

# Language Documentation and Pedagogy: Seeking Outcomes and Accountability

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## Abstract

It is approaching 20 years since scholars predicted the disappearance of a large number of languages around the world, and this year is the tenth anniversary of the birth of language documentation, the principal area targeted at addressing the problem. Documentation of languages has been defined as the creation of multipurpose records of a variety of speech genres and events (Himmelman 1998); but increasingly, there are doubts about how feasible or useful it is to do this. This paper raises further questions about what drives documentation goals and methodologies, showing, for example, that documentation as it is currently practised mainly serves the purposes of descriptive and typological linguistics.

However, documentation can make a real contribution to the states of languages; a first step is to replace the difficult goal of revitalisation with concrete pedagogical activities to which documentation can contribute, for example by creating pedagogically relevant data and metadata, and extending its sociolinguistic aspects to contribute to language development activities. In turn, through an interdisciplinary involvement with pedagogy, documentation itself can gain many benefits.

## Introduction: ten years of documentation

Nearly 20 years ago, Krauss (1992) raised the alarm about global language loss, pointing out that linguists' objects of study were likely to soon disappear under their own watch.

This year, 2008, is the tenth anniversary of the birth of documentary linguistics, the major response so far to the problem of language endangerment. Documentary linguistics aims to create multipurpose records of language practices. Its main features are its orientation towards recording and representing primary data on language usage, diversification of that data to include a variety of speech styles and events, and accessibility to "a broad audience of users" (Austin and Grenoble 2007; also Himmelman 1998 and Woodbury 2004).

The decade has seen many positive developments including the establishment of degree programs, training courses, publications, archives, funding initiatives, and hundreds of funded documentation projects (Dobrin et al 2007: 65). Thus the principal achievements of documentary linguistics so far have been in three main areas: training; reaching better understandings of what endangers languages, how languages decline, and how people have responded; and creating recordings and descriptions of several hundreds of endangered languages.

Despite this progress, documentation faces several problems. We list some of them in the next section, before moving to the issue of support for endangered language teaching and learning; the second part of this paper describes a language teaching methodology, called 'a Performance Approach', that may be of interest to documenters of endangered languages.

## Questions for documentation

While documentary linguistics has been embraced – and funded – with enthusiasm, the pace of language extinction has not appeared to lessen, and many revitalisation efforts are not realising their goals.

Austin and Grenoble (2007: 21) describe documentation as a "young" field for which "it remains unclear what the outcomes ... can be". They raise doubts about what shape a truly comprehensive and multipurpose corpus would take and how feasible it would be to create. In turn, this raises questions about who is served by its outcomes (see the metadata section below).

Documentation is generally claimed to be an emerging and distinct discipline, and the distinctions between language documentation and description have been extensively discussed elsewhere. Nevertheless, linguists rarely think of collaboration between language documenters and other linguists as *interdisciplinary* activity.

The assumptions that linguists should be the principal practitioners of documentation, that they should unilaterally define its practice, or that linguistics ought to have privileged access to the results of documentation can all be challenged. Because the goals of documentation are both broad and deep, it should ideally be a collaborative or interdisciplinary activity best conducted by teams (Austin and Grenoble 2007: 22). The range of relevant skills is so wide that it is unlikely to be embodied in a single practitioner; potential participants include linguists, audio and film recordists, educationalists, computer experts, ethnobotanists, anthropologists and others.

Funds designated for documentation are frequently being used to undertake descriptive work because the venerable tradition of lexicon, grammar and texts bears too much weight in linguistics. On the other hand, documenters who observe documentation's emphasis on primary data are often not trained in recording, film-making, and robust data management, so, for example, we find excellent linguists spending their time making amateur-quality audio and video recordings (Nathan 2007). For some, data appears to have become an end in itself. For example, at HRELP we often hear documenters say that the purpose of their work is to "deposit data in the archive".<sup>1</sup>

Documentation's methodologies often do not reflect the arguments put forward for the value of endangered languages. Although it is standard to argue that languages should be defended and documented because they hold irreplaceable knowledge of the speakers' environment (zoological, botanical, climate etc), history, culture and social roles, in practice "linguists tend to focus on structural and lexical analysis" rather than these various kinds of cultural and emic knowledge (Batibo 2005: 40).

