



Culture and Heritage: Indigenous Languages

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**Australia: State of the Environment
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Preface

Australia: State of the Environment 1996 (the first ever independent and comprehensive assessment of the state of Australia's environment) was presented to the Commonwealth Environment Minister in 1996. This landmark report, which draws upon the expertise of a broad section of the Australian scientific and technical community, was prepared by seven expert reference groups working under the broad direction of an independent State of the Environment Advisory Council. While preparing the report, the former Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories, on behalf of the reference groups, commissioned a number of specialist technical papers. These have been refereed and are now being published as the State of the Environment Technical Paper Series. Reflecting the theme chapters of the report, the papers relate to human settlements, biodiversity, the atmosphere, land resources, inland waters, estuaries and the sea, and natural and cultural heritage. The topics covered range from air and water quality to sea grasses and historic shipwrecks.

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The authors

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David Nash has a PhD in linguistics (MIT, 1980), and has done linguistic research and related work in the central Northern Territory, including work involving several traditional land claims. He is an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the Department of Linguistics (Arts), Australian National University, and at Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Abstract

The knowledge that a culture has about the environment is best expressed by the language of that culture. Language allows the expression and transmission of this knowledge within and across generations. It also serves as a powerful expression of identity. This paper surveys the state of Australia's indigenous languages up to January 1995.

In general, the indigenous languages have been in a disastrous decline since first European contact. Many languages have only a handful of elderly speakers, and if preceding cases are any indication, almost all of the traditional languages currently spoken could be gone within a generation. As it is, there are only at most twenty traditional languages that are being passed on to children and being used by them as a primary form of communication. The loss of indigenous languages goes together with the loss of detail in traditional knowledge.

Research on indigenous places best involves collaborative site documentation combined with investigation of the narrative context and related songs and other performance, and hence implies an understanding of the local languages. A case study shows how indigenous place names are treated or ignored in official toponymy. The paper summarises the pressures on languages, and responses including language maintenance activities such as:

- language documentation and linguistic studies
- language education programs
- community language programs
- the use of indigenous languages in the media
- interpreting and translating
- creoles and Aboriginal English.

The main needs to help maintain traditional languages and cultures are identified, with suggestions for dealing with documentation of language and traditional knowledge.

1 Introduction

Language is a distinct part of any culture, and the medium for its transmission and development. Particular languages are adept at the expression of particular ideas, ones central to the culture of the people that have shaped the language. As well, the particulars of a language serve as an immediate expression of cultural identity. (For a general discussion see, for example, Walsh and Yallop 1993.) The 'state' of indigenous languages is an important measure relevant to the intangible and social aspect of culture and heritage for the State of the Environment Report. The areas covered in this paper are as specified by the State of the Environment expert reference group. The information is current up to early 1995.

2 The state of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

2.1 The number of languages

It is probably not possible now to know exactly how many Aboriginal languages there were at the time of first European contact, but estimates vary between 200 and 300 languages, and most of these probably had a number of distinct dialects. On the basis of these estimates, Schmidt (1990, p. 1) settles on a figure of 250 languages, of which only about 90 are still spoken today. The exact figure depends on varying opinions about what are separate languages or dialects of a single language. Schmidt describes only 20 of the 90 as relatively strong, that is, being used by children, while the other 70 face 'severe threat of extinction',

at least, it might be added, in terms of being primary forms of communication.

It is important to note that there are differing views on what precisely constitutes language death or

extinction, a point that will be discussed further below. However, accepting Schmidt's estimate that at least 80 of the surviving 90 languages will be extinct within 30 to 40 years (1990, p. 131), on average, *two languages are now lost every year*.

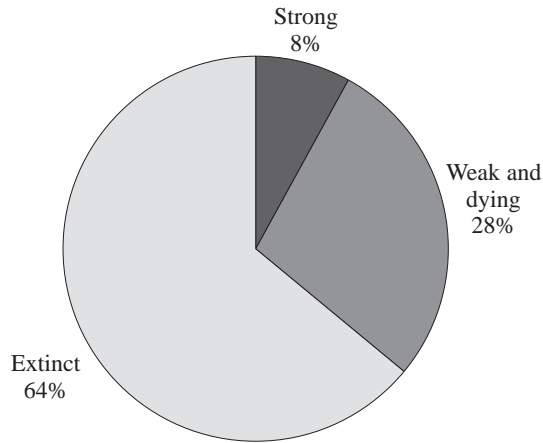


Figure 1: Vitality of the 250 Australian indigenous languages

Source: Schmidt 1990, p. 2, modified.



Figure 2: Estimated numbers of indigenous languages 1788–2030

Source: Based on Schmidt 1990, p. 131.

The decline in the number of languages is due to either (i) shifting to a variety of English or creole or to another traditional language, or (ii) the complete loss of speaker populations through violence or introduced illnesses. The history of language shift in this country is complex, but often involves active suppression of traditional languages by mission and other authorities as well as the often more subtle effects of shifts in power and status.

2.2 The number of speakers

In the 1986 Census there was, for the first time, a question about Aboriginal languages:

Q.11 Does speak an Aboriginal language at home?
 No, only English.
 Yes.

Table 1: Aboriginal language spoken at home—all rural areas

	Age (range in years)					All ages
	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-54	over 55	
Aboriginal language spoken at home	no info	42%	44%	45%	58%	45%
Aboriginal people counted	10 220	19 551	16 844	23 802	5 812	76 229
No response recorded	n/a	4%	5%	5%	7%	5%

Small towns and communities (including stations and outstations) with total population under 1000.

Table 2: Aboriginal language spoken at home—all urban areas

	Age (range in years)					All ages
	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-54	over 55	
Aboriginal language spoken at home	no info	5%	6%	8%	12%	7%
Aboriginal people counted	21 629	39 112	36 306	46 127	8 242	151 416
No response recorded	n/a	3%	4%	4%	7%	4%

All towns and communities with a total population over 1000.

Table 3: Aboriginal language spoken at home—all Australia

	Age (range in years)					All ages
	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-54	over 55	
Aboriginal language spoken at home	no info	17%	18%	20%	31%	19%
Aboriginal people counted	31 849	58 663	53 150	69 929	14 054	227 645
No response recorded	n/a	4%	5%	5%	7%	5%

All people counted in the 1986 census.

The results are given in Tables 1, 2 and 3 (from Hoogenraad 1992). These tables are derived from ABS data. It should be noted that these figures indicate the respondents' assessment of language use and not the results of detailed studies. They do not indicate whether the respondents understood the term 'an Aboriginal language' to include distinctively indigenous varieties of English and creoles, as well as traditional languages, or whether they speak more than one indigenous language. Perhaps more importantly, they also do not indicate how well or how frequently respondents speak a language. In a more detailed local study, Hoogenraad (1992, p. 9) found that when a number of respondents assessed an individual's language, 'there is nearly always agreement on the languages spoken fluently or not at all' but 'there is not very good agreement on how well a language is part-spoken or understood'. The issues involved here are discussed further below.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that perhaps 8 per cent of Aboriginal people were not counted in the 1986 census. Hoogenraad (1992) also points out that the 'failure to respond' rate is slightly higher in the groups that are more likely to speak a traditional Aboriginal language, older people and people in rural locations. On the basis of the 1986 census figures, he then calculates that the total number of Aboriginal people in Australia in 1986 was probably 250 000, of whom 45 000–50 000 would say that they speak an Aboriginal language at home.

Examination of the percentage of Aboriginal people in rural areas who speak an Aboriginal language at home indicates that whilst there is a substantial drop from the over 55 years of age group to the next younger group—from 58 per cent to 45 per cent, the drop from the next age group, 25–54 years, down to the 5–14 years age group is much smaller—from 45 per cent to 42 per cent. Interpreting these figures as a measure of the transmission of languages, and to the extent that they are accurate and consistent measures, they suggest that the decline in the proportion of Aboriginal people who say they speak an Aboriginal language in rural areas is slowing down. The figures for urban areas show a larger proportional drop between the oldest and the two youngest groups; the percentage in the youngest group is less than half the percentage in the oldest group.

Given the discussion above regarding the degree of variation expected in how respondents might interpret the census question, it would be inadvisable to draw too strong a conclusion from these data. Much more extensive research would be required for that. The current data might mean that the shift in attitudes towards traditional indigenous languages and increased resources put into their maintenance over the last 20 years is beginning to show positive results. However, it may well mean that more Aboriginal people identify their speech as an 'Aboriginal language' where it involves restricted use of salient features of traditional languages.

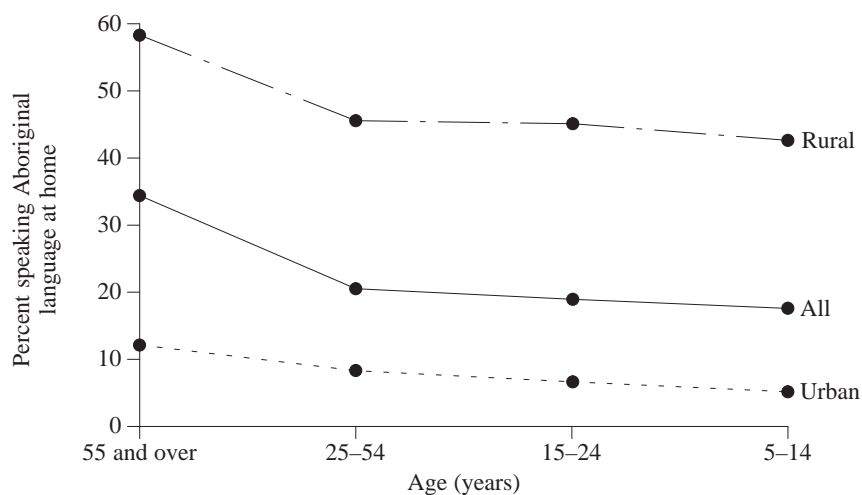


Figure 3: Proportion of Aboriginal people who speak an Aboriginal language at home

Source: Based on 1986 Census.

