing and that both of these are not limited to phenomenally present groups. For most Tewa villagers, speaking the emblematic language is viewed as a necessary means of fully participating in the community not only in the present but in connecting to ancestral communities of the past. For while it may be quite important to quantify and detail linguistic sharing and to plot the social networks within communities, it is critical to understand the experiential perspective of speakers who attempt to link not just with those that are physically present but to orient themselves temporally to both past and future communities. To better understand how contemporary linguistic communities construct themselves we need to incorporate a more phenomenological approach in order to see how these subjects are engaged in the work of locating themselves, and their communities, in the negotiation of the disjuncture between subjective and cosmic time (Ricoeur, 1988:245; Eisenlohr, 2006:270).

In the present, the Village of Tewa community often represents itself as divided—as distinct from the Hopi majority, as divided by clan (and more importantly kiva group) and as divided by gender and generation. Though these divisions construct structural and experiential differences between members that account for considerable internal diversity, almost all speakers in them do value their emblematic language as a means of participating in a historical flow of ancestral knowledge. For many, especially men, speaking Tewa is seen as proper evidence of maintaining their cultural independence from Hopis, as a way of linking to an ancestral “authoritative word” (Bakhtin, 1981; Kroskrity, 2009), and as a language that permits some mobility in clan and kiva hierarchies that would enable one to assume positions of religious and political responsibility beyond mere tribal initiation. Many Tewa youth are frustrated by the contradictions inherent in the adult practice of preferring English as a language of the home and yet using Tewa as a gatekeeping mechanism in other aspects of cultural life. One young man, in a public meeting on language policy, expressed it this way:

“What am I supposed to do? My parents don't speak Tewa in our house probably 'cause my Dad is Hopi. But how can I play any role in the kiva or talk to my elder uncles if I don't know enough to even speak with them. And now we hear that some clan chiefs even oppose the teaching of the language”.

Another, in the same meeting, mentioned a frequently recurring theme.

“You know Tewa is a difficult language—there are a lot of sounds you need to know. We need help with this learning because many of us are not kids anymore—we can't just pick it up by being around it. But we need Tewa to connect to our parents, to our grandparents, and to our ancestors. Most of our stories and our histories are still in that language.”

But older adults split over the issue of the young “needing help” which they see as associated with the need to bring in outside experts, an emphasis on Tewa language literacy, and Western classroom learning spaces and pedagogies. Many older adults still fault the youth for not actively locating someone in their kinship group who could provide the necessary information. “You should be asking your clan uncles,” they say, often in a scolding tone, and often in public meetings.

Other adults seem to recognize that the younger generation wants to learn in ways that are distinctive to their generation—they want to learn from books, from computers, from classroom teachers—and that they have to learn this emblematic language while still also mastering a great deal of English. But those adults who are less able to empathize with the historical situation of the youth simply blame the victim and view this as a failure to learn in the time-honored oral tradition that was good enough for centuries of successful language transmission. Such elders ask, “Why do they [Tewa youth] need something special, something that is outside our culture?” Here the influence of Western technologies of literacy and postliteracy seems to disrupt the chain of authentication (Irvine, 1989:257–8) that would otherwise prevail and provide the desired connection to the ancestral voices that are the ultimate touchstone of authority.⁵ This tolerance, or intolerance, seems to be closely associated with kiva group affiliations. All clans—approximately 9—link to one of two mutually exclusive kivas thereby reproducing at a ceremonial level the structures that also pervaded Tewa civil societies in their Eastern Pueblo homelands.⁶ The Plaza kiva—*Munæ Te'e*—consists of four clans that regard themselves as the first Tewa to arrive in the First Mesa area and as the location where the Bear Clan—the clan that supplies the village chief (in a Hopi-like manner)—occupies its place. This kiva group sees its traditional structural superiority as a warrant for viewing itself as the legitimate source for leaders and the ultimate authority figures in the Village. However, as might be expected, this view is not shared by members of the *Pendi Te'e* (Outside Kiva) who see themselves as representing the valorized historical warrior-protectors thereby performing a historical role that is viewed as a key aspect of village identity. The Outside Kiva group may not include the hereditary chief but their larger numbers and stronger representation in community council activities have given them a leading role in Village of Tewa civil society.