So perhaps it is possible to ask whether documentation has a coherent present and a productive future. Recently, Austin and Grenoble (2007) argued that the distinction between documentation and description might be spurious and unhelpful. However, it is unclear to what extent those authors see a complex dialectic arising between the two areas, or whether they are implicitly admitting that documentation has had limited success in developing distinctive methodologies. In terms of its methodologies for data collection and representation, documentation offers little that is innovative or unique to endangered (as opposed to healthy) languages. And below, we demonstrate that documentation's methodology and outputs seem to predominantly serve the aims of typological linguistics, even though there is no evidence anecdotally or in the literature that typological findings are valued by or useful for language speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> But today's *YouTube* phenomenon may create a precedent for the collection and broadcast of "data" with unspecified provenance and purpose.

With documentation's goals and methods increasingly confused, working out how to make effective contributions to language revitalisation might provide some much-needed direction. Grinevald (2003) argues that documenters have an obligation to directly support communities and their languages. But while linguists have taken on board the responsibility to be accountable for their formal analyses by making primary data available (Bird & Simons 2003, Himmelmann 2006: 15), they have been less convinced of the need to be accountable for the states of languages, or at least to make the necessary resources available to language communities who wish to maintain their languages.<sup>2</sup>

### Documentation for revitalisation

With a few small changes and additions to its methods, documentation can make a great contribution to language revitalisation. Documenters can play crucial roles in the creation of supporting materials for language teaching and learning, which, together with innovative methods for effective language learning, may offer untapped potential for supporting languages.

Note at the outset that *revitalisation* is a too-onerous and frequently misleading goal. Although the term is useful for contrasting with other responses to various language situations, such as maintenance, revival etc., it is at best a general and long-term aim (Penfield 2008). In most cases, it will be more realistic to direct efforts towards specific language development outcomes (Grenoble and Whaley 2006: 174).

Of course, many documenters *do* go to significant efforts to produce materials for use in language communities, including for language teaching. However, materials created or repurposed for such purposes, often under the rubric "giving back to the community", are typically adjuncts to or by-products of the main linguistic tasks; that is, they serve as tokens of the researcher's ethical position (Dobrin et al 2007) rather than a central function of documentation.<sup>3</sup>

Documenters can contribute to language pedagogy in four main areas:

- (a) undertake basic training in awareness of issues in language pedagogy in order to better understand how to make their materials useful for language teachers and learners
- (b) prepare resources using cross-disciplinary teams
- (c) share their sociolinguistic research to help in the planning and establishment of language programs
- (d) create pedagogically useful metadata

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<sup>2</sup> We do not know of any funders of endangered languages work that require accountability in terms of language outcomes in the community.

<sup>3</sup> Nathan & Csató's (2006) *Spoken Karaim* CD is equally a rich linguistic documentation and a revitalisation resource, but there are currently few other comparable products.

Language documenters could be trained in basic concepts and practice of language teaching and teaching material preparation. This would *not* be primarily aimed at helping them to teach or directly prepare pedagogical materials, but to assist them to tailor their documentations to be usable by teachers and others who wish to adapt them for teaching purposes.<sup>4</sup> Currently, the pedagogical value of documentations is more or less left to chance, or they are assumed to be easily harvested later for good teaching materials.

Just as documenters cannot be expected to master and perform language teaching, teachers cannot be expected to fully understand linguistic data in a documentation, some of which might be highly specialised, for example, to reflect a researcher's focus on some particular linguistic phenomenon. Documenters who are aware of teachers' and learners' needs can label and describe pedagogically useful resources within their documentary work. The documenter and pedagogist, working together, would create new, interdisciplinary ways of working, such as developing shared vocabularies to mediate between the knowledge and representations used by each area. The metadata section below has some initial proposals for this type of work. Another possibility would be to make the linguistic software that many documenters use (such as ELAN, Transcriber, Praat, Toolbox) accessible to teachers and other non-linguists to use. Linguistic resources would then be opened up to enable such people to use documentation data or to make annotations that best suit their own needs.

Many documenters do sociolinguistic work, often as a preliminary step in planning a project and applying for funding. This work could be extended and the results made available to education authorities or community bodies who could use it to identify potential learner groups and their abilities, needs, and motivations, as well as potential teachers and consultants and their particular skills. Currently, documentation's emphasis on discourse, authenticity, native speakership and command of a language means that many consultants who could make potential contributions to language learning resources are easily overlooked.

Although education authorities have been, and continue to be, agents of language shift, we should not underestimate the extent to which they can be mobilised in *support* of languages. In many parts of the world, education bodies are responsive and innovative in supporting local and Indigenous languages. However, to do so, they need primary resources as a basis for creating curricula and learning materials. Where such primary resources are lacking, unknown to, or unusable by education bodies, there is no opportunity to draw on their efforts and influence. In much of Africa, for example, Batibo (2005: 54) found that "[t]he absence of documentation is often one of the excuses advanced by [educational] decision-makers" to not support languages.

