2019 LSA Linguistic Institute Symposium

# Linguistic Research with Diaspora Communities

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University of California, Davis
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# Abstracts

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**The sociolinguistics of language shift and stylistic variation in Garifuna**

*Maya Ravindranath Abtahian (University of Rochester)*

Two of the basic guiding principles of the study of language variation and change are that there are no single style speakers (Labov 1984); and that an individual speaker's range of stylistic variation is derived from interspeaker differences in the broader speech community (Bell 1984). Yet the study of stylistic variation has still mostly considered monolingual speakers of languages with large speaker populations in urban environments. When working in small, diasporic, or endangered language communities, or with individual language consultants, there are additional challenges associated with (i) how to identify socially meaningful variation; (ii) how to write a 'symphony of variation' (Meyerhoff 2017) when the language is under-documented; and (iii) how to consider the relationship between the use of different codes and the use of different styles in multilingual communities.

In this presentation I will talk broadly about language shift, contact, and variation in the Garifuna-speaking diaspora, before turning to a case study of language consultant speech in the context of sociolinguistic fieldwork. Language consultants for language description projects are ideally fluent speakers, and in cases of shift and endangerment they are often those who are also interested in language preservation. As sociolinguists who are interested in stylistic and other types of linguistic variation, we might consider the role that they play in the community with respect to language maintenance, the persona they may inhabit as an 'authority' on language, and how the variation that they exhibit fits into the speech community as a whole.

**Hybridization and identity crisis of African languages and culture in diaspora: The case of refugees in New Mexico**

*Emmanuel Asonye (University of New Mexico)*

African Refugees constitute 31% of refugees admitted into the State of New Mexico from 2013 to 2016 and are among the most marginalized due to linguistic and cultural barriers (Goodkind, 2017; Asonye, Emma-Asonye & Okwaraji, 2018). Since the 1970s, the United States is one of the countries with the largest admittance of refugees from across the world. While countries that admit refugees are commended for their *acts of kindness*, hardly do we think about the potential linguistic and cultural barriers these refugees have to face in what has mandatorily become their '*new home'*. Compared to other refugee communities, African Refugee Community (ARC) in New is believed to have one of the least linguistic profiles and face a great amount of linguistic and cultural barrier that has been compared to that of deaf children in some African countries (Asonye, Emma-Asonye & Okwaraji, 2018).

This paper discusses a situation of forced hybridization and identity crisis faced by African refugees in New Mexico, USA resulting from perceived racial profiling, cultural barriers and existing government

policies through their naturalization process. Data discussed on this paper were generated from a pilot by this author in 2018 plus 2017 reports of Refugee Well-being Project of the University of New Mexico. Data from the pilot project were collected through family outreach visits, one-on-one interactions, and during linguistic literacy classes. Approximately 5 families were visited over a 6months program, 15 students were taught in the linguistic literacy program, 1 African Refugees church was visited and about 50 individuals were reached, children and adults.

This paper finds as follows:

i. Evidence of linguistic and cultural barriers against the African Refugee Community (ARC).
ii. Evidence of possible linguistic/racial profiling of the refugees.
iii. Evidence of unfriendly existing policies

All these factors seem to pose an identity crisis on the African refugees which in turn poses a fundamental challenge to them from becoming self-dependent and contribute to the development of the immediate community to which they now belong. The paper therefore seeks to answer the following research questions:

i. How could the ARC retain their linguistic and cultural identities and still imbibe the culture and language of their new home for economic development?
ii. What should those that work with the Refugees do to reduce their perceived frustration through this process?
iii. How could policy change be an enabling factor through their naturalization process?

The paper recommends further studies to address further these grey areas.

**Changes in the determiner system of New England French**

*Laura Demsey (Indiana University Bloomington)*

The French-speaking communities in the New England region of the United States have a complex past and present. These linguistic communities are part of the Quebec and Acadian French diasporas and share many features with these dialects, but differ from them in important ways as well. Because of class bias, persecution from nationalist organizations, and governmental suppression of French in schools, the Francophone population in New England today is a fraction of its original size and continues to dwindle, with an extremely limited number of people under the age of 50 speaking French as a first language. The linguistic situation is quite complicated, with speakers possessing negative attitudes about their own dialect and expressing various reasons why their families stopped speaking French, including the closing of the bilingual schools, shaming by teachers for speaking “bad” or “wrong” French, and discrimination while fighting in World War II. Due to bilingualism with English and the minority status of French in the area, New England French is in the process of shifting to

English. It thus has the potential for extensive English influence, which may often be seen in its grammar.