Basically the Outside Kiva group has been the most active in thinking about the necessary actions to revitalize the language. While youth of both kiva groups contacted me about resuming active research in the community, I received considerable overt support from Outside Kiva people and none from Plaza Kiva people though I met with both in an abortive

⁵ By postliteracy (Kroskrity, 2002), I mean the use of digital multimedia and internet mediated forms of communication—CD-ROMs, DVDs, language program websites, etc. One young Tewa man in the community who attended an early meeting asked me when we would develop applications that might be available through Facebook.

⁶ My estimate of the number of clans is “approximate” here because there are ongoing debates within the community about whether some clans are truly distinct or merely sub-clans of larger, more inclusive clans.

attempt to garner bipartisan approval and cooperation. Both groups see the language as critical to connecting to ancestral authority and the religious ceremonies that are designed to channel it but they differ dramatically in how these connections can and should take place. After protracted discussions about the importance of avoiding a situation in which a Village of Tewa dictionary—a product we are only just beginning to produce—might fall into the “wrong hands,” work has begun in earnest on producing resources that can be used in Tewa language classes, not in the First Mesa Elementary school (which is shared by Hopis) but rather at the Community Center or some other location which would ensure Tewa-only participation. Recall a similar situation for the Hopi noted by Whiteley (2003) in which the presence of 5 Navajo students is the cause for Hopi villagers to abandon teaching their Hopi language in classrooms otherwise filled with Hopi students. Outside Kiva clan leaders have been especially welcoming at a time when Plaza Kiva leaders take a hard line. Plaza Kiva leaders have not expressed a vigorous objection to the dictionary project but, as of September 2013, neither have they endorsed it. Consultants from both kiva groups tell me that this amounts to approval while retaining the right to mercilessly critique the project and the other clans supporting it should we not live up to expectations in producing a useful dictionary. Thus one kiva group is willing to innovate and assume that new technologies are necessary while the other assumes that by doing nothing it perpetuates the very conditions that have produced successful language transmission until now. Reluctant to express approval, Plaza Kiva leaders nevertheless deflect their glance from revitalization work—the production of dictionaries and classes—in which some of their own youth engage. Though both kiva groups want to cross temporal borders to an ancestral past, it seems only Outside Kiva clan leaders are equally concerned with crossing the temporal border to the future by attempting to “re-stock” the community with speakers even if they are TSL (Tewa as a Second Language) speakers. One can argue that this group’s leaders are more fully cognizant of the needs of youth and more bicultural—possessing more higher education backgrounds, fluency in Tewa, and greater awareness of community members’ needs gained through community based participation rather than through top-down styles of leadership. Several Outside Kiva leaders have used language fluency as a means of authentication. In informal gatherings and talking among fellow kiva group members, one leader represented his frustration with the other group’s failure to explicitly endorse language revitalization work with the rhetorical question, “How can we take some of them seriously as leaders when they cannot even speak Tewa in the kiva during their ceremonies? They don’t speak for us in any way!” These same leaders will speak Tewa for long stretches at a time, in part, to clearly validate their cultural authority. Oftentimes they must redundantly translate every Tewa remark into English in order to be understood by all the Villagers attending public meetings.

4. Boundaries erected

But if a measure of unity accrues to the Village of Tewa in its desire to build bridges to an ancestral past, there is considerable diversity in the crossing of boundaries within and, more often than not, these efforts may be better understood as the construction of boundaries designed to exclude. We all know that identity projects can be conducted using both exemplary models of endorsed identities as well as by constructing “others” who can serve as symbolic foils to delineate inappropriate, oppositional, or unavailable identities (e.g. Basso’s (1979) canonical *Portraits of “the Whiteman”*).