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<sup>4</sup> This has also been called *mobilisation* (Nathan 2006).

More than we might like to admit, then, the fates of many languages rest in the hands of documentation funding bodies such as ELDP, NSF, VW and even FEL.

### Towards pedagogy-friendly metadata

Metadata is *data about data*. It consists of various information about primary data, such as details of its provenance and technical details such as encodings and abbreviations. Due to documentation's emphasis on data, metadata is central to its methodology, in particular playing a crucial role in identifying the content of audio and video recordings. As well as illuminating the content of data, metadata provides the key to managing, understanding, identifying and retrieving data (OAIS 2002). Therefore, metadata not only reflects the knowledge and practice of data providers, but also defines and constrains the audiences for data and how they can effectively use it.

By looking at formulations of documentation "best practice" (EMELD) and metadata schemes, we can discover what those intended audiences and usages are. The two commonly used schemes, IMDI and OLAC, place principal emphasis on standardised encoding of language names and formal linguistic phenomena to support comparison and statistical aggregation of those phenomena and the easy "discovery" of them.<sup>5</sup> This, then, particularly benefits typologists for whom endangered languages offer such rich and diverse sources for making and testing hypotheses. Indeed it has frequently been typologists who have urged documenters to create and apply standardising ontologies and other classifications to their linguistic representations. But "aggregation" work, while important for linguistics' understanding of the human language facility, offers little contribution to the states of *particular* languages.

Thus, an analysis of metadata strategy reveals that documentation's current methodology principally serves the goals of typological linguistics.<sup>6</sup> However, the same, or even greater, obligation should apply to documenters to support languages through pedagogy and revitalisation. The creation of metadata for endangered languages materials is either too important to be left to linguists alone, or else documentary linguists need to expand their remit and collect and include information relevant to a variety of language teaching and learning topics. Following is a provisional list of metadata that would facilitate discovery, selection, adaptation and usage of documentation for teaching and learning:

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<sup>5</sup> The interdisciplinary potential of IMDI is acknowledged, but has not been as successfully embraced as hoped (Klassman 2006).

<sup>6</sup> If we include Nathan & Austin's (2005) claims about "thick metadata" – which extend the definition of metadata to include all symbolic descriptions associated with events and recordings, including transcriptions, glossings, annotations – the effective audiences for current documentation materials are clearly identified as descriptive and typological linguists.

1. identification and description of socially/culturally relevant events such as songs, which are of great interest to community members and which provide invaluable teaching materials (Holton 2007)<sup>7</sup>
2. phenomena that provide learning domains, such as numbers, kinship, greetings, tense
3. socially important phenomena such as register and code switching
4. notes on learner levels
5. links to associated materials that have explanations and examples
6. notes on prior selections and usages of material for teaching
7. notes on how to use the material for teaching
8. notes and warnings about restricted materials or materials which are inappropriate for young or certain groups of people (e.g. profane, archaic etc)
9. accessible basic information, e.g. name of language or variety, speaker, gender, speaker's country etc

Another way of supporting pedagogy would be to revisit current definitions of documentation formats. Documentary linguistics currently recognises a standard representational trio of “working format”, “archive format”, and “presentation/dissemination format” (Johnson 2005, Austin 2006). This has two negative consequences. Firstly, it makes linguists think that what they generally disseminate – which often includes what is provided to communities – is limited to so-called dissemination formats such as MP3 audio files; i.e. resources that can easily be produced as by-products of their “real” work. As a result, teachers and learners have little access to more rich or complex documentation resources. Secondly, because linguists tend to see richness and complexity within the window of their particular software tools, there is an assumption that rich linguistic materials are not broadly disseminable. Nathan's work in interactive multimedia has tried to dispel this myth (Nathan 2006). What linguists can genuinely contribute is the knowledge they add to recordings, not the conversion of media formats.

### Benefits for documentation

Interaction with pedagogy could offer several valuable perspectives to the theory and practice of documentation. While documentation's methodologies generally pay lip service to the relationship between language and culture, many modern pedagogical approaches embed language learning in culturally relevant experiences. Conceptually, this reflects the move to “content-based” language teaching that took place during the 1990s,<sup>8</sup> when language came to be recognised as principally a tool for

<sup>7</sup> Linguists typically spend huge amounts of time creating morpheme-by-morpheme glosses while not including simple information that would allow teachers or community members to locate particular songs or stories in recordings.

