Title
Failing American Indian Languages

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This article examines the interdiscursive constitutiveness and permeations of a logic of "expectations" in relation to American Indian language practices and American Indian languages. Beginning with a reflection on my own grandfather's experiences, this article explores popular, everyday, and institutional reflexes of a logic of expectations that mediates and is mediated by concepts of American Indianness and evaluations of linguistic practice. That is, such reflexes emerge through the "bundling" of such normative, conventionalized concepts in the process of evaluation; they become the rationale or justification for the evaluation and, ultimately, reproduce the logic of expectations that mediates everyday judgments of practice.[1] Through the lens of my grandfather's life, the following reflection illustrates the mutual conceptualization of success and failure as a logic of "expectations."

My grandfather, an amazingly gifted yet very stubborn man, spent his life challenging expectations and never wavered in this quest. From driving one hundred miles to attend an Elks Lodge meeting because the one in Madras didn't allow Indians, to driving several hundreds of miles back to Oklahoma every summer for social gatherings, he engaged in a range of expected and unexpected Indian practices. A product of Haskell, my grandpa also had acquired a range of skills, from baking bread and boxing to playing wood and horn instruments and golf. Playing clarinet every Friday night with the Macy "boys" at Warm Springs, my grandfather was still an "unexpected" Indian, a Comanche surrounded by Wascos, Paiutes, and Warm Springs Indians. This

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range of unexpectedness—as an unexpected member of a typically all-white male organization and as a Comanche living on a federally recognized non-Comanche reservation—ultimately reminds us of the actual lived complexity of these expectations and the simplifying effects of generic assessments of success and failure.

In a similar way, two contemporary scholars, Philip Deloria and Jane Hill, encourage us to complicate expectations. For Hill, the venue is language. Whether it's language revitalization or the calling-out of tacit racist language, one of her scholarly contributions is the recognition, analysis, and interruption of the expected. For example, her article, "The Grammar of Consciousness and the Consciousness of Grammar," and her coauthored ethnography, *Speaking Mexicano*, make salient the interactional and tacit complexity of language shift and its various conceptualizations.[2] Her work on mock Spanish and the language of white racism also reveals the incipient hierarchical structuration and justification of difference (inequality) through subtle (expected) linguistic cues.[3] That is, the ongoing everyday practices through which human beings are socialized into certain taken-for-granted, conventionalized interpretations frequently reinforce the hierarchization of practices, beliefs, and, by extension, peoples. As part of this socialization, certain elements become associated with certain conceptualizations of types of persons, and the subtle deployment of such elements then reinforces such conceptualizations. The artistic deployment of "grassy-ass" (*gracias*) in a thank-you note or the opening endearment, "Princess Running Mouth," on a greeting card to a close friend draw upon and reinforce the aesthetics of the practice; mark the practice as different, exotic, and aberrant; and indirectly underscore the hierarchical positioning of certain practices and their practitioners. Her critical examination of "expert rhetorics" encourages endangered-language advocates to shift to a discourse of human rights rather than enumeration, valorization, and universal ownership.[4] She offers a means for interrupting these conventionalized rhetorical strategies in order to alleviate the entitled status of "experts," which such rhetorics perpetuate, and to recover the entitlement of endangered-language communities to diagnose and direct their own linguistic remediations.

Likewise, Deloria examines expectations through a historical lens, opening up for readers the pervasive discourses on Indianness and accompanying practices that entrenched and uprooted particular conceptions linked with being Indian. In *Playing Indian* and *Indians in Unexpected Places*, Deloria reveals how various ideological threads were woven into the conventionalized expectations and evaluations of Indian peoples and their everyday practices, on the one hand, creating the conventions through which such evaluations were made possible and, on the other hand, mildly unraveling them.[5] However, many consumers of mainstream practices appear to maintain a relatively uncomplicated and

uninterrupted conceptualization of Indianness (as evidenced by some students' remarks in large lecture courses about Native North America). As with Hill's work on mock Spanish, the racialization of certain practices and their association with (aberrant) foreignness and difference (if not downright deviancy) socializes the consumer into a default interpretation, an instant parsing of a practice as deviant rather than provoking the consumer into a thoughtful silence, a reflective pause allowing for the recalibration of the interpretation, of the logic of expectations.

