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Challenging "Extinction" through Modern Miami Language Practices

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What Gets Noticed with Indigenous Languages?

The most important part of this article is not its discussion of actual Miami language practices, but rather the meta-issue that the story needs to be told at all. It represents a series of findings that, although largely self-evident, challenge a common discourse in which American Indian cultures and languages are frozen in the past and are authentic only if unchanged relative to some perceived norm associated with their past. Because of this discourse, the present story becomes even more anomalous than it might otherwise be. Miami, an Algonquian language indigenous to Indiana and claimed by a contemporary population of several thousand people, has been termed "extinct" in widely consulted sources such as the *Ethnologue*.[1] However, *myaamia* continues to exist in the linguistic repertoire of the Miami people.[2] A twelve-year-old participant at the conclusion of a 2007 Miami language and cultural youth camp addressed this paradox in her puzzlement by asking, "If *myaamia* was a dead language, how would we be able to speak it?" Because of a robust language-reclamation effort that began during the 1990s, many Miami people, myself included, not only claim heritage to our language but also actually speak it to varying degrees, despite its supposed demise.[3]

It is for this reason that the story of Miami language use exemplifies the theme that Philip Deloria develops and deconstructs in *Indians in Unexpected*

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Places.[4] Deloria demonstrates how various patterns of colonialism have created a situation in which American Indians are expected to exist only in ways associated with perceived (and often incorrect) ideals of their pasts, in which the norms in question reflect patterns of colonialism, stem from domination, and often impose significant limitations to full participation in "modern" life. Behaviors that contradict these assumptions, even when they are common and normal to the people who perform them, get conceptualized as unexpected; they are anomalous in that they upset the status quo of what Indians are allowed to be. In doing so, they also challenge existing power structures by showing that Indians can and do participate in all aspects of life and will not accept an imposed narrative in which they live(d) only in the past.

For the story under discussion, this larger phenomenon is exemplified through the contemporary usage patterns of the Miami language—patterns that contradict common assumptions held within US society regarding how Indian languages supposedly exist. This set of general assumptions, which I will refer to as the "dominant discourse," starts with impositions of purism on the language structure and usage patterns of the American Indian language in question—in this case, of *myaamia*. They also include the related idea that the speakers must be "pure" in their cultural identities and associated life practices, thus disallowing influence from other cultural or linguistic communities to which the members of the group may also belong.[5]

Within the Miami community, these themes are frequently discussed in terms of our language and certain recurring experiences several Miami people have had. Especially common are stories of individuals who have questioned our legitimacy, often without recognizing the strangeness of their inquiries when they ask if what we're speaking is really *myaamia*. Such themes are hardly unique to the Miami story, but instead reflect a larger set of ideologies regarding American Indian languages and the people who claim them. As Anne Goodfellow concludes in her analysis of why Kwak'wala revitalization efforts are deemed to be failing despite an increase in younger speakers, "the greatest obstacle to keeping Native American languages thriving is a prevalent belief of linguists, language planners, teachers, and the general public that a language must somehow be maintained in its 'pure' form, which usually means the oldest form of the language now spoken by elderly people."[6] Conversely, a widely held belief within the Miami community is that the language will be different in form with respect to any given point in the past and that this is fine. However—and this point is crucial—although there have been several outside (that is, non-Miami) scholars who have agreed with the sentiment behind this thinking, the dominant discourse still overwhelmingly imposes an expectation of purity on Miami. As with other indigenous languages, regardless

of what the heritage community may think or do, non–community members have ideas regarding what the language is supposed to be.

Clearly, the ideology underlying the dominant discourse creates and reinforces a situation in which indigenous languages get constrained. Important to acknowledge, however, is that there usually does exist some idealized "legitimate" version of the target language, in terms of its form and its use. As such, it is not that the dominant discourse claims that Indian languages cannot exist or ever be used, but rather that it licenses their use only in certain forms, on certain topics, and in certain domains—generally ones that are considered "fully" Indian in that they are thought to lack (or at least minimize) Western influence. This discourse represents a challenge for indigenous languages across the United States and elsewhere because it imposes significant restrictions to recognition of their contemporary usage patterns, which often include practices that are shared with nonindigenous groups. Therefore, even when the usage of these languages is increasing, this fact can easily be overlooked or dismissed because the specific uses at issue often fall outside of what the dominant discourse acknowledges to be legitimately Indian.

The story of the *myaamia* language takes this idea close to its logical extreme. This is because, in addition to its recent use in specific "unexpected" places—such as in contemporary songs, games, and computer-mediated communication—the "extinction" of Miami makes its use anomalous even in contexts that the dominant discourse otherwise recognizes as legitimately Indian, such as traditional ceremonies. Its active reclamation from historical documentation after a thirty-year period of dormancy reflects a scenario that most would acknowledge is technically possible, but that is anomalous because *extinct* means forever. Many people, experts and nonexperts alike, have not caught up to the reality that Miamis speak *myaamia* today, and moreover, that the ways in which we do so are, upon commonsense consideration, arguably expected in that they reflect the contemporary circumstances of being Miami.

This article has two major objectives. One is to exemplify several modern Miami language practices that the dominant discourse deems anomalous and to show why they are actually fully normal and expected, the expectations in this case being framed around the history and contemporary circumstances of the Miami people, along with general principles of language. The second is to critique and explore why this would even be an issue. The specific practices that I outline reflect that our *myaamia* language is important to us and that we Miamis are a diverse people, whose practices blend our *myaamia* background with the English language and elements of the various communities to which we belong.

I narrate this story from my own point of view, as a Miami tribal member and linguist who specializes in indigenous language reclamation as a social

practice. The examples and arguments in this article come from approximately ten years of participant observation in Miami language programs—more recently, as chair of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Language Committee, a role that has fostered ongoing discussions about Miami language issues with a variety of audiences.[7] My goal is to tell the story as it is—we are Miami, we come from many backgrounds, and our ancestral heritage language underwent a period of dormancy, but we generally share a belief that it has contemporary value. The actions and language-usage patterns in light of these variables are relatively straightforward. Prior to telling this story, however, it is important to situate the context in which it becomes anomalous in the first place.

REGARDING THE SUCCESS OF MIAMI LANGUAGE RECLAMATION

> *I give the revival of the Myaamia language a 1% chance of being successful and that is being optimistic.*
>
> —The Language Guy, "Reviving Dead Languages"

It is not a shortcoming of organization that led me to share this particular prediction without having first provided sufficient information regarding the history or contemporary status of the Miami people and our language.[8] Rather, I do this intentionally; the lack of background information is what makes this example representative of a larger pattern that characterizes much of the Miami story. It reflects the ongoing problem of outside scholars and others making predictions about the "success" of Miami language reclamation without ever having asked the Miami people what our language goals are, and usually without fully understanding the larger context in which language shift has occurred in the Miami community. Jane Hill reminds us that academic work about endangered languages, even when well intentioned and meant to evoke public awareness or concern, can also have damaging effects on these languages by reinforcing a norm by which experts gain or maintain the prerogative to determine their value.[9] There is an especially strong current focus on documenting these languages before they are "gone," their dooming extinction framed primarily as a loss to universal (particularly scientific) knowledge, often with a secondary focus on the cultural implications for the communities that claim them.[10] In this frame, the vitality of an indigenous language gets evaluated largely by its speaker population and transmission patterns; the stability of its grammatical structure relative to some perceived or actual historical norm; and the scope of its vocabulary—especially whether speakers command vocabulary domains that are deemed unique to their cultural group. From this common point of view, reclamation "success" probably entails meeting targets in these areas and would be measured by the number of speakers and their

linguistic fluency, along with the number and type of domains in which the language is used.

