

# Endangered Languages

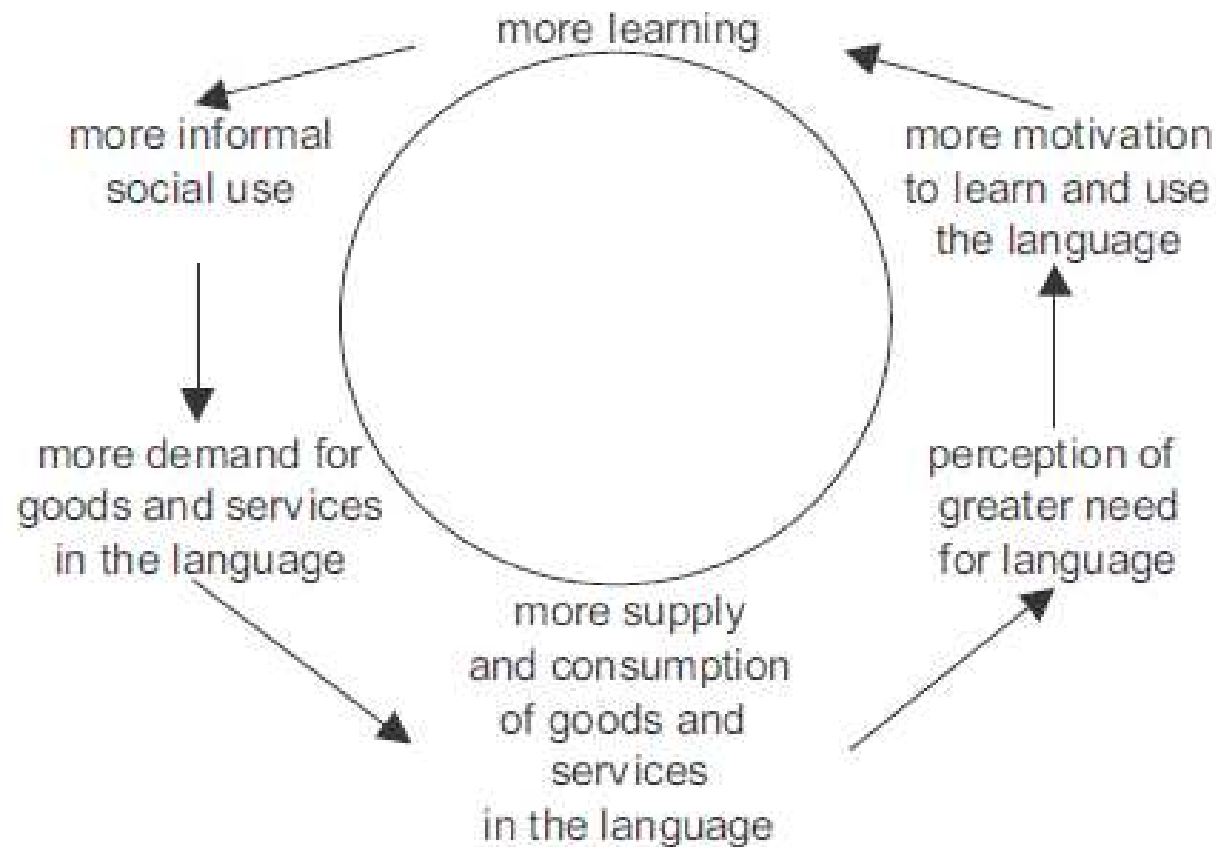
prof. Nicole Nau, UAM 2015

Fifteenth lecture (08/06/2015)

Language revitalization: increasing visibility and use  
of a language. Ideas and examples



# The Catherine wheel (Strubbel 1999, from Darquennes 2007)



„Strubell makes clear that the functional relationship between

- 1) language competence,
- 2) the social use of a language,
- 3) the presence and demand for products and services in/through that language, and
- 4) the motivation to learn and use that language

needs to be considered when conceptualizing language revitalization measures. In presenting things this way, Strubell avoids a rigid, cumulative and evolutionary description of social change that is inherent in Fishman's GIDS.” (Darquennes 2007)

# David Crystal: What helps a language survive? 6 points

1. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community.
2. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.
3. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community.