This study explores definite determiner usage, specifically in structures where French and English differ. It examines these structures in L1 French speakers in two New England speech communities, Manchester, New Hampshire and Lewiston, Maine, searching for potential English influence in their grammar. The four structures elicited via guided conversation questions, translation, and other targeted elicitation tasks were:

- Locative prepositions and definite articles with place names, e.g. au New Hampshire vs. à New Hampshire for 'to New Hampshire'
- Inalienable possession with body parts, e.g. je me lave les mains vs. je lave mes mains for 'I wash my hands'
- The superlative, e.g. l'homme le plus riche du monde vs. le plus riche homme du monde for 'the richest man in the world'
- Generic and abstract nouns, e.g. J'aime le rock et le pop vs. J'aime rock et pop for 'I like rock and pop [music]'

The hypothesis was that the speakers would follow English word order and grammatical rules due to transfer from English into their French definite determiner and prepositional systems, mainly due to a low level of exposure to French and an infrequent, contextually limited use of French. Results suggest that the speakers do have many of the kinds of influence from English that are predicted. This can be attributed to grammatical borrowing, incomplete acquisition (in the sense of early termination of acquisition), and/or L1 attrition, depending on the age, generation, and level of French exposure of the speaker.

**Nido de Lenguas: Collaborative language education in Monterey Bay's Oaxacan diaspora**

*Ben Eischens (UC Santa Cruz), Paula Ledesma (UC Santa Cruz), Maxwell Kaplan (UC Santa Cruz), Fe Silva-Robles (Senderos), Kelsey Sasaki (UC Santa Cruz) & Maziar Toosarvandani (UC Santa Cruz)*

The Monterey Bay area of California is home to more than 40,000 immigrants from Oaxaca. Most speak one of Oaxaca's numerous indigenous languages, including varieties of Chatino, Mixe, Mixtec, and Zapotec. In Santa Cruz, this diaspora community is served by the nonprofit organization Senderos (http://scsenderos.org), which provides resources for integrating its members into the larger community and confronting the stigmatization they face through events promoting Oaxacan dance, music, and food. Since 2016, Senderos and linguists at the University of California, Santa Cruz have been collaborating on *Nido de Lenguas (Language Nest)*, a year-round series of events to raise awareness about the indigenous languages of Oaxaca. We describe the history, goals, and activities of Nido de Lenguas, and discuss how it advances both Senderos' mission and our knowledge about the languages of Oaxaca.

Linguists at UC Santa Cruz became involved with the Oaxacan immigrant community informally at first, through individual research collaborations between graduate students and native speaker community members. These personal connections led to graduate field methods courses on Santiago Laxopa Zapotec and San Martín Peras Mixtec, and these in turn have fed a growing network of research collaborations between members of the community and faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students, working together to better understand these languages. One community leader—Fe Silva-Robles—is the primary native speaker member of the Santiago Laxopa Zapotec collaborations, as well as the Director and Co-Founder of Senderos. Through her, UCSC linguists have joined some of Senderos' activities, volunteering at the annual Guelaguetza festival, and even performing with the Senderos *banda*.

As these collaborations grew, community members and linguists saw an opportunity to add a linguistic dimension to Senderos' activities, which had largely focused on Oaxacan dance and music. Nido de Lenguas was inaugurated in the summer of 2017 with the first *Camp*, a free weekend-long event for community members to learn about the languages of Oaxaca, which had its second iteration in the summer of 2018. The participants included Senderos members, members of the Oaxacan immigrant community, as well the general public. They learned about the basic phonetic and structural properties of two languages, Santiago Laxopa Zapotec and San Martín Peras Mixtec, through games and demonstrations. The instructors were native speakers, assisted by linguistics students and faculty.

The *Camp* events have been enthusiastically received. After the first one, several participants asked how they could continue learning about Santiago Laxopa Zapotec. In response, monthly *Clases* were introduced in fall 2017, and continue to the present. Taught by Fe Silva-Robles with support from UCSC linguists, these classes aim to teach students to have basic conversations in Zapotec, increase their understanding of Zapotec people and culture. The materials development is collaborative—the linguists' lessons about various aspects of the language are combined with the instructor's lessons on the customs and traditions of Santiago Laxopa. Students include interested community members, as well as educators in local schools who want to learn more about the languages many of their own students speak.