For these and related reasons, I am hypothesizing that The Language Guy's statement above frames successful "revival" as something that would entail the full adoption of Miami—of its grammar and in terms of its usage—in a way that matches patterns for languages of personal familiarity to the author. Joseph Errington notes that linguistic analyses and their associated descriptions often share many similarities even when the languages under consideration are quite different, and argues that this stems from a practice of conceptualizing analyses in terms of languages of familiarity to the researcher.[11] I have noticed a similar trend in several discussions I have had on indigenous language learning and teaching efforts. Here, what I believe is the same underlying process gets manifested when the legitimacy, goals, and practices associated with indigenous language efforts are unquestioningly framed in terms of norms for major world languages. An especially prevalent notion—one that is highly problematic for languages that have had a period of total dormancy—is that "genuine" language transmission is only that which occurs in the home unconsciously and completely, as with the common (though not universal) experience of children acquiring English in the United States.[12] By extension, if Miami isn't transmitted in this way, many quickly assume that its reclamation efforts are unsuccessful, even though languages that have had a period of dormancy can initially be learned only as second languages; intergenerational transmission is a later stage. Moreover, as Barbra Meek illustrates in her critique of the problematic ways in which success gets measured for indigenous language efforts, general expectations for American Indians to fail can be augmented by discourses of failure specific to language efforts.[13] For all of these reasons, although it is not certain exactly how this blogger conceptualizes success, it's not surprising that he predicts a 99 percent chance of it not occurring. In this sense, "success" is clearly unexpected, if not almost impossible.

However, most Miami language programs are successful because they are framed around a series of attainable objectives that are informed by contemporary community needs and values. Goals include fostering a positive and informed *myaamia* identity, a connection to the larger Miami community, a cultural understanding of the language, and some linguistic proficiency. The goal is not full linguistic fluency by 100 percent of the Miami population. As tribal member and language leader Daryl Baldwin summed up in a keynote lecture for the 2004 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference, "When we talk about language and cultural revitalization, we are in essence referring to the revitalization of belief, value and knowledge systems. It is through our language and culture that we express those ways of knowing. This all takes place as one interrelated process. So when I say, 'Is it really all

about fluency?' the answer in my mind is 'no.' Fluency is an outcome of the collective effort."[14] A major goal—referenced in Baldwin's words and echoed by many other Miamis—is to achieve a certain level of what might be termed "cultural fluency," in which proficiency in the language may ensue but in which this proficiency is not the immediate target. For this reason, an assessment of contemporary Miami language usage might most naturally be one that would consider cultural knowledge and the associated ways of expressing it through the language, not isolated measurements of linguistic competence (except insofar as a certain level of direct linguistic knowledge is necessary for some cultural practices).[15] Nevertheless, the reality is that the dominant discourse not only places the idea of Miami language reclamation into an unexpected category but also often unilaterally imposes its goals.

Furthermore, contemporary language efforts of the Miami people are motivated by a need to respond to our political and linguistic history. Our efforts are in some ways a healing process. They represent a way of responding to the past and contemporary circumstances that contributed to the shift away from *myaamia* and that were usually accompanied by the denigration of language and culture. As with American Indians of other nations, many Miamis went to Indian boarding schools where they were not allowed to speak *myaamia*, which in turn contributed to the nontransmission of the language in the home.[16] Other efforts to force-assimilate Miamis into "mainstream" culture, along with various economic struggles—especially those that contributed to migration away from centers of tribal population—also contributed to the shift away from the heritage language and toward (only) English. During the 1960s, *myaamia*, for the most part, went out of use altogether. At that time, living people held only very limited linguistic knowledge, and this is when the language became "extinct." However, there remained a very large corpus of written documentation spanning approximately three hundred years, and this is what eventually became the basis for learning and reintroducing the language into the community.[17]

Crucial to this story is that, through the lens of the dominant discourse, the passing of the "last" Miami speaker represents the end of the story. In most categorizations employed within the field of linguistics, this represents language extinction, and it is usually considered to be a key turning point in that the language is no longer thought to be able to contribute to linguistic theory (except in limited ways through new analysis of its historical documentation).[18] Looking at language "loss" from a more anthropological perspective, however, the pivotal turning point is the beginning of language shift—or more accurately, the precursors to that process. This is what demonstrates that some sort of power imbalance has occurred, one that is frequently accompanied by a sense of shame in the language. For Miamis, this imbalance occurred at some

point during the nineteenth century, and likely reflected variables that include land loss, two removals, and formal education by the United States in which being Indian was said to be bad. What is important to recognize is that such factors do not automatically disappear when the language in question ceases to be known. Rather, that second turning point commences a state in which the measurable symptom of declining language use is no longer overt, but in which the underlying issues that led to language shift are usually still present.

It is because Miami language efforts are not only focused on the language, but also respond to these larger historical and contemporary series of events and ideologies, that I have come to refer to what's happening in the Miami community as *language reclamation*, instead of by the more commonly used term *language revitalization*. We certainly are breathing new life into the language—hence revitalizing it—and the outcomes of our efforts do include many of the common targets of revitalization, such as increasing the number of speakers, increasing the domains in which the language is used, and promoting intergenerational transmission of the language, which has begun in a few families.[19] However, these and other linguistically defined targets occur within a much larger social process of claiming—or reclaiming—the appropriate cultural context and sense of value that the language would likely have always had if not for colonization. Meeting language-specific targets represents part of the process, but it isn't the core. The fact that the members of a community assert their right to claim, learn, and speak their language is more fundamental.

Furthermore, the Miami people must also claim the prerogative to implement, talk about, and evaluate our language efforts in a way that reflects contemporary Miami people and our values, not through a dominant ideology that relegates success to a very narrow set of parameters while assuming that Indians are generally incompetent. Recognizing this prerogative also falls under the larger process that I call language reclamation.[20] In terms of language programs and their assessment, this entails that the goals of any program will stem from the community's values and needs and that evaluations of success will be based on these goals, not on somebody else's. Such examples of self-determination are also part of language reclamation.

In this respect, this article is an example of language reclamation in practice in that I am responding to the larger meta-issue that clouds Miami language efforts. It's not that we aren't successfully learning *myaamia* and benefiting from doing so, but rather that this process is impeded by a dominant discourse that doesn't establish a space in which it can occur. We Miamis challenge this discourse repeatedly and have what Paul Kroskrity calls "an awareness leading to the transformation of selves and systems."[21] Our reclamation efforts include a recognition and assertion of the agency that we, as Miami individuals and as a community, have in describing, adapting, and speaking our language. No

longer do we accept the "e-word" (*extinct*) to describe *myaamia*; we instead use the term *sleeping* to refer to its status during its period of dormancy, noting that this term is not only more socially appropriate but also more accurate in that our language was never irretrievably lost.[22] No longer do we accept the ideology that our language cannot or should not change, and some of us have come to question why changes in indigenous languages are often called "attrition" even when similar patterns in major languages are just called "change." No longer do we evaluate our successes (and some failures) in terms of evaluation scales that don't reflect our own needs and values. No longer do we acquiesce to various related notions that stem from the colonialist idea that indigenous cultures, languages, and identities are real only if they exist in a way that matches a perception of how they existed at some point in the past, the perception in question usually being one of "pure" peoples with relatively narrowly constrained cultural and linguistic practices.