Both in its orientation to the linguistic curse and related narratives that not only purport to explain asymmetrical bilingualism on First Mesa but also to warrant further acts of secrecy so that the Tewa language is not spoken near or among Hopis who might learn the Tewa language and “use it against us,” the Plaza Kiva folks construct themselves as the true believers and practitioners of ancestral wisdom and construct a wall between themselves and the Hopi majority. In my private discussions with Plaza Kiva Leaders in 2007, these leaders clearly saw the Hopi as a threat to their language and they also questioned the appropriateness of language renewal programs in which many Tewa speakers had relatives—especially children and spouses—who could be defined as Hopi, Paiute, Apache, Pima, or Navajo in terms of their ancestry. In their view, Tewa language materials and language instruction, needed to be reserved exclusively for the Tewa since these “others” could not be trusted to use their emblematic language appropriately. Thus in reality the purifying boundary—the moat of linguistic and tribal/ethnic purity—was being constructed so as to de-authorize and exclude the hybridizing, unauthorized actions of the Outside Kiva even though it had attracted the Village of Tewa majority to its side.

A form of pervasive factionalism, these internal divisions of the Tewa community call into question whether or not members even perceive themselves to be a singular community. Villagers expressed a considerable range of variation depending upon age, membership, and social experience. One very old man articulated a position common to many in his generation, when he saw the largest divide to be, not between kiva groups or between ceremonial elites (*paa-t’owa*) and common people (*wæ-t’owa*) but between generations.⁷

They say things have not been the same since the schools made what is called a generation gap. I’ll tell you that the gap is a language gap that has made it hard for young people to understand the elders. So there’s the community that speaks Tewa and grew up speaking it and then today there is a community of people who look Tewa but who grew up speaking only English.

⁷ These class-like divisions are well established in Tewa society (Ortiz, 1972) and in Pueblo societies more generally (Whiteley, 1986:70). Though “class” as a descriptive term is appropriate it should be observed that the relevant indexical orders for members and outside observers might promote confusion. Used in the context of contemporary societies, the term most often indexes material wealth but in the Pueblo cultural context the most relevant indexicals are religious privilege and political authority.

Those elders who were more embedded in ceremonial societies used their experience with esoteric linguistic knowledge as a resource for understanding the position of young people within the context of language shift to English.

There has been a lot of change here and English has been playing a bigger and bigger part in the community and in the lives of our youth. They need English to make a living these days but they need Tewa to carry on our people's traditions, to take part in the ceremonies, and the dances. Even when I was a young man in my twenties, I had a lot of learning to do to understand the way our language is used here, in the kiva and so on. We need to show that patience that was shown us. These kids are starting further behind in their Tewa training but they will carry it forward in their own way. So this way we are in today is not so different. Young people have always had to deal with new changes and they are dealing with them now.

Indeed, the history of the Tewa, as I have contended elsewhere (Kroskrity, 1993:76; 2000:358), is really one of massive social change that has been somewhat masked by the emblematic language. Indigenous purism has camouflaged massive sociocultural change on the Hopi model—including the development of land-holding clans and matrilineal, matrilocal kinship (in a formerly patrilineal, moiety system). Changes in the very fabric of Tewa kinship and social organization were rendered invisible because they were labeled by Tewa words and performed in Tewa discourses. Even though the Hopi influences on Tewa culture and society were significant, Tewas still could pride themselves on maintaining their distinctive linguistic and cultural practices. But Hopis never exerted the kind of hegemonic pressure that is historically linked to English on the Hopi Reservation. Unlike Hopi society, Euro-Americans actively suppressed the use of Tewa, through schools and other institutions, dominated all mass media, and incentivized English as the language of economic opportunity. For the Tewa, resistance to Hopi assimilation worked for three hundred years but the threat of a complete language shift to English now compels young people and community leaders to actively pursue language revitalization or comply with the loss of their emblematic language.

Tewa discourses of language and identity often express contradictory positions regarding either the unity or disunity of the Tewa language or speech community. Many speakers, though not most, expressed beliefs that there were as many communities as there were clans. One middle-aged woman provided the following statement:

It is as you would expect out here, we are just a bunch of clans and each clan has its own leader. Each clan is its own community and they even talk differently because they mostly speak to each other.