While the *Camp* and *Clases* events provide small groups of people an opportunity to learn in-depth about one Oaxacan language, Nido de Lenguas also hosts *Pop-Up* events at local cultural events organized by Senderos, such as the annual Guelaguetza or Día de los Muertos festivals, to engage more broadly with the public and increase awareness about indigenous Oaxacan languages in the Monterey Bay area. At the *Pop-Up* booth, children and adults can learn a little about Mixe, Mixtec, or Zapotec through fun, fast-paced games. What constitutes "increasing awareness" has already proved quite broad—it ranges from explaining to curious passers-by that these languages are not related to Spanish to discussing the details of intra-language variation with speakers of different varieties than those represented in our games.

Through Nido de Lenguas, linguists at UC Santa Cruz have been able to build on their research collaborations with members of the Oaxacan diaspora community in Santa Cruz to contribute a linguistic dimension to Senderos' activities and help advance its mission of increasing the visibility of the Oaxacan immigrant community in the Monterey Bay area.

**The San Diego Hmong language project**

*Marc Garellek (UC San Diego)*

The Hmong community in San Diego was founded in the mid-1970s, and consists of speakers of two related varieties: White Hmong and Green Mong. In this talk, I provide an overview of the San Diego Hmong community and language, and describe the San Diego Hmong language project, which began in 2015 in partnership with a local Hmong organization. The project focuses on documenting Hmong narratives, folk tales, poetry, and songs by members of the Hmong community in San Diego. The project webpage (hmong.ucsd.edu) includes freely accessible audio recordings, Hmong transcripts, and English translations. I describe the project's motivation and challenges, and highlight some recent work on tone-tune alignment in Green Mong song that makes use of the project's recordings.

**Description in diaspora and the Moro Language Project**

*Peter Jenks (UC Berkeley) & Sharon Rose (UC San Diego)*

This paper details the progress that has been made in the description and documentation of Moro (Kordofanian: Sudan, 30,000 sp.) solely through working with speakers living in diaspora. In the case of Moro diaspora was forced an ongoing civil war and attempted genocide on the part of the Sudanese government in the Nuba Mountains, the Moro homeland.

The Moro Language Project, hosted by UC San Diego, had its roots in field methods classes held in subsequent years in 2005 and 2006 on Moro, working primarily with Mr. Elyasir Julima and sometimes with his spouse, Ms. Ikhlas Elahmer. Mr. Julima and Ms. Elahmer arrived in the United States as refugees in the early 2000s due to ongoing political unrest and discrimination against the Moro and other ethnic groups in Sudan. The project was funded by an ongoing NSF grants (#0745973) from 2008-2012, and has produced numerous publications covering many different aspects of the language, an online searchable database of Moro, and a descriptive grammar, currently nearing completion and represents the culmination of the project.

In 2011 we began collaborating with Mr. Angelo Naser, an active Moro language advocate and expert living in Omdurman, Sudan, where he was teaching literacy classes in Moro, serving as the minister of a Moro church, and actively working on Bible translation. The New Testemant had been translated into Moro in the 1970s by Kenneth and Betty Black of the United Bible Society; who also produced the Moro Language Grammar and Dictionary (1971). Both the Grammar and the New Testament were written in what is now considered the standard dialect, Wërria, or Longorban. While Mr. Naser was a native speaker of the same dialect as our US-based speakers, called Thetogovela, a dialect which had been the subject of our research as well as the grammar, Mr. Naser's role as a literacy advocate and his interest in developing a standardized variety of Moro meant that he also had developed fairly sophisticated understanding of the standard dialect.

We describe two sources of uncertainty regarding the dialect situation in Moro. First is an ethical concern, related to the potentially disruptive force of our work on what is perceived as a non-standard or vernacular dialect of Moro by literacy experts in Khartoum. As linguists, we tend to prize description and analyses of divergent dialects, but from the perspective of the literacy program among diasporic Moro speakers in Omdurman, our work could be perceived as a disruption of the general trend towards standardization. This concern is balanced against the fact that all of our research to this point has focused on Thetogovela, and the belief that the description of distinct dialects is of inherent scientific and humanistic value.