In response to this issue, a recent theme in Miami cultural programs has been the promotion of the idea that tribal members are "100 percent *myaamia*" regardless of the specific history of a given tribal member's family. That is, our tribal citizenship cannot be reduced to smaller parts, in which, for example, some members would be "one-fourth" Miami and their children would be "one-eighth." Though there are differences in any given tribal member's "cultural knowledge" (usually understood to refer to knowledge of traditional culture) and some tribal members more strongly identify with their Miami-ness than others, it is thought that demoting any tribal member's status as a full Miami citizen is always inappropriate. Nevertheless, the dominant discourse, in which many Miamis are called "part Miami," is still powerful.

Because the Miami people are phenotypically diverse, many tribal members must also confront a related line of thinking that claims they aren't really Indian because of how they look. Some Miamis do "look Indian," but many have blond hair, blue eyes, and other features that the dominant discourse indexes to a "non-Indian" (usually European) norm. Given patterns of intermarriage and some early adoption of Europeans into the tribe, this phenotypic variation is not surprising. However, what is striking is that people will sometimes say that they met a Miami person who didn't look Miami—even when they, by virtue of not having had contact with many other Miamis, really would have no way of knowing what a prototypical Miami might look like or if there even is a norm. Such examples abound. Individuals without an appropriate frame of reference make unsubstantiated claims about the Miami people and do so in a way that would be likely recognized as ridiculous if the dominant discourse about American Indians, which includes what we look like in addition to how and what we speak (or don't speak), wasn't so pervasive.[23] Our reclamation efforts thus include discussions about how we are real Miamis, each with the

full prerogative to participate in our nation and to speak *myaamia*, and how the notion of being "part Miami" was introduced through various policies by the United States.[24]

In general, this changed rhetoric in which Miamis are fully *myaamia* has led to positive outcomes in that it situates tribal members in a place of legitimacy and responsibility. That is, as people who are fully *myaamia*, we ought to care about Miami issues, perhaps more so than somebody who within the dominant discourse would be termed "part Miami" or a "Miami descendant." However, because *bona fide* Miami tribal citizenship is not limited by race, phenotype, religion, or blood quantum, the demographic outcome is that we who are legitimately *myaamia* comprise a diverse group of people, with significant cultural and linguistic influences from the various other groups and communities of practice to which we belong.[25] These include the "mainstream" social, cultural, and regional backgrounds that we come from and our occupational, religious, and political affiliations, which for any given Miami person will almost always incorporate at least some ways of being that differ from historical Miami norms. It ensues that our language practices would reflect this twenty-first-century multicultural reality. So-called unexpected uses of our language are surprising only when somebody is caught up in the notions that indigenous languages cannot change and that their speakers exist in a cultural vacuum. The more straightforward expectation is that they would develop in ways that reflect their population of users and general developments in the world. The next section discusses several examples of this phenomenon, all of which I argue are legitimate and expected, given the diverse nature of the Miami community. The more pressing question is not why these examples are legitimate and expected, but rather why anybody would (continue to) question that this is so.

How Do Contemporary Miamis Speak *Myaamia*?

> The vocabulary of the Miamis was not very great, probably containing not over six hundred or eight hundred words, but it was all they needed in their savage life. They did not use all these words in ordinary conversation; they possibly used no more than one hundred in common conversation.
>
> —Martha Una McClurg, *Miami Indian Stories*

From the appendix to a 1961 publication of traditional Miami stories, the quotation given above is out of date, but I include it here because it isn't very different from the sorts of erroneous assumptions that people today have about indigenous languages such as *myaamia*.[26] Like other languages, Miami has thousands and thousands of words, a fact that should have been patently

obvious to McClurg just from a quick look at any number of historical word lists or dictionaries. What is more important about this statement is that many people today, including university students I have taught, often initially have no hesitation in believing that it is true.

As has been increasingly deconstructed in the academic literature, though far less so in everyday society, there exists within the dominant discourse an underlying belief that American Indian languages are limited, an assumption that likely reflects larger principles of colonization—particularly the idea that colonized peoples are themselves limited and inferior.[27] The corollary to this is the notion, my present focus, that these languages can or should be used in only very limited ways, as demonstrated in the quotation given above. Such thinking partly reflects the more general misconception that American Indian cultures and languages are suitable only for old, "primitive" practices.

An additional and somewhat less obvious issue is that the dominant discourse prohibits certain counterexamples to this notion of limitedness to even come forward as counterexamples. This occurs when the discourse doesn't index those examples as "American Indian" even when they are practiced by American Indians in ways that incorporate elements of the Native language or culture in question. For example, borrowings from English, even when adapted in pronunciation to match the sound system of a given indigenous language more closely and/or used in ways that differ from English, may not even be considered for evaluating the scope and size of that language's vocabulary. Responding to a similarly motivated issue, Anthony Webster relates a story of a Navajo author who prefers to use the plural form *sheeps* in his English instead of *sheep*, and whose English is widely and easily assumed to be deficient because of his usage of this and other Navajo English forms.[28] In this case, it is the legitimacy of a Navajo dialect of English that is being questioned, and the assumption is couched within a larger expectation that American Indians cannot speak "correct" English.[29] Conversely for the Miami story, it is the *myaamia* forms that get questioned, especially if they appear to have English influence.[30] Regardless, all such examples reflect a shared underlying issue: the dominant discourse severely limits the possibilities of what can even be considered as a possible Native American word, grammatical pattern, or language variety. Cases that contradict those expectations simply get marked as non-Indian, and often also as incorrect. Beyond directly dealing with egregious ideas about our language such as the preceding example, part of Miami language reclamation has entailed associating a wide variety of practices—especially those that the dominant discourse is unlikely to recognize as Miami—as legitimately *myaamia*.

That noted, except insofar as any Miami use is anomalous because of the "extinction" factor, it's true that traditional practices and their associated

language practices are comparatively accepted within the dominant discourse as legitimate. The more pressing issue thus becomes recognizing and legitimizing "newer" Miami practices, especially those that contain elements from the many other communities of practice to which Miami people belong.[31] Below I discuss several such examples, all of which involve some use of the *myaamia* language and which have been chosen for discussion because they include elements that the dominant discourse frames as non-Miami.