Both scholars urge us to investigate the various scales at which oppression pervades every strategized and unstrategized moment of interaction. Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places* reflects on anomalous events and their role in the constitution of the expected, taken-for-granted ideologies, discourses, conventions, and representations and on the configuration of the unexpected, "which resists categorization and, thereby, questions expectation itself."[6] Although his questioning has a historical focus, thus challenging conventional versions of American history, his theoretical framing calls to mind the dialogism, or the "dialogic emergence" of such practices and concepts, and the mutual constitutiveness of language and culture writ large.[7] It is through language as form and function (as grammatically, conceptually, and performatively provenanced) that such expectations get patterned, and, relatedly, the unexpected is constituted, becoming recognizable and salient at moments of counterpatterned disruption and disjuncture. Or, to put it in a more Hill-ian frame, racism "passes" as expectations "lurk[ing] in the shadows of discourse."[8] To understand and participate in the dispersal of these "shadows" requires not only passive analytic deconstruction of logics but also, perhaps, active renegotiation, that is, everyday involvement in the practices that socialize us into such logics in the first place.

This article critically elucidates the mediating role of public and scholarly expectations (or logic) in the imagining and management—and possible transcendence—of failure/success as these concepts relate to American Indian speech, American Indian languages, and ultimately indigenous-language revitalization.[9] Or, if nothing else, it is a nudge to look for the unexpected rather than the expected. Toward that end, I present and analyze four permeations through which such expectations find ground and root themselves. This analytic exercise is intended to provoke or enhance our awareness of the ways in which such expectations inflect language revitalization and the "dire prognosis" for American Indian languages. Drawing from Hill, these dimensions are organized in relation to the processes that sustain the four "cultural projects": taxonomy and categorical characterization; assignment of peoples and persons based on these characterizations; ranking and hierarchies; and permeations and permutations.[10]

Taxonomy: Characterizing Difference through Dysfluency

The first permeation focuses on a popular misconception regarding American Indian Englishes, a conception of difference through dysfluency. Portrayed across a range of media, representations of Indian speech encourage an expectation of incompetence, of a failure to acquire (some standard variety of) English. Drawing on representations of Indian speech in settler journals and travel logs, the earliest fictional portrayals of Indian speech recreated the differences first cataloged by these Europeans. These perduring differences inflect contemporary portraits of American Indians and their characterization.

Unwittingly or not, purveyors of popular media participate in the substantiation and maintenance of such recognizable, generic forms of differentiation through the ongoing circulation of these iconicized images. Linguistically, ethnically inflected lexical forms and grammatical alterations are assembled together in order to mark certain characters as different, often in conjunction with other iconic markers such as dress, hairstyle, dwelling, and mode of transportation. For American Indian characters, the style of speech portrayed in such media (referred to elsewhere as "Hollywood Injun English" [HIE]) employs the deletion of morphemes marking common grammatical relationships (such as number, tense, and person) in conjunction with certain conventionalized words, such as *squaw*, *wigwam*, *How!*, *heap*, and *um*. This style connotes a certain kind of Indianness, one that historicizes and differentiates American Indians from "Americans."[11]

To illustrate this style of speech briefly, consider the following excerpt from the well-known Disney production *Peter Pan*.[12] Many generations of Americans are fluent in this style of speech, and with the recent rerelease of *Peter Pan* on DVD more children are being socialized into this way of speaking in association with "playing Indian." Many of the grammatical elements of this style can be found in other kinds of talk, such as "foreigner talk" and "baby talk."[13] What marks this style as HIE is the iconic use of particular lexical items and phrases, which are borrowed or associated with American Indian languages, along with the physical appearance of the characters who inconsistently perform this style.

In this excerpt, two of the three British children (John and Michael) are bound to a stake along with the Lost Boys. They are pleading with the Indians to free them. However, this time—unlike on previous occasions—the Indians aren't playing because Tiger Lily, the "Indian Princess," is missing, and the Lost Boys now stand accused.

(1) From Disney's *Peter Pan*

1   John: I'm frightfully sorry old chaps. It's all my fault.
2   Boy 1: Aw, that's all right, Wildcat.
3   Boys 2 and 3: No, we don't mind.
4   Boy 4: That's okay.
5   Chief: How.
6   Boys: How, Chief.
7   **Chief: For many moons, the red man fight paleface lost boys.**
8   Boys: Ugh!
9   **Chief: Sometime (1) you win.**
10   **Sometime (1) we win.**
11   Boy 1: Okay, Chief, uh you win this time, now turn us loose.
12   John: Turn us loose?
13   You mean this is only a game?
14   Boy 2: Sure, when we win, we turn them loose.
15   Boy 3: When they win, they turn us loose.
16   Boy 4: (They) turn us loose.
17   **Chief: This time (1) no turn-um loose.**
18   Boy 2: Huh? (laughs) The chief's a great spoofer.
19   **Chief: Me no spoof-um.**
20   **Where you hide Princess Tiger Lily?**
21   Boy 1: Uh, Tiger Lily?
22   Boy 4: We ain't got your old princess.
23   John: I've certainly never seen her.
24   Michael: Me neither.
25   Boy 2: Honest we don't.
26   **Chief: Heap big lie.**
27   **If Tiger Lily not back by sunset (2) burn-um at stake.**

