

## NAMA in the IYIL 2019 Perspectives: Celebrating 20 Years Training Native Scholars in Linguistics<sup>1</sup>

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Since 1999, the Native American Languages & Linguistics Master of Arts (NAMA) program of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Arizona has been serving Native American students interested in training on linguistics, language documentation, and language revitalization. This paper is part of our celebration of NAMA's twentieth anniversary. In this paper, we describe the history of the program, stories from our alumni, and the role NAMA has played in providing Linguistics training to Native American scholars.

**1. Introduction.** In 2019, the Native American Languages & Linguistics Masters of Arts (NAMA) Program of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Arizona celebrated twenty years training Native American scholars in Linguistics. Language endangerment is a global problem, and the University of Arizona Department of Linguistics is one of the leading places to learn methods to combat endangerment. In this paper, we offer an overview of the NAMA history, its goals, and its contribution to promoting and including Indigenous voices in linguistic research.

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In its two decades of existence, NAMA has been contributing to the training of Native American scholars in language sciences. Recently, the Native4Linguistics satellite workshop held at the 2018 annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America called attention to the need for ‘expanding language sciences by broadening participation of Native Americans in Linguistics.’<sup>2</sup> Native scholars have the potential of leading transformational research in Linguistics, wherein the research is done with and by a member of the tribe/community rather than for them and *on* their behalf. The NAMA program contributes to the development of new indigenously informed documentation practices and theoretical connections in which the views from Native scholars are brought into linguistics through the projects they develop, thus providing an Indigenous-centered approach to language sciences (Leonard 2012, 2018).

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 we provide background on the position of Native American languages and the relationship of Native Americans to American higher education, followed by a brief description of NAMA history in Section 3. In Section 4, we present a summary of the exceptional level of success of the program. In Section 5 we describe the types of students we serve, and present two student stories about their experiences in the program. A summary of the NAMA panel presentations at the International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019 Perspectives conference is given in Section 6, followed by concluding remarks in Section 7.

**2. Background: Native Americans in higher education.** Research increasingly supports the vital role of Native Language education for ensuring the health, welfare, and vitality of Native Americans and communities and students. A number of initiative and work from the University of Arizona faculty in the Department of Linguistics, Anthropology, and the College of Education have led over the years to increasing recognition of the importance of work addressing the needs of endangered language communities (Zepeda & Hill 1991 in Wyman et al. 2010). The first federal law recognizing the value of Native American languages and articulating a National obligation to preserve and protect them, the Native American Languages Act of 1990/1992, was drafted in Arizona at a conference that was led by researchers from the University of Arizona.

On the national scene, the understanding of the importance of this work is increasing. The need for its support is recognized at all levels of government—as an example, see the *White House Native Youth Report 2014* for several policy recommendations addressing the need to find solutions to improve education, economic development, and health for the Native American youth in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Programs like NAMA and the Language Revitalization track of the Linguistics Ph.D. program, as well as courses in Navajo and O’odham language, at the University of Arizona, render the institution an international leader in building capacity to address these needs. However, these programs and courses are non-traditional in several respects—in the kinds of students and faculty best qualified to lead them, in terms of the populations they primarily serve, and in terms of their scale. They will never draw large numbers of students into undergraduate courses, and they will, therefore, never be a venue for revenue generation

<sup>2</sup> For information on the Natives4Linguistics initiatives, please see <https://natives4linguistics.wordpress.com/> (Accessed on September 2, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport\\_final.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf) (accessed on July 10, 2020).

on the existing budget models implemented by universities across the United States. Instead, we see these programs as representing an opportunity for strategic investment based on our shared values and priorities. Investment in these areas is necessary and will pay significant dividends for the College, the University, and the community at large.

Native American students face a unique challenge in higher education (see Patel 2014; Field 2016a). Native Americans constitute by far the smallest ethnic group in American universities, at any level (undergraduate, graduate, or faculty). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES),<sup>4</sup> as of 2020, Native Americans are less than 1% of full-time faculty at colleges and universities in the United States.

According to the 2020 National Science Foundation's *Survey of Earned Doctorates*,<sup>5</sup> academic institutions in the United States had 55,283 doctorate recipients in 2020; from that, only 100 were awarded to people who self-identified as Native American (i.e., American Indians or Alaska Natives)—this is less than 0.2% of the total recipients. According to the same report, from the total of 232 doctorate recipients in the field of Linguistics in 2020, only one was for a Native American student.