4. An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system.
5. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down.
6. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology

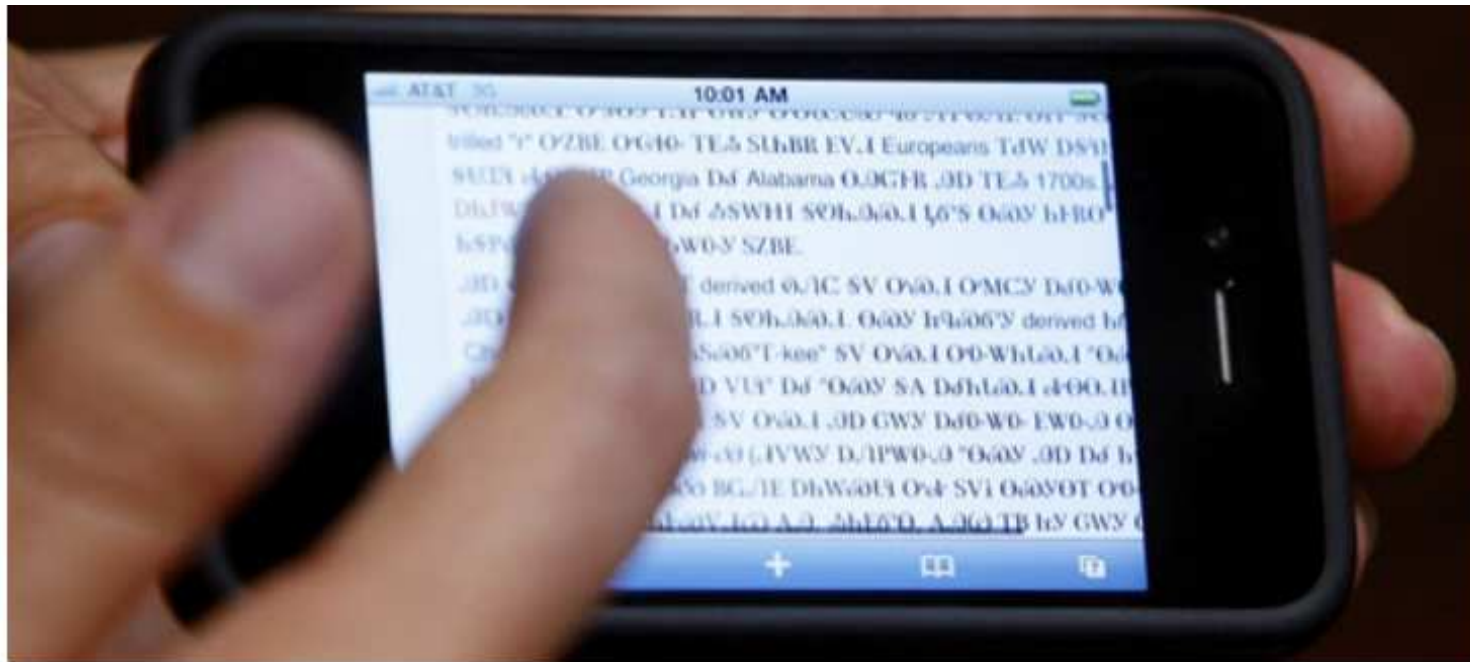
(read more at: <http://aheku.net/forums?m=posts&q=2159>)

<http://www.whitewolfpack.com/2012/11/last-words-phone-app-bids-to-save-dying.html>





<http://www.macgasm.net/2010/12/24/cherokee-nation-convinces-apple-add-language-support-iphone-ipad/>



How do you save a dwindling language with technology? In the case of the Native American Cherokee tribe, you put your language on the devices that the kids want most, and that's iPhones and iPads. Cherokee has been supported on Mac OS X since 2003, with special keyboard layouts and keys that use Cherokee characters. Now you can use your iPhone, and soon the iPad, to do the same.