Sporting a feathered headdress, long black hair, and leather buckskins, the chief character is unmistakably "Indian." His deep, gravelly voice and slow cadence also underscore this characterization, along with the savage pronouncement to "burn-um at stake" (line 27). Highlighting further his ethnic difference are the linguistic dysfluencies littering his speech: a marked lack of use of verb tenses (lines 7, 9–10, 20, and 27), the deletion of auxiliary verbs and pronouns (lines 17 and 26), and the replacement of subject pronouns with object pronouns (line 19).[14] All of these linguistic elements differentiate the chief's speech from the speech of the Lost Boys, thus indexing his Indianness.

Further distinguishing their styles is the use of contraction, which is present in the speech of the boys and Wendy while completely missing from that of the chief's speech.[15]

(2) *Peter Pan* Continued
1 Wendy: What's the chief doing John?
2 John: He's delivering an oration in sign language.
3 Michael: What's he saying?
4 John: He says (1) Peter Pan (1) mighty warrior.
5   Save (1) Tiger Lily.
6   Make (1) big chief heap glad.
7 Wendy: Well, he certainly doesn't look heap glad.
8 Chief: Make Peter Pan heap big chief.
9   You now (1) Little Flyin' Eagle.
10   (to Indians)Teach-um paleface brother all about red man.

The stylistic dysfluencies are further emphasized when John switches from speaking his (standard) English variety to an HIE style when translating the chief's signed oration (lines 4–6 in no. 2). Included in the translation is an extensive use of pauses, the omission of morphology (no tense marked on "save" or "make"), the deletion of verb copula and subject pronouns, and the appearance of the specialized term *heap*. Of equal interest is the fact that John is able to translate this signed oration, suggesting that this mode of communication is more primordial than spoken language. The chief never switches styles (spoken or signed) in relation to his interlocutor; he only speaks HIE. The one other Indian character that speaks also only uses HIE, doing so when addressing Wendy ("Squaw get-um firewood"). Although the English-speaking children are able to switch styles, and some are even able to understand new codes, the Indian characters do not participate in this linguistic precociousness. This lack of precociousness, or adaptability, becomes interpretable as a sign of cognitive difference, suggesting that these adult Indians are so underdeveloped that even (non-Indian) children are more sophisticated and capable than they are.

By fabricating and performing a style of speech that is markedly different from some standard variety of spoken English, mapping this style onto an Indian character and then locating this character in the past, the modern American Indian becomes a historical category. In conjunction with the performative dysfluency used to typify Indians, this historical category perpetuates the taxonomic structuring of "white man" at the top and "Indians" at the bottom.

Media like *Peter Pan*, *Bedtime Stories*, *Killshot*, *Taking Chances*, and episodes of *The Simpsons* and *South Park* contribute a sociolinguistic saliency and structuring to these representations. They can tacitly mediate interlocutors' expectations of each other because of the everydayness of language. Although most (non-Indian) people probably do not expect to see American Indians wearing feathered headdresses to work or jingle dresses to the grocery store,

they may still expect American Indians to speak differently, that is, to lack English fluency. Because films in general can and do underscore social differences linguistically—in the preceding case, by having Indians speak differently than the "white man"—the next question is whether this has any influence on or relationship to Indian adults' and children's everyday experiences?[16] What kinds of socializing effects might such linguistic representations have on everyday experiences? How are these images "recruited" and deployed in everyday interactions? Do imagined or superficial grammatical similarities trigger or evoke (negative) evaluations, which can then be projected onto speakers of nonstandard English varieties? Relatedly, do such projections facilitate an expectation of dysfluency for these speakers?

Assignment: from Dysfluent Characters to Dysfluent People

Children tend to be linguistically precocious and remarkably creative in their facility with different styles of speech. Frequently, I've overheard my own children changing "voice" to mark a shift in character as part of their imaginative play, performing adultness or babyness in contrast to standard kidness. In school contexts, this kind of precociousness is often discouraged and requires therapeutic intervention. One justification that I was given (in relation to my own children) was that the teachers need to be able to understand their students. If they can't, then the students need to adjust or change their speech. Although such logic defies disagreement, an underlying or unexpected consequence of such logic is the alignment of certain students with the teacher (for example, the teacher's expectations or the institution's evaluation of success) and the disalignment of other students. That is, such logics entail certain assignments—students whose performances align with institutional expectations of fluency become designated (or "assigned") as successful; those who do not are assigned differently.