At the University of Arizona, Native American students are the most under-represented group. Among our undergraduates, they have the lowest retention rate. Most Native American students (undergraduate or graduate) are first-generation college students (Saenz et al. 2007). Most Native American students at all levels come from a background of poverty, as Native Americans overall have the highest poverty rate of any group in the United States (Asante-Muhammad, Tec, & Ramirez 2019).

It is clear that many Native American students at the undergraduate level find the adjustment to the university extremely challenging, and most Native American students who go on to a Masters or Ph.D. program find academic culture to be somewhat foreign. Most Native American university or graduate students began at a two-year Tribal College, buffering the transition, and this is a route to educational success (Field 2016b). At the same time, Native American languages and its speakers continue to face ongoing oppression. It is impossible to know the exact number of Indigenous languages spoken in the Americas prior to the first European arrival and its subsequent horrendous consequences for the Indigenous peoples and their lands (cf. Silver and Miller 1998). The estimate is that over 1000 languages were spoken in the Americas then, but that number has been reduced to almost 600 that are still spoken (cf. Belew et al. 2018). In California, for example, of the 100 Native American languages of California, less than fifty have any living speakers, and none are being learned by children in the home (Hinton 1993, Golla 2011).

In Arizona, which is home to twenty-one federally recognized tribes, and a dozen or more living Native American languages, several such languages are being learned by at least some children in the home. But even in these cases, the percentage of children who come to school as speakers of these languages has dropped precipitously over the last 20-40 years. Navajo, an Arizona language which is the most commonly spoken of the languages Indigenous to the lower 48 states, was as recently as the 1980s the first

<sup>4</sup> NCES – <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csc/postsecondary-faculty?tid=74> (Accessed on August 11, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf22300/data-tables>, <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/#sd> (Accessed on August 11, 2022).

language for a large majority of Navajo children starting school. By the early 2000s, almost all Navajo children entering school are either monolingual speakers of English or prefer to speak English (Benally & Viri 2005).

When a language is not being transmitted to children, it is severely endangered. Without quick and thorough intervention, the language will become dormant. A very high percentage of Native American languages are likely to lose their last fluent speaker within the next 1-2 generations. Although European languages have been endangering Native American languages for over 500 years, we are living right now at the crucial time point for these languages. If Native American communities are unable to undertake language documentation and revitalization right now, this vitally important and irreplaceable store of human knowledge and creativity will be lost.

These twin challenges—the difficulties faced by Native American students adjusting to the university, and the crisis point faced by Native American languages—represent a formidable proving ground for the University of Arizona’s land-grant mission. The great potential, however, lies in the fact that a focus on training Native American language experts and teaching Native American languages respond to both challenges simultaneously, potentially leading to a virtuous circle of improvement in both domains. Romero Little & McCarty (2006) state that “[t]hese dual challenges—maintaining ancestral languages and providing culturally responsive and empowering education—lie at the heart of contemporary Indigenous language planning and policy (LPP) efforts today.”

The University of Arizona’s NAMA program, and the Department of Linguistics efforts in postsecondary Indigenous language instruction, contribute in this vein at the university level, unique to universities in the United States today. Furthermore, NAMA addresses the challenge of broadening the participation of Native American scholars interested in the documentation and revitalization of their languages in the field of Linguistics. The preservation of Indigenous languages is crucial to the preservation and maintenance of Indigenous knowledge. The NAMA program has served students with a variety of interests ranging from arts to STEM. Indeed, according to Fitzgerald (2018), there is evidence suggesting that language is a key concern and high priority for tribal citizens and nations, including STEM graduate students. In recent years, there have been increasing interests in computational approaches to language documentation and language revitalization. A few NAMA students interested in these areas have benefited from combining the training they receive at NAMA with that offered by the Human Language Technology program of the Linguistics Department.