Though these examples come from a variety of sources, a significant portion occurred in the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma's *eewansaapita* language and cultural immersion camps for tribal youth, the design and scope of which have special relevance to the current discussion.[32] Happening annually since 2005, the *eewansaapita* program becomes an especially pertinent example for the current discussion for several reasons. It represents not only a gathering of people who happen to be Miami (as occurs naturally with most tribally sponsored events), but also one that was created specifically to be *myaamia* in every way that it could be and that includes teaching language and traditional cultural activities among its goals. These camps have twenty to thirty-five student participants ranging from ages nine to sixteen, along with several camp counselors, staff, and volunteers, all who have gathered to do *myaamia* things.[33] As a major event that tribal members from across the United States attend, the *eewansaapita* camp program is also representative of the demographics of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma in a way that most locally oriented events are not. Although there are concentrations of Miamis in Oklahoma and Indiana, a majority of tribal members—including many camp staff and participants—live elsewhere. In this respect, the camps more accurately show the geographic diversity that characterizes the Miami people; some participants are local and others fly in for the program, and we thus bring different perspectives that reflect the regional diversity of the United States. Finally, language practices of the *eewansaapita* program are especially relevant for this article because the program is designed for youth, and even most staff are relatively young; most counselors, for example, are college students. I raise this last point not because elder life isn't important—it very much is—but rather because the dominant discourse tends to be comparatively (though hardly fully) accepting of Indian elders and their practices as "real," and one goal of this article is to show that Miami youth are real Miamis too.[34] For this reason, the following examples of song, play, and regular communication primarily come from younger Miamis.

On Song

Miami songs never had a true period of dormancy as with most of the language; certain song traditions have always been active. One elder remembers and can

sing a Miami lullaby that her grandmother sang to her when she was a child, and there are several other examples that are "only" *myaamia*. As traditional songs tend to fall within what the dominant discourse licenses as Indian, however, I am omitting them from the current discussion, though they are important to Miami life and worthy of discussion in their own right. My focus instead is on examples that more directly reflect the twenty-first-century multicultural, and increasingly multilingual, Miami community.

One such example occurs right at the beginning of *eewansaapita* camps, when Miami children learn a Miami number song. Knowledge of number vocabulary is necessary for many things—particularly for playing games. Games were especially prominent with the 2009 *eewansaapita* camp, the theme of which was *weekihkaaminki-meehkintiinki*, or ball games and games of chance, and where the games in question required counting and keeping track of points. Many participants come to programs already knowing such basic vocabulary; for them, the relevance of this song may be that it asserts their knowledge, similar to how a child who already knows the Latin alphabet may still sing the *ABC Song*. Repetition of such songs also further establishes the camp as a place where Miami is spoken—or, in this case, sung.

Key to the current discussion is this song's tune. The lyrics are ones that the dominant discourse would likely recognize as fully *myaamia*, because the number words have no similarity to their English counterparts. The tune for our number song, however, is the *This Old Man* nursery rhyme, the English version of which all Miami children already know and which is a counting song. It was English-speaking Miamis (a redundant expression, as all Miamis minimally speak English, if not *myaamia* and other languages) who created this song in the first place by borrowing a familiar tune.[35] I have never heard a Miami person question the Miami-ness of this song, but I have encountered this question from non-Miamis.

Another song, one that was first widely introduced as part of the 2009 *eewansaapita* curriculum, further exemplifies the same mixture of influences. This was a song of greeting and thanks, the singing of which reflects core historic Miami practices of using song as one method of accomplishing these communicative goals. Its lyrics are as follows:

aya aya (× 2)	"Hello/hi"
neehaki-nko kiiyawi? (× 2)	"Are you well?"
neehaki niiyawi (× 2)	"I am well"
teepahki (× 2)	"It's good"

This was a song that the camp participants sang before meals to show appreciation to the camp cooks. As the motivation for singing this song falls

into a more general and older Miami cultural practice of using song to show appreciation, the purpose of this song would probably not be considered "unexpected." Its tune, however, is anomalous; the greeting song is sung to the tune of *Are You Sleeping?*—also known by its French title *Frère Jacques*. It is noteworthy that the borrowing of the song into English from French—in this case the tune and the content of the song—is rarely questioned; English borrows a lot from French, and this borrowing reflects contact. When Miami borrows the tune, however, the phenomenon is marked, even though Miami people today all speak English and likely all know this song. Moreover, as the first European language to come prominently to the Miami people, French has maintained a level of cultural and linguistic influence in Miami society that exceeds all other European languages aside from English. For example, French shows up frequently in Miami surnames, including my own. Given that French has special significance as part of the multicultural heritage that many Miamis have, incorporating elements of an originally French song becomes even more natural than it already would be by virtue of the status of French as a widely known language, not to mention the global popularity of this particular tune.

We also have short songs that are created on the fly, in which somebody notices something and starts singing about it in Miami, again following an old Miami practice. For example, I have observed this several times as a part of playful teasing—in which, for example, somebody might make up a simple tune to point out some negative attribute of somebody else, such as being stinky after strenuous activity. Similar to the previous examples, many of these fleeting songs are sung to well-known Western tunes, which is not surprising given that most Miamis grew up with these tunes. Unfortunately, the ephemeral nature of such examples makes them tricky to record for purposes of inclusion here, but it is important to note that they exist and should be expected. After all, why wouldn't Miami people use the full variety of language and music resources that we have to poke fun at each other?

On Games

Many games at the 2009 *eewansaapita* camp are long-standing in Miami culture—in some cases being games that have always been played, but in other cases being games that have been newly learned from historical written descriptions and brought back into use. In the camp context, the point was not only to learn about those games as a part of Miami history but also to play them. In this way, this particular camp largely revolved around mixing older tradition with contemporary ways, and then putting those mixtures into practice.

For example, *pakitahaminki*, or lacrosse, is an old Miami game, likely originally learned from the Iroquois, but well established as a Miami practice and

currently played by many Miami people. It has not, to my knowledge, been questioned in terms of its Miami-ness, which is likely because early ethnographies of Miamis frequently refer to it and thus place it into the "expected"; expected practices can include borrowed games so long as they were borrowed before the Indian culture in question was initially described by the colonizers. Even practices that are authorized by the dominant discourse, however, usually have restrictions on the specific ways in which they occur. Let us consider the specifics of how lacrosse was played at this camp.

In the camp setting, participants normally play *pakitahaminki* by using commercially produced lacrosse sticks with components made out of plastic or metal. However, at the 2009 camp, we also commissioned our artist-in-residence to make a traditional stick out of wood as a way of exploring and learning from this traditional practice. This is expected; cultural groups often adopt new technologies while maintaining a sense of value for older ones.[36] Participants used several common *myaamia* collocations while playing the game such as *miililo*, or "give it to me," and *pemaahkiilo*, or "throw it." However, the more complicated directions for the game were largely explained in English. This is expected; we are in the early stages of language reclamation, and most Miamis have only limited proficiency in *myaamia*, so complex issues are often discussed in English.