Susan Philips examined the impact of such logic on students at Warm Springs during the 1970s.[17] Her research crucially showed that the interactional practices of teachers and Indian students differed considerably such that Indian students were frequently overlooked in the classroom and subsequently evaluated as underperforming and unsuccessful. More recently, Anthony Webster has detailed similar evaluative frames in relation to reviews and reflections of Navajo poets and their texts.[18] In this issue, in particular, he details the ways that non-Navajo reviewers trivialize the creative and subtle tactics that Blackhorse Mitchell uses in *Miracle Hill: The Story of a Navajo Boy* (1967) to reflect on and complicate oppression (through boarding school

experiences, for example) while realizing his own and his readers' freedom through writing (aligning all of us in a "here" that is not "there"). As Webster shows, the non-Navajo critics miss such subtlety of expression because of their overwhelming (or overwhelmed) attention to the linguistic variety Mitchell chose for his composition.[19] Again, we see Indian speakers being imagined as childlike, dysfluent, and subordinate.

While in Watson Lake (Yukon Territory, Canada) working with First Nations children, one of the most salient changes I witnessed was the adjustment of these children's speech styles to the style(s) used by English-dominant, non-Indian teachers.[20] Working as a volunteer, assisting the director and language teacher for one continuous year at the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS), I became intimately aware of some of the external challenges faced by First Nations administrators, teachers, and students. One of the challenges pertained to language. For AHS, this challenge appeared in the guise of English-language acquisition. Part of the AHS mission is to prepare young First Nations' children for public school in terms of the temporal and linguistic regimentation of activities. The goal was to create "successful" students, ones who would complete high school. Another part of its mission is to promote Kaska language and culture. To do so, AHS hired a part-time language instructor and arranged visits by elders, albeit infrequently. Without an elaborated bilingual curriculum for instructional guidance or any substantial pedagogical approach, the program reflected the practices of other preschools, which were focused on learning colors, numbers, simple routines (for example, weather and greetings), arts and crafts, and English-language standards. Transitioning to the elementary school, the Kaska language focus became relegated to one class a day, which was optional by the first grade; the concern with speaking a standard variety of English became priceless. By the age of ten, the transformation to some standard variety was often complete. Coordinating these changes were the sentimental logics expressed by those, such as teachers, who were invested in the transformation.

Working with the Kaska language teacher in the elementary school for more than one year gave me ample opportunity to hear and witness such remarks. On one such occasion, a non-Native teacher commented on the deplorable English-speaking skills of one of her Indian students, suggesting that this reflected the child's lack of development.[21] I pointed out to her that the child was probably speaking a dialect of English that entailed some of the same grammatical features as the child's heritage language (Kaska). This prompted the teacher to respond by exclaiming that they, the teachers, should be taught more about the grammatical structure of this heritage language. Regardless of whether teachers need more linguistic training, I would suggest that it was the convergence of a particular perceived grammatical form, the

conventionalized assignment of this form to a particular category of person, and the teacher's own expectations grounded in socialization that led to the assessment of the student's linguistic practice as dysfluency rather than any other alternative, such as development or variation.

This second permeation illustrates two points. First, a significant issue for American Indian students in the Yukon and elsewhere is the assignment of linguistic dysfluency regardless of actual fluency. Popular socializing logics, such as those projected in Hollywood film and fictional texts, may have unintended consequences, at least for young First Nations students who dare to produce a nonstandard utterance for a teacher of standard training. Similarly, the pedagogical logics and interactional habits relied on by teachers as they evaluate student performance also have ramifications for young American Indian students.[22] Second, the fact that Indian children might speak differently is not unexpected; it fits with the history of expectations portrayed across a range of media, a history of expected incompetence. This logic of linguistic incompetence has yet further implications for indigenous peoples and their linguistic practices.

Hierarchy: Ranked Speakers, Discouraged Speakers

As these permeations have illustrated so far, the geography of the logics of American Indian difference and expectations—in which linguistic performance becomes read as dysfluency and incompetence—infiltrates several domains of representation and practice. The interdiscursive connections allowed through this geography of logic extend as well to the ongoing efforts to revitalize or recreate indigenous languages. That is, the expectedness of dysfluency and incompetence pervades the representations and discourses used to mobilize support for endangered languages.