But this image of each clan being cut off from the others reads too much linguistic influence from this politically potent form of social organization. Since people marry outside their clan, each household is firmly tied to two clans and all aspects of the ceremonial system require people to interactively cooperate with other clans—both within and outside of their own kiva group. But Tewa local knowledge does shed light on some member's models that can accommodate a unified diversity. Typically those who have some vantage point from within the ceremonial system find some of the features of ceremonial performance to provide resources for conceptualizing a high level of internal diversity that is nevertheless organized and unified. For example, a middle-aged ceremonial leader offered the following:

Outside people see the differences between us and wonder how we hold it together. But think about the ceremonies! Each ceremony is owned by a particular clan. Only its leaders really know all the prayers and all the preparation that needs to be done, yet members of every other clan will help in making that ceremony happen by singing and dancing. Why do they do this? We support their ceremony—we know it is intended for the good of all our people. But also we know that if we take part in their ceremonies, then we can count on them taking part in our clan's ceremony when that comes around. This is why I think it is wrong to think badly of the different attitudes that are being expressed about our language by the clan leaders. There will always be differences and we should respect them but when you look at the young people, many are interested in taking Tewa language classes and it doesn't matter which group they are from. So many adults and young people want us to carry our language forward. The differences they talk about, in what should be done about the language, are less important than the idea that we want to do something to save the language. So the Tewa language is something we all value and doesn't that bring us together in some way?

This view is consistent with Hopi appreciation of epistemological limits and the practice of internal secrecy within their communities discussed by Richland (2009:99) or with the “ceremonial ideology” discussed by Levy (1990). Like the Hopi, the Tewa also understand such differences as inevitable clan prerogatives and view these differences as ultimately fitting together to produce and reproduce the perceived “wholeness” of Tewa culture and language.

Though this local model provides an esoteric rationalization of the apparent contradiction between unity and division, it is enforced by another unifying historical environment caused by the “other”-ing of their Hopi neighbors. Issued at a time of heightened tension between the Village of Tewa and the Hopi Villages of First Mesa, the anti-Hopi sentiment was so deeply felt that even Plaza Kiva leaders could not help but agree to a compromise position in which language revitalization moves forward but with important restrictions on who has access to Tewa language resources and who can take language classes. No Hopis allowed! This might have been expected given a growing list of Tewa complaints about Hopi discrimination, feelings of disenfranchisement by some Tewa, and a fluorescence of Tewa micro-nationalism which may pose new challenges to a Hopi dominated political system on First Mesa in which Tewa Villagers are not represented as a discrete community. But apart from the current political tensions and, of course, Tewa language endangerment as exacerbating forces in the present, there is the much older, kiva-related, discourse convention of viewing Tewa linguistic knowledge and specific linguistic practices as

something to be dispensed and propagated on a need-to-know basis rather than in accord with some neoliberal notion of free textual circulation (Debenport, 2010).

5. Language endangerment and linguistic communities

What can we learn from case studies of endangered language communities that might shed light on how we would begin to rethink the fundamental notion of speech community? As reviewed by many scholars (e.g. Morgan, 2004; Silverstein, 1996b), definitions of this concept have tended to remain fairly stable over time and show considerable unity since their origin in the early 20th Century. Below, I have excerpted a few key quotes from three well-known scholars in linguistics and linguistic anthropology.

Bloomfield (1933:42) A speech-community is a group of people who interact by means of speech.

A group of people who use the same system of speech-signals is a *speech-community* [1933:29].

Gumperz (1968:381) [T]he speech community: any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage.

Hymes (1972:54) [A] *speech community* is defined as a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety. Both conditions are necessary.

In the Village of Tewa case that I have outlined here, we see that the community's prior history and existing linguistic culture had already set an agenda in discursive consciousness that was further amplified by now regarding language shift as a linguistic emergency. Having a culture of language with considerable, and even remarkable, awareness of language, history, and identity issues preadapted the community for thinking about the impact of possible language shift and death of the emblematic language (Kroskrity, 1993; Collins, 1998). Strong feelings, however, about the group's emblematic language did not produce a culturally uniform response but rather a variable one indexical of positionalities within the speech economy of the Village of Tewa.