Consider also the game of chess, which many Miami people already know by virtue of our other cultural backgrounds, but which only recently started to be played in the *myaamia* language.[37] The pattern by which *myaamia* names were assigned to the pieces is important. The young Miami man who codified those names first considered how existing Miami roles might match those already established for chess pieces, and then named them accordingly:

> *akima*, or "chief" (king)
> *akimaahkwia*, or "female chief" (queen)
> *kaapia*, or "assistant to the chief" (bishop)
> *maamiikaahkia*, or "warrior" (knight)[38]
> *niimihki*, or "fort" (rook)
> *eetehsia*, or "soldier" (pawn)

With its culturally informed "borrowings," chess becomes a very characteristic example of the ways in which multiculturalism plays out among contemporary Miami people. The pieces, although not traditionally Miami, have taken on Miami names—ones that reflect Miami roles. In this respect, the names are fully *myaamia*, and the game has become *myaamia*, but the original knowledge of what the pieces were supposed to represent likely stems from knowledge that Miami people held by virtue of membership in other

cultural groups, not from historical Miami culture in a direct way. A similar example arises in Erin Debenport's discussion of the Tiwa soap opera *As the Rez Turns*.[39] Debenport notes that the creators of *As the Rez Turns* identified its genre as one whose origin was outside their own cultural group, but that they nevertheless made it into a Tiwa soap opera—not only through language use but also by imbuing it with local features and themes. Likewise, beyond the culturally informed way in which the pieces were named, Miami chess also becomes *myaamia* in that there is an expectation of older people to guide and support younger ones, this being a tribal cultural norm. However, such guidance might occur in English, again reflecting how most Miami people grow up primarily as English speakers. For example, in chess games that I have observed being played by a Miami family, much communication does occur in *myaamia*, but as with the previous example of lacrosse, complicated rules are more likely to be explained in English. The following sentence, which comes from a young Miami man (then age twelve) from the family that explained the game to me, illustrates this pattern:

> The object of the game is *pakamaci akima*
> you (sing.) strike him chief (king)
> "The object of the game is for you to strike the chief."

Beyond the historical norm, in which this sentence would likely have been entirely in the Miami language, the expected historical construction for the verb phrase is probably *pakamaaci akimali*, or "she/he strikes the king," as the logical subject of the second clause would be a third-person entity. "You" forms were never used as a generic third-person reference in Classical Miami, but it's not surprising that the English convention of using *you* as a generic third-person reference has been borrowed.[40] This is a common outcome of bilingualism. A similarly motivated example occurring in this and other games is *ayaalo*, an imperative that means "go!" which historically likely occurred only as a command for the hearer to move away from a location, but that now also means "take your turn."

Though it's true that most Miami lexical innovation (creation of new words) occurs with an awareness of historical cultural patterns and a desire to maintain them, many examples of lexical innovation occurring on the fly involve directly translating English proper nouns into a Miami form, a pattern that directly reflects multilingualism. For example, prior to one of the *eewansaapita* programs, some of the staff stayed at a place that they started calling *palaani-kaani*, which literally means "eight building," and in this context referred to a Super 8 motel. By referring to things in *myaamia* that don't already have Miami names, we create a Miami space, which is a major component of our

reclamation efforts and, hence, is not surprising; we want to do this. However, that English influences the forms expectedly reflects that the multicultural society in which we live is, for the most part, English speaking, and that we are also English speakers.

As argued above, the presence of these and similar examples are straightforward when one considers the variables at play. When the language in question is a major world language, this phenomenon is usually called language contact. When one of the languages is indigenous, however, such changes can be accompanied by the idea that the indigenous language is no longer authentic, even though there were likely similar contact-induced changes in the language before some variety of the language became established as "authentic."[41] It is essential that Miami people move beyond these ideas. If the language isn't allowed to change in order to reflect our contemporary circumstances as a multilingual and multicultural people, the reclamation sought by the Miami people truly might have only a 1 percent chance of occurring because we will have accepted the dominant discourse, which says our language is extinct and cannot change.[42]

On Regular Communication

Regular communication is the term I adopt here to refer to interactions characterized by the absence of rules or expectations that are marked to the extent that speakers are consciously aware that they are unusual. I make this distinction because specialized indigenous language use of various kinds, particularly when associated with ritual, is often comparatively expected within the dominant discourse. For example, fixed expressions that occur during a ceremony in which the participants are dressed in traditional regalia are expected and accepted; this is one of the ways in which I personally have always been allowed to be an Indian. For the current discussion, I am referencing common situations in which, for example, Miami people might be communicating with each other about work, to plan activities, or to check in with each other as friends and relatives.

Throughout this article, I have been contending that the appropriate way to make a hypothesis or to frame an associated expectation would be to consider the variables as they actually are, not as the dominant discourse assumes them to be. In this spirit, let us consider the variables at play in assessing the likely patterns of everyday communication by Miami people. All Miamis come from multicultural heritages and are dominant in English (at least in most domains—a few may be more proficient in *myaamia* in certain areas). Although we have varying levels of proficiency in *myaamia*, most of us share a belief that there's value in speaking it and make an effort to do so. The

linguistic result is what one might expect. Many interactions among Miami people, whether in oral or written forms, occur primarily in English but incorporate certain elements in *myaamia*. This trend shows up throughout our communicative practices, and the specific patterns of language mixing reflect our contemporary demographics.

For example, an increasing number of Miami families have adopted the convention of addressing each other with Miami kinship terms, a practice that had gone almost completely out of use prior to our reclamation efforts. Similarly, although naming traditions never ceased to be practiced, they did diminish. However, there has recently been a renewed interest in receiving Miami names, with many parents asking that the chief provide one for their children. It is perhaps to the point where Miami names, at least in certain circles, are again the norm. One telling example occurred several years ago, when a series of friendly reprimands were directed to me for inadvertently bidding against other Miamis in a series of online auctions for Miami and Miami-related items such as books, art, or historically significant artifacts. My intent, which I later learned several other Miamis also shared, was that the items in question should be in tribal hands, though it wasn't important that they be in mine specifically. The point of this anecdote is that I should have been aware that I was bidding against fellow tribal members, as this was supposed to be evident in that some of the other participants in the online auction had *myaamia* user IDs.[43]

That this last example involves computer-mediated interaction is also representative of a larger trend. Because the Miami people are scattered throughout the United States, and especially because tribal members in different cities usually coordinate language programs, our communication often occurs over a distance and employs *kiinteelintaakana*, or "computers" (literally, "things that think fast"). Several Miamis involved with language efforts, myself included, work in academia; hence we use e-mail, instant messaging, and various networking sites as part of our professional lives and often also for personal purposes. Similarly for the *eewansaapita* summer program, most counselors are university students who use all of these technologies and others; based on a recent survey, the majority of the student participants report having and using the Internet at home as well. A general trend exists among youth in the United States, whether of indigenous or other cultural affiliation, to use more and more Internet-based communication and social networking. All of these variables predict that the Miami language would be used frequently in computer-mediated communication.

This prediction is borne out. Many Miamis use Facebook and similar social-networking sites. In doing so, it is common for us to intersperse *myaamia* within our English when communicating with other tribal members. As with

the earlier example of online auction user IDs, the use of Miami names for e-mail and social-networking site user IDs is common. Similarly for the main text of e-mail and instant messaging (or telephone texting), many Miamis incorporate quite a bit of *myaamia*, with some longer passages entirely in the language. Even for language learners whose linguistic knowledge is still relatively limited, one common pattern is to greet the interlocutor and to close the interaction in *myaamia*. As Jocelyn Ahlers argues, such uses of indigenous languages allow an entire communicative event to be framed as an indigenous one, even if most of the utterances within the event are in English.[44] Again, this is not surprising, but rather reflects a strategy for asserting one's Miami-ness while reflecting the reality that most Miamis have limitations on what we know how to say in our language.