<sup>8</sup> Or Content Based Instruction (CBI); see Brinton et al 1989 and <http://www.cal.org/resources/archive/langlink/0301.html>.

formulating and exchanging knowledge, rather than an autonomous object of study. Learners acquire new knowledge, learned and expressed in the target language, thus emphasising culture and content over language skills *per se*. New methods of documenting cultural domains could evolve if documentations were to focus on cultural and other content, rather than on collecting a variety of speech genres and communicative events.

Interdisciplinary interactions with educators would bring documenters into contact with additional language stakeholders such as teachers, materials developers, and educational authorities, with whom alliances and mutually beneficial exchanges could take place. Connections with language courses provide a forum for community language activity and present opportunities for linguists to look at areas such as language attitudes, language change, literacy, and language in use, as well as to meet new consultants. Focusing on learning settings also raises the possibility of *documenting the processes of the learning and teaching of threatened languages*, of which there are few examples so far (there have been some relevant recent projects, e.g. see Nariyo Kono's project;<sup>9</sup> and we have made an interactive video documentation of the use of the Performance Approach for a course in Min Nan). Research into the nature of language learning in adverse situations is indispensable if we are to understand how languages can be revitalised.

Gómez (2007: 101) has even argued that language teaching needs to *precede* the start of documentation work in a community so that community members can be fully informed about the project's methods and objectives in order to participate effectively.

### A Performance Approach to language learning

We now turn to summarise a language teaching methodology ‘Performance Approach’ (PA) that has been developed by Fang over several years (Fang 2008). While the PA was originally developed in the context of teaching large languages, its key features – such as its effectiveness, especially for achieving rapid, measurable learning within short, intensive language programs – have been found very relevant for the teaching of less commonly taught and endangered languages. It has been applied, for example, in teaching languages ranging from Japanese (in Taiwan) and Chinese (in Japan) to Min Nan (Japan and UK) and Karaim (an endangered language spoken in Lithuania).

In a PA, performance is the primary learning activity. The classroom becomes a “stage”, where a kind of authenticity can be achieved. A range of simple, concrete, routine activities are used, culminating with group creation and presentation of a short drama. The drama provides a flexible, effective, and highly motivating platform for group-based language learning.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hrelp.org/grants/projects/index.php?projid=144>

At the Karaim Summer Schools (Csató & Nathan 2007),<sup>10</sup> these group drama performances have become not only the culmination of the school program but also an annual community-based event, where the whole local community gathers as audience, senior members form the judging panel that assesses the groups' dramas, and the performances are followed by prize-giving and further musical performances.

The PA has common elements with teaching methodologies such as communicative approaches and linguistic understandings that various types of meanings (lexical, propositional, pragmatic, social) are enacted in actual language use. By consolidating language interactions as performances, students are able to take on a wider range of roles in creating resources that suit their own needs and interests, performing and recording events, and reflecting on their skills and learning. The PA's use of drama is one of the few effective ways for developing language functions such as modality and for the expression of emotions.

Such courses must be well planned and prepared, use efficient teaching methods, be tailored to the hours available, and take into account the students' levels, ages and backgrounds. Teaching methodology should be adjusted to the delivery of an endangered or heritage language (rather than a first, second or foreign language). For example, in a heritage language teaching context, language for social exchange is emphasised, but other aspects such as pronunciation and cultural awareness are likely to be familiar to the students.



Learner attribute	Similarity in group setting ...	
	institutional, foreign language	community, heritage language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age</li> <li>• ability</li> <li>• background (incl family language competences)</li> <li>• dominant language</li> <li>• mother/heritage language background</li> </ul>	<i>more</i>  <i>less</i>	<i>less</i>  <i>more</i>

Figure 1: Comparing group learner attributes in mainstream and endangered languages settings

In planning various courses, we noticed that in many ways the learner demographic in the heritage language class is inverted from that in the typical (e.g. UK university) foreign language classroom. Figure 1 (above) shows learner attributes listed in order of increasing

<sup>10</sup> The Karaim Summer School is a series of language revitalisation programs held at Trakai, Lithuania. They are coordinated by Professor Éva Csató of Uppsala University (and occasionally by David Nathan), and funded by the Swedish Academy and also supported by the Endangered Languages Archive at SOAS and FEL.

similarity for the typical mainstream learner group; in the heritage language classroom the order is reversed. Since individual factors dominate the most variable attributes in heritage settings, the need for careful course design and appropriate teaching methods is highlighted.