A second, related source of uncertainty related to subtle grammatical differences between our San Diego-based consultant and our Khartoum-based consultant. While Mr. Julima had primary childhood exposure to Thetotovela, Mr. Naser continued to live and worked in a millieu of different dialectal speakers. Perhaps inevitably, certain grammatical discrepancies have been noted between the two speakers, with the Khartoum-based Mr. Naser showing more similarities to the standard dialect, for example, in his use of auxiliary verbs.

We discuss some strategies we have adopted for overcoming these challenges. One is the collaborative development of resources in standard written Moro, including an online database of stories, the Moro Story Corpus, and an ongoing book of stories intended for Moro readers. Another is the inclusion of standard written Moro in the grammar alongside the Thetogovela we describe. The hope is that by endorsing Standard Moro and collaborating in its development alongside our descriptive and theoretical work on Thetogovela, we are able both to support the goal of language development in literacy and preservation while simultaneously emphasizing the value of dialectal diversity.

**Building positive language attitudes in a Turoyo (Neo-Aramaic) diaspora community**

*Laura Kalin (Princeton University)*

Neo-Aramaic languages descend from vernacular dialects of Old/Middle Aramaic and are spoken today predominantly in diaspora communities around the world. In this talk, the focus will be on the highly-endangered Neo-Aramaic language Turoyo, originally spoken in southeast Turkey and northeast Syria, and one of its diaspora communities, in northern New Jersey. This community centers around the Syriac Orthodox Church, where Classical Syriac (a prestige variety of Middle Aramaic) is the liturgical language. While the community takes great pride in speaking Aramaic, the language of Jesus, Turoyo is seen as a corruption of Syriac, and so does not have a standardized orthography, is not typically written, and is not consistently taught in educational programs run by the church (rather, Classical Syriac is more consistently taught). Many children in the community today are either not acquiring or not maintaining Turoyo.

In Fall 2018, I was invited to give the keynote at Suryoyto Women's Day, a yearly event organized by the church, attended by women and children in the community as well as by the church clergy. My main goal for the keynote was to build more positive attitudes towards Turoyo, both by discussing how and why languages change, as well as demonstrating that Turoyo and Classical Syriac are completely separate languages. In this talk, I will discuss this keynote, its reception, and my impression of the future of Turoyo in this community.

**Towards a complete Diaspora Linguistics:**
**Balancing community needs with linguistic research**

Invited Speaker: *Daniel Kaufman (CUNY, Queens College)*

Ex-situ fieldwork, working with speakers outside their traditional language territory, has been responsible for several major works of linguistic description. To take one example, Bloomfield's (1917) *Tagalog Texts with Grammatical Analysis* was based entirely on ex-situ fieldwork in Chicago with Alfredo Viola Santiago, a then student of architectural engineering at the University of Illinois. Yet whatever "diaspora" aspects there may have been to Bloomfield 1917, they are virtually invisible in the text. Over 100 years later, with the wholesale relocation of communities as well as the diversification of linguistics as a field of study, it is time to consider Diaspora Linguistics as an independent subfield with its own topics and problems. In this talk, I focus on the slow journey from "ex situ" fieldwork towards meeting the full potential of Diaspora Linguistics in the context of the Endangered Language Alliance in NYC and in relation to community needs around language in urban settings. Specifically, I discuss an ongoing collaboration with the NYC Department of Health on Indigenous Latin American linguistic communities, a project documenting NYC's Himalayan linguistic diversity, and our work in training community members and others to carry out their own recording and analysis.

**Dictionary as entry to literacy and language documentation: A Copala Triqui case study**

*Román Vidal López (Albany Triqui Working Group), Monica de Jesús Ramírez (Albany Triqui Working Group), Lauren Clemens (University at Albany), Jamilläh Rodriguez (University at Albany), Michael Stoop (University of Florida) & George Aaron Broadwell (University of Florida)*

Copala Triqui (TRC) is an Otomanguean language of the Mixtecan branch, originally spoken in San Juan Copala and nearby towns in western Oaxaca, Mexico. Due to political violence and economic difficulties, as many as one third of Copala Triqui's approximately 30,000 speakers have left Oaxaca. About 1000 Copala Triqui live in upstate NY, where our research is based. Members of this

community have formed an organization called *Triquis Sin Fronteras* (TSF), which works to promote Triqui culture and support Triqui people living in diaspora.