These general patterns noted, one practical issue is that computer-mediated communication in the United States is usually set up for the Latin alphabet and a few other commonly occurring characters and emoticons. Although this is largely a nonissue for writing Miami because our orthography is for the most part based on the Latin alphabet, there is one character that is less straightforward to type. This is the s-wedge [š], which represents a voiceless postalveolar fricative, or what in English orthography is usually written as *sh*. For example, in a conversation I was having with a fellow tribal member through an instant-messaging program, I had indicated that I was with our mutual friend and that we were about to leave for a previous engagement. He wrote,

> *neeyolaani kati . . . ii$i Leanne aya!*
> I see you FUTURE tell her Leanne hello
> "I'll see you later. Say 'hi' to Leanne [for me]!"[45]

In this example, [š] is substituted for by a dollar sign. According to the dominant discourse, American Indian languages are not normally written—especially for computer-mediated communication, but given the contemporary needs of the Miami people, it stands to reason that *myaamia* would be used in such ways. Second, the reason for the orthographic substitution in this example is clear. Western keyboards are not created for modern Miami orthography, so when Miamis type in Miami (especially for "quick" communication such as with instant messaging), we have established a convention of using another symbol that can be typed in a more direct way. This is a straightforward example of a modern indigenous nation using the resources of other communities—in this case, adapting existing keyboard conventions—in order to meet an everyday communicative need, a practice that is arguably expected by any reasoned consideration. What might be truly unexpected would be for Miami people to avoid typing words with that particular character.

Conclusion

Miami linguistic practices reflect the multicultural Miami people. We believe it is important to have access to *myaamia*, and we attempt to speak it when we can. However, we also speak English, and this shows up in our communicative practices. The only reason any of these examples seem anomalous is the pervasiveness of the existing—and too often unchallenged—dominant discourse that relegates indigenous languages to tokens of the past, spoken by the "true" Indians and not by the "Indian descendants," which is what we tend to be called today. When framed within this damaging discourse, even contemporary language practices may be seen as evidence of loss or "extinction." I argue, on the contrary, that the ways in which the Miami language is spoken today show that the Miami people do still exist—as does our language—because the patterns in question demonstrate how we continue to adapt to our environment and to the evolving communicative and cultural needs of our population. Part of our reclamation process involves our recognition and legitimization of how we exist, which is as a diverse group of people who share a common history, language, and Miami cultural values.

Given these variables, the expectation regarding future use of the Miami language by current language learners appears relatively straightforward. Wider-scale linguistic proficiency or fluency will likely take time. Language reclamation is a multigenerational process, and the Miami community does not yet have the resources (for example, a large land base and tribally run schools) that may be necessary for later stages of the process. Nevertheless, most Miami children already know at least some *myaamia* and use it to varying degrees, and I see this continuing. I hope that all will quickly recognize the fallacy of statements regarding any inability of our language to be used for modern purposes, though changing the discourse of expectations regarding American Indians is a multifaceted process that will likely take ongoing efforts because the dominant discourse is so powerful.

That reality noted, one prediction—yet another challenge to that dominant discourse, but again logically predicted upon more reasoned consideration—comes out of *eewansaapita* camp participants' own statements. At the end of the 2007 program, one of my roles was to create and administer a written questionnaire as part of a larger-scale assessment. One question read, "Do you plan to use the *myaamia* language at home after this camp?" and participants were asked to circle one of the following answers: *iihia* (yes), *moohci* (no), or *I'm not sure*. Two of the twenty participants indicated that that they were unsure of their plans, but the other eighteen circled *iihia*. One young woman summed up a common sentiment in noting, "I think that it is important to be *myaamia* because when we get older and our elders pass away, we could be able

to teach kids younger than us how to speak our language so then they can pass it down, generation to generation. I think it is very important to be *myaamia* and to be able to speak it!"

Having participated in Miami language efforts for more than a decade and having researched issues of minority languages for a good portion of that time, I was not surprised by these results. They corroborated what I have observed in the many efforts that I have been a part of, which is that children who have a positive association with any given aspect of their identity will normally want to claim and use specific things, such as language, that they associate with that aspect of their identity. However, I can still also hear challenges coming from wider society, questioning, for example, whether these children were really speaking *myaamia* and predicting that they certainly wouldn't do so once they got away from the language camp, or perhaps even that they had lied on the questionnaire because they felt pressure to give the "correct" answer.

Given the patterns in the dominant discourse discussed throughout this article, the first part of this challenge is not surprising; the legitimacy of modern indigenous languages frequently gets called into question. This is something that we must continue to challenge and deconstruct. As for people predicting that these children would actually not continue speaking *myaamia*, it's true that this sometimes happens. However, the underlying assumption that people wouldn't want to speak their ancestral heritage language is a socio-politically loaded one that needs to be deconstructed just as much as the norm of basing legitimacy on a perception of the past. This idea is situated within a long history of immigrant and indigenous language shift in the United States, which in turn reflects a long history of restriction-oriented language policies and the associated dominance of English. Although very important for consideration as real variables, however, these patterns do not represent an inherent reality for American Indian languages. Rather, they represent a specific set of circumstances that can be changed. Having assessed the language-usage patterns of Miami children as part of my longitudinal research with Miami youth who participate in language and cultural programs, I can report that the actual norm is that they do use the language after events such as *eewansaapita* camps. Many of them make an explicit effort to share their language knowledge with their families and speak with pride of how they taught their parents and siblings some *myaamia*. This may not be what the dominant discourse expects, but it is the truth.

In closing, let us return to a major theme that underlies the Miami story—namely, that the reclamation of *myaamia* is multifaceted and occurs within and responds to a specific sociohistorical context. I introduced language reclamation as a process that includes not only language revitalization, but also requires feeling and asserting the prerogative to learn and transmit the language and to

design, implement, and evaluate language programs in a way that reflects the community's needs and values. Miamis have done and continue to do these things. We refuse to acquiesce to outsiders' ideas that our heritage language does not have contemporary value; we know that we can learn it and use it and confront the ideology underlying the "e-word." Notably, this process has entailed a series of challenges to ideas that the dominant discourse classifies as anomalous, and this article attempts to reframe certain components of the reclamation process as the expected practices that they arguably are. In this broader sense, language reclamation might thus be said to include setting expectations that reflect the truth, a major one for the Miami case being that *myaamiaatawiaanki noonki kaahkiihkwe*: "we speak Miami today."

Acknowledgments

NOTES

1. The *Ethnologue* (Raymond J. Gordon Jr., ed., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15th ed. [Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2005]) attempts to catalog all of the world's languages and to provide basic information about their speaker populations, language-family relationships, alternate names, and additional facts of potential interest to linguists and missionaries. I am referencing the 2005 edition of the *Ethnologue* because most discussions within the Miami community about the term *extinct*, and our associated challenges to this label, have taken place in response to our language having been categorized as such in this and earlier editions of the *Ethnologue*. However, the most recent edition of the *Ethnologue* (M. Paul Lewis, ed., 2008) simply classifies Miami as "a language of the USA" and mentions that a revitalization program is in progress. The editors decided not to use the term *extinct* to describe languages with second-language speakers because they agreed with the Miami claim that this was inappropriate (M. Paul Lewis, personal communication, 2009).