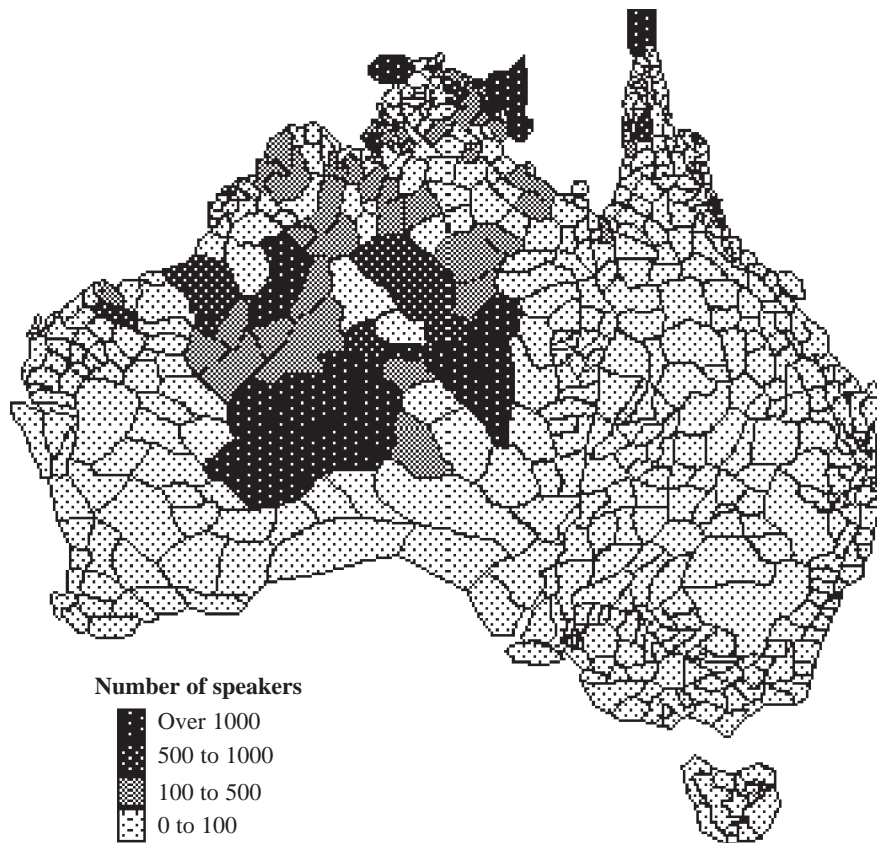


Figure 4: Geographic distribution and numbers of speakers of traditional languages still used as a primary means of communication

Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Note: The lines represent the boundaries of language areas identified by Tindale in 1974.

A rough indication of the distribution of traditional languages which are still used as the primary means of communication is given in Figure 4.

3 Indigenous creoles

Creoles are now spoken by a significant number of indigenous people across the north of Australia: Kimberley, Victoria River District across to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and Cape York Peninsula. These languages developed from the pidgins that were originally used by speakers of traditional languages to communicate with English speakers, from the earliest contact in Sydney onwards. A pidgin is a restricted form of language which has relatively limited vocabulary and grammatical devices and which is not

anyone's first language. A creole develops when a new generation takes a pidgin for its first language, extending and developing it so that it is capable of a full range of expression. Creoles have often been accused of not being 'proper' languages, of being somehow 'second-rate', but this view is not borne out by detailed studies such as Sandefur (1979), Hudson (1983) and Shnukal (1988). Since the late 1970s, there have been moves to give proper recognition to Australian creoles in education, the media, interpreting and translating, and other areas.

There is usually a continuum between creoles, Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English (SAE). Most speakers have command of varying ranges of the continuum, with the typical range of

younger speakers being closer to SAE while the typical range for older speakers is closer to the creole.

The two conditions for the development of creoles from pidgins are (i) 'sudden and drastic social change and the accompanying disruption of normal language transmission' (i.e. from generation to generation) (Harris 1991, p. 201), and (ii) 'a sufficiently large new speech community..., and members of such a community adopt the new language as an act of identity' (Mühlhäusler 1991, p. 168). These conditions were met in a number of places in northern Australia where local populations rapidly declined through violence or illness and where people from different language backgrounds were brought together into new communities, often missions.

According to Rhydwen (1992) the major creoles in Australia today are 'Kriol' and 'Broken' (Torres Strait Creole), although she does describe variation between different locations. Mühlhäusler (1991) makes some finer distinctions within Kriol, identifying varieties such as Cape York Creole. Note that the spelling 'Kriol' follows the writing conventions used in a number of places in the Northern Territory and Western Australia and refers only to mainland varieties, not Torres Strait Creole.

Kriol has developed in the north of the Northern Territory and surrounding areas of Western Australia and Queensland. According to Harris (1991, p. 202) this started from local creoles that developed in many places and which later spread and merged into 'one widely spoken language'. As already mentioned, other writers describe significant differences between what Harris would identify as varieties of Kriol. Rhydwen (1992, p. 107), for example, identifies differences between Kriol and Daly River creole as due to the influence of the languages traditionally spoken in the Daly River area.

The development of Kriol in the Roper River area has been well described by Harris (1991, p. 201 and elsewhere). The construction of the Overland Telegraph through the area took place in the early 1870s, following which, cattle stations and the settlement at Roper Bar were established in the 1870s and 1880s. Aboriginal people in the area were subjected to extreme violence and, despite their initial retaliation, were very nearly annihilated by the 'unprecedented, systematic campaign of extermination' waged by cattle interests. The Roper

River Mission was established by the Anglican Church in 1908 and had a population of around 200 local people within a year. These survivors belonged to at least eight different groups with at least eight different languages. Although people in the area would, over their lifetimes, have learned a number of these local languages, the children were generally not old enough to have acquired much of any other languages. So when children from the different groups mixed in the mission school and elsewhere, they had no language in common, apart from the English pidgin used between Aboriginal people and English speakers. It was this generation who developed it into a fully expressive creole language.

According to Rhydwen (1992, p. 6) there are 'reputed to be 20000 speakers of Kriol in the Northern Territory and parts of Queensland and Western Australia.' This presumably includes people who speak Kriol as their first language and the many people who have acquired it as a second language. Roper River Kriol has been extensively described by Sandefur (1979 and elsewhere). A bilingual education program in Kriol started at Barunga school in 1976; an orthography has been established and school books produced in Kriol (Murtagh 1982). Portions of the Bible translated into Kriol were published in the 1985 *Holi Baibul* as part of a continuing project. In 1994 in the Kimberley region, the Catholic Schools introduced a program to raise awareness in both teachers and students of the distinctive features of Kriol and its equal status with English.

Broken, or Torres Strait Creole, is spoken by about 3000 people on the Torres Strait islands as a first language and possibly a further 12 000 people on the mainland as a second language (Shnukal 1991, p. 180). It developed out of the Pacific Pidgin English which was used by the large influx of Pacific Islanders and others into the Torres Strait area in the middle of the last century. There were many marriages between the newcomers and Torres Strait people, and their children adopted the pidgin as their first language, developing it into a creole. Shnukal (1991, p. 183) attributes its rapid spread to two factors: (i) its function as a lingua franca between the groups speaking the two (mutually incomprehensible) traditional languages of the Strait, and (ii) the common perception that the creole was English (although it is now generally recognised as distinct).

There is evidence that creoles are continuing to spread in the northern part of the country, and some Aboriginal people are concerned that this is at the expense of traditional languages.

4 Language use

The situation of indigenous languages cannot be described simply in terms of the basic numbers of languages and speakers; it is necessary to know what roles or uses these languages have in the domains in which they occur. It is, of course, very difficult to establish the complete range of use of these languages in everyday life beyond what can be determined from simple approaches such as the census question discussed above. The practical indicators of language health, then, must be the institutional or formal activities which produce materials or result in some kind of documentation, or which receive government or other accounted funding. However, it must be borne in mind that such indicators give only a very rough measure of what is actually happening to daily language use: activities which leave a 'paper trail' vary enormously in their effectiveness.

For the present purposes, the following types of formal or institutional activities are examined:

- language documentation and linguistic studies
- language education programs
- community language programs
- the use of indigenous languages in the media
- interpreting and translating.

4.1 Language documentation and linguistic studies

After some early, mostly amateur, language documentation, Aboriginal languages were largely ignored from the turn of the century until the 1960s (with a couple of notable exceptions)—as surveyed in

some detail by Capell (1971). Since then most linguistic studies and language documentation have been done through tertiary education institutions, the missionary organisation the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and, more recently, Regional Language Centres. Within tertiary institutions, most of this research is done by staff and students of Linguistics departments although some research and teaching takes place within related departments such as Anthropology. The first full department of Linguistics in Australia was established in 1965. The missionary organisation, SIL, has published extensively in the area since the early 1960s, establishing an Australian Aborigines Branch in the late 1960s. Walsh (1979) surveyed grammars, texts, dictionaries produced between 1968 and 1978, and Austin (1991) extended the survey to 1987. Goddard and Thieberger (1997) surveyed dictionary-making from 1968 to 1993.

The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs was founded in 1969 by a church group and, after its handover to an Aboriginal board of management in the 1970s, became the first Aboriginal-controlled organisation with a division specialising in language work. While early work concentrated on teaching local languages to non-Aboriginal people and English to Aboriginal people, since the early 1980s the language program developed into the largest language centre in the country, conducting language teaching, research, publishing (through IAD Press), training interpreters and operating an Interpreter Service. IAD was originally funded by the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs and is now funded principally under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP), with some ATSILIP (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Initiatives Program) funding (see below). The IAD Language Centre served in some ways as a model for the development of the Regional Language Centres in the current network.

Table 4: Funding under National Aboriginal Languages Program, Aboriginal Languages Initiatives Program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Languages Initiatives Program

Period	Funding body	Amount	Number of allocations
1987/8	NALP	\$500 000	37
1988/9	NALP	\$1 000 000	53
1989/90	NALP	\$1 000 000	n/a ¹
1990/1	NALP	\$1 000 000	n/a
July–December 1991			n/a
January–June 1992	ALIP	\$1 750 000	n/a
1992/3	ATSILIP	\$2 875 777	27
1993/4	ATSILIP	\$3 025 502	41
1994/5	ATSILIP	\$3 141 000	31

Note 1. The numbers of allocations for the period 89/90–91/92 are not reported in any publication available to the authors, but may be able to be obtained from the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

The available indicators in this area are project funding and documentation produced. Documentation, for these purposes, includes audio and video recording, materials written in an indigenous language, and descriptions of these languages. Research grants have been available from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and its predecessor, AIAS, since the mid-1960s, and from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and its predecessors for many decades. The amount of funding from these sources has not been particularly high or consistent. Some other work has been funded intermittently through State and Territory education systems and through tertiary education. Since 1987, the Federal Government has provided larger amounts for documentation and some educational programs under the National Aboriginal Languages Program (NALP) which was operated by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) from 1987 until 1992 when the Aboriginal Languages Initiatives Program (ALIP) commenced. ALIP was later re-titled ATSILIP and transferred to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

ALIP/ATSILIP funding is intended to be by way of Regional Aboriginal Language Management Committees and Regional Aboriginal Language Centres. The number of these language centres has grown, mostly since the mid-1980s, to the present

total of 25. Grants shown above cover the running costs of the Language Centres and also local projects, which may be passed on to other local groups or organisations. This means that the actual number of allocations does not accurately reflect the number of activities supported. Most of the activities funded in this way involve documentation of languages, although some involve educational programs. The umbrella body for the ATSILIP-funded organisations is the independent Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL), established in 1992. The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Limited (NLLIA 1995) reviewed ATSILIP.