Hollenbach's extensive documentation of Copala Triqui includes a Triqui-Spanish dictionary (Hollenbach 2005, 2016). However, traditional lexical resources do not adequately meet the needs of Copala Triqui speakers (in Mexico and abroad). Members of TSF have helped us understand that Copala Triqui speakers

1. do not understand the orthography well enough to pronounce unfamiliar words or find words in an alphabetically organized dictionary;
2. benefit from hearing audio recordings of words and example sentences;
3. prefer images of flora, fauna, and items of cultural significance (e.g. textiles) to Spanish or English translations; and
4. prefer electronic resources over print resources.

For these reasons, our team developed an online, trilingual, audiovisual dictionary of Copala Triqui, searchable in Triqui, Spanish, and English. We began with text collection and interlinear analysis within Fieldwork Language Explorer (FLEx), followed by audio recording of individual lexical items. We debuted this dictionary via SIL's Webonary platform in 2013 and had a public launch with TSF in 2014.

The current online version is the 47th revision since 2013 and Google Analytics reports an average of 200-300 users in Mexico and the U.S. each month. Using SIL's Dictionary App Builder, we have also created a free app available for both Android and Apple devices, which reflects the web dictionary with example sentences, audio, and translation between English, Spanish, and Triqui. We are fine-tuning the app with the goal of releasing the first version by the end of the year. Our experience shows us that electronic dictionaries are a better match for language communities with low literacy levels. Traditional dictionary design presumes literacy skills which are often absent in minority language communities.

Many positive developments have come of the online dictionary project, including increased literacy among community members collaborating on the project. One of our key collaborators, Román Vidal López, began writing in Copala Triqui, ultimately publishing *Nana naguan' rihaan nij síí chihaan' | Consejos para la gente Triqui | Words of counsel for the Triqui people* (Vidal López 2012). In addition, TSF members now regularly share original poetry written in Copala Triqui and translated into both Spanish and English at *O güii se chihanj nij síí chihan' man Nueva York* "Day of Triqui Culture in the Capital District," held annually each spring.

Our broader documentation work also dovetails with dictionary development. Our collaborators work to create and record natural example sentences for the dictionary, and we also integrate examples from our text corpus. Grammatical investigations, whenever possible, are connected to lexical entries, and thus sentences serve dual roles as both grammatical and lexical exemplars.

**Ideologies of language purity in healthcare interpreting**

*Ruth Rouvier (University of California, Berkeley) and Alma Caravarin (Mental & Behavioral Health Interpreter/ Immigration Resource Coordinator, Southeast Asian Assistance Center)*

Healthcare interpreters assist those with limited English, including many members of diaspora communities, in accessing vital care and services. These individuals often experience significant health issues due to the conditions they experienced before and/or during their migration. In addition to physical, mental, and behavioral healthcare settings, healthcare interpreters can operate in courts for workers' compensation or immigration cases, and in schools, mainly in Individualized Education Program meetings for children who are eligible for special education. As a relatively new profession, healthcare interpreting is still developing standardized practices, codes of conduct, and a code of ethics.

Currently, many practicing interpreters receive limited or no interpreting training. The industry historically has equated bilingual fluency with interpreting competency, and in most cases the requirements to become a healthcare interpreter are a high school diploma, a biology/anatomy class, a medical terminology class, and fluency in English as well as another language. Any training the interpreter does receive is centered around Western healthcare settings. There is very little opportunity, and no requirement, for interpreters to learn about cross-cultural communication dynamics, especially in formal settings, or on culturally and linguistically specific conceptions of health, leaving them to rely on their own individual cultural backgrounds and experiences to navigate between the two (or more) cultures that they are bridging. Especially in behavior and mental health encounters, there is a great reliance on nuanced expression of beliefs and world views in order to diagnose and treat potential conditions, but the interpreter has little but their own cultural experiences to guide interpreting encounters for individuals who might not share their cultural background, even if they share a common language.

This lack of knowledge, training, and available resources about diverse cultural and linguistic practices related to physical and mental health and healthcare, and on intercultural communication in general, leads to challenges for clients, providers, and interpreters. In addition, the absence of interpreting standards and training can result in interpreters going beyond their scope of practice (as message conduit, cultural clarifier, cultural broker, and minimally client advocate). This can interfere with the delivery of care, result in confusion among clients and providers, and create tension and misaligned expectations among all parties in current and future interpreting sessions.