**3. The NAMA program.** The NAMA program trains Native Americans to work with their communities to meet the community’s language goals. Such goals include, but are not limited to, teaching the language so that more community members can speak it, teaching adults how to pass the language on to children, and documenting and describing the language. The NAMA Program also sends M.A. graduates on to Ph.D. programs, from which many go on to become university faculty. Given the low number of Native Americans holding PhDs or working as faculty in any field at all universities in total, NAMA contributes significantly to expanding the Native American faculty of the future. In this, we are continuing and expanding the leadership role of the University of Arizona in the postgraduate training of Native Americans. The University of Arizona is often listed among the top 20 doctorate-granting institutions in the United States. In the most

recent National Science Foundation's *Survey of Earned Doctorates*, the University of Arizona ranks number one amongst for the number of doctorates awarded to Native American students, a total of 28 in 2020. Patel (2014) notes the vital role that master's programs like NAMA play in this context by serving as the pipeline to doctoral programs.

The NAMA program was founded in 1999 as part of the Department of Linguistics. The Department of Linguistics itself was founded in the 1970s when the National Endowment for the Humanities funded a pilot study (co-PIs Adrian Akmajian and Dick Demers, 1976-77) to establish a language center at the University of Arizona. Linguist Ken Hale, a life-long advocate for Native language communities and a scholar of Native American Linguistics, was hired to teach Navajo and Hopi. Thus, the teaching of Native American Languages formed an essential cornerstone in the mission of the Department from its founding. The goal was to develop a world-class linguistics program that would have as one of its core priorities the training of Native American linguists— or “native speaker linguists” in the words of Hale, who discusses the importance of this mission at length in Hale (1992). Native American linguists could contribute meaningfully to the struggle to turn the tide of language endangerment. The original NEH grant was followed by more substantial external support (1978-81, co-PIs Adrian Akmajian and Dick Demers), and in 1978 the Department was officially established under Deans Hermann Bleibtreu and Paul Rosenblatt, with Professors Dick Demers, Adrienne Lehrer, Adrian Akmajian, Mike Harnish, and Susan Steele. Regents Professor Ofelia Zepeda, the co-founder of the American Indian Language Development Institute and Tohono O'odham scholar, was among the first students enrolled in the program (McKee et al. 2015).

The NAMA program was founded by two Native American scholars, Professor Mary Willie (Navajo) and Regents Professor Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O'odham). Both are Ph.D. graduates of the University of Arizona Department of Linguistics and native speakers of their communities' languages. The NAMA program was the first of its kind designed to serve the needs of endangered language speakers and community members – and lead them to a Master's degree that would serve the language-related goals of those communities. Twenty years after its founding, there are still extremely few programs of any kind—whether leading to a degree or not—that focus on training members of communities to do the language documentation, revitalization, and teaching work that their communities want.

**4. Demonstrated success and outcomes.** The NAMA program prepares students either to do language work in their communities or to go on in academia for a Ph.D. and perhaps a faculty position. As of Summer 2020, the NAMA program has graduated twenty-eight students. Of these twenty-eight students, ten have gone on to complete Ph.D. programs at the University of Arizona, or elsewhere, and four of those have become faculty at various universities. In general, NAMA graduates are mostly doing language revitalization, language teaching, and language activism work in their communities. All NAMA graduates thus far but two have been members of Native American communities (a description of the types of students NAMA serves is given in §6 below). Given the very small number of Native Americans obtaining Ph.D.'s in any field in the entire United States, NAMA is a significant contributor to the educational pipeline for bringing Native

Americans into the Ph.D. and faculty level.<sup>6</sup> Several past NAMA graduates have gone on in academia in the College of Education at the University of Arizona, or in fields such as Education, Anthropology, or Child Development, and Computational Linguistics at other universities. We are very proud that NAMA is contributing to interdisciplinarity.

Education relating to Native American Linguistics in the Department of Linguistics is also not limited to the NAMA program, and other activities of the Linguistics Department are also making significant contributions to training Native American students to work on their communities' languages, as well as training non-Native linguists to work on language revitalization while prioritizing benefit to the language community. The faculty who support the NAMA program also work in these other programs, and students interact across all of these programs.

An important partner, crucial for NAMA's success, is the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) at the University of Arizona. AILDI has been providing undergraduate and graduate-level education to Native American students and interested others from communities across North America since 1978. Because AILDI is a short-term intensive program, it accommodates the needs of Native students from distant locations who cannot move away from their communities for the long-term to pursue their education. NAMA students are required to attend AILDI during the summer as part of their degree. Increasingly, the last few years have seen AILDI expanding its offerings of short workshops, often provided at communities' requests within their geographical boundaries. AILDI has consistently provided opportunities for both NAMA and Ph.D. students and alumni to serve Indigenous communities by organizing, facilitating, and teaching at workshops by AILDI, and by hiring them as RAs or instructors for AILDI. NAMA and Ph.D. students routinely serve as volunteers at AILDI workshops both on campus and in reservation communities. Such workshops sometimes extend to the student's community, even outside Arizona, as in the case of AILDI workshops led by Joseph Dupris in his community in Oregon (see Dupris 2019).