AIATSIS funds academic and community research in all areas of Aboriginal affairs, while the Australian Research Council (ARC) is the primary funding body for academic research in tertiary institutions (except for the Australian National University's Institute for Advanced Studies). Such grants are competitive and indigenous language-related work must compete with applications for funding for other areas. As a result, the amount allocated to indigenous language-related research in tertiary institutions can vary quite widely from year to year.

AIATSIS grants for the period from 1985/86 to 1993/94 are listed in Table 5. The average amount granted for language-related research per year over this period is \$116 677. There is no significant long-term trend away from this average.

Table 5: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies research grants for indigenous language-related research 1985/86–1993/94

Financial year	Language-related		Total ¹		Language-related as % of total value
	Number	Value	Number	Value	
85/86	17	\$216 787		\$482 407	45%
86/87	6	\$30 371		\$389 458	8%
87/88	8	\$132 743		\$333 602	40%
88/89	12	\$122 490		\$456 988	27%
89/90	16	\$179 653		\$573 575	31%
90/91	13	\$140 647	77	\$927 497	15%
91/92	8	\$35 891	68	\$419 741	9%
92/93	2	\$90 783	75	\$656 771	14%
93/94	10	\$100 729	82	\$606 861	17%

Source: Annual reports

Note 1. Total of small and large research grants, but not including the Rock Art Protection Program or special targeted grants.

The ARC identifies research grants primarily involving indigenous languages under an Australian Aboriginal Languages subject area classification but has been unable to report on the pattern of grants in this area within the time constraints of this paper¹.

Special one-off funding schemes have also contributed significantly in the area of documentation. The National Aboriginal Lexicography Project was run by AIAS (now AIATSIS) with a grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority, for a ‘National Dictionary of Aboriginal Languages’. This project provided support for small dictionary projects, amongst other things, with more than \$45 198 of the \$147 000 grant being distributed. The Dictionaries Project administered by AIATSIS in 1992 involved \$240 000 provided as an Aboriginal Reconciliation initiative initially involving NALP funds from DEET. Assistance was given to 59 dictionary and wordlist projects, most of which have now reached publication.

The most obvious measure of linguistic documentation is the number of works produced. One measure of this is the annual bibliography which has been published in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* since 1982. These list only published titles

and indicate that while the number of publications varies widely from year to year there is no substantial long-term trend away from the average of around 95 publications per year. In the area of dictionaries and wordlists, Goddard and Thieberger (1997) list 142 publications since 1968, as well as 172 unpublished works held at AIATSIS.

No up-to-date figures are currently available on other unpublished works including theses, manuscripts and teaching materials, although it is in the last two areas that there has been a fair amount produced through Language Centres and education programs in the last few years.

Most of the publications on indigenous languages has been through academic publishing such as *Pacific Linguistics* or AIAS. Since the AIAS publications section developed into the more commercially-oriented Aboriginal Studies Press, there has been comparatively little published there in the language area. Regional Aboriginal organisations, notably IAD Press in Alice Springs, have continued publishing extensively in the area. There have also been a few attempts since the early 1980s to establish a continuing periodical devoted to indigenous language issues and/or language descriptions but generally these have not lasted long.

Indigenous vernacular literature development has also been supported in a few instances by the Australia Council, particularly under its earlier Aboriginal Arts Board.

4.2 Language education programs

While there were sporadic attempts at language education programs from as early as 1839 (Gale 1994, p. 192), very few of these were maintained for more than a few years. Notable exceptions have been the mission schools at Ernabella in South Australia and Hermannsburg in the Northern Territory. In the late 1960s, the newly elected government in South Australia adopted policies in line with the ILO Convention on Indigenous Peoples, including vernacular education. When the government school was established at Amata in 1967, it followed the model of the bilingual mission schools at Ernabella (established in 1940) and Fregon. In 1971, the South Australian Department of Education took over responsibility for the mission schools and established schools at other Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara communities (Edwards 1982).

The Watts and Gallacher report on Aboriginal education, commissioned by the Federal Government in 1963, recommended that the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling should be the child's first language. However, at that time this was 'dismissed as an impractical goal' (Dixon 1980, p. 89). It was only in 1972 that the newly elected Federal Government adopted this principle as policy. This decision mainly affected the Northern Territory, where the Commonwealth still had administrative control but new programs were also established at Aurukun in Queensland and in the independent Strelley schools in Western Australia. The number of programs grew rapidly and by 1977 there were 18 programs in the Northern Territory.

To help support the development of the various programs, the School of Australian Linguistics² was established as part of the Darwin Community College (Dixon 1980, pp. 91–93) in 1974. Its aim was to train Aboriginal people in linguistic analysis and bilingual curriculum development. Since its establishment in 1973, the journal *Aboriginal Child at School* has also been an important forum for indigenous language education matters.

Following the establishment of full bilingual programs, there has also been increased interest in

more limited language programs that would be appropriate in areas where the traditional language was not spoken by school children or where there were insufficient other resources available. These smaller programs, often described as LOTE (Languages Other than English) programs, have been the focus of most of the new developments since the early 1980s. A few places which had originally adopted full bilingual education programs have since changed to smaller programs, for a variety of reasons. A further type of language education occurs where indigenous teachers or teaching assistants who speak a traditional language work in schools with no official language program, teach indigenous children who also speak the language. The indigenous assistant often acts as a kind of interpreter or intermediary for an English-speaking teacher, effectively converting the teaching into a kind of bilingual program concentrating on oral language.

Education programs are probably the most obvious form of language maintenance, although according to the discussion paper prepared for the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (1994), only 2651 students took vernacular language courses around the nation in 1991 (NLLIA 1995). However, it is not easy to quantify the full range of activity in this area for a number of reasons, the main one being that there are no consistent reporting practices across the range of school systems (state, religious and independent) and other organisations involved, such as regional language centres and community groups.

Most smaller programs are funded, one way or another, under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP), which was intended to be supplementary to standard State and Territory education funding. \$214 million was made available in the first funding triennium (1989–1992), but none was specifically earmarked for indigenous languages. In the second triennium (1993–1995) funding was earmarked under the National Aboriginal Language and Literacy Strategy (NALLS) which covers English literacy, numeracy and the development of culturally appropriate teaching methodologies as well as the Aboriginal Languages Education Strategy (ALES). Remarkably, given the priority accorded indigenous languages in the AEP goals, DEET is currently (1995) unable to determine how much AEP funding actually goes to language education programs.

There is wide variety in the types of programs and the language situations in which they take place, with a wealth of terminology in use to describe these (see Hartman and Henderson 1994). Some broad categories of situations with regard to traditional languages are:

- the traditional language is spoken relatively fluently by adults and children, typically as their first language
- the traditional language is spoken relatively fluently by some or all adults but is not spoken by children or younger people
- older people speak some of the traditional language but not fluently; children and younger people know less or none and do not speak much if any
- few people know more than a few words of the traditional language. There may be some early documentation of the language, of varying quality.

Language programs may be categorised into three broad types:

1. bilingual programs where students already speak the language relatively well and where a range of subjects is taught in that language
2. language learning programs where students know less or none of the traditional language but are expected to develop some degree of communication skills in it
3. language awareness programs where students learn *about* a traditional language or languages but are not expected to acquire any significant ability to communicate in the language(s).

Programs vary enormously in terms of teaching hours, resources, accreditation, assessment and nearly every other characteristic of a teaching program. Some programs consist of informal and irregular visits to classes by Aboriginal people for language and/or culture sessions. Programs may be a regular and continuing part of schooling, or might not be sustained for long. There are some fully accredited courses, even at senior secondary level.

The Australian Indigenous Languages Framework has been under development since 1992 as a national approach to accredited indigenous language courses at the senior secondary level (years 11 and 12). These

are expected to be offered in 1995 in six places (four in South Australia, one in Victoria, one in the Northern Territory). This framework includes units involving general study of indigenous languages and units on particular languages. However, there are still only two or three language learning programs at the tertiary level, and only a few language courses for adults run by TAFE institutions and Language Centres.

Some indication of the distribution of school programs can be obtained from Table 6, although it must be remembered that these do not indicate the type or extent of program, and because reporting is so patchy it is likely that there are other (probably less formal) programs in addition to these. Many of these programs, including nearly all bilingual programs, operate in predominantly Aboriginal communities. Figures for language programs in pre-schools, childcare centres or homework centres are not available for all States and have not been included here.

4.3 Community language activities

The Aboriginal Languages Association (ALA) was established in 1981 and held a number of successful conferences, from some of which collections of papers were published. The 1984 conference in Alice Springs is especially noteworthy for the resolutions produced in the areas of Interpreting and Translating, Orthographies and Dictionaries, Language Maintenance and Revival, Bilingual Education, Non-Traditional Aboriginal Languages, Aboriginal Language and Research, and other general policy areas (Hobson 1984). The ALA has effectively given way to FATSIL since its establishment in 1992.

There is a range of other activities that are sometimes described as 'community language programs/activities'. This term is sometimes used to describe the work of regional language centres, but it is not clear how many there are which involve activities other than language documentation or education. In a few cases, orthographies have been developed in meetings of speakers. There have been discussions in a number of places about establishing language nests: community-organised centres where older speakers create a vernacular language environment for young children.

Table 6: Indigenous language education programs in schools

State/Territory	Program	Number
Northern Territory (1995)	Schools with formal bilingual programs (including NTED, CEO, independent)	20
	Schools with other AEP-funded programs through NTED	34
	Catholic schools with other programs	2
Western Australia (1994)	State schools with WA Framework LOTE program	22
	Catholic schools with WA Framework LOTE programs	6
	Catholic schools with bilingual programs	2
	Aboriginal Independent Community Schools with language programs	7
Tasmania (1994)	Aboriginal school	1
Queensland (1994)	State schools with language programs	20
Victoria (1994)	Independent Aboriginal college with language program	1
	Christian school with language program	1
South Australia (1994)	Schools with Aboriginal language LOTE programs	22
	Aboriginal primary schools	6
	Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara) schools	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy and oral programs • oral language only 	3 5
New South Wales (1994)	Schools with community-based local programs	15
Australian Capital Territory (1994)		0

Source: Information supplied by the respective school authorities at time of writing.

4.4 Use of indigenous languages in the media

Although indigenous broadcasting has been a major growth area since the early 1980s, there are currently no indicators available of the amount of broadcasting done in traditional languages or creoles. However, as an indication of the potential, the *ATSIC Annual Report* for 1991/92 notes that there were five regional resource organisations for indigenous media and 82 communities with local facilities provided under the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS).

Unfortunately, perhaps the best known of the organisations, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), which had pioneered this type of broadcasting in the late 1970s now (1994) has almost no Aboriginal language content on air apart from song lyrics, and even in that area there is

a predominance of English language songs. The reasons for this decline are no doubt complex, but presumably involve the lack of funding available for broadcasting as a method of language maintenance.