2. *Myaamia* and Miami (pronounced *my-AM-ee* or *my-AM-uh*) are functionally equivalent, the former being the name of the language and people in the language (an endonym), and the latter being the exonym used in English and many other languages. As using an endonym has a certain sociopolitical impact in that it asserts a tribal identity, some tribal members make a point of using it. Moreover, as use of the language has become more common, the endonym has likely also become

more common because we are more accustomed to saying and hearing it. However, particularly when speaking English, it is common for Miami people to alternate between both terms—perhaps with a general trend toward saying *myaamia* when referring to an identity or cultural frame, and I am following that convention here. This pattern exemplifies a theme of this article, which is that the Miami are a multicultural and multilingual people, and it thus makes sense that we would refer to ourselves and to our language in more than one language.

The spelling of *myaamia* words in this article, including the noncapitalization of the word *myaamia*, follows conventions that have developed in the Miami community. The phonetic values of the Miami orthography are described in Daryl Baldwin and David J. Costa, *myaamia neehi peewaalia kaloosioni mahsinaakani: A Miami-Peoria Dictionary* (Miami, OK: Miami Nation, 2005) and are close to those of the American Phonetic Alphabet.

3.   Wesley Y. Leonard, "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct? Miami, a Formerly Sleeping Language," in *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties*, ed. Kendall A. King, Natalie Schilling-Estes, Lyn Fogle, Jia Jackie Lou, and Barbara Soukup (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 23–33.

4.   Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

5.   Because of space limitations, I am omitting a literature summary of the general principles of colonization and the associated expectations for indigenous language purity, and instead, I am detailing specific issues as they arise in the article. For an historical overview of this phenomenon, I suggest Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), which details how ideologies of linguistic purity developed in Western scholarship. The essays in Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret Field, eds., *Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009) illustrate how these ideologies affect Native American communities, as outside forces and by virtue of community members holding the ideologies.

6.   Anne Goodfellow, "The Development of 'New' Languages in Native American Communities," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2003): 53. For discussion of Goodfellow's statement in terms of the Miami case, see Leonard, "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct?" 28–30.

7.   Because of the initial Miami Removal in 1846, which involved only part of the Miami community, there are two political entities called "Miami"—known officially as the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma (see http://www.miamination.com) and the Miami Nation of Indians of the State of Indiana (see http://www.miamiindians.org/) (both accessed March 4, 2011). For a detailed discussion of this Removal and its effects, see Kate A. Berry and Melissa A. Rinehart, "A Legacy of Forced Migration: The Removal of the Miami Tribe in 1846," *International Journal of Population Geography* 9 (2003): 93–112. As a citizen of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma whose experiences are primarily within the Oklahoma Miami political and cultural structure, I narrate this story with an Oklahoma Miami bent, and my examples come primarily from the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma members. However, I believe that the general discussions in this article hold for Miamis of any political affiliation—whether Oklahoma, Indiana, or, in some cases, no official tribal membership—as we all share our language and are thus challenged by the same dominant discourse.

8.   The Language Guy, "Reviving Dead Languages," blog entry from February 24, 2007, http://thelanguageguy.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html (accessed May 1, 2010). Many similar comments have been made about Miami language efforts, but I chose to include this one because it sparked some extended discussion by the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Language Committee and other Miami language program leaders. We were struck because we saw that someone with a PhD in linguistics—hence an expert—wrote it, someone who had never asked us what we're trying to do in regard to "reviving" our language and yet made a dire prediction about our ability to do it.

9. Jane H. Hill, "'Expert Rhetorics' in Advocacy for Endangered Languages: Who Is Listening, and What Do They Hear?" *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12, no. 2 (2002): 119–33. See also Lise Dobrin, Peter K. Austin, and David Nathan, "Dying to Be Counted: The Commodification of Endangered Languages in Documentary Linguistics," in *Proceedings of Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory*, ed. Peter K. Austin, Oliver Bond, and David Nathan (London: SOAS, 2007), 59–68.

10. To be certain, the distinction is not so binary that the value placed upon these languages resides either in their grammar/vocabulary or in their community/personal functions; rather, most of the literature explicitly recognizes the multiple values of language. Nevertheless, rhetoric of loss for general (scientific) knowledge has become especially common. Frequently cited examples include K. David Harrison's *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) and the documentary *The Linguists*, directed by Jeremy Newberger (Garrison, NY: Ironbound Films, 2008).

11. Joseph Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 3; see also Michael Silverstein, "Contemporary Transformations of Local Linguistic Communities," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 408.

12. I have observed this not only from nonindigenous groups but also from indigenous ones. See, e.g., Richard E. Littlebear's frequently cited analysis of why indigenous languages "keep dying" (Littlebear, preface to *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*, ed. Gina Cantoni [Flagstaff, AZ: Center for Excellence in Education, 1996], xiii–xv). Littlebear argues that language transmission in the home is the most fundamental practice for revitalization. Many Miami people believe in the importance of the home, but also note that for a language with no speakers, the only way to bring it back into use is for a group of people first to learn it "unnaturally" as a second language.

13. Barbra A. Meek, "Failing American Indian Languages," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 51–54.

14. Wesley Y. Leonard, *Miami Language Reclamation in the Home: A Case Study* (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2007), 36.

15. Following the convention in linguistics, I use the word *competence* to refer to the knowledge that allows a speaker of a given language to speak it in grammatically well-formed ways.

16. For an overview of Miami experiences in boarding schools, see Melissa A. Rinehart, *Miami Indian Language Shift and Recovery* (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2006), 179–208. On US educational policy toward indigenous languages more generally, see Ofelia Zepeda and Jane H. Hill, "The Condition of Native American Languages in the United States," in *Endangered Languages*, ed. Robert H. Robins and Eugenius M. Uhlenbeck (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 135–55; see also Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret Field, "Introduction: Revealing Native American Language Ideologies," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 3–30.

17. For discussion on the scope and usability of several main sources of Miami documentation, see David J. Costa, *The Miami-Illinois Language* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 10–33.

18. Due to length constraints, I am not listing the full set of endangerment frameworks in which this practice gets employed, but I have discussed and critiqued this practice in some detail in Leonard, "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct?"

19. Leanne Hinton, "Sleeping Languages: Can They Be Awakened?" in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, ed. Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2001), 416; Leonard, *Miami Language Reclamation in the Home.*

20. Some scholars have adopted the term *reclamation* to refer specifically to bringing a language with no speakers back into use—also called *revival* (e.g., Nancy C. Dorian, "Purism vs. Compromise in Language Revitalization and Language Revival," *Language in Society* 23, no. 1 [1994]: 479–94)

and differentiate this process from *language revitalization*, which they in turn use to refer to a similar process for languages that have never ceased to be spoken. E.g., Rob Amery adopts *reclamation* to describe recent efforts with the formerly sleeping Australian language Kaurna ("It's Ours to Keep and Call Our Own: Reclamation of the Nunga Languages in the Adelaide Region, South Australia," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 113 [1995]: 63–82); and Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley follow Amery's convention in *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Though the Miami example actually falls under *reclamation* per this other definition, I am adopting the term to refer to a widespread sociological process that I see occurring with endangered languages in general, regardless of whether they have had a period of dormancy.