This third permeation focuses on the institutional depictions of indigenous languages as shifting toward nonexistence in direct correspondence to shifts across generations of speakers. This commonly recurring institutional line also appears in the discourse of elders. The elders' discourse often reinforces this correspondence and is accompanied by the emerging expectation of language death rather than a more complicated scenario of language change and linguistic diversity.[23] Once again younger generations are depicted as failing to acquire a language, in this case their ancestral or heritage tongue.[24]

This sentiment emerges in several ways: from government literature, surveys, and census to language meetings and indigenous-language media. One such arena is the literature produced by Aboriginal Language Services (ALS).[25] Part of its mission is to produce surveys that assess the Aboriginal-language

situation for each First Nation and overall. Many, if not all, of the charts and graphs produced by the government display—for everyone to see—how younger generations are not learning, understanding, or speaking their heritage languages. The Canadian Census also reflects this scenario. As expected, fluency is greatest with the oldest individuals and declines with age. Consider this chart from ALS (fig. 1).
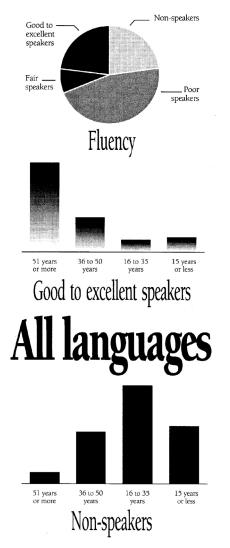

FIGURE 1. *Aboriginal Language Services chart illustrating the Aboriginal language shift in the Yukon Territory, Canada. Compliments of Aboriginal Language Services, 1998. For more information on this or other Yukon Aboriginal languages, please contact Aboriginal Language Services, Government of the Yukon, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6.*

Whether these are reliable representations, what they accomplish semiotically is not only the visual portrayal of a language shift but also a ranking of individuals by age, which is a ranking by fluency, highlighting the decreasing fluency of younger generations.[26] It is a statistical image that gets read as the incompetence or failure of younger generations to acquire their parents' (and grandparents') language. The discourse of elders—those who are the highest-ranked speakers—and the rhetoric of governments underscore this as well. The discourse of elders promotes this interpretation through their lamenting of the younger generations' lack of knowledge. This unsurprising practice, although neutral in most contexts, has the unfortunate effect of reinforcing the dominant discourse of failure surrounding Native Americans, especially younger generations of Native Americans. In spite of its rhetorical utility for the strategic negotiation of funding from governments and other dominant institutions, such discourses (or expert rhetorics) erase from our purview the quotidian successes of this same generation, as when they listen to elders, in Dené, reminisce about "long time ago" or chastise them for being lazy. These are the subtle moments that should give one pause.

PERMEATIONS AND PERMUTATIONS: INCOMPETENT INDIANS, DOOMED LANGUAGES

This final permeation highlights the discourse, or expert rhetoric, circulating through various media (for example, television, such as PBS's National Science Foundation–sponsored *The Linguists*; popular nonfiction, such as Mark Abley's *Spoken Here: Travels among Threatened Languages* [2003]; or academic literature, such as Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine's *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* [2002]). Government-funded publications, First Nations or otherwise, and even organizations such as ALS also perpetuate the doom-and-gloom narrative.

In general, ALS facilitated and promoted Aboriginal language revitalization in the Yukon Territory, resulting in a range of local and territorial successes. For example, the Kaska House of Language workshops, which ran from September 1998 to June 1999, were successful. They brought together a range of specialists (elders, linguists, and language teachers), First Nations (Liard River First Nation, Kaska Tribal Council, and Ross River First Nation), and participants (Native and non-Native). All participants worked toward creating Kaska language materials, sharing knowledge, building competencies, and establishing a venue for linguistic and cultural reclamation under the control of First Nations people. Another example of sustained success and support for Aboriginal languages in the Yukon is the Yukon Native

Language Centre under the direction of John Ritter. Established during the late 1970s, the center manages the teacher-training program that facilitates the employment of First Nations Aboriginal-language teachers in the public schools, creates texts for Aboriginal-language education, and preserves an untold amount of grammatical information on each of the Yukon Territory's Aboriginal languages. ALS provided support, resources, and funding for these ventures. In spite of such successes, ALS's final assessment report of the Yukon's Aboriginal-language situation remained bleak; the report notes, "There is no doubt that most aboriginal languages in Canada are in jeopardy and well on the pathway to extinction. The threat of losing any one of the eight Yukon First Nation languages should be of concern to every Yukon person, both First Nation and non-First Nation, as the impact will affect the present generation and the generation to come."[27] They go on to enumerate the numbers of barriers working against their attempts at "successful" language revitalization, that is, the survival of these languages.