The value of song lyrics has been well demonstrated in indigenous language education area (e.g. Varcoe 1994 re Kurna in Adelaide; Hartman 1994). Even where there is little or no other broadcasting in indigenous languages, the role of modern music with vernacular lyrics should not be under-estimated as a strategy in language maintenance, but again there are no indicators available for this. Such songs are usually popular with children and younger people, as well as adults, presumably working against the 'identification of speaking the old language with old people and their ways' which McConvell (1991, p. 154) concludes is the reason that younger people in many places do not speak their traditional language.

Apart from the publication of language documentation already noted, there has also been a general increase in the number of general market publications which involve a significant proportion of indigenous language text. The main Aboriginal publishing houses are Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS), IAD Press in Alice Springs, and Magabala Books.

4.5 Interpreting and translation

The need for interpreting and translation services for indigenous people has long been recognised but has generally only been met sporadically, usually by informal interpreting by relatives or by non-Aboriginal missionaries, linguists or others interpreting in a few critical situations. Mostly, in areas such as law, health, education and other government services, English speakers have presumed that the quality of communication with speakers of indigenous languages has been sufficient for their purposes. Although there is a long history of individuals acting as interpreters and/or mediators in various places at various times, the first specialist Aboriginal Interpreter Service was only established in Alice Springs in 1983—and remains the only one today. Training for Aboriginal interpreters started at the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs in 1980, and later at SAL (now CALL). It has also recently been introduced in north-western Australia.

In the last two or three years, there has been more attention given to this issue, particularly in the legal area, but there has been very little systematic development. The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department has sponsored workshops on Aboriginal interpreting. The Department of Social Security has also made arrangements for the provision of interpreters, including employing interpreters in DSS offices.

5 Collaborative research on Aboriginal places

Detailed recording of Aboriginal knowledge of place and its cultural significance involves many

disciplines, each interacting of course with the *indigenous experts* on the country. A knowledge of the particular Aboriginal languages is needed not only to accurately record the form of the toponyms, but to record related flora and topography, and for elements of the related myths and song. Rarely does one researcher command the range of abilities needed (not to mention dealing with the practical demands of access and mapping, or being able to devote sufficient amounts of time), so team work is called for.

With respect to recording the totality of Aboriginal knowledge of place, each discipline has its strengths and weaknesses.

Descriptive linguists study all aspects of a language, though once there is basic documentation of the lexicon and grammar, individual linguists focus on different aspects. It is usual for a field linguist to record 'texts', including 'oral literature', and to be compiling, or contributing to a vocabulary list. Work on a dictionary necessarily involves compilation of the results of many disciplines, assimilated by the *lexicographer* (usually a linguist) to the dictionary style of presentation and cross-referencing. The last 25 years of dictionary-making is summarised in Goddard and Thieberger (1997). Even the most comprehensive and detailed dictionaries usually include only a fraction of the toponyms in the language area: the centres of population and other well-known landmarks. Examples of published dictionaries with more than the usual number of toponyms include Heath (1982) with approximately 190 and Dixon (1991) with approximately 140.

Study of song and music by *ethnomusicologists* has sometimes led to these researchers documenting links with Aboriginal land. Two main recent compilations about Aboriginal songs are Kassler and Stubington (1984), and Clunies Ross, Donaldson and Wild (1987); see also Koch (1987, 1992) and Barwick and Marett (1996). There has also been related study of *dance*.

A limitation of linguistic and musicological study is that the subject matter is so rich and so much can be done 'in camp' so that the researcher has not time for investigating the details of the country referred to in the terminology, stories, and songs recorded.

Ethnographic site recording uses approaches of *human geography* and *anthropology* to record the many and varied relations of groups and individuals with site elements. This work is more likely to involve visits to particular places than does linguistic or ethnomusicological work, and is more likely to involve collaboration with *natural scientists* or *surveyors*. The practical demands entailed can make it difficult to record related songs (which the singers may prefer to perform in a group and as part of a ceremony).

Documenting a complete ‘Dreaming track’ involves much study: for each place, the surrounding country and its geography and resources, with associated myths, songs, body paintings, ground designs, and sacred objects. Publications of this scope are rare: cf. Mountford (1968)—although the stories are only in English; Strehlow (1971); Morphy (1984).

Collaborative research focussing on the cultural significance to Aboriginal people of art works related to particular places, and of sacred objects related to places, is generally beyond the scope of our expertise. Some of this research includes attention to the particular languages; see Sutton (1989) and the references cited there.

Illustrative example

An illustrative example is Nash’s travels with Warlmanpa and Warlpiri people in the area west of the pastoral leases along the Stuart Highway in the central Northern Territory, into the ‘wilderness’ area now mostly held by the Karlantijpa (and adjacent) Aboriginal Land Trusts: see Figure 5 for the general location. The trips are listed in chronological summary in Table 7, with a note of external sponsorship. Most trips were for some part of the travel in an area where no Aboriginal people had previously been other than on foot.

These travels have not only allowed old people to visit again the places of their youth after decades of absence, but have also resulted in cumulative documentation of the country, especially the location and nature of sites and surrounding country, Dreaming affiliations, role in life histories, Aboriginal ownership, and mythological stories and songs.

Sponsorship in the above list refers mostly to accompanying vehicles and staff, and relates to some of the purposes of each trip. Other resources came from Nash’s support (consultancy arrangements, or research grants: AIAS in 1978, ARC 1990, 1992), and from private sources.

Table 7: Trips returning to Karlantijpa country, 1978–present

Year	Date	Part assisting agency ¹
1978	July 4–5	AIAS
1979	3 trips	CLC land claim
1980	2 trips	CLC land claim
1981	8 trips	CLC/ANR site clearance
1981	1 trip	CLC land claim
1984	Aug 5–7	NLC, ASSPA
1984	Sept 23–26	CLC
1986	June 16–19	ASSPA
1986	2 trips	CCNT
1986	2 trips	Jurnkurakurr ORC
1987	June 25–26	
1987	July 13–20	Jurnkurakurr ORC
1987	Aug 1–3	CLC
1987	July 28–29	Papulu Apparrkari language centre
1988	June 23–30	ANPWS to CLC; Maryland Public Television
1988	Sept 19–22	Jurnkurakurr ORC
1988	Oct 16–24	CCNT
1989	July 17–25	CCNT
1990	June 17–19	CLC/ EL(A)
1990	July 22–29	CCNT
1990	August 16–21	CLC
1991	June 26–30	CLC
1991	August 6–15	CLC, EL(A)
1992	several trips	NLC land claim
1992	2 trips	CLC
1993	2 trips	ANCA to CLC
1994	August	ANCA to CLC
1994	August	SA Film Finance Corp
1995	August	CCNT
1996	September	ANCA to CLC
1997	2 trips	Land Management, CLC

Note 1. ANR=Australian National Railways; ORC=Outstation Resource Centre; CCNT=Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory; ASSPA=Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority (now AAPA); CLC=Central Land Council; NLC=Northern Land Council; EL(A)=Exploration Licence (Application).

5.1 Number and range of studies since the early 1960s

A history of attempts by non-Aboriginal scholars to map Aboriginal knowledge of landscape is included

in Sutton (in press). As Sutton points out, the 1950s was a watershed in this work, because of the post-war availability of reliable 4WD vehicles, and spread of topographic maps based on aerial photography, and concurrent shifts in ethnographic approaches.