Most definitions of speech or linguistic community from Bloomfield (1933) to Gumperz (1968) and Hymes (1972) and beyond seem to tether the notion to a complex of features like: (a) the focused interactional patterns of members, (b) the sharing of language structures, and (c) the sharing of norms of production and interpretation.⁸ As scholars of speech communities have observed (Collins, 2012; Morgan, 2004), these definitional criteria from Gumperz forward were deliberately designed to decenter the study of particular languages and their structures and, instead, to treat them as social phenomena that lived within the social contexts of actual communities of speakers. Thus, as Rampton (2009) observes in his overview, such attempts to understand the social side of language necessarily emphasized such key themes of sociological analysis as "tradition" and "modernity" and later the post-modern emphases associated with community of practice and language ideological perspectives. Yet while the social emphasis represented by such definitions is valuable and successfully renders a palpable social phenomenon, it is useful to take the occasion of exploring the endangered emblematic language communities in order to see what manner of theoretical adjustment or enhancement might be necessary to fully encompass endangered language communities.⁹

Regarding (a) and the objectivist imagery of social networks or participation structures that pervade the conventional notion of "the speech community", it seems clear that for the endangered Arizona Tewa linguistic community it may be more useful for researchers not to imagine the community as prefabricated or purely phenomenal but to adopt a stance that is significantly more phenomenological—as constructed more by the language beliefs and practices of the group than on measures of interactional intensity. As in other contemporary communities, the interactional patterns of its members are more globalized and include more urban and global influences through travel, schooling, and internet participation (Blommaert, 2010). But even more important in this comparatively tiny and largely face-to-face community of 700 is how an actual interactional community is internally partitioned by the language and identity barriers I have described and how its members variously attempt to cross temporal boundaries to the culturally valorized ancestral world. Like the secular Yiddish

⁸ Silverstein's (1996a) distinction between speech communities and *linguistic* communities is a valuable permutation on the conventional speech community. His linguistic community orients to a common monoglot standard as both a denotational code and a set of ideal norms (Silverstein, 1996a: 285; Blommaert, 2010:164). As such, it reproduces some of the emphases associated with the notion of the speech community while spotlighting the commoditization of the state-endorsed standard and the valorization of those believed to exemplify it. Though Silverstein's redefinition calls proper attention to awareness of the standard and to the political economic basis for these processes, it does not really open the doors for a more phenomenological rethinking of the objective criteria conventionally used. I see the language ideologies movement as providing some potential for emphasizing the subjective consciousness, both discursive and practical (Kroskrity, 1998:116), of speakers as one of the keys to understanding the language ideological formations that determine the trajectory of language maintenance, attrition, and/or death. This field of inquiry desperately needs approaches that "can get at the richness of people's lives, concerns, and engagements in direct and incisive terms" (Desjarlais and Throop, 2011:97) and relate these experiences of actual social actors to their language beliefs and practices.

⁹ In this article I have repeatedly suggested that the study of language endangered speech communities and their speakers would benefit from more phenomenological approaches, broadly construed. Note that such approaches need to go well beyond the explicit language ideological statements that speakers make about their language and community (e.g. Hinton, 2002). Those statements are instructive and help to correct a scholarly imbalance that over-represents community external advocates.