> Although sufficient rationale and reason for saving Yukon First Nation languages exist, there are significant barriers that FN [First Nations] peoples face today . . . legislative barriers . . . [educational barriers] using only English as a medium of instruction [in Aboriginal-language classes] . . . current imbalance between the levels of symbolic and practical importance of the languages . . . the greatest challenge of all is developing a program or incorporating strategies to increase individual levels of motivation, dedication, and commitment to learning one's ancestral language . . . and an acceptance of social institutions that contain systemic barriers.[28]

All of these expectations coalesce in this final vignette, the (eventual) failure of language revitalization.[29] From the "systemic barriers" that jeopardize language-revitalization efforts to the lack of involvement of Aboriginal speakers and the institutional dominance of English, finding a glimmer of hope against this discursively overwhelming expectation of failure seems impossible. Add to this the "inability" of younger generations of Indians to acquire any language fluently, the overall incompetence of Indians, and this dominant logic of failure, how could language revitalization—or any other indigenous endeavor—ever succeed? Chuckling, one might say, *dene yéh dene zaagí sek'aade gúliin*.[30]

Conclusion: Interrupting Logics, Disrupting Failure

As these various permeations have exemplified, people's practices—Indian, non-Indian, educated, and elite—are mediated by institutional expectations, or conceptions of success and failure that infuse the particulars of our everyday interactions, influencing the ways in which we understand and negotiate the

object or goals of our interactions and encourage particular trajectories of action. Returning now to Deloria's concern with Indians and the unexpected, he notes, "Expectations tend to assume a status quo defined around failure, the result of some innate limitation on the part of Indian people. Success is written off as an anomaly, a bizarre little episode that calls up a chuckle."[31]

This status quo permeates the very heart of language-revitalization efforts. So although various Indian people are intervening, working to transform anomalies into expectations—as with the Tiwa students' disruption of expectations through the creation of "As the Rez Turns"—and positing success as the assumed outcome rather than failure—as with the reclamation of the *myaamia* language through camps, university classes, and everyday use—the historical and conceptual depth of these permeations constantly presents barriers, challenges, or constraints that need to be destroyed, unpacked, deconstructed, or just changed.[32] Although it is difficult (enough) to shift language practices so that an indigenous language will survive, an equally necessary and complex shift is one of expectations.

Indian people might consider interrupting conventionalized expectations, through imagery and other media (as with Red Cloud Woman being photographed in a salon getting her nails done); however, practical everyday ruptures (or disjunctures) and the seizing of opportunity presented by such ruptures is an exceedingly, if not superhuman, venture. It requires a level of vigilance and heightened degree of awareness that, at least for my human self, is frequently muffled by mundane duties and everyday demands. For American Indian languages, it means rethinking the structure and practice of language and allowing for a transformation in both (as with Navajo poetry, no matter the variety used, or perhaps especially because of the variety used).[33] That is, rather than privileging the variety of languages spoken by the oldest generation of speakers (or perhaps only one or two individuals from that generation), linguists, community members, bureaucrats, social workers, and so forth could focus on the multiplicity of tasks and roles involved in language-revitalization and recreation efforts with the objective being to find a place for everyone in this complex project. Furthermore, direct engagement with other local projects and overall community goals would enhance the approach to language revitalization as well as the evaluation of the outcome of such efforts. Beginning with application to a community for involvement in their research plans, "outside" investigators could play an active and mutually beneficial role in local-language efforts rather than imposing their own institutionally mediated expectations and demands, which have frequently resulted in a discouraging depiction of indigenous-language efforts and their impact on those same language practices.[34]

Such involvement should recalibrate evaluators' expectations by creating room for a range of linguistic varieties and competencies. As teenagers pointed out to me, elderlike performance and necessary competence may not be actualized until a person achieves such status. With this in mind, the expectations of the "outside" language expert need to adapt to the expectations of those individuals for whom the Aboriginal language matters. An additional recalibration should happen in regard to documentation. To understand the sociolinguistic scenario of an endangered language fully requires analyzing not only the most pristine varieties but also the complicated, messy varieties of everyday interaction. Languages change; why shouldn't the variety being revitalized change as well? Darrell Kipp once remarked to me that we can consider successful any language program that results in a child's producing an indigenous word.[35] Littering their English syntax with indigenous lexemes would be one way to recalibrate success or failure for indigenous-language revitalization. More changes may be desired, but the point is that such recalibrations work to interrupt the expectation of failure, an expectation that too frequently gets imposed and sets the backdrop to any Native American accomplishments. From the building of casinos like Soaring Eagle to the resurrecting of Anishnaabemowin and Wampanoag, it seems that the more appropriate evaluative logic would be one of success, or perhaps it is.