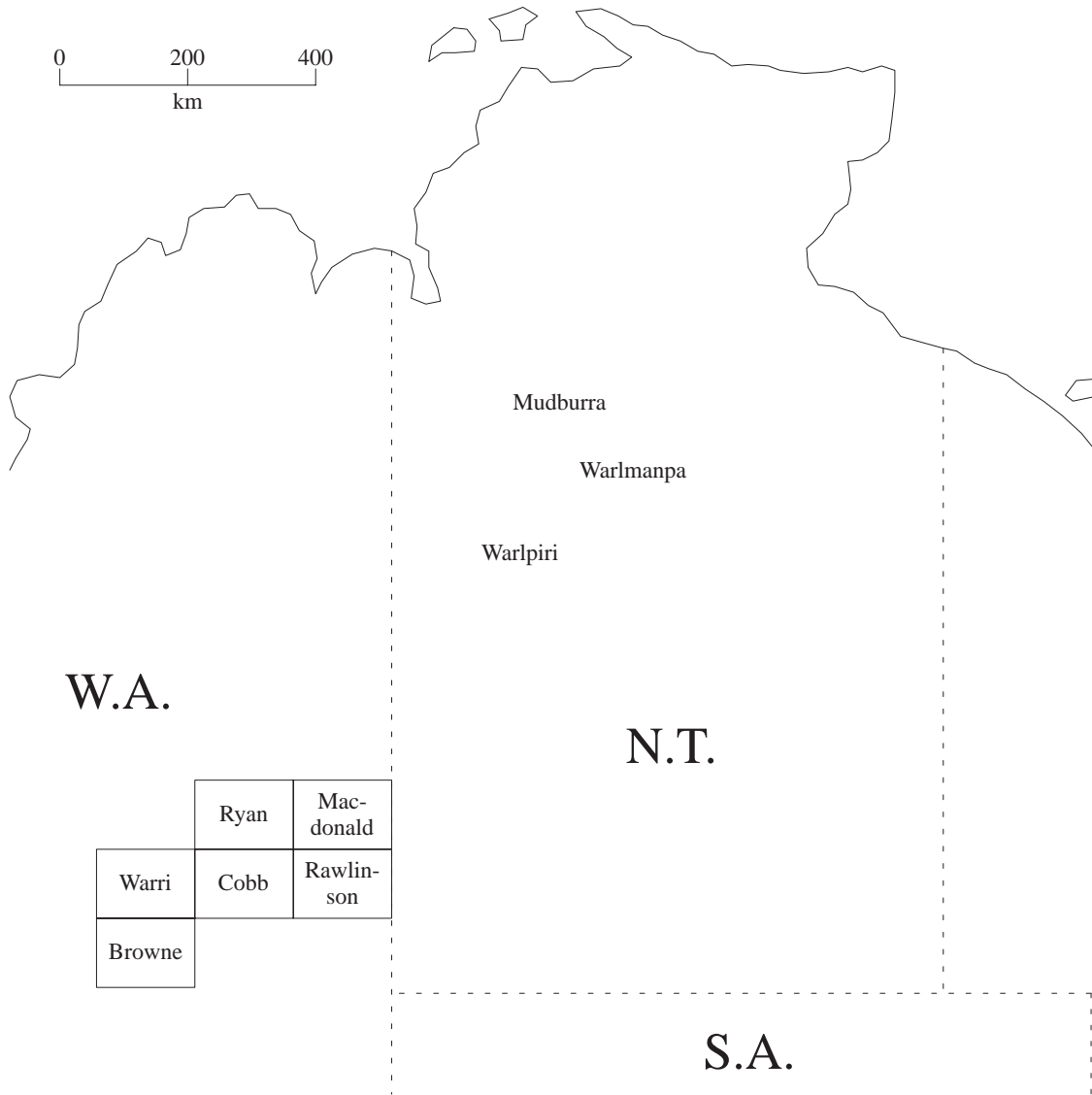


Figure 5: Location map for Table 7 and Figure 6

Table 8: Chronological list of projects recording Aboriginal places and song

Period	Researcher	Song	Area	Languages
1921–60s	N.B. Tindale	Y	Wide	
1928–	A.P. Elkin	Y	Wide	
1930s	C.P. Mountford	Y?	W Central Aust.	Luritja, Warlpiri
1930s–c1950	H. Nekes & E. Worms	?	W Kimberley	Nyulnyul, etc.
1940s–70s	R.M. & C.H. Berndt	Y	Many	Many
1948– ?	C.P. Mountford	Y?	Arnhem Land?	?
1950s–70?	T.G.H. Strehlow	Y	W Central Aust.	Arrernte, Luritja
1960–	P.E. Playford (WA Geological Svy)	Y	Fitzroy Crossing, etc	Gooniyandi, etc.
1960s	W. Laade	?	Torres St	?
1960s–	B. Alpher	Y?	Kowanyama	Yir–Yoront
1960s–	L.A. Hercus	Y	NE SA	Arabana, Wangkangurru, Dieri, etc.
1960s–77	N. & P. Wallace	?	NW SA	Pitjantjatjara
1960s–70s	R.M.W. Dixon	Y	NE Qld	Dyirbal, Yidiny, etc
1963–	C.J. Ellis et al.	Y	N SA	Antikirinja, Pitjantjatjara,
1968	C.G. von Brandenstein	Y	Pilbara	Yindjibarndi, Ngarluma, etc.
1969–	D. Turner	Y?	Groote Eylandt	
1969–	J. Taylor	?	W Cape York P., Pormpuraaw	
1969–	J. von Sturmer	Y?	W Cape York P., Aurukun	Wik
1970–	P. Sutton	Y	Cape York P., N Qld	Various
1970s, 1982	R. Moyle	Y	Kungkayunti, Balgo	Pintupi
1970s–	A. Chase	?	Cape York P.	
1970s–	C. Anderson	?	Bloomfield	Gugu Yalanji
1970s–	I. Keen	Y?	Arnhem Land	Yolngu Matha
1970s–	N. Peterson	?	W Tanami	Warlpiri
1970s–	J. Dymock	N?	Gulf, various NT	Waanyi, etc.
1971–72	D. Biernoff	Y	Numbulwar	Nunggubuyu
1974–	P. Sutton	Y	E Cape York P.	Various
1975–	J. Avery	?	Barkly	Wambaya, etc
1975–76; 1980s?	B. Rigsby	?	E Cape York P.; Princess Charlotte Bay	
1975–1980s	B. Stokes	?	lower Fitzroy R	Nyikina
1975–9	G. Oshima	Y	Torres St	?
1976–	P. Sutton	Y	W Cape York P., Aurukun	Wik
1977–80	R. Moyle	Y	Sandover River	Alyawarre
1975–	H.E. Payne	Y	Pitjantjatjara Lands, Finke	Pitjantjatjara, Yankuntjatjara
1978–	D. Nash	Y	E Tanami	Warlpiri, Warlmanpa, etc.
1979–	F. Merlan	Y	Roper River	Mangarrayi?, etc
1981–	D. Tunbridge	Y	Flinders Ranges	Adnyamathanha
1980s	S. Davis	?	N Arnhem Land	Yolngu Matha, ?
1979–80s	B. Glowczewski	?	Lajamanu	Warlpiri

Table 8 (cont.): Chronological list of projects recording Aboriginal places and song

Period	Researcher	Song	Area	Languages
1980s	J. Bradley	Y	Borrooloola, etc	Yanyuwa
1980s	R. Keogh	Y	W Kimberley	Nyigina
1980s	W. McGregor	Y	Fitzroy Crossing	Gooniyandi, etc.
1980s–	A. Rumsey	?	Fitzroy Crossing	Ngarinyin, Bunuba, etc.?
1980s–	H. & G. Koch	Y	Barrow Ck	Kaytej
1983–85	F. Dussart	Y	Yuendumu	Warlpiri
1983–93	M. Harvey	?	W Arnhem Lnd	Kakadju, others
1985?	C. Goddard	N?	Ernabella	Yankuntjatjara, etc.
1990s	L. Cataldi	Y?	W Tanami	Warlpiri, Ngardi, Jaru
1990s	C.J. Ellis, M. Sharpe	Y	Borrooloola, Roper?	Yanyuwa, Alawa
1994–	J. Green	Y	Sandover	Alyawarr

Source: Various, including Koch (1987, 1992) and Sutton (1995)

A range of known site documentation projects are listed in Table 8; the researcher named in the second column is generally an anthropologist, linguist or ethnomusicologist; names of collaborating natural scientists or surveyors are omitted. The third column indicates whether the researcher also recorded songs relating to the places documented.

Table 8 does not cover the substantial amount of site documentation carried out at the instigation of government agencies, whether State or Territory bodies responsible for National Parks or Aboriginal site protection, or Aboriginal land councils. Some site documentation has also been commissioned by mining companies, or other projects requiring an environmental impact statement (such as gas pipelines, Alice Springs–Darwin railway). The Federally-funded Rock Art Protection Program administered by AIATSIS has been summarised by Ward 1992 and references there cited. With some exceptions, site documentation instigated by these agencies has not included the recording of detailed stories or associated songs. Even in the fairly detailed documentation carried out for claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act*, songs may be performed for the Commissioner at the hearing only, and may be recorded incidentally during preparation, but are not recorded as part of research.

Apart from research, there would be many audio and video recordings which usually are not curated and are effectively ephemeral—these have been made in the style of ‘home movies’, including those made by Aboriginal performers themselves or guests at performances. Other recordings have been made in

the course of recording for broadcast or commercial filming, and often escape archival curation.

5.2 Sponsorship currently available

Sources of sponsorship currently available include governmental agencies as mentioned above, such as:

- AAPA (NT) (requires an application for site registration results)
- Aboriginal land councils (requires relevance to a pending land claim)
- Federal land-related funding, such as from National Estate Grants Program (NEGP, of Australian Heritage Commission); Murray–Darling Commission
- State museums and heritage units, such as the South Australian Department of Lands Aboriginal Heritage Branch, Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

For academic research, whether linguistics, ethnomusicology or anthropology, the usual sources of funding are university-internal funds, ARC, and AIATSIS; and wider possibilities have been used, such as corporate sponsorship (from a mining company operating in the area). Sources outside Australia include academic sources in other countries (if the researcher has overseas affiliations), UNESCO (for instance, the Red Book program for endangered languages), and some non-government sources (such as Earthwatch).

6 Aboriginal place names—use over time

Transmission and recording of Aboriginal knowledge of country and place of course involves much more than the names of places. However, place names are a focus, convenient in many ways, and are felt to encapsulate wider and deeper knowledge.

Recorded indigenous place names probably date not so much from exploration in Australia (with some notable exceptions such as Thomas Mitchell), but more commonly from the time of settling or colonisation, along with the greater opportunity and necessity for the settlers to acquire local knowledge. At the official level, the 1884 International Provincial Geographical Conference in Melbourne advocated official preference to indigenous place names; this was echoed by a meeting of Australasian Surveyors General in 1912, and the 1992 policy of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia (Clark 1994, p. 34, Western Australia Geographic Names Committee 1994).

Colonists and settlers, in learning an indigenous place name, have absorbed a varying degree of detail, and been subject to various misunderstandings (cf. Carter 1987). The parameters include:

- whether the name has been transcribed accurately and according to an orthography of the language in which it occurs
- whether a morphological analysis (and gloss or ‘meaning’) is known, and relatable to the rest of the language
- what kind of name it is (whether restricted in some way, a substitute, and area name and so on)
- what relation there may be to related stories, songs or people
- what features or site elements it refers to, according to the language’s pattern of toponymy.

Even at the least detailed degree of knowledge (say, just a name quite anglicised, with any vague or misunderstood link to a geographic feature), we can surmise that the published record has a scanty selection of the Aboriginal toponyms known to Aboriginal people, but no detailed continent-wide study of Aboriginal toponymy has been made. The best we can do is to extrapolate from particular studies, such as those mentioned in Section 5.1.

Hunn (1994) postulates that around the world indigenous language groups tend to have about 500 toponyms for their land. This surprising postulate has barely been tested against Australian evidence, though the data gathered, for instance in land claims, suggest it is plausible as an approximation. Assuming this postulate for the moment, and that there were 250 indigenous languages in Australia, it would follow that Australia has about 125 000 indigenous toponyms. If the estimate is to be based on there being 600 distinct language groups (some in a dialect relationship), the number of toponyms is of the order of 300 000, which is still an order of magnitude less than some other estimates. In their *Australian place names*, Kennedy and Kennedy (1989, p. 5, cf. Atchison (1986); Clark 1994, p. 33) have ventured a rough estimate that ‘Australia has over four million place names... Nearly three-quarters of Australian place names are of Aboriginal origin’.

No source is given for these statements, and the proportion may be based on something like the Kennedy compilation of 2000 entries (or the ‘100 000–odd entries in the Australian Gazetteer’). Estimates of the proportion also vary widely, from the three-quarters just quoted, to the *Cambridge dictionary of Australian places* which lists 4700 places, including the centres of population and major geographical features and heritage areas, and states ‘Places of Aboriginal origin constitute about a third of all names listed’ (Appleton and Appleton 1992, p. x).

(Note that this is the first general compilation which attempts to assign an Aboriginal toponym to a particular Aboriginal language.) The wide range of these estimates show the preliminary state of Australian toponym studies.

The officially recorded place names reflect the density of non-Aboriginal settlement much more than the density of Aboriginal places. The 1957 US Gazetteer of Australia has 62 000 entries. The 1988 Auslig Master Names File (1988 version) of approved and unapproved names lists over 230 000 items, being the occurrences of toponyms on the 541 topographic map sheets of the 1:250 000 series, and (almost 6 times as many) 1:100 000 topographic map sheets.³ In the less-populated Northern Territory, the Master Names File has 13 214 items (1994 version; 5.2 per cent of the Australian total), yet the Northern Territory’s 90 map sheets comprise one-sixth of the country’s area, with a fair sample of topography.

