

THE LANGUAGE REVIVAL DIAMOND (LARD). REVIVALISTICS IN THE MIRRORING SERVICE OF RECTIFYING LINGUICIDE

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Abstract: *Revivalistics is a new comparative, global, trans-disciplinary field of enquiry studying comparatively and systematically the universal constraints and global mechanisms on the one hand (Zuckermann 2003, 2009, and importantly 2020), and particularistic peculiarities and cultural relativist idiosyncrasies on the other, apparent in linguistic reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration across various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe (Zuckermann 2020, Zuckermann and Walsh 2011, 2014). The best-case scenario is that in which the revivalist happens to be the custodian/owner of the very language being revived (see e.g., in the case of Myaamia). But this is unfortunately rare these days, especially in Australia. Language revival, therefore, is similar to co-parenting. But the revivalist is only a stepfather. The important biological mother is the Indigenous/minority community. If you are the stepfather and your spouse, who is the biological mother, makes what you perceive to be a mediocre decision with regard to your children, you cannot just disapprove of it. After all, the children are your spouse’s more than they are yours. You must work together for the best possible outcome. Similarly, if the community supports a decision that is not linguistically viable, the revivalist can try to inspire the community members, but must accept their own verdict. That would be difficult for a linguist with poor social skills. This article first introduces revivalistics, the reclamation-revitalization-reinvigoration spectrum, and explores the symmetry of one of its tools, namely the LANGUAGE REVIVAL DIAMOND (LARD), which consists of four core quadrants: Language Owners vis-à-vis the Public Sphere; and Linguistics vis-à-vis Pedagogy.*

Keywords: Language Revival; Social Harmony; Linguistics; Aboriginal Studies; Endangered Languages.

INTRODUCTION

Revivalistics is a new comparative, global, trans-disciplinary field of enquiry studying comparatively and systematically the universal constraints and global mechanisms on the one hand (Zuckermann

2003, 2009, 2020), and particularistic peculiarities and cultural relativist idiosyncrasies on the other, apparent in linguistic reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration across various sociological backgrounds, all over the globe (Zuckermann and Walsh 2011, 2014).

What is the difference between reclamation, revitalization, and reinvigoration? All of them are on the revival spectrum. Here are my specific definitions:

1. Reclamation is the revival of a ‘Sleeping Beauty’ tongue, i.e., a no-longer natively spoken language, as in the case of Hebrew, Barnjarla (the Aboriginal language of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia), Wampanoag, Siraya and Myaamia.
2. Revitalization is the revival of a severely endangered language, for example Adnyamathanha of the Flinders Ranges in Australia, as well as Karuk and Walmajarri.
3. Reinvigoration is the revival of an endangered language that still has a high percentage of children speaking it, for example the Celtic languages Welsh and Irish, and the Romance languages Catalan and Quebecoise French.

Language endangerment has little to do with absolute numbers. Rather, it has to do with the percentage of children within the language group speaking the language natively. A language spoken natively by 10 million people can be endangered (as, say, only 40% of its kids speak it). A language spoken natively by 3,000 people can be safe and healthy (as 100% of its kids are native speakers).

Table 1 describes the difference between reclamation, revitalization, and reinvigoration:

Table 1 Comparison of Reclamation, Revitalization and Reinvigoration

Reclamation	Revitalization	Reinvigoration
There are NO native speakers when the revival begins.	Severely endangered. The percentage of children within the group speaking the language natively is very low, e.g., 0%, but there are still adults speaking the language natively.	Endangered. The percentage of children within the group speaking the language natively is lower than 100%.
e.g. Hebrew, Barnjarla, Wampanoag, Siraya, Myaamia; Tunica (Central and Lower Mississippi Valley, USA)	e.g., Adnyamathanha, Karuk, Walmajarri	e.g., Welsh, Irish, Catalan, Quebecoise French

Obviously, reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration are on a continuum, a cline. They do not constitute a discrete trichotomy. That said, the distinction is most useful. For example, the Master-Apprentice (or Mentor/Apprentice) method can only be used in the revitalization and reinvigoration, not in reclamation. This method was pioneered by linguist Leanne Hinton at the University of

California, Berkeley (see, e.g., Hinton 1994), who had been working with a wide range of Native American languages spoken or in some cases remembered or documented across California. In many cases, she was working with the remaining handful of ageing fluent speakers of languages such as Karuk. It is a difficult proposition to ask an elderly speaker to come into a school classroom and teach children when they themselves are not trained teachers and, in some cases, may never have had an opportunity to attend school themselves. Even if they were able to teach their languages in a school setting, will this really ensure that their language continues into future generations? Probably not. What is more effective is to ensure that highly motivated young adults who are themselves owners-custodians of the language gain a sound knowledge of and fluency in their language. This is achieved through the Master-Apprentice (or Mentor/Apprentice) approach: A young person is paired with an older fluent speaker – perhaps a granddaughter with her grandmother – and their job is to speak the language with each other without resorting to English. It does not matter what they do – they can weave baskets, go fishing, build houses, or fix cars together – so long as they speak the language with each other (Zuckermann 2020).