**5. The type of students NAMA serves.** Until approximately 2016, the NAMA program served only students who were members of Native American communities, and a rare non-Native student who had a strong long-term connection to a particular Native American community. However, the NAMA program has broadened the scope of the students it serves. We describe below some of characteristics of the NAMA student population.

*Native American students without strong connections to their community:* Among Native American students, only those with strong connections to their communities were originally accepted into the program. However, due to the political, economic, and cultural situation in the United States, there are many Native Americans who were raised away from their community with little or no connection to it, or who only found out in adulthood that their biological non-custodial parent is Native American. In recent years, the NAMA program has admitted several Native American students who want to build connections to their heritage.

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<sup>6</sup> In the 2009-2010 period, 952 Native American Ph.D.s in any field at all universities total. Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72> (Accessed on September 2, 2020).

*Members of Indigenous communities outside North America:* There are students from endangered language communities in Central and South America and in other parts of the world who also apply to the University of Arizona to learn how to do language documentation and revitalization work in their communities. Recently, for example, NAMA has served students whose heritage language is *Manchu* (China), and a native speaker of Kichua from Bolivia.

*Non-native students wanting to contribute to language revitalization:* There are many non-Native students who find language revitalization for endangered Indigenous languages compelling, and who want to work in this area but do not have a connection to any particular language community or tribe. The NAMA program provides training to students who plan to develop such a relationship with an Indigenous community. At NAMA, non-Indigenous students gain skills in language documentation and revitalization, and NAMA has trained a few students in this category.

Admitting students from these three groups to NAMA allows us to expand the NAMA program considerably and to provide training in language revitalization to far more people, who could then apply this knowledge around the world to help improve the health of endangered languages.

**5.1 Our journey into NAMA: Sharing two stories.** We present now two stories by NAMA alumni Bri Alexander and Corey Roberts. A common theme in these two distinct stories is the importance of Indigenous languages for reclaiming Indigenous identity. Bri's and Corey's stories are a good representation of the motivations that drive Indigenous students to become linguists: The passion for their languages, and the desire to keep alive the knowledge and traditions of their ancestors.

**5.1.1 Culminations, by Bri Alexander.** ᄒᄒᄒ (*osiyo*) / *hatitoh* / hello! Kᄒᄒ ᄒᄒᄒ (*Tsonena daquadoa*) / *Laalo'kachiititha nitesiitho* / my name is Bri. Though I write this piece, none of it is mine, for I am but a culmination of the multitude of generations before me. My knowledge is ancestral knowledge revealed through my experienced life thus far, so while I write this from my perspective and as my stories, I contemplate what those notions mean, and I invite you to do the same as you read.

My spirit came into this world on Mvskoke Creek Nation lands to a mixed household. My father's family is enrolled in Cherokee Nation and starting to enroll in Shawnee Tribe. I used to ask DYSS (*agidudu*, "my grandpa") to tell me his stories of growing up, our ancestors, and our knowledge. He would answer with remorse, "*Tsonen*, I don't have any stories. My grandpa wouldn't tell me anything when I would ask."

I was walking through the National Museum of the American Indian when I first saw that *Tecumseh* was Shawnee. 'Strange,' I thought. 'Why would *agidud*'s grandpa be named after a Shawnee?' That's how I found out that the "A.S." on my Cherokee tribal enrollment card meant "Adopted Shawnee." I once again went back to DYSS and asked. He said, "Of course. You didn't know that?" DYSS installed a Cherokee keyboard on his phone and now texts me in Cherokee. I almost always have to ask him to translate what he says -- his learning has surpassed my own, despite my degree in linguistics and my work with Cherokee Nation to reclaim the language. He tells me I inspired him, but in truth, he inspires me.