The official geographic names average less than 500 per 1:250 000 map sheet, though of course with large variation. At the low extreme, for instance, just 43 names occur on the Yowalga (SG 51–12) sheet, including eleven ‘Gibson Desert’, eight ‘Great Victoria Desert’, and three each of ‘Laverton Warburton Road’ and ‘Warburton Range Stock Route’. There are only 21 distinct names on the sheet, four of them of Aboriginal origin. Judging by analogy with other areas, such as the eastern Tanami (cf. Table 7), it is likely that there are hundreds of Aboriginal toponyms known to local Aborigines in a sheet area such as this. Other comparable areas are:

- for the southern Diamantina River region, over 2400 place names occur in Reuther’s list and on the 1904 map prepared by H.J. Hillier at Killalpaninna Mission;⁴
- the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in the first Warlpiri land claim (to a western part of Warlpiri country) heard evidence of over 400 Warlpiri toponyms, and some subsequent land claim hearings have involved more than this.

From evidence such as this, and from some of the studies mentioned in Section 5.1, we can tell that the officially recognised geographic names which are of Aboriginal origin are a small fraction of the Aboriginal toponyms known to local Aboriginal people, at least in areas where they speak their traditional languages.

6.1 Gibson Desert case study

Nash has studied the origins of all the official names on six adjacent 1:250 000 sheet areas in the Gibson Desert area of Western Australia: see Figure 5 earlier for the general location, and Figure 6 for more detail.

Today this area has virtually no population, even Aboriginal, but with respect to place names it is not atypical of the areas of Australia where Aboriginal languages are still the dominant local languages, areas of Australia which correlate largely with ‘wilderness’ areas (compare Figure 4 which shows the geographical distribution of speakers of Australian languages with the summary map of the National Wilderness Inventory Program).

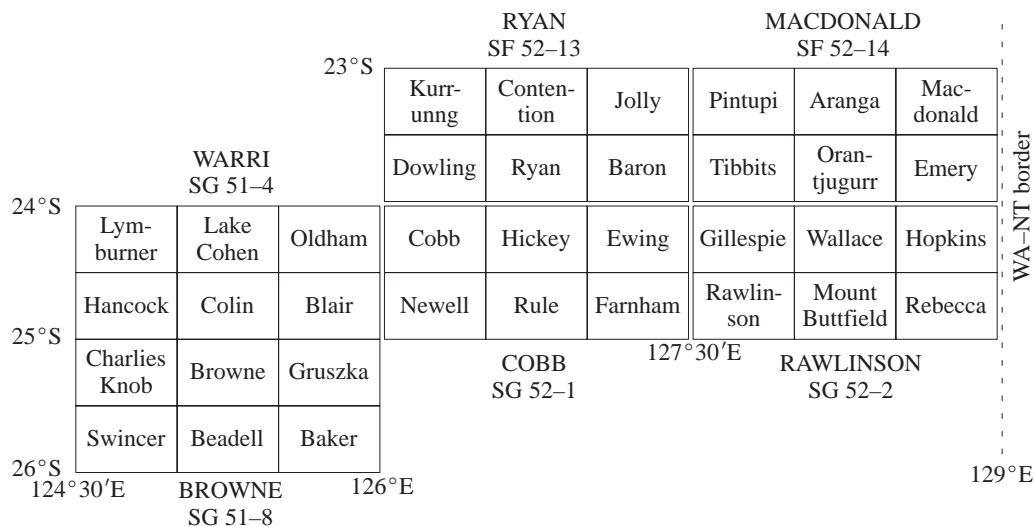


Figure 6: Gibson Desert showing 1:250 000 and 1:100 000 sheet areas and names

Note: There are 6 (3 × 2) 100 000 sheets to each 1:250 000 sheet.

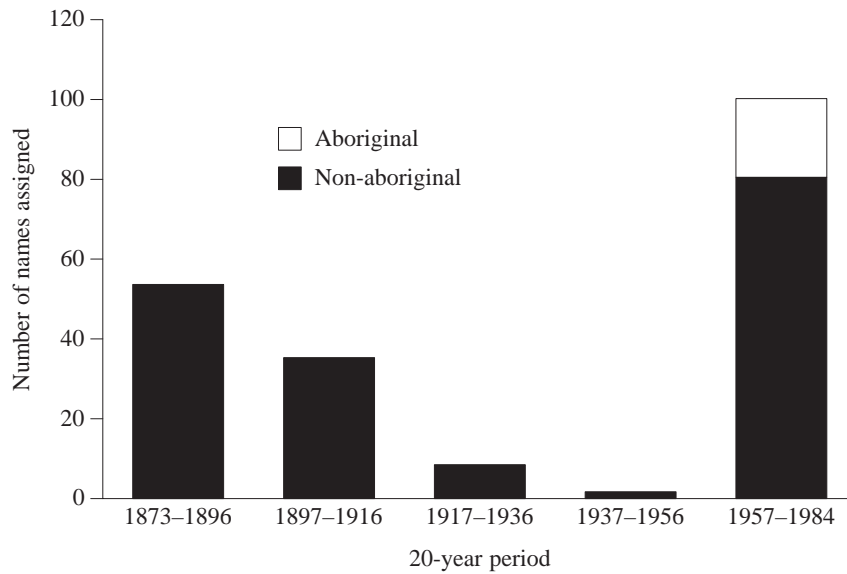


Figure 7: Gibson Desert official geographic names

Source: Computed from data from the Western Australia Department of Lands.

For the sheet areas in Figure 6, the Master Names File lists 172 distinct toponyms (excluding seven trigonometrical points identified only by number) in a total of 259 occurrences with repetitions. No more than 22 of these names are of local Aboriginal origin, and at most three of these were recognised prior to a revival in the late 1960s of the policy of recognising Aboriginal names.

Interestingly, the two peaks of European naming can be seen also in a case study of 86 Aboriginal place names in the Grampians/Gariwerd area of western Victoria, of which 44 have been given non-indigenous names, mostly before 1870 or since 1900 (Clark and Harridine 1990, p. 23).

Further points about the official geographic names in the study area illustrate some issues of widespread relevance.

1. Some geographic names which might appear to be Aboriginal toponyms are not.⁵
2. A number of recent non-Aboriginal toponyms were assigned although the records show official knowledge of an Aboriginal name for the feature.⁶
3. Aboriginal names are applied without linguistic advice, despite official acknowledgment that it is necessary. Advice can be about the type of name, orthography, a name's affiliation, or other matters. For instance, even the relatively minor matter of

hyphenation requires knowledge of the conventions of the particular language.⁷

Map *sheet names* are a related geographic name which, especially in remote areas, have enhanced currency as general area names. Outsiders travelling in these areas generally carry topographic maps and these have the sheet name emblazoned as the title.⁸ Geologists, for instance, often use the sheet name as the basis for names of man-made features on the sheet (such as bore holes). The sheet names, even more than the feature names, often have no local currency and show a pattern of being assigned remotely with a tenuous, literary, connexion to the particular area. Increasingly, local Aboriginal people are being involved with researchers and travellers and are puzzled why their country has these strange names on it. Specifically, of the 37 different sheet names in the study area (Figure 6), five are words of Ngaanyatjarra or another dialect of the Western Desert Language, but none of these⁹ are derived from a local Aboriginal toponym.

6.2 Reasons for changes in usage

The reasons for changes in the use of Aboriginal place names are a combination of 'top down' implementation of official policies, and the effects of 'bottom up' local decisions (whether conscious, or the result of other decisions).¹⁰ Of course, changes in

public awareness of, or response to, the significance of Aboriginal culture effects change in both ways.

At various times Surveyors General (the authority for official toponyms in each State and Territory; see Western Australian Geographic Names Committee 1994) have specified a preference for Aboriginal names: some in the early period of the first waves of exploration, and again in the last couple of decades as Aboriginal rights have generally been more widely recognised.

Whether an Australian toponym is of local Aboriginal origin is generally easy to guess, given the distinctive phonology of Australian languages compared to English (and other languages from which introduced toponyms are drawn). However, the guess can be wrong, and more so as time goes by and the memory fades of the source of the introduced name. The main source of spurious local Aboriginal names is probably Aboriginal toponyms from elsewhere, transplanted by settlers as a link with a distant area.¹¹ The spread of exonyms and spurious toponyms has been aided this century by the numerous booklets of 'Aboriginal Words' used for naming houses, farms, streets, etc, and the persistent popular notion that there is a single continent-wide 'Aboriginal language'; in this way particular local knowledge is diluted.

One significant pattern in central Australia, at least, is for the Aboriginal name of a population centre to be used in official documents, and, in conversation, by the staff of Aboriginal organisations in the region, while the Aboriginal residents are likely to continue the use of an English or non-Aboriginal toponym. The reasons for this include:

- the retention of the Aboriginal toponym for its prior referent, usually a feature near the population centre (such retention maintained especially by senior people),
- the neo-toponym (the Aboriginal name newly applied to the population centre) may be affiliated to an inappropriate (Aboriginal) language,
- the pronunciations of the neo-toponym are often assimilated to English patterns and away from those of the source language, a change promoted also by the role of literacy in the promulgation of the neo-toponym.

The linguist Wurm (1960) gave arguments in favour of the preservation of Aboriginal names, and some advice on methods; Tunbridge (1987) has added

arguments based on the mythological significance of Aboriginal place names with examples from Adnyamathanha mythology, and proposed a draft policy for preferring Aboriginal names. In recent years State policies have been elaborated in this respect (Western Australian Geographic Names Committee 1994; Clark 1994, p. 34–36), with the recognition of the need for Aboriginal involvement, and sensitivity to the restricted nature of some names. AIATSIS currently has a Place Names Trainee, an Aboriginal person, funded by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation has proposed a national symposium on indigenous place names, to boost recent official efforts to promote indigenous place names (Clark 1994, pp. 41–42, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1994, pp. 134–135). The emerging geographic names policy includes a degree of retrospective recognition of Aboriginal names. The sensitive implementation of a geographic names policy which accords due weight to indigenous names necessarily involves public education, the details of which need attention. Apart from implications for school curriculum and supporting materials, there is potential, for instance, for the addition of pronunciation and origin notes on popular road maps.

7 Areas of major concern to be monitored

The following areas need to be monitored:

- number and strength of traditional languages used as a primary form of communication. The best indications come from continuing sociolinguistic studies in the relevant communities
- number of speakers. It is important that future censuses retain a question on Aboriginal languages, complementing more detailed local studies. It would be useful if a census question could look for levels of language skills, possibly following the categories in Hoogenraad (1992)
- the number and type of indigenous language programs undertaken in schools, language centres and other institutions. Some form of appropriate standard reporting across the various education systems is needed
- the number and type of projects which document traditional knowledge and/or traditional languages, and pidgins and creoles, and related

projects such as sociolinguistic studies, language acquisition

- the amount of indigenous language used in the media, especially the broadcast media
- approvals of geographic names, including map sheet names, with respect to indigenous place names
- funding provided through government departments and agencies, including ATSIC, DEET, ARC and AIATSIS. Some of these would need to change their reporting systems in order to make this readily possible.