## Rationale

In conventional teaching, what students *produce* typically has little real value or use, except perhaps for assessment. The value of language learning is typically *deferred* until, for example, students study further or interact with speakers of the language. The PA aims to make language learning activities relevant and valued in classroom settings. One way of doing this is to connect to the actual social and theatrical contexts of the classroom rather than attempting to *simulate* events (as in typical communicative approaches) that can only really happen elsewhere. Thus a PA offers language learning contexts that are more “authentic” than those of standard communicative methodologies (Fang 2006).

Similarly, while learning resources are typically static and “distant” from the learners, in the PA learners continually perform and revisit what they have learned, create new resources, and use the performances themselves as the basis for further learning. Performance builds up the learners' repertoire (of all skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) in layers, through routines of activities such as question and answer, monologue, conversation, text production for drama, rehearsals and improvement and refinement. Students move through various roles, from language investigator, to story teller, to performer. Many of these performances can be worth documenting, both as language-using events and as records of a language development/revitalisation process.

In the process of creating their drama, learners watch video of previous classes' performances in order to visualise what they can achieve. By seeing these videos they get a sense of where they are going and what it *feels like* to use the language with the level of competence, fluency and flair that they are expected to reach.

## Details and implementation

The following sections summarise the implementation of a PA. The PA has three general principles and twelve design features. The principles are:

- learners perform wherever possible
- the teacher is an active leader and guide
- learners' language outputs are valued and authentic

The PA has these design features:

### *Clearly describe the course learning goals*

Identify the course's purpose; students' motivations; course length and calendar; class sizes, hours and frequency; age and level ranges of students; number of class levels to be offered.

### *Courses are learner- and group-centred*

All aspects of course planning and implementation are focused on the language performance outcomes of the learners. Groups provide microcosms of social settings where authentic language learning and usage takes place. The teacher is an active facilitator.

### *The learning process is explicit and signposted*

Course plans and materials have clear modular stages so that learners can see their progress and get regular personal feedback.

### *Teaching materials are rationally designed*

Learning materials are carefully created or selected as sequenced modules, where each module is fully learnable, and each module builds on the previous one.

### *Teaching and learning follow the designed sequence*

Class activities are designed to ensure that students can complete each phase before moving to the next one.

### *Learning activities are effective*

Learning activities are designed to maximise language input and output (i.e. performance) throughout classes for all learners.

### *Learning takes the form of a spiral*

As they advance, learners re-encounter and reinforce what they previously learnt (see Figure 2 below).

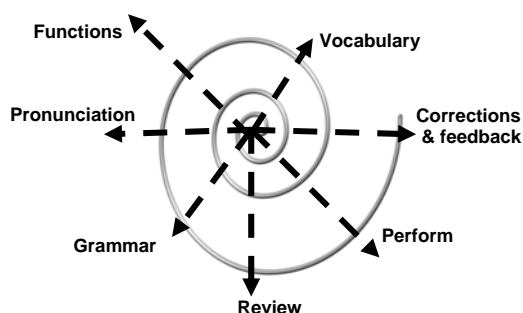


Figure 2: Learners revisit and extend what they previously learned and performed

### *Provide opportunities for feedback and correction*

“Mistakes” are opportunities for learning, and learners must perform in order to make them. Teacher actively monitors and responds to mistakes either with corrections, by keeping records for providing feedback later, or by preparing remedial materials.

### *Teacher records students’ progress*

Teachers keep detailed records of each individual student’s progress and patterns of mistakes and weaknesses. These can be used to give feedback to students, monitor the course effectiveness, and as part of ongoing assessment.

### *Learning from drama creation*

Creating and presenting a short drama is the principal and indispensable component. It consolidates all learning, and provides unique learning opportunities, such as how to express emotion in the target language.

### *Continuous and varied assessment*

Distribute varied types of assessment throughout the course to more accurately reflect learners’ progress.

Assessment should be used to keep teachers and learners focussed on the learning process and the course goals, not administrative needs. Use innovative assessment methods, such as group work and drama performances. Assessment should provide realistic measures of students’ achievements so that course progression to higher levels can be properly managed.

### *Use learners’ language production as resources*

Invest in learners’ work by recording it; for example, make video of drama performances. This gives learners opportunity for feedback, demonstrates that their performances are valued, and can provide useful study and documentation materials for future users.