My interest in language revitalization was sparked by a conversation I had with Dr. Richard Grounds (Executive Director of the non-profit Yuchi Language Project). I met Dr. Grounds randomly on an airplane, five years before I started NAMA. I was on my way to Oklahoma to reconnect with my Native side after a lifetime of being separated, and he had copies of the magazine *Cultural Survival* with him. I was astonished to hear that Native languages were losing speakers. Why didn't I know this sooner? What can I do? I would think about this for five years until a simple Google search showed me NAMA. I still have the map of tribal lands Dr. Grounds drew on an airplane napkin for me.

During my time in the NAMA program, I had the opportunity to meet several other Indigenous students in other programs at the University of Arizona. My Native friends were from a variety of fields, experiences, and communities. One of my favorite memories was when I saw one post about needing a car to get up to Standing Rock to help protect water, and I volunteered mine. When I asked Dr. Elizabeth Kickham, my NAMA director and advisor, if I could get that time off to go, she told me that these opportunities must be taken. Dr. Kickham gave me a gift; I learned more about Native languages in that 54-hour road trip with three Native sisters and in volunteered work at Standing Rock than I ever would have guessed possible.

In my last year in the NAMA program, I received an email asking if I was available to consult for an online Cherokee language program; I thought it was spam—it was too good to be true! Three years later, I am wrapping up that chapter of my life after developing two Cherokee language programs. The first was a result of mixing NAMA teachings on language ideologies, language attitudes, and context with curriculum development for Indigenous languages and online designing. The second was less theoretical but much more natural; it came to me in a dream and was developed out of asking a bunch of questions. It will always be my favorite because of the building process, even though it is unfinished.

Recently, I drove to my Shawnee family's lands in Kansas, pre-removal. I then drove south along the path they took to end up in Cherokee Nation. At my last-known matriarch's grave, I touched the stone while I prayed in Shawnee. I am here today because of her resilience and strength.

I have myriad stories that follow the same themes above, about how my family's Native languages have shaped us, guided us, bound us, and freed us; about the historical, social, and political processes that interrupted and continue to interrupt intergenerational transmission; about how language work is always community work and more than a collection of grammatical elements, though those can be wildly useful in the work; about how learning is much more than what happens in a classroom, though the spaces opened, connections made, and lessons learned in that classroom are priceless; and about everything in between that you might take from this. I've been blessed with stories now that I've dedicated my time to language and cultural reclamation work, and while they cannot replace the stories my family has lost, perhaps they will allow us to breathe deeply and know who we are and where we came from once again.

### **5.1.2 Reclaiming a language, reclaiming identity, by Corey Roberts.**

*Mecouremēchen kihoe hūk.* Corey Roberts *omiklākhlewa. Mīm Yesāñ. Mīm Occaneechi. Mīma Tucson watīwa nikas omiknahōma. Mīsān nikas mañgīda Yesāñ mīma hūk yesanetçi mayoknahōse. Mīma hūk netçi wañgitowa wañkoñspewa.* 'Greetings all. My



name is Corey Roberts. I am Southeastern Siouan. I am Occaneechi. I live and work in Tucson. My Southeastern Siouan cousins and I work on Tutelo-Saponi. We all work to remember our language.'

The Tutelo-Saponi language, for me, represents the quest for reconnection, the testament of my ancestors' and cousins' resilience and determination, and quite plainly, the future. I came to my language and understanding of my Indian ancestry later in life. Only after I had lived 40 years was it revealed in my family that we were of Occaneechi ancestry, and I was determined to find out more. Having previously experienced learning new languages, I felt that learning about how my forebears spoke would perhaps be the most meaningful way for me to connect to this newfound ancestry. I carefully approached the Occaneechi about resources available on the language before and during the tribal powwow in 2018, and I have been cultivating a relationship with members of the tribe and other Southeastern Siouan language communities ever since.

At the powwow, I was pointed in the direction of a few of the very limited language resources that were available. I was also told that only three members of the tribe spoke the language. I quickly learned from the main scholarly work done on Tutelo-Saponi that only around 800 words remained in the documented lexicon, and some of them were borrowing words from Algonquin, Iroquoian, and Indo-European languages. There was so little to work with, and while some would have called (and continue to call) my language 'extinct,' these deterrents have done nothing but motivate me to help wake this sleeping language out of its century-long slumber.