Revivalistics is trans-disciplinary because it studies language revival from various angles such as law, mental health, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, geography, politics, history, biology, evolution, genetics, genomics, colonization studies, missionary studies, media, animation film, technology, talknology, art, theatre, dance, agriculture, archaeology, music (see Grant 2014), games (indirect learning), education, pedagogy (see Hinton 2011), and even architecture.

Consider architecture. An architect involved in revivalistics might ask the following ‘location, location, location’ question, which is, of course, beyond language:

1. Should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a natural Indigenous setting, to replicate the original ambience of heritage, culture, laws, and lores?
2. Should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a modern building that has Indigenous characteristics such as Aboriginal colours and shapes?
3. Should we reclaim an Aboriginal language in a western governmental building – to give an empowering signal that the tribe has full support of contemporary mainstream society?

THE LANGUAGE REVIVAL DIAMOND (LARD)

Reviving a language is complex and involves a great deal of time and the help of many people. Revivalistics uses the LAnguage Revival Diamond (LARD), which consists of four core quadrants, each of which is necessary in reviving any language:

1. Language Owners: depending on the stage of the language under revival, these are the (native) speakers who are ancestrally tied to the language or those who will carry it into the future. This is often a starting point for revival, but it is possible to start anywhere in the Diamond. It is always an organic process, with interdependent and always-moving parts.
2. Public Sphere: This final quadrant is all about moving the language under revival into the public domain. It includes working with the general public and government where desired and changing the landscape (linguistic landscape), the signs where the language belongs.
3. Linguistics: A key early point in the process is about recording and documenting the language, where that is still possible; and collating or reconstructing existing material and sources. It also includes work on spelling, orthography (see, e.g., Bradley 2011), dictionaries, and grammar. Moving forwards and to compound the work, it is crucial to engage in and create New Media resources and learning material.
4. Education: This includes working in Art, Song, and Traditional Rituals to pull out or extend the language; Methods and Strategies, for example: in the case of revitalization and reinvigoration (but not in reclamation, of a no-longer spoken language) the Master/Apprentice (or Mentor/Apprentice) method. Education also includes Learning, Teaching, Schooling, and Immersion. This is key to ensuring the longevity of a language, particularly once there are several or many speakers.

CONCLUSION

More and more indigenous and minority communities seek to reinstate their cultural autonomy, intellectual sovereignty, spirituality and wellbeing, all of which often lost in case of linguicide (language killing). Revivalistics can assist them in doing so. One should listen to the voice of Jenna Richards, a Barngarla Aboriginal woman who took part in my first Barngarla reclamation workshop (out of dozens) in Port Lincoln, South Australia, on 18-20 April 2012. She wrote to me the following sentence in an unsolicited email message on 3 May 2012:

Personally, I found the experience of learning our language liberating and went home feeling very overwhelmed because we were finally going to learn our "own" language, it gave me a sense of identity and I think if the whole family learnt our language then we would all feel totally different about ourselves and each other cause it's almost like it gives you a purpose in life.

As Barngarla woman Evelyn Walker (née Dohnt) wrote to me following the same reclamation workshop: Our ancestors are happy!

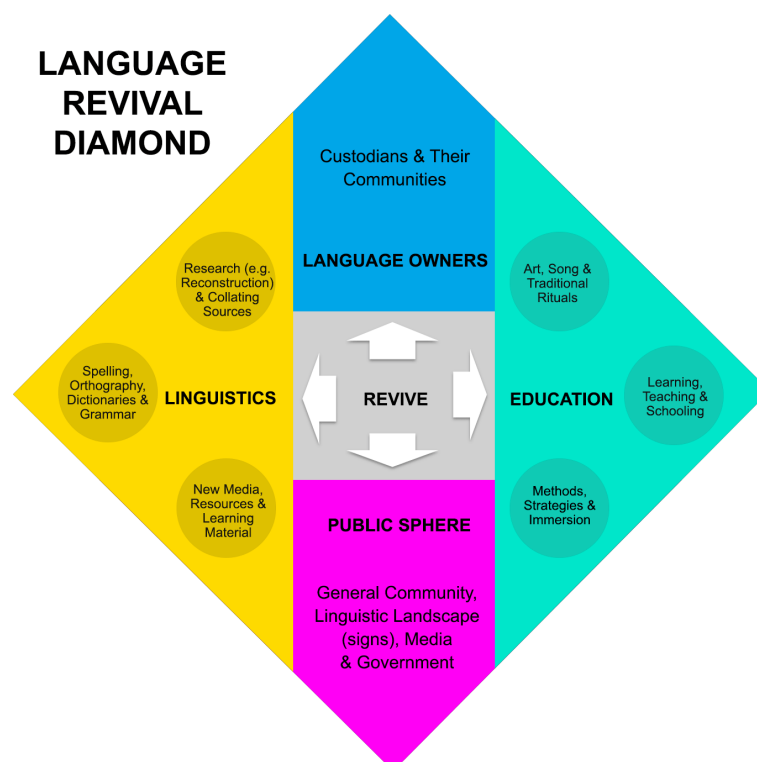


Figure 1 LARD: LAanguage Revival Diamond (Zuckermann 2020:212)

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