# Writing + technology + education



# David Harrison about technology for endangered languages

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxZAbA3NuEM>

Languages mentioned:

- **Siletz Dee-Ni** is an Oregon Athabaskan language, very similar to Navajo, spoken by Siletz tribes once local to northern California through southwest Washington [1:20]
- **Matukar Panau:** This Oceanic language of Papua New Guinea has only 600 speakers who live in just two small villages [2:30]
- **Tuvan** is a Turkic language spoken in the Republic of Tuva in south-central Siberia [3:50]

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/talking-dictionaries/>

# Writing and literacy for survival (review of last lecture)

- The language must have a writing system.
  - How to develop a writing system? (Examples: Mavea; Miraña; Uru Chipaya)
- The speakers must know the writing system.
  - How to teach a writing system? (Example: Uru Chipaya)
- The speakers must use the writing system.
  - How to promote literacy in the language? What motivates people to read and write in the language? Where can the language be used in written form?

# What can be done to raise the prestige of a language?

1. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community.  
(Crystal)

„Prestige comes when people start to notice you. An endangered community therefore needs to make its presence felt within the wider community. It needs to raise its visibility, or profile.” (Crystal)

Write down 3 ideas how to „raise the visibility” of a language!  
For which grade of endangerment is your idea best suited?  
What is needed to realize the idea?

Next slides:

Different ways to make a language **visible** in public space

# Bilingual road signs and street names in Scotland

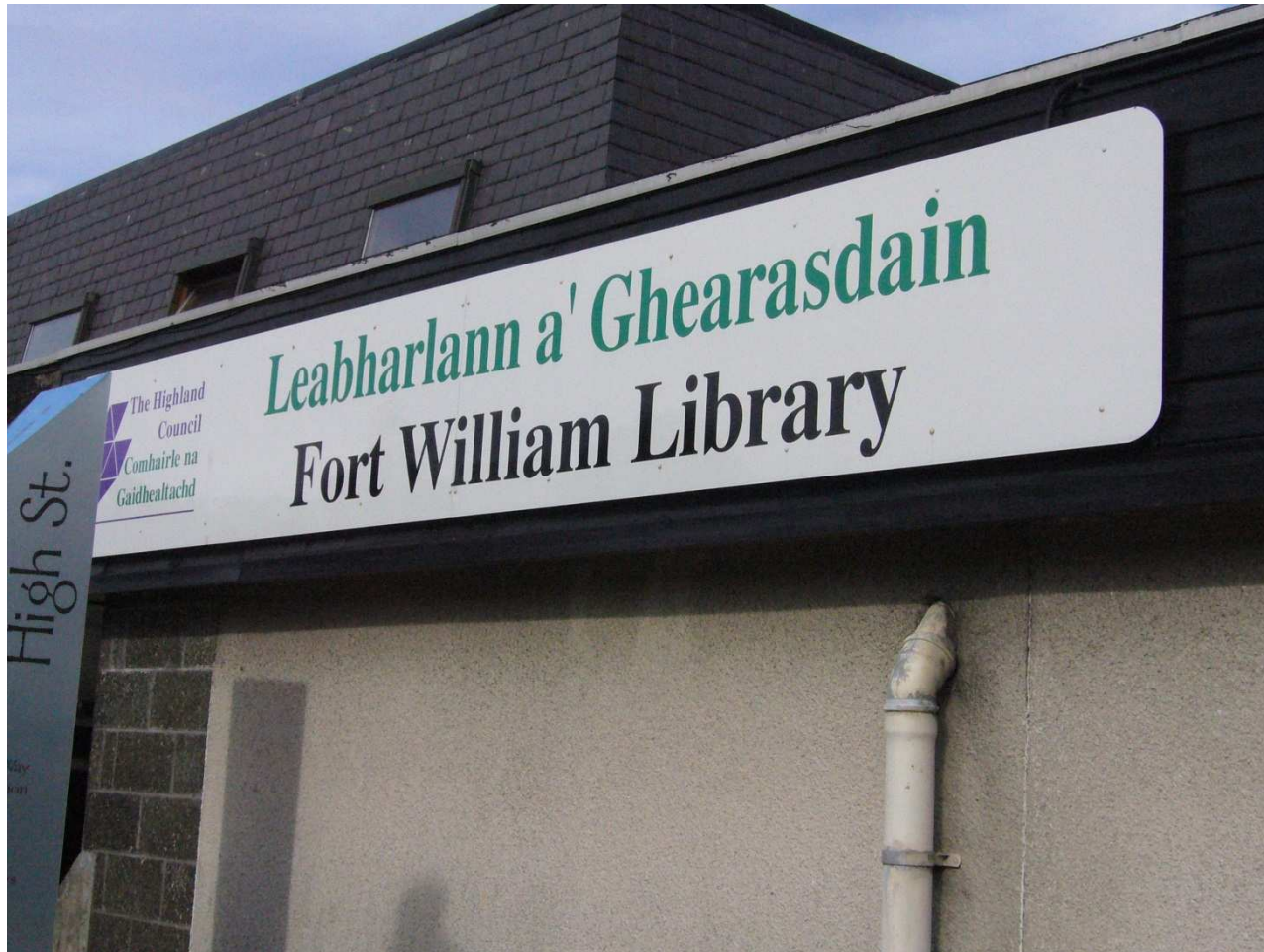




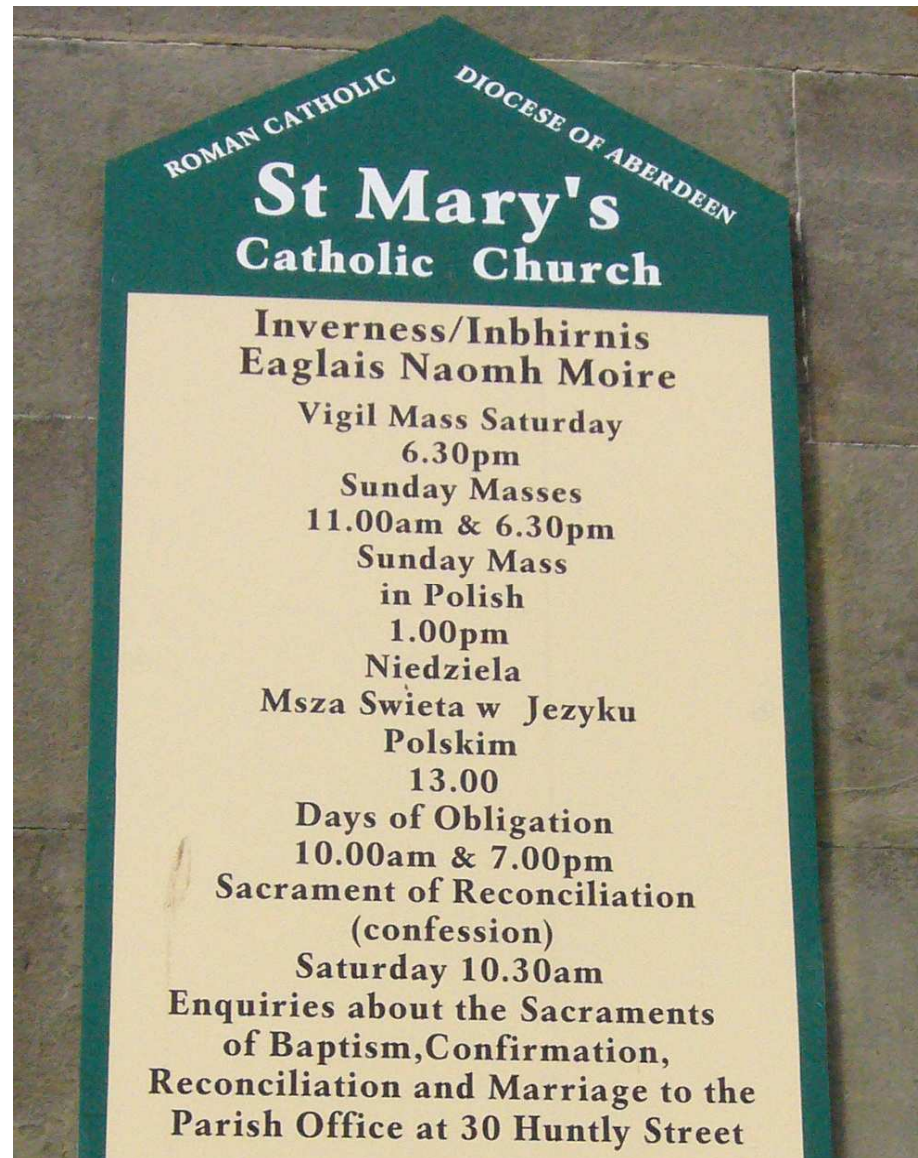
Two street signs in Scotland:  
What is the difference?  
(Why) Is it important?