I am glad of this initial motivation because not long after, I learned that the inaccessibility of the scholarly work done on Tutelo-Saponi was a formidable deterrent to community members who wanted to learn more about their language. As helpful as they would eventually become, the sketch of a 19th-century philologist and the dissertation of a late 20th-century linguist were almost impenetrable to a neophyte with no linguistics background. Confronted with multiple orthographies and terms such as 'leftward nasalization' and 'final-vowel ablauting,' search engines did little to help decode the documentation on Tutelo-Saponi. They did, however, point me in the direction of the place that could offer me the help I needed. This current phase of my ancestral language journey started with a simple search in the fall of 2018 using the terms 'master's program Native American language.' This journey continues as I finish my Masters of Native American Languages and Linguistics in the NAMA program at the University of Arizona.

During my year in the NAMA program, I have been exposed to many tools that have deepened my understanding of both the sketch and dissertation that have been done on Tutelo-Saponi. Not only do I understand how final vowels ablaut in my language, but I can explain the phenomenon in a challenging yet accessible way to members of the four language communities I have worked with since the start of this journey. Coursework in syntax, historical and comparative methods, documentation, and language revitalization has allowed me to bring linguistic science to the analysis of both the mundane and spiritual use of the language. This course of study has inspired me to specialize in using historical and comparative methods to reconstruct lexical and (to a lesser degree) morphosyntactic features in Tutelo-Saponi using lexemes and grammatical features found throughout language family tree. With this coursework, *waõ̃nspe nētçi mā̃nganañga* 'European language knowledge (linguistics)' has become a tool for rather than a

deterrent to my family and me in our ancestral-language acquisition and revitalization efforts.

The perspectives of my family and my ancestors informs almost every bit of language and linguistic work that I do. While it would be a stimulating challenge to reconstruct switch reference in my language, my tribal cousin asking me how to say ‘turtle’ is both a more practical and immediate goal. The word for ‘oven’ supersedes differentiating between reflexive and middle voice markers for community members. Reconstructing the words for animals mentioned in a naming ceremony form the basis of a research study before conjecturing germination in my language. These community-driven research questions have often presented initially as simple and straightforward morphological or comparative problems. They have always resulted in more complex and rewarding research than anything that I could have produced on my own. Given a choice between researching a trendy gap in Siouan linguistics because it will be publishable and using linguistics following up on the language dream of an elder, I will choose the motivations of the community every time. I will do so with the understanding that our ancestors speak through the community, and the knowledge they share has always been of the greatest benefit to their descendants. We reconnect with them using the words they give us, and the Grammar they bestow upon us with the sounds of *yesanētçi* (the tongue of the Southeastern Siouan people). I will reconnect with them and research on their behalf for the rest of my life.

*Dokałīdo bilahūk. Wañgida bilahūk. Waõñspe nētçi māñganañga bilahūk.*

NAMA *Bilahūk*. ‘Thank you to all the ancestors. Thank you to all my cousins. Thank you, linguistics. Thank you, NAMA program.’

**6. NAMA at the IYIL 2019 Perspectives Conference.** In 2019, the NAMA program organized a panel composed by a group of current students and alumni, with the goal of celebrating the program, and sharing individual perspectives and experiences as Native scholars. The NAMA panel at the IYIL 2019 Perspective Conference consisted of presentations by four NAMA graduate panelists (Bri Alexander, Mosiah Bluecloud, Joseph Dupris, and Joseph Koodeik). The panelists shared their perspectives on the role of linguistic training for both their careers and for serving their communities’ language preservation and conservation efforts. In this section, we provide a summary of the topics addressed by each panel participant.

Bri Alexander opened the panel, sharing her journey into the field of linguistics. Bri is a member of the Cherokee Nation. After graduating from NAMA in 2018, she went on to pursue a Ph.D. in Anthropological Linguistics at CUNY Graduate Center, NY. Bri’s interest in NAMA was motivated by her desire to contribute to Cherokee language preservation and conservation efforts. Bri’s research during her time at NAMA focused on a case study to explore the development process, including community collaboration, in the creation of a Cherokee language App (Alexander 2018).<sup>7</sup> See §7.1 below for Bri’s account of her journey coming into the field of linguistics.

The second panelist, Mosiah Bluecloud (Kickapoo), started working on Indigenous language revitalization in 2008 as a staff member in the Sauk Language Department. After graduating with a B.A. in Linguistics from the University of Oklahoma in

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<sup>7</sup> Bri is the co-founder of BLOOM, a web-based application for language learning. <https://www.discoverbloom.com/about> (Accessed on September 1, 2020).