metalinguistic community, described by Netta Avineri (this issue) and the Pomo communities analyzed by Jocelyn Ahlers (this issue) as orienting to an idealized ancestral community, or the apocalyptic Chontal community described by Jena Barchas-Lichtenstein (this issue) as orienting to its imagined future, people in the Village of Tewa are creating both identities and communities through a temporal orientation to both past and future that is largely constructed through cultural narratives (Ricoeur, 1988). This “complex interplay of multiple dimensions of temporal regimentation” (Eisenlohr, 2004:96) illustrates an important way communities can locate themselves in the phenomenology of experienced time by connecting with imagined, yet authenticating, ancestral communities in a constructed past while simultaneously projecting a future community. Achieved through both phenomenological border crossing and boundary construction, such temporal regimentations provide a key resource for defining personal and distinguishing group identity as a community. By admitting phenomenological criteria, our analysis better aligns with members’ understanding of communities as not strictly coextensive with other co-present members with whom they can interact but rather as inclusive of a “felt” connection to unseen members, past and future. This subjective dimension thus complements and extends Avineri’s (2012) “metalinguistic community.” Her notion allowed for a kind of semiotic transference from doing linguistic identity work primarily by speaking it (Yiddish) to speaking about it. While some of this talk conveyed nostalgia for Yiddish speaking communities of the past and provided sites for ideological explication of the indexing of Yiddish to those sentimentally constructed communities, phenomenological approaches are more concerned with the interiorized beliefs and feelings than with the linguistic practices that reveal and display them.

Regarding (b), sharing linguistic structures, this feature becomes problematic when the only words that are universally recognized are informal greetings like *Ham bi-’o*, literally what are you doing? And gender-appropriate ways of expressing thanks: *kunda* (man speaking) and *kuna* (woman speaking). Otherwise it is difficult to see what of the group’s emblematic language is actually shared. Language shift is now so complete that it is exceedingly rare to find any Tewa youth who speak their language. What is still shared is an allegiance to the heritage language. Grenoble and Whaley have called analogous groups by the term “local community”, “that group of people who have some claim on a local language, either because of historical-cultural connections to it, ethnic connections to it, or an ability to speak it” (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006:16), viewing a language allegiance rather than shared language as critical. Most monolingual Tewa youth do feel that they should learn their group’s distinctive language and they blame their parents for not socializing them in the language. Most express interest in alternative ways of learning the emblematic language not because they have given up on their families as providing speakers to learn from but because they must start from such a low level that they need the help of specialized teachers and resources.

Though the present state of linguistic diversity diminishes the sharing of grammar, phonology, and lexicon within the community, speakers are more likely to share certain linguistic practices. These include the strict compartmentalization of kiva speech (even to the point of hypercorrection) forms that they may have learned while participating in certain ceremonies, careful observation of gender differences in the small subset of Tewa vocabulary for which men and women have different terms, and the preference for Tewa neologisms over loanwords from either Hopi or English. Displays of these practices are perhaps more uniformly shared than those involving linguistic structure and widely used to establish one’s knowledge of the language.¹⁰

Regarding (c) the sharing of norms of production and interpretation, it seems that even with language shift, many of the non-language specific discourse norms of Tewa culture do still prevail. One highly relevant norm involves the control of information. As in Erin Debenport’s (2010) study of San Antonio Pueblo, it is especially relevant to observe here that the Village of Tewa does not practice neoliberal norms of textual circulation, especially in Tewa linguistic matters. As if it were esoteric ceremonial knowledge, the Tewa language is carefully regulated and dispensed only on a “needs to know basis” to those who have a Tewa parent. This fits the community’s widely shared belief that only those who are Tewa need to speak Tewa. Up until recently this expectation for young people to speak existed without any attempt to provide opportunities to learn the Tewa language. But as of September 2012, two instructors have begun teaching about 40 young TSL in a voluntary class. They hope that soon these young students are on a path to being able to say “*Naa-m-bi hiili naa-m-bi wowatsi na-mu*” “Our language is our life”.

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¹⁰ Here I am extending Labov’s (1972) concept of hypercorrection to an indigenous and decidedly non-urban context. As in the case of lower middle class New Yorkers who displayed what Labov called “linguistic insecurity,” younger Tewa speakers who lack confidence in their linguistic knowledge of Tewa, often overcompensate by attributing vocabulary to kiva speech, a highly regulated register, that would more conventionally be assigned to everyday speech. This was a phenomenon noted by the late Dewey Healing (Tewa), a senior consultant from the Tewa community with whom I worked for about two decades beginning in 1974, who correctly predicted that this would make linguistic research progressively more controversial as more and more of the language would be declared “off-limits” as esoteric knowledge.

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