Drawing on our backgrounds in mental health interpreting and linguistics, we explore how ideologies of language purity affect healthcare interpreting. Existing professional standards, protocols and training in healthcare interpreting emphasize maintaining a strict separation of languages during the delivery of interpreting services, and interpreters are strongly discouraged from engaging in any use of 'non-standard' language. Patient/clients, providers, and interpreters themselves may also have explicit or implicit beliefs and expectations about the languages, dialects, registers and vocabularies that are appropriate for use in an interpreting context. These formal standards and individual attitudes may conflict or interfere with effective delivery of information, depending on the linguistic repertoires of the members of the healthcare visit. They also fail to account for the highly multilingual and multidialectal population that receives interpreting services, and can fail to prepare interpreters to

effectively serve that population. Language choices also impact the development of trust and comfort between patient/client and interpreter, in complex ways.

Using experiences of code-switching, with a variety of outcomes, as an entry to this topic, we present several examples of communicative and interpersonal breakdown or conflict related to decisions about language, dialect or register by healthcare interpreters. We discuss the ways that these choices are informed, and perceived, by the participants in the encounter, and how improved training could better support interpreters to navigate these linguistically complex situations. Finally, we invite discussion regarding how linguistics can contribute to, and benefit from, research to inform the development of improved standards and training for healthcare interpreters.

**Contemporary migrations and New African diasporas**

Invited Speaker: *Dianna Shandy (Macalester College)*

Anthropologists are known for travelling to their field site, often to faraway locales. My work complicates this idea by describing research "at home" concerning a population who was on the move. I describe the research's inception, making contact, developing relationships, and how my positionality shaped the interviews. Over the past nearly 25 years, I have worked largely with Nuer-speaking people who are one of anthropology's most famous case studies and who have often been subject to what Appadurai calls metonymic freezing. My research illustrates how their lives in the U.S. intersect with their ethnographic past in Africa and the implications this dynamic has for fieldwork.

From a longitudinal vantage point, I also describe some of the implicit external factors shaping choices that I made then and touch on some of the "what I know now that I wish I would have known then" aspects of my work. I conclude by introducing some recent and unexpected developments in my work that involve interactions with Nuer who returned home to South Sudan but who recently re-migrated to the United States, as South Sudan spiraled back into conflict.

**Field Report of Documentation and Description of Mewahang, Nepal**

*Narayan Sharma (University of Oregon)*

Mewahang has approximately 900 remaining speakers living in the remote and isolated villages of the Sankhuwasabha district of eastern Nepal. In this talk I will particularly discuss the fieldwork report of Linguistic Description and Comprehensive Documentation of Mewahang, an undescribed Tibeto-Burman (Kiranti) language of Nepal (Yadava & Turin 2007: 30).

The project's aim is to document a culturally significant rich oral tradition and develop an appropriate comprehensive and accessible digital corpus for researchers and the community, with a focus on standard elicitation for additional structural analysis and grammatical description. The project collects a rich corpus more than 80 hours containing a wide variety of unplanned narratives and conversations in everyday situations, traditional narratives, myths, songs, and folktales, and documenting oral literature, particularly with reference to the local cultural heritage and knowledge. Our language documentation methods incorporate the points made by Woodbury (2003), Dwyer (2006), Harrison and Dwyer (2008), Lupke (2010) and amongst several others.

The project provides documentation training to increase local capacity to the language consultants and transfers the principal investigator (PI)'s documentary experience, knowledge, technical skills and capacity to them which will later make contribution to their community for preservation and promotion of their language for wider use of communication. This training will also help them to further document their oral literature and linguistic analysis on their own. The most important rationale for undertaking this language documentation and descriptive linguistics has been promoted interdisciplinary research that has involved both oral language knowledge and its description for the purposes of preserving and promoting undescribed diversity.

There is a very good impact of documentation on the Mewahang community, as the Mewahang community has been willing to preserve their language and even use it as medium of instruction in basic literacy programmes for children and adults under the policy envisaged by the Government of Nepal. Mewahang community is going to prepare the primers very soon once the Mewahang monograph is available.

The outcomes of this project will be a monograph, peer-reviewed linguistic papers on morphosyntactic investigations, and rich transcribed, translated and annotated audio-video corpus. The research crucially will shed light on Tibeto-Burman linguistics and typological studies of languages, which promises to be a contribution to Tibeto-Burman and theoretical linguistics.