2016, he developed the Kickapoo Language Program in Mcloud, Oklahoma. Mosiah joined NAMA in the summer of 2019. One of his research interests is neologisms (i.e., creation of new words and expressions) in Central Algonquian languages. In his presentation, Mosiah shared his perspectives and experiences in working with other Kickapoo language teachers and language advocates in creating neologisms in Kickapoo and other Central Algonquian languages. Mosiah views the creation of new words and expressions as a way to resist the incorporation of terms from the dominant colonial languages (English and Spanish) into Indigenous languages. Mosiah finished his NAMA degree in 2020 and began his Ph.D. in Linguistics (Language Revitalization Track) at the University of Arizona in the fall of the same year.

Joseph Dupris (Klamath-Modoc) shared his experience in building Tribal research collaboration. J. Dupris is an enrolled member of the Klamath Tribes and is a descendant of Big Pine Paiute and Cheyenne River Sioux. He has been one of the key players in leading language revitalization activities in his hometown, (*mbosaksaawas*, Klamath Reservation), in Oregon. One of J. Dupris's research interests is developing a locally-controlled, sustainable approach to Indigenous language research documentation/revitalization appropriate to the Klamath Tribes' context. J. Dupris's work on *maqlaqsyals* (Klamath-Modoc language) includes collaboration with several tribal research partners. J. Dupris has also fostered collaborations between Klamath Tribes and the University of Arizona's American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI). Through these partnerships, J. Dupris offered training to community members in immersion techniques and monolingual elicitation to develop critical learning scenarios along with gaming and conversation methodologies. J. Dupris graduated from NAMA in 2016 and has graduated with a double Ph.D. in Anthropology and Linguistics (ANLI) at the University of Arizona. Dupris (2019) describes his initiatives to promote collaborations in tribal research and how they can be informed by local values, knowledge, and worldview and remain recognizable to both academia and other Indigenous communities.

The fourth member of the NAMA panel was Joseph Koodeik, a member of the Tlingit Tribe, in Alaska. Koodeik is currently pursuing the joint Ph.D. in Anthropology and Linguistics (ANLI) at the University of Arizona. Koodeik's research interest centers on the need for linguistic elicitation methodologies to include and be respectful of the Indigenous' voice in linguistic research. While Koodeik acknowledges that linguistic elicitation plays important roles in gathering linguistic data (i.e., it can be used for theoretical linguistic research or for producing materials for language revitalization efforts); he also points out some potential issues elicitation may bring to members of minority and Indigenous communities. According to Koodeik, very rarely, the voice of Indigenous Peoples are included or taken into account in the literature on linguistic fieldwork research methodologies. Koodeik's research interests aim at filling this gap by conducting interviews with members of his community who have worked with non-Indigenous scholars in the past. He also considers the perspective of community members who have refused to work with non-Indigenous scholars. Koodeik's goal is that his work can help scholars to reflect on how members of Indigenous communities perceive their research practices.

**7. Concluding remarks.** This paper celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the NAMA program in 2019, the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The NAMA program

contributes significantly to the need to bring Indigenous voices into Linguistics. The NAMA program was the first of its kind designed to serve the needs of endangered language speakers and community members—and lead them to a Linguistics graduate degree that would serve the language-related goals of those communities. Twenty years after its founding, there are still very few programs that focus on training members of communities to do the type of language documentation, revitalization, and teaching work Indigenous communities want.

In these 20 years, The NAMA program has graduated over 25 students. NAMA is a significant contributor to the inclusion and training of Native American scholars in language sciences. In this respect, NAMA plays an important role in the expansion of language sciences by broadening participation of Native Americans in Linguistics—one of the main goals of the Natives4Linguistics Interest Group of the Linguistic Society of America.

NAMA alumni have the potential of leading transformational research in Linguistics, wherein the research is done with and by a member of the tribe/community rather than for them and *on* their behalf. They contribute with an Indigenously informed language research, including language documentation practices and their theoretical connections. The work done by NAMA students (including non-Indigenous students) emerge from community collaboration and is in tandem with community goals. We view communities' language revitalization goals and activities, as being center stage, and from which our work on language documentation, training, and linguistic analysis derive.

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