The challenge, however, for recalibration lies in extending the transformation to a broader venue, in somehow reconstituting the expected and the unexpected in "white public space." In her article, "Structure and Practice in Language Shift," Hill proposes a site for analysis and a moment for change: "Negotiations over code differentiation and code contextualization . . . occur in all speech communities. But, in the contexts of subordination of the community and pressure on its boundaries that occur in language obsolescence, these negotiations may take on exaggerated importance, contextualizing and reproducing basic lines of cleavage. . . . Such negotiations, thus, seem to be a site where the structures of oppression and the structures of language are articulated through local practice."[36] As has been discussed by several linguists, negotiations over orthographic conventions, genre appropriateness, and the overall focus on entextualization can aggravate rifts present in a community. Although some people consider the creation of texts a sign of success, other people consider it a travesty and a sign of failure. However, rather than managing the negotiations toward the expectations of dominant institutions, the negotiation might be better served if it were to orient toward ends and means. By constantly recontextualizing the negotiation in terms of those whose language is being served, rather than in terms of external institutional demands—and through such recontextualization that recognizes the heterogeneity inherent in human practice—the institutionally derived logic of expectations can be disrupted and

replaced with a more fluid, less regimented logic that is grounded in the reality of people's lives.

Such negotiations are exceptionally powerful moments; they have the power to reinforce the expected (as in basic lines of cleavage or dichotomies of difference), or they can tear it asunder (destabilizing expected coevolved structures of oppression and language). In so doing, these negotiations can lay the ground for new concepts, discourses, practices, and expectations.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. Webb Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things," *Language and Communication* 23 (2003): 409–25.

2. Jane H. Hill, "The Grammar of Consciousness and the Consciousness of Grammar," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 4 (1985): 725–37; Jane H. Hill and Ken Hill, *Speaking Mexicano* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986).

3. Jane H. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

4. 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.

5. Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

6. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 11.

7. Jane H. Hill and Bruce Mannheim, "Language and Worldview," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 381–406; Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim, eds., *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); see also Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. and ed. Michael Holmquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

8. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism*, 47.

9. The slash between *failure* and *success*, rather than a standard conjunction, is used to indicate the mutual constitutiveness of these two concepts.

10. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism*, 20–23.

11. 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. For an emerging body of work on other "aberrant" American Englishes, see Angela Reyes and Adrienne Lo, eds., *Beyond Yellow English: Toward a Linguistic Anthropology of Asian Pacific America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

12. *Peter Pan* (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Video, 2002), DVD.

13. Charles Ferguson, "Absence of Copula and the Notion of Simplicity: A Study of Normal Speech, Baby Talk, Foreigner Talk and Pidgins," in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives: Papers on Language in Society, 1959–1994*, ed. Thom Huebner (1971; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 115–23.

14. These linguistic features are bolded in the transcript.

15. See lines 1–4 and 22 in no. 1 and lines 1–3 and 7 in no. 2 for examples. An exception to this pattern is in the song "What Makes the Red Man Red?" which is sung by the Indians and the chief.

16. According to Rosina Lippi-Green, "In most movies, live action or animated, where accent is used as a cue to place, only some characters will speak with a contrived accent," which reinforces the association of language with some particular national origin group and heightens their otherness. Rosina Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 84. On children's media and the use of American Indian characters, see Pauline Strong Turner, "Animated Indians: Critique and Contradiction in Commodified Children's Culture," *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (1996): 405–24; see also her chapter, "Playing Indian in the 1990s: *Pocahontas* and *The Indian in the Cupboard*," in *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film*, 2nd ed., ed. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 187–205.

17. Susan U. Philips, *The Invisible Culture: Communication in Classroom and Community on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation* (New York: Longman, 1983).

18. Anthony Webster, "To All the Former Cats and Stomps of the Navajo Nation: Performance, the Individual, and Cultural Poetic Traditions," *Language in Society* 37 (2008): 61–89; see also Anthony K. Webster, "'Please Read Loose': Intimate Grammars and Unexpected Languages in Contemporary Navajo Literature," *American Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 61–86

19. Webster, "Please Read Loose."

20. This observation is the result of two and a half years of fieldwork *in situ*, followed by subsequent visits and ongoing research regarding the documentation and revitalization of the Kaska language, which is a Northern Athabaskan language spoken by approximately 200 people; for more details, see Barbra A. Meek, *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan Community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

21. See Jessica Ball and B. May Bernhardt, "First Nations English Dialects in Canada: Implications for Speech-Language Pathology," *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics* 22, no. 8 (2008): 570–88; see also Webster's remarks ("Please Read Loose," 82n14).

22. For some additional research on American Indian educational experiences, see Teresa L. McCarty, *A Place to Be Navajo: Rough Rock and the Struggle of Self-Determination in Indigenous Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002); K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York and London: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 2006); Susan U. Philips, "Participant Structures and Communicative Competence: Warm Springs Children in Community and Classroom," in *Functions of Language in the Classroom*, ed. Courtney Cazden, Vera John, and Dell Hymes (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1979), 370–94. And, more broadly, for a sample of scholarship on the linguistic anthropology of education, see Stanton Wortham and Betsy Rymes, eds., *Linguistic Anthropology*

of Education (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003); and Stanton Wortham, "Linguistic Anthropology of Education," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 37–51.