**It Takes Many Villages: A Social Justice Model for Language Research with Resettled Refugees in the Diaspora**

*Michal Temkin Martínez (Boise State University)*

This past decade has seen global rates of displacement and forced migration soar to exceptionally high rates. With it, there has been an increase in people seeking resettlement through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Although the rate of resettlement in the United State has dropped since 2016, many resettlement cities across the country serve as new homes to large communities of New Americans. These multilingual communities provide great opportunities for linguistics faculty and students to undertake cross-linguistic research at home — there is much knowledge to be gained

from these speakers. However, working with this vulnerable population that has experienced more trauma and hardship than many others living in their new hometowns, behooves us to not only welcome them, but to lend our expertise to serving and supporting them as best we can.

In this talk, I will discuss ways through which linguistics faculty at Boise State University engage in responsive and responsible practices in language research, working within city-wide support networks to best serve the newest members of our community while also training our undergraduate students in global citizenship, ethical research practices, and linguistic methodology.

**What can diasporic languages teach us about the development of phonological distinctions? Examples from Somali Chizigula stops and Toronto Cantonese vowels**

*Holman Tse (University of Pittsburgh)*

While much research on sound change in progress has focused on phonemic mergers (loss of phonological distinctions) relatively little has focused on splits (either allophonic or phonemic) or on how new distinctions are created (Labov 1994, 2011). The goal of this presentation is to discuss two examples of the development of phonemic or allophonic distinctions in two different diasporic languages (with homelands in two different continents). I will argue that intense contact settings (as defined by Thomason & Kaufman 1988) facilitate the development of new phonological distinctions. Diasporic languages, thus, provide fertile ground for the development of new phonological distinctions because of their development in sociolinguistic settings involving intense language contact.

The first example comes from the development of a plosive vs. implosive contrast in Somali Chizigula (Kizigua), a dialect of an East African language spoken in Somali Bantu communities in various US cities including Boise, ID, Columbus, OH, and Pittsburgh, PA. Consultant work shows speakers with minimal pairs such as [basi] ‘bus’ vs. [ɓasi] ‘enough’ and near minimal pairs such as [gasi] ‘gas’ vs. [ɠali] ‘expensive’. Thus, while implosives are found in inherited vocabulary, plosives occur in English loan words. The phonetic production of this contrast has been confirmed by acoustic and aerodynamic studies (Temkin Martinez & Rosenbaum 2017). Tanzanian dialects of Chizigula, however, have only plosives (Kisbey 1897, 1906; Mochiwa 2008) and interestingly these plosives correspond to implosives in Somali Chizigula. The development of this plosive vs. implosive contrast can be accounted for in terms of the migration history of Somali Chizigula speakers. Chizigula speakers from Tanzania arrived in Somalia in the 19th Century where they came in contact with speakers of other Bantu languages, including some that have implosives corresponding to Tanzanian Chizigula plosives. Thus, through contact, the inherited plosives shifted to implosives. As a result of the Somali Civil War, many Somali Chizigula speakers moved to Kenyan refugee camps, where they learned Swahili, and then continued on to the US where they learned English. At this point, loan words with English voiced stops became part of Somali Chizigula speech. Thus, the result of these distinct periods of migration (characterized by contact with speakers of different languages) is a plosive vs. implosive contrast.

The second example involves the development of a pre-nasal split in /ɛ/ in Toronto Cantonese. Acoustic data analyzed as part of the Heritage Language Variation and Change in Toronto Project (Nagy 2011) shows that some second-generation speakers (grew up in Toronto) have developed a fronted variant of /ɛ/ that occurs before nasal consonants. This pre-nasal split appears to be influenced by a similar prenasal allophonic split found in Toronto English and many other North American English dialects (Boberg 2008). Further supporting an argument for contact-induced change is acoustic data showing its absence among first-generation (immigrant generation) speakers and among Homeland (Hong Kong) speakers. What this second example illustrates is that structural influence from the phonology of the dominant language (Toronto English) can lead to the development of an allophonic split.

To conclude, what unites these two cases is intense contact, characterized by multilingual speakers who have access to multiple phonological systems and who are, thus, able to combine elements from their distinct languages in innovative ways. Creating new phonological contrasts and innovating allophonic splits are two examples of changes that can be initiated by multilingual speakers in diasporic settings. Although the extent to which these specific changes persist as features of these two diasporic varieties remains to be seen, what is clear from these two examples is the need to consider diasporic languages in developing models of sound change.