8 A summary of the current pressures, state, and responses

8.1 The state of indigenous languages

In general, indigenous languages have been in a disastrous decline since first European contact, and this decline is continuing. Many languages have only a handful of elderly speakers, and there are only 34 languages with 200 or more speakers—a level Schmidt (1990, p. 2) identifies as an apparent lower limit for relatively healthy languages. Even those languages that are relatively strong, that is, that have a relatively large number of fluent speakers *including children*, ‘rely on a delicate configuration of socio-political and psychological factors’ that could easily change (Schmidt 1990, p. 3). There are numerous cases where the change from fluent predominantly traditional language to a variety of English or creole has taken place within a single generation, which means that the worst case, if preceding cases are any indication, is that all of the traditional languages currently spoken could be gone within a generation. As it is, there are only around 20 traditional languages that are being passed on to children and being used by them. McKay (1996) builds on four 1994 case studies and comprehensively reviews indigenous language maintenance and development needs and activities across Australia.

There are important issues involved in the question of what counts as a *living indigenous language*, or perhaps more importantly, what does not count as a dead language. Not the least of these issues is where financial and other support should be focussed. It is fair to say that there is a common view that the only

living indigenous languages are traditional languages where speakers are able to express themselves in varied situations *primarily using features that are distinctive to that traditional language*. These features may include words, parts of words, the set of sounds employed, accent, grammatical constructions, patterns of intonation, patterns of meaning (the way things and events are categorised in a language), and conventions about how to speak in different situations and to different people. If the traditional features are not the primary resources of a modern variety of language, and people are not said to speak the language fluently, then in one view the traditional language is effectively dead.

8.1.1 Creoles and Aboriginal English

In a fairly traditional view, the most important distinguishing features are probably words, parts of words and grammatical constructions. There are, however, many situations where a relatively small number of the words from a traditional language are used in what is basically a variety of English. Such words or expressions are typically strong markers of a speaker’s Aboriginality and in many cases indigenous people have said that what remains of these traditional languages deserves the same recognition and support as predominantly traditional languages. As already discussed, although creole languages have often been, and sometimes continue to be, discounted as something less than real languages, there is a growing acceptance of their status as indigenous languages.

In recent years, a number of studies have indicated that even where indigenous people speak English with few or no traditional words, they often, or even typically, retain some of the less obvious features of traditional languages, such as aspects of the traditional patterns of meaning and the conventions about how and when to speak to whom. These and other features define a specifically Aboriginal variety of English. Serious descriptive research into Aboriginal English began only in the early 1960s, and even recent work such as Harkins (1994) still makes its starting point a challenge to the assumption that Aboriginal English has no significant features different from Standard Australian English. One of the important focuses of much of this recent work (particularly that of Eades (e.g. 1982) and Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm (1982)) has been on the type and degree of miscommunication that results from the assumption that Aboriginal English is the same as

Standard Australian English, and the problems and injustices that result from this miscommunication. Such work has led to greater recognition of the existence of Aboriginal English and, in the words of the resolution on this topic from the 1984 Aboriginal Languages Association conference, the need 'to ensure that Aboriginal English be accepted as a legitimate dialect of English throughout the education system' (Hobson 1984, p. 34). This typically does not mean that Aboriginal English speaking students should not learn Standard Australian English; rather that they should be able to distinguish these varieties and be competent in both.

8.1.2 The loss of traditional knowledge and languages

While it is possible to measure very roughly the number of indigenous languages and speakers, and therefore to give some measure of their decline, there is no simple measure of the decline in traditional knowledge. However, many indigenous people have expressed their concern at the loss, typically combining culture with language as something to be maintained (Hoogenraad 1994, p. 173). In a number of cases, Aboriginal claims to land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act* have been made complicated by the claimants' difficulties in demonstrating the kind of traditional knowledge required under that Act.

There are a number of ways in which the loss of traditional knowledge is related to the loss of traditional languages. Before considering these however, it might be useful to attempt a rough (and much over-simplified) categorisation of areas of traditional knowledge:

- the use of natural resources
- geography
- social organisation
- myth (Dreamings) as expressed in ceremony, art, songs and their explications, and stories
- other oral literature, such as children's stories, which embody the values of the society
- traditional language.

This is not to imply that such categories are completely separate—far from it. Significant places are associated with particular Dreaming stories, which often explain the formation of the place and which link them to other places. Individuals have

associations both to the characters of the Dreaming stories and to the places. The inseparable relationship between kinship, places, and Dreamings has been described in works such as Wilkins (1993) for Arrernte, where it is evidenced by the use of certain vocabulary across the three areas.

Indigenous people who have *highly detailed* knowledge of Dreamings and other oral literature are nearly always also fluent in a traditional language. Although there is no a priori reason, beyond the question of the possibility of perfect translation between any two languages, why such detailed information should not be transmitted to following generations in some variety of English or creole, there is a strong tendency for significant loss of detail. Varieties of Aboriginal English and creole generally have less detailed terminology in the areas of kinship and spatial description than traditional languages. The same changes which reduce the transmission of traditional languages also appear to reduce the transmission of at least certain types of traditional knowledge.

Obviously, however, some traditional knowledge has been retained in varying degrees of detail even where people mostly speak a variety of English or creole, although it is not widely documented. An obvious exception to the lack of documentation is the well-received children's book *The story of the falling star* (Western Region Aboriginal Land Council 1991). In the case of songs, there is almost no possibility of translation while retaining the traditional song form.

There is also the degree to which some kinds of traditional knowledge are embedded in the features of traditional languages. These may be overt things which are articulated, such as the meanings of individual words, or they might be implicit within the language. For example, a number of studies, such as Waddy (1988), have described the principles of overt expressions of classification in plant and animal terms, while Hale (1986) has described the subtle means by which aspects of 'worldview', including physical orientation, are implicitly encoded in grammar. In the domain of social organisation, many of the distinctions made in kinship terms in traditional languages have been lost in shifts to Aboriginal English or creole. One overt aspect of traditional language which attracts particular interest from non-indigenous people is placenames and their 'meaning'. In many cases, local indigenous people are not able to provide the traditional name of a place

or to give a known placename an etymology or explain the literal meaning. It must be recognised, however, that, as elsewhere around the world, many place names should not be expected to have such explanations.

There is also a strong belief among speakers that traditional languages are the appropriate vehicle for traditional knowledge. This belief is sometimes expressed in statements like the following from an Arrernte speaker: 'Dreamtime stories in English are nothing; it's gotta be in language.'

8.2 Current pressures

Many of the processes which have contributed to the decline of indigenous languages and traditional knowledge are well-known: 'the history of massacre, forced movement, and institutionalisation of Aboriginal people ... the periods of prohibition and denigration of their culture and languages by schools and other bodies' (McConvell 1991, p. 143), to which can be added disease and poor health. However, given the present situation, the issues in identifying the major factors in continuing language shift are complex. There seem to be no simple answers to the questions: Why do individuals choose to talk the language that they do? Why do people who could use their traditional language *and* the language of some other group choose not to use their traditional language? McKay (1996, pp. 189–240) has an excellent summary of the relevant literature and discussion of the factors relevant to successful language maintenance.

According to McConvell (1991, p. 150), probably the most important factor is 'the expression of either solidarity with or distance from certain social groups'. In this view, younger indigenous people choose not to speak their traditional language to distance themselves from their older relations and/or to express solidarity with some other group, presumably other indigenous people of their own age. The form of language that they shift to, another traditional language or a variety of Aboriginal English or creole, is presumably also able to express their distance from non-indigenous people and/or their solidarity with the groups of indigenous people they identify with. Most people probably do not make a single conscious decision about this; it is the effect of many small probably unconscious decisions in particular situations. Indeed, it is not uncommon for people who

support language maintenance to find it difficult to put it into practice themselves in many situations; the immediate situation seems to override the long-term goal.

Indigenous people who want to see their languages and cultures maintained are faced with a complex situation in which there are many factors which influence children and younger people in the choice of the social group(s) they identify with. The most important of these seem to be the social change which brings younger generations into more interaction with speakers of the new language(s), and the cultural change by which they are introduced to new values and ways of behaving that are associated with the speakers of the new language. Most of the activities designed to maintain traditional languages are aimed at adjusting the apparent balance of interaction in the 'opposing' languages by creating around younger people more situations in which the traditional language is spoken and fewer situations in which the new language is spoken. Emphasis is often placed on the things that are thought to be most appealing to children and younger people.

Education and electronic media are widely thought by indigenous and non-indigenous people working in language maintenance to be the most powerful influences promoting language shift, which, if these can be controlled by local communities, will be able to provide enough traditional language content in everyday life to maintain it. In light of this, it is remarkable that while education has attracted the level of financial and other support that it has, the electronic media have received comparatively little, despite the fact that they are believed to be an especially strong influence on younger people. The levels of support are presumably due to some perception that education is inherently valuable while the electronic media are mostly just entertainment.

The brief and limited support that language education and media have received to date is insufficient to determine whether they will be effective in the long term, but the early results show promise. The costs of activities are typically under-estimated by government and other agencies, which often have little experience in this area.

One factor which is important in language shift is the extent of social and economic interaction with sections of the wider community where only English is spoken. Obvious areas are commerce, employment and government services including health and legal

services, housing and social welfare, etc. Clearly, good English language skills allow people to obtain greater benefits in these areas, and although it is not clear that there is a direct relationship between language and benefit, it is enough for the shift to English that people believe there is such a connection. Interestingly, translating and interpreting services have not often been developed beyond the informal level in response to this.¹²

A secondary effect of these social and economic relationships is that disparate groups of people from different language backgrounds are drawn together at the places where these relationships take place, typically larger towns or communities. If the earlier experiences of forced relocation of indigenous people are any indication, it is to be expected that such environments promote language shift. The movement since the 1970s to outstations or smaller communities on or near traditional lands would likewise be expected to reduce the influence of English—at least, until the late 1980s spread to remote areas of VCRs, telephones, and broadcast radio and TV.¹³

The spread of creole in northern Australia is regarded negatively by some speakers of traditional languages who see it as a poor but attractive rival to both their traditional language and English. Rhydwen (1992) has suggested that this is because of a perception that the creole is identical to their own limited skills as second language speakers of English. It is difficult to cast creoles, or indeed Aboriginal English, consistently in terms of direct pressure on traditional languages or of a response to such pressure. As has already been discussed in Section 3 earlier, the major factors in the development of creoles from pidgins have been population shifts that result in linguistically mixed but socially coherent groups. The development of creoles is in some sense, therefore, a response to social change, whereas their continuing spread is seen by some Aboriginal people as a pressure on traditional languages in much the same way that English is seen as a pressure.

8.3 Responses

Awareness of the decline in indigenous traditional languages and traditional knowledge is now more widespread than ever before. Governments are also now more prepared to take an interest and to provide some funding, a change which has largely been a response to pressure from indigenous groups. Many indigenous people have tried to explain their

emotional and psychological responses to this loss to others, almost universally asserting the enormous significance they attach to traditional language and culture. Many people ‘both regret and resent the loss of their traditional language’ (Fesl 1982, p. 5).