## **Emotion**

Emotion is not easy to address in language learning; not just talking about emotion, but *expressing* emotions. Learners are probably unable to experience emotions such as anger, love, pain, and disgust in the classroom, and the words, prosodies and structures that express them may be inappropriate for classroom use, so communicative approaches fall back to bland role play.

A Performance Approach, by creating a “stage” or a hypothetical world within which the learners-as-actors perform, allows the learners to portray emotions with few limits. What is lost in the suspension of belief that enables the classroom/stage to host a constructed world is more than compensated for by achieving an authentic setting for the *performance* of a wide range of emotions. Theatrical genres are generally familiar to students through their experience of films and television as well as games and other activities in everyday life that involve suspension of disbelief.

## **Learning from mistakes**

Learners make mistakes. In some cases, mistakes are better ignored if they do not affect the learning goal. But students learn from mistakes: each mistake is an opportunity for learning, so students need to perform in order to make mistakes and teachers need to be attentive and active in remedying them. However, in typical learning contexts, the time when mistakes are foregrounded is during assessment – when it is too late!

In a PA, students regularly demonstrate recent learning in predictable frames (such as semi-structured question/answer sessions) where their language performance, both listening and speaking, is under the scrutiny of the teacher and other learners. By focusing on regular, constrained speaking and listening tasks based on current learning topics, learners quickly learn to perform without anxiety while receiving targeted feedback, and teachers can continuously gain detailed information about the learners’ progress and problems.

Feedback is driven less by a requirement for accuracy than to meet the goal of achieving the best possible performances within available resources. Learners and teachers can thus interpret correctness as a property of a

particular performance, not an indicator of a learner's knowledge or ability to learn. This, paradoxically, means that the "stage" setting of PA makes correction of mistakes less threatening and even somewhat "authentic".

## Developing a drama

Learners' group-based creation and performance of an original drama is the centre-piece of the Performance Approach. The method is described in more detail in Fang 2008; here is a basic outline of steps:

### 1. Establish drama parameters

Establish basic parameters, including length, size of groups, and individuals' roles, depending on learners' levels, time available, and assessment requirements.

### 2. Set up the stories

Discuss story themes and structures, e.g. arguments, misunderstandings, dreams failed or achieved, love stories etc. Watch video of previous performances to see what is expected and what can be achieved.

### 3. Formulate and present the story

Groups write a brief outline of their story, including title, characters, and plot. Groups present their story to the class for discussion and feedback.

### 4. Script writing

Introduce scriptwriting conventions, including stage directions. Groups draft their scripts, usually in their own (dominant) language – otherwise they will oversimplify the dialogues – with teacher help where appropriate. Once settled, scripts are written in the target language.

### 5. Script correction

Teacher gives feedback about cultural content and appropriateness, discourse structure, social and cultural aspects, grammar, expression, pronunciation and intonation. Teacher and other groups offer suggestions for improvement, expansion, etc.

### 6. Script re-presentation

Oral presentations of revised scripts; teacher monitors, especially for pronunciation, expression, emotion. The emphasis now moves away from "accuracy" to "effectiveness" and enjoyment of performances.

### 7. Preparing for performance

Groups finalise scripts. Teacher checks scripts and records audio of the lines for the groups to help them practise. Groups practise/rehearse.

### 8. Performances

Groups perform their dramas, with no use of written scripts or cards etc. This should be done in a "theatrical" venue if possible, with suitable space, light and acoustics for shooting video. Encourage groups to use props. Invite an appropriate audience. The performance itself should be the focus of assessment.

### 9. After the performances

Everything should build up to learners feeling a sense of achievement. Schedule a follow-up class for the learners to watch the video recording of their

performances, and/or produce copies on DVD for each learner as a memento of the event and their learning.

### 10. After the course

The video is useful for reviewing the effectiveness of the course, and for course planning.

## Conclusion

General agreement that a vast number of languages are endangered has fostered the new field of language documentation. While the field has made considerable strides, it remains more defined by its constituency of linguists and its loose set of goals than by a coherent and effective set of methodologies. A reticence to explicitly grasp the nettle of supporting language revitalisation activities marks a major weakness, not only in an ideological sense, but also by a failure to gain the benefits that an interdisciplinary engagement with pedagogy would bring. Attention to these factors, combined with effective language teaching programmes, would offer the potential to make real contributions to the health of many languages. A "Performance Approach" is a teaching methodology that is especially effective for short intensive courses in many endangered languages settings. It emphasises careful planning and preparation of materials, creative class activities, and continual learner performance which not only fast-tracks learning, but also provides a vehicle for realistic assessment and even language documentation itself.

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