23. Wesley Y. Leonard, in "Challenging 'Extinction' through Modern Miami Language Practices," *American Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 135–60, examines the potency of such dominant discourses in relation to Miami, or *myaamia*, language-reclamation efforts. He shows how such discourses create an expectation of (irreversible) death for this Native American language and the erasure of contemporary speakers. When acknowledged, these speakers are "unexpected." He argues that the "unexpectedness" of these speakers is actually expected within alternative discourses, and this expectedness is one way in which dominant discourses and practices can be and are being interrupted and transformed; see also, 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.

Margaret C. Field describes a similar case for Navajo, focusing on the interplay of historic, dominant representations and discourses in relation to contemporary practices (code switching) and grammatical change. See Margaret C. Field, "Changing Navajo Language Ideologies and Changing Language Use," in *Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country*, ed. Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 31–47.

24. For additional endangered-language comparisons in which a multiplicity of perspectives (or language ideologies) circulate, and sometimes align with dominant discourses on language endangerment, see Margaret C. Field and Paul V. Kroskrity, "Introduction: Revealing Native American Language Ideologies," Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 3–28; Jeffry Anderson, "Contradictions across Space-Time and Language Ideologies in Northern Arapaho Language Shift," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 48–76; Christopher Loether, "Language Revitalization and the Manipulation of Language Ideologies: A Shoshoni Case Study," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 238–55; Jennifer F. Reynolds, "Shaming the Shift Generation: Intersecting Ideologies of Family and Linguistic Revitalization in Guatemala," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 213–37.

For comparison with a nonendangered, heritage-language scenario, see esp., Neriko Doerr, "Introduction, Heritage, Nationhood, and Language: Migrants with Japan Connections," *Critical Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2010): 53–62, in which linguistic dysfluencies are read into certain Japanese bodies and not others; see also, Barbra A. Meek, "Dreaming in . . . English? The Complexity and Unexpectedness of Japanese Being and Becoming through Language," *Critical Asian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2010): 256–64, for a reflection on the parallels between Japanese and endangered Native American languages.

25. Aboriginal Language Services (hereinafter referred to as ALS) was a Yukon Territory government department meant to facilitate the development and coordination of language-revitalization efforts for the territory's eight officially recognized Aboriginal languages. Most importantly, it was in charge of distributing government funding to the First Nations for their individual efforts. For more details about the program and its history, see Barbra A. Meek, "Language Ideology and Aboriginal Language Revitalization in the Yukon, Canada," in Kroskrity and Field, *Native American Language Ideologies*, 151–71.

26. Although more recent diagrams depict a similar scenario, they more fully recognize the complicated sociolinguistic situation and frame the new charts in terms of linguistic varieties and range of abilities. The result is a more complicated, hopeful, and successful portrait of language revitalization in the Yukon. ALS, *We Are Our Language: Sharing the Gift of Language: Profile of Yukon First Nation Languages* (Whitehorse: Yukon Executive Council Office, 2004a).

27. Ibid., 133.

28. Ibid., 133–35.

29. Although such rhetoric appears in this recent government publication (and dominates older reports), the overall rhetorical style of this document is more complicated, reflecting an awareness of the complexity of language revitalization. The report offers a sense of hope and highlights some of the program's successes in relation to individual First Nations. ALS, *Evaluation Report: Hope for the Future: A Call for Strategic Action: Five-Year Report, 1998–2003* (Whitehorse: Yukon Executive Council Office, 2004b). For a more elaborate discussion, see Meek, "Language Ideology and Aboriginal Language Revitalization in Yukon, Canada."

30. "The people and the language remain."

31. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 231.

32. Erin Debenport, "As the Rez Turns: Anomalies within and beyond the Boundaries of a Pueblo Community," *American Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 2 (2011): 87–109; Leonard, "Challenging 'Extinction.'"

33. Webster, "Please Read Loose."

34. Linguists are becoming more aware of and reflective on the politics of language documentation, especially in endangered-language contexts; for a recent discussion of this growing institutional awareness, see Keren Rice, "Ethical Issues in Linguistic Fieldwork: An Overview," *Journal of Academic Ethics* 4 (2006): 123–55; see also, Keren Rice, "The Linguist's Responsibilities to the Community of Speakers: Community-based Research," in *Language Documentation: Practices and Values*, eds. Lenore A. Grenoble and N. Louanna Furbee (Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2010), 25–36.

35. Personal communication with author (March 2007).

36. Jane H. Hill, "Structure and Practice in Language Shift," in *Progression and Regression in Language: Sociocultural, Neuropsychological and Linguistic Perspectives*, ed. Kenneth Hyltenstam and Åke Viberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 69.