21. Paul V. Kroskrity, "Embodying the Reversal of Language Shift: Agency, Incorporation, and Language Ideological Change in the Western Mono Community of Central California," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 192.

22. Leonard, "When Is an 'Extinct Language' Not Extinct?"

23. This "problem" of phenotypic variation and the associated racialization of American Indians is not unique to Miamis, as it stems from a wider experience that affects most indigenous nations in the United States. See Circe Strum, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002) for an in-depth study of this issue.

24. Pauline Turner Strong and Barrik Van Winkle, "'Indian Blood': Reflections on the Reckoning and Refiguring of Native North American Identity," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 4 (1996): 547–76.

25. Unlike many indigenous nations of the United States, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma has never had a blood-quantum requirement for official membership, though our eligibility for membership is biologically constrained under our current constitution. The basic rule is that one must be a biological descendant (however distant) of a person on a series of official rolls taken in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There have been discussions in the tribe that our constitution should be changed to grant membership to children adopted into Miami families, but this has not yet happened as of the writing of this article.

26. Martha Una McClurg, *Miami Indian Stories Told by Chief Clarence Godfroy Ka-pah-pwah (Great-great-grandson of Frances Slocum)* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1961), 159.

27. I am assuming general familiarity with issues of language and social inequality and am leaving out significant discussion here for length considerations. Dell Hymes, *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice* (Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1996) offers valuable insights on linguistic (in)equality, and I use it as a foundational source. Important discussions on this topic as it pertains to indigenous languages include Nancy C. Dorian, "Western Language Ideologies and Small Language Prospects," in *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects*, ed. Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3–21; and Kroskrity and Field, "Introduction." I also offer the following principle that I created and have used as an epigraph for many course syllabi: "All languages are equal. But some languages are more equal than others."

28. Anthony K. Webster, "On Intimate Grammars: With Examples from Navajo English, Navlish, and Navajo," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 66 (2010): 191; see also Webster, "'Please Read Loose': Intimate Grammars and Unexpected Languages in Contemporary Navajo Literature," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 65.

29. See related discussions by Barbra A. Meek, "And the Injun Goes 'How!': Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space," *Language in Society* 35, no. 1 (2006): 93–128; and Meek, "Failing American Indian Languages."

30. Several linguistic anthropologists over the years have questioned whether the English of Miami people gets scrutinized or delegitimized in ways that are common for other Native American groups. Particularly given the recurring theme of "unexpected" American Indian Englishes developed in the other articles in this issue, I will address the matter here.

   To the best of my knowledge, this practice is relatively uncommon; it is only the *myaamia* of Miami people that gets questioned. Most Miamis speak forms of English that are associated with the regional and socioeconomic histories of their individual lives. E.g., many in northeastern Oklahoma speak local (non-Indian) varieties of English. Only a few Miamis speak a form of English that would be widely indexed as "American Indian English." For discussion on what this name entails, see William L. Leap, *American Indian English* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993). It makes an interesting commentary to note that recent trends in fields such as (linguistic) anthropology and Native American studies have fostered a prediction—perhaps even an expectation—that there would be a Miami form of English, and that it would be nonstandard and stigmatized. However, there isn't a target English to denigrate (or valorize) because a distinct form doesn't widely exist for Miami people. This noted, given that more and more Miami people are learning the *myaamia* language and integrating elements of it into their English, a uniquely Miami form of English might be under development, and such a form could very well be met with the stigma that has been described for other American Indian Englishes.

31. It is important to note that these examples differ from the commonly discussed phenomenon of "globalization," which often evokes a frame in which a given group of people have recently adopted a technology or practice to which the group did not previously have access. Although it's true that specific items and languages of European origin were newly introduced to Miami people historically, most "unexpected" practices by contemporary Miamis were not recently newly introduced but are instead things that Miami people were already using or doing. E.g., it would be strange to talk about how the Internet was introduced to the Miami, as the more accurate description would be that using the Internet became common in the United States, and Miami people were part of that process by virtue of being Americans, in addition to being Miami.

32. The word *eewansaapita* literally means "she/he rises" and is understood to mean "sunrise."

33. For detailed discussion on the history, changing goals, and outcomes of the *eewansaapita* and similar Miami language programs, see Wesley Y. Leonard and Scott M. Shoemaker, "'I Heart This Camp': Participant Perspectives on the Role of Miami Youth Camps," in *Papers of the 40th Annual Algonquian Conference*, ed. Karl S. Hele and J. Randolph Valentine (Albany: SUNY Press, forthcoming), 146–64.

34. Elder participation is actually crucial to the *eewansaapita* program and to all other programs for language and culture, as it is our elders who provide the support for these efforts and, in many cases, provide direct language and culture knowledge. In most *eewansaapita* programs, e.g., there have been elder nights, in which the camp participants meet with tribal elders over dinner. Some tribal elders visit camp throughout the week. Unlike some other tribal programs that are specifically designed to be multigenerational, however, the *eewansaapita* program, in terms of its objectives, is for tribal youth and designed to be a place for them.

35. Some modern Miami songs don't borrow English tunes. E.g., some tribal members sing what is called a community song, the music of which is distinctly American Indian. These, however, are not the focus of the current discussion, as they are "expected." The problem is that some see only those sorts of expected songs as truly Miami, thus reflecting and reinforcing a discourse in which being a real Miami Indian entails following an increasingly narrow set of parameters.

36. This practice could be seen as an example of Miamis clinging to the past, but my impression is that most Miamis view it as a way of respecting the past and incorporating our ancestors' wisdom

into our own lives. Notable skill is involved with bending (without breaking) a piece of wood to be used for a lacrosse stick.

37. I have not seen chess played at the *eewansaapita* camps (where most games are more "active"), but it's possible that participants have played it there without my being aware of it. I first encountered Miami chess when spending time with another Miami family, in which two brothers were playing it with each other.

38. Over time, some Miami chess players have drifted away from this term and instead say *neekatikašia* (horse) for the "knight" piece, which is not surprising given that the horse that the knight rides often represents the knight figure.

39. Erin Debenport, "As the Rez Turns: Anomalies within and beyond the Boundaries of a Pueblo Community," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 100.

40. David Costa, personal communication, 2007.

41. E.g., Rosemary Henze and Kathryn A. Davis, "Authenticity and Identity: Lessons from Indigenous Language Education," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1999): 3–21; Leanne Hinton and Jocelyn Ahlers, "The Issue of 'Authenticity' in California Language Restoration," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1999): 56–67.

42. Several people, Miami and non-Miami, have mentioned to me that there are certain elements of their languages that they don't believe should change. The most common example referenced is certain prayers, which many people believe to have been bestowed onto their people in a certain form for specific purposes. My response is that I am referring to language for most everyday use; no good reason exists that traditions cannot or should not be maintained in a given form.

43. I was negligent in that I wasn't paying much attention to who was participating in the auction but instead was looking only at their bids.

44. Jocelyn C. Ahlers, "Framing Discourse: Creating Community through Native Language Use," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2006): 58–75.

45. Following the convention in linguistics, the word *future* is in all capitals in order to indicate that *kati* is a grammatical particle that marks future tense.