# Gaelic names of institutions



Three  
languages at a  
church in  
Inverness,  
Scotland.  
Gaelic used  
only in  
symbolic  
function

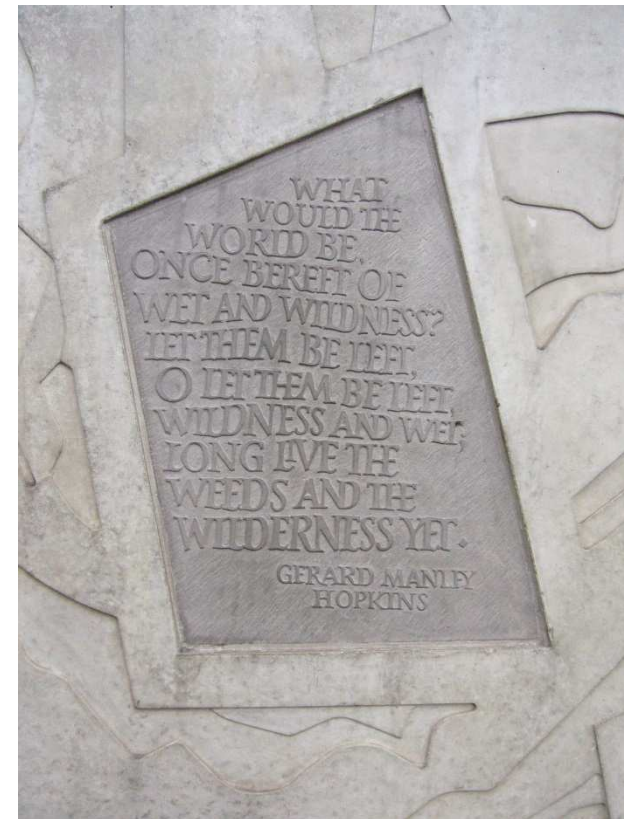
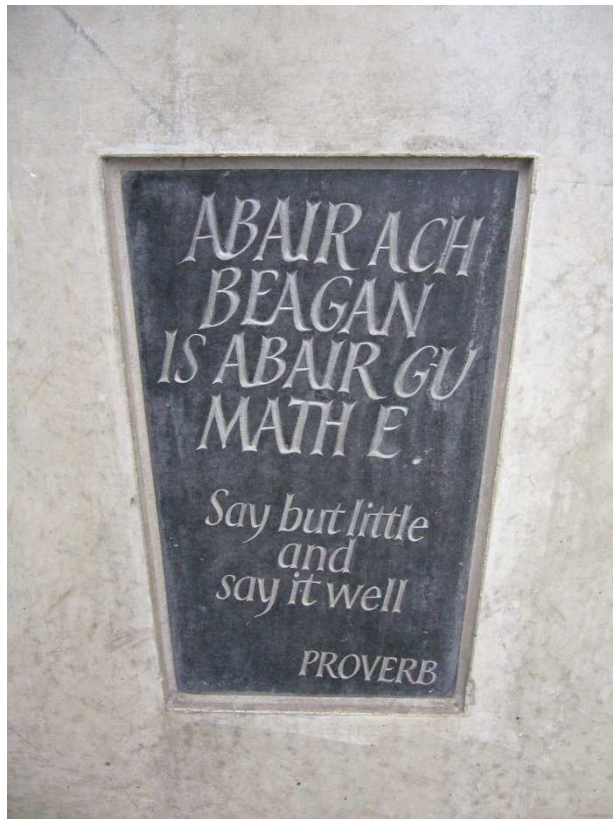




# Invisible Gaelic



Decoration at the Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh (plates made from indigenous Scottish rocks).