While concern with language loss is now widespread, it is not universal. Some people do not see their languages as endangered while others do not appear to see the loss of language as something which may be within their control. For example, Lanham et al. (1994, p. 94) report of Docker River in the Northern Territory that:

People here are surprised when you say that the Pitjantjatjara language might die someday. They find it hard to believe and ask why that might happen, as their language is so strong and the children learn to speak it properly. Concern about language maintenance is not widespread, for this reason, although some people have at times in the past few years said that children are mixing English with Pitjantjatjara, which they consider a bad thing.

More commonly, indigenous expressions of concern are in the form of statements on the importance of maintaining traditional language and culture, or whatever remains of it in some areas, or even of reviving aspects of it. Expressions such as ‘keeping language strong’ are common. While there are as yet no detailed published studies of changes in individual or community language use since this renaissance of indigenous languages, it is clear that many people have been looking for more formal or institutional ways to keep their languages strong. The main focuses have been on recording languages from older people and on teaching language to children in school programs, although there is activity in all the areas discussed in section 4 above:

- language documentation
- language education programs
- community language programs
- the use of indigenous languages in the media
- interpreting and translating.

Indigenous people are adopting various strategies in these areas, including developing their own skills and seeking help from non-indigenous people with specialist skills, but these are largely uncharted waters so many of the current activities have to be fairly experimental. It is, however, important to note that while there are many indigenous people who are keen to document, or have documented, aspects of

traditional language or culture, there are also people who believe that documentation is a much lower priority than its direct transmission within their local group. There are also concerns over the difficulty of controlling circulation of written material. Some of the possible negative results of relying on literacy in this way are discussed in Dixon (1980, pp. 86–88).

In the past, academic researchers have sometimes been criticised for producing documentation which is not in a form that is accessible to the indigenous communities from which the information comes. Most academic work, including theses, is required to be in a form that is not readily accessible to non-specialists, and the constraints of academia, and academic funding, typically work against the preparation of accessible versions of the work. However, in Aboriginal-controlled organisations in the last 10 or 15 years, there has been a growing trend to more practical and accessible publications, such as Evans' *Learner's guide to Warumungu* (1984), Goddard's *Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English dictionary* (1988), and other Learner's Guides produced at IAD.

In some cases, such as in the Tasmanian Aboriginal Language Program, it has been decided that traditional language will only be taught to indigenous children, so that these skills can be a distinctive part of Aboriginality without placing indigenous students in a potentially negative situation of competing academically with non-indigenous students in such a distinctively Aboriginal area. In general, though, indigenous people are keen to have their languages taught to non-indigenous people so that they will develop more familiarity with, and therefore understanding of, indigenous people, and an appreciation that there is a distinct indigenous heritage.

There has also been some change in attitudes to indigenous languages and cultures among non-indigenous people, parallel to wider recognition of Australia as a multi-cultural nation. Some aspects of this are:

- the growing recognition of indigenous place names as appropriate for places of special significance to indigenous people, Uluru and Nitmiluk for example, along with increased recognition of the proper processes in determining spelling and explanation of such names

- the now more common practice of including information about the indigenous history and significance of places in interpretive material in parks and tourist locations
- the large increase in the number of new general and educational market publications about indigenous people and culture in the last ten years
- the increased proportion of indigenous perspectives in school curricula and growing interest in learning about Aboriginal language and culture
- in many areas, government and non-indigenous people have responded to requests by indigenous people to be known by the appropriate *local* term, rather than 'Aboriginal'. Terms such as Anangu, Yolngu, Koorie, Nyoongar, Murri and Nunga are now commonly used
- growth in Aboriginal cultural tourism, especially where Aboriginal people take tourists through their country or to particular sites explaining the significance of the places. On some occasions, such as at Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, Aboriginal guides present information in their traditional language which is translated into English for tourists.

Other changes have occurred through legislation and the establishment of agencies which assist indigenous people in the protection of culturally significant areas. Relevant legislation includes the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act (SA)*, the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975* and State and Territory equivalents. The federal *Native Title Act 1993* is, of course, further recognition of indigenous rights and interests in land. Relevant institutions and agencies include the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), regional land councils, and the Northern Territory Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and its equivalent in the States.

8.4 Current needs and issues

There is still great need expressed by indigenous communities for adequate resources to help maintain traditional languages and cultures. These include training, equipment, adequate funding and specialist assistance. Because this type of work is relatively new, relatively few people have had much opportunity to develop extensive experience in it. For example, there is no tradition of teaching any indigenous language in schools that is anywhere near

as extensive as the tradition and experience of teaching foreign languages, such as French. There is much to be gained from the sharing of practical experience in this area between indigenous people from different places, but if this is to be really useful, it must be properly supported and resourced.¹⁴

The value of indigenous language use in the media as a language maintenance strategy should be recognised, with specific funding made available to support it.

There is a desperate need for cultural maintenance support, including long-term support for recording/documenting traditional knowledge. The relevant Aboriginal people must decide whether such work is done and must have control over both the activity and what it produces, including control over subsequent access to the information. Training in specialist skills should be available where needed, as should access to specialist advice and/or assistance.

There are clear benefits to be gained from the establishment of some kind of unit to offer real practical support of various types to individuals and communities who are trying to maintain their languages and cultures. Such a unit could be established within existing organisations but must be well funded and able to demonstrate continuing practical value.

The way in which various government departments and other organisations deal with indigenous languages suggests that they give them relatively low priority. Funding bodies need to be more aware of the issues involved in supporting language and culture maintenance activities, especially the costs of doing

them properly. Government departments and agencies need either to develop more expertise or experience in these areas within their own staff, or to seek specialist advice from outside.

Even though there is relatively greater recognition of the importance of indigenous languages and cultures among non-indigenous people, many indigenous people have said that more needs to be done in educating people about indigenous languages and cultures.

Documents or other materials that are produced by government agencies should be properly archived so that they are available to the relevant indigenous communities. These should include the full range of materials, including raw information, and not just final reports; the narrow concerns of a particular report often mean that other valuable information may not be presented.

Geographic names policy should include some retrospective recognition of indigenous names. The importance of proper linguistic description and advice in geographic naming, recognised in principle by the relevant bodies, needs to be supported by monitoring of its application in practice. Public education implications need to be studied.

Documentation of language and traditional knowledge should be available to the relevant indigenous communities in a form appropriate to their needs (unless there is a good reason why an item is confidential). Where necessary, researchers should be supported to produce work in such forms from existing materials.

Endnotes

1. The ARC reports that it is able to report on grants in this area since 1989, but that earlier information would require searching through individual project files.
2. It is now incorporated into Batchelor College as the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (CALL).
3. Since the name of the one feature may be repeated on the one map sheet, across adjacent map sheets, or repeated on maps at two scales (e.g. 'Stuart Highway'), the number of distinct places listed is somewhat less.
4. Hercus and Potezny 1990. Their assessment shows the difficulties in locating most sites from the map but generally corroborates that the names are genuine toponyms.
5. In the study area, these are Warri Well (named after Warri, a member of Carnegie's party, the name also applied to the map sheet Warri), and Lake Orantjugurr, named by Donald Mackay in 1930 after a Pintupi man he met hundreds of kilometres away from the feature.
6. For instance, Anne Range and Flat Top. One Aboriginal toponym recognised in 1960s geological reports, Iragana Hills, was not officially recognised and has been replaced by 'Clutterbuck Hills'. (W.J.E. van de Graaff 1975, *Cobb, W.A. Sheet SG/52-1 International Index*, 1:250 000 Geological Series—Explanatory Notes, p. 6.) The 1984 assignment of Rescue Creek and Dare River are recorded as based on signposts at the features, reading 'Rescue Creek/Wataru', and 'Mirinya/Dare River' respectively.
7. On the 1:100 000 index sheet, where sheet names have to be broken to fit into small boxes, Orantjugurr is broken as Orant-jugurr, ignoring that 'tj' is a digraph no more breakable than English 'th' or 'ng'.
8. The recent Joint Operations Graphic series highlights the reference code rather than the sheet name.
9. Kurrung is a word meaning 'sun' recorded from the 'Wallawe tribe' by L.A. Wells in 1891; it is not recorded on sheet area.
Pintupi is a name for the local Aboriginal people and language.
Aranga; the origin is unknown; it is not known on sheet area.
Warri is a name for an Aboriginal guide to the 1896 Carnegie expedition.
Orantjugurr is a name of a Pintupi man living near Donald Mackay's 1930 base camp in the Northern Territory.
10. Kuthulla, the name for Tibbits sheet before 1974 is not known on the sheet area. Of the other sheet names, six (Lymburner, Oldham, Medcalf, Rule, Ewing, and Tibbits) were assigned in Perth to commemorate former Western Australia Lands Department surveyors who apparently were never near the sheet areas.
11. An example: Yarrana Heights
HILL 20 04 123 25 SF5103 3557 WA
in the Great Sandy Desert, and now marked on official maps, has currency limited to some geological reports, and originates in the name 'Yarrana' of a Melbourne-based helicopter used by geologists in mapping the area in 1957.
12. The Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal Development commissioned a report on 'An Aboriginal Language Interpreter Service' (Peter J. Carroll, April 1995), which has led to trial interpreting services in legal and health areas, conducted from January to June 1997.
13. As noted by McConvell 1992, p. 217 on 'the importance of the outstation movement for Aboriginal language maintenance', that '[w]hile this [relationship] is a plausible assumption, there is no evidence backed up by research for this that I know of.'
14. See for instance 'A proposal for sharing ideas on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language maintenance and language education' sent to ATSIC, AIATSIS and other key bodies in late 1994.

Abbreviations

AAB	See SIL–AAB	CRES	Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
AAIB	See SIL–AAIB	DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority	DSS	Department of Social Security
AEP	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy	FATSIL	Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission	IAD	Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs
AIAS	Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS)	LOTE	Languages Other Than English
ALES	Aboriginal Languages Education Strategy	NALLS	National Aboriginal Language and Literacy Strategy
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	NALP	National Aboriginal Languages Program
ALA	Aboriginal Languages Association	NEGP	National Estate Grants Program (AHC)
ALIP	Aboriginal Languages Initiatives Program (now ATSILIP)	NLLIA	National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Limited
ANU	Australian National University	NTED	Northern Territory Education Department
ARC	Australian Research Council	SAE	Standard Australian English
ASSPA	Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority (now AAPA)	SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	SIL–AAB	Summer Institute of Linguistics—Australian Aborigines Branch
ATSILIP	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Initiatives Program	SIL–AAIB	Summer Institute of Linguistics—Australian Aborigines and Islanders Branch
CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association	UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
CALL	Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics (Batchelor College)		
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (Western Australia)		

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