# Scots (and English) as decoration in northern Scotland





It doesn't need to be official..  
Grafitti in the urban dialect of Poznań



# T-shirts promoting Gaelic in Scotland

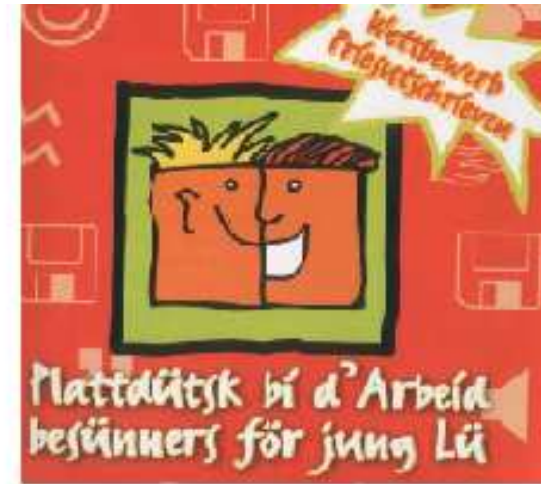




# Promotion of Welsh in Wales

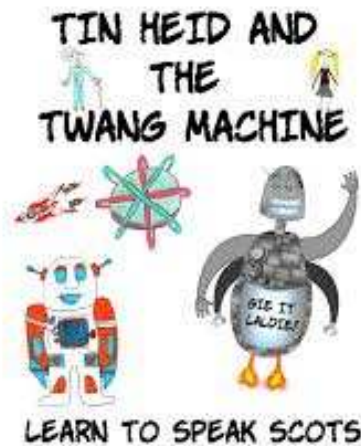


Posters promoting the use of (1) Frisian, (2) Kashubian, (3) Low German



Stickers promoting regional languages in Estonia

# Promoting Scots in Scotland



Male Toilets  
Leithris na bhFear  
Menfowk's Lavatories



Female Toilets & Baby Change  
Leithris na mBan &  
Friotháil Naíonán

Weeminfowk's lavatories an  
bairns' hippins cheyng



# Tourist information sign in Rēzekne, Latgale region in Latvia



# Tourism

2. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.

Tourism is a good example of a service industry which can bring considerable benefits to an endangered language, as has been seen in parts of Switzerland and northern Italy. (Crystal)

## Isamu Shimoji on Miyako (clip shown in the second lecture)

„If we can record CDs like that, or write the books, or pick the *mozuku* seaweed, but instead of selling them with the “*mozuku*” label we sell them with their local name “*sunuzu*”, the impression would be much stronger. Likewise, if we sell the sea grapes [Jap. *umibudō*] not as the “sea grapes”, but with their local name *nkjafu*, the tourists may be surprised: “Japanese words can’t begin with the /N/ sound, can they?”, and thus, intrigued, they will sure reach out for them. And when they read on the package that the content is the sea grapes, they think “ah, so it’s the sea grapes! Might as well buy one, then”. It seems to me that we could in this way combine the language promotion activities with business.”

# References

- Crystal, David. 2000. *Language death*. Cambridge University Press
- Darquennes, Jeroen. 2007. Paths to language revitalization. In Jeroen Darquennes (ed.), *Contact Linguistics and Language Minorities* (Plurilingua XXX), 61-76. St Augustin.
- Strubell, Miquel. 1999. From language planning to language policies and language politics. In Peter J. Weber (ed.), *Contact + Confli(c)t. Language planning and minorities*, 237-248. Bonn.