

*in*Field

Language activism

University of California at Santa Barbara, June 24-27, 2008

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&

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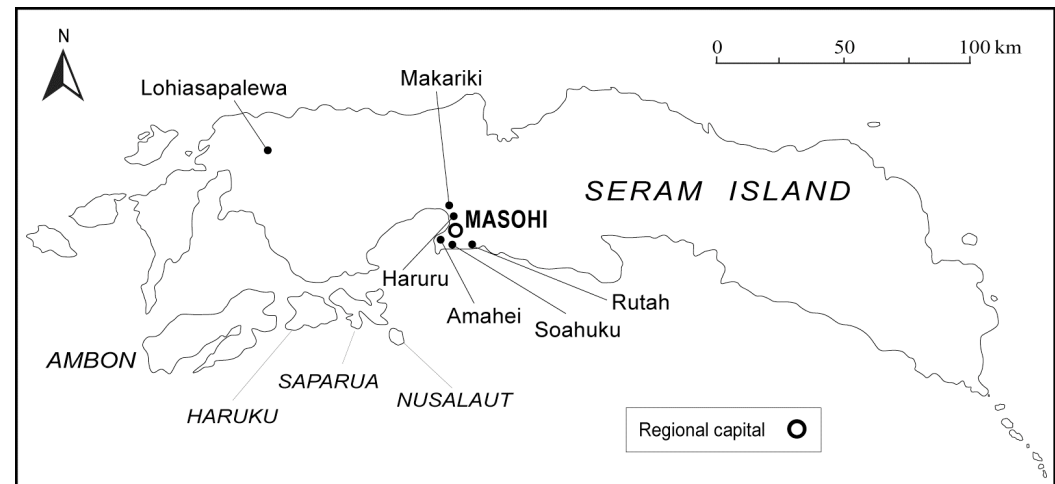
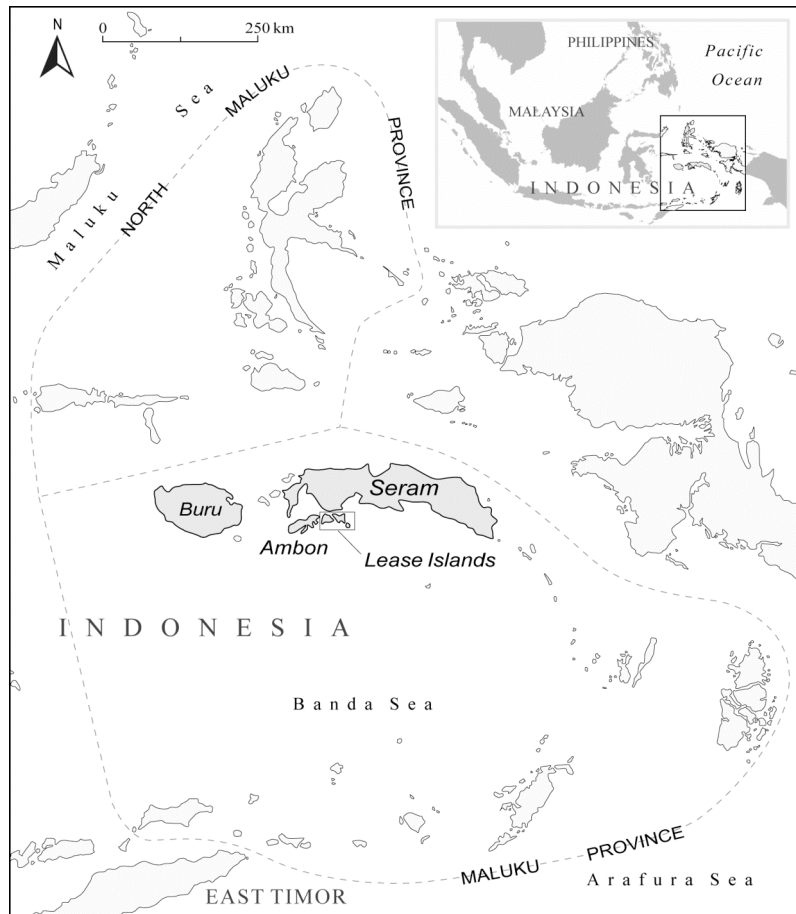
University of Arizona

Day 1

- Introduction: definitions and framework
 - *In this first class, we problematize the notion of language activism.*
 - *We suggest a definition of activism, ask who is a language activist, and examine what they do in diverse settings.*

Margaret Florey

- Research & activism based in eastern Indonesia (Maluku region) since 1988
 - Alune language community—western Seram Island
 - *Kouro* language community—south central Seram Island
- Training activities
 - in Indonesia— at grassroots & regional level in Maluku, and at national level in Bali
 - in Australia— at Monash University, coordinator of Language Endangerment programs
- Co-founder of Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity (www.rnld.org)
- Board of Governors of Terralingua (www.terralingua.org)



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Language activism

Susan Penfield

- Research on U.S. Indigenous Languages
- Faculty for the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI)
- Panel Member: Endangered Language Documentation Program, University of London (SOAS)
- Training and consulting:
 - Colorado River Indian Tribes (Mohave and Chemehuevi)
 - Coshatta Nation of Louisiana in grant writing and language documentation
- Co-founder of ILAT (Indigenous Languages and Technology) listserv

- Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT)
- Population: 3,500
- Community dynamics:
 - Mohave
 - Chemehuevi
 - Hopi
 - Navajo



- **Language activism**
- **Definition:** a language activist is "a person who focuses 'energetic action' (OED) towards language."
 - A language activist initiates action or activities in support of the language and the community of speakers.
 - The term "language activist" applies to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, internal and external to academia, and with a broad spectrum of interests and skills in linguistics and allied disciplines.

- Language activism is emerging within the contexts of
 - the "new linguistics"
 - a more participatory and politicized linguistics with language activism at its centre, and characterized by profound changes to ethics, methods and practice in the field
 - alliances being formed between external and internal language activists who are working together towards the shared goal of documenting and supporting minority languages and cultures
 - language rights
 - international policy documents highlighting and setting out the rights of Indigenous peoples to control intellectual property and strategies and actions

- **Convention on Biological Diversity**
 - entered into force on 29 December 1993
 - 190 nations now signatories
 - Australia & United States have not yet signed

- **Convention on Biological Diversity**
 - **Article 8(j) Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices**
 - *Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds*

- United Nations Economic and Security Council, **Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous People**
 - Principle 7— *To protect and preserve their heritage, indigenous peoples must control their own forms of cultural transmission and education. This includes their right to the continued use and, wherever applicable, the restoration of their own languages and orthographies*

- **UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**
 - adopted 17 October 2003
 - entered in to force 20 April 2006 with ratification by 30 states
 - 93 state parties
 - those not yet signed include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States

- **UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**
 - defines ICH as *the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.*
- The ICH to be safeguarded by this Convention:
 - is transmitted from generation to generation;
 - is constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history;
 - provides communities and groups with a sense of identity and continuity;
 - promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity;
 - is compatible with international human rights instruments;
 - complies with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, and of sustainable development.

- **UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**
 - Article 2 notes various domains for ICH, including *"oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage"*
 - Article 11— States Parties which are signatories to the Convention are bound to *"take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory"*

- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)**
 - adopted on 13 September 2007
 - vote
 - 144 in favor
 - 4 against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States)
 - 11 abstentions

- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)**
 - **Article 13**
 - *Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.*
 - *States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.*
 - **Article 14**
 - *Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.*

- Various stakeholders in language documentation and revitalization activities may have
 - diverse perspectives on language-related issues and strategies
 - different expertise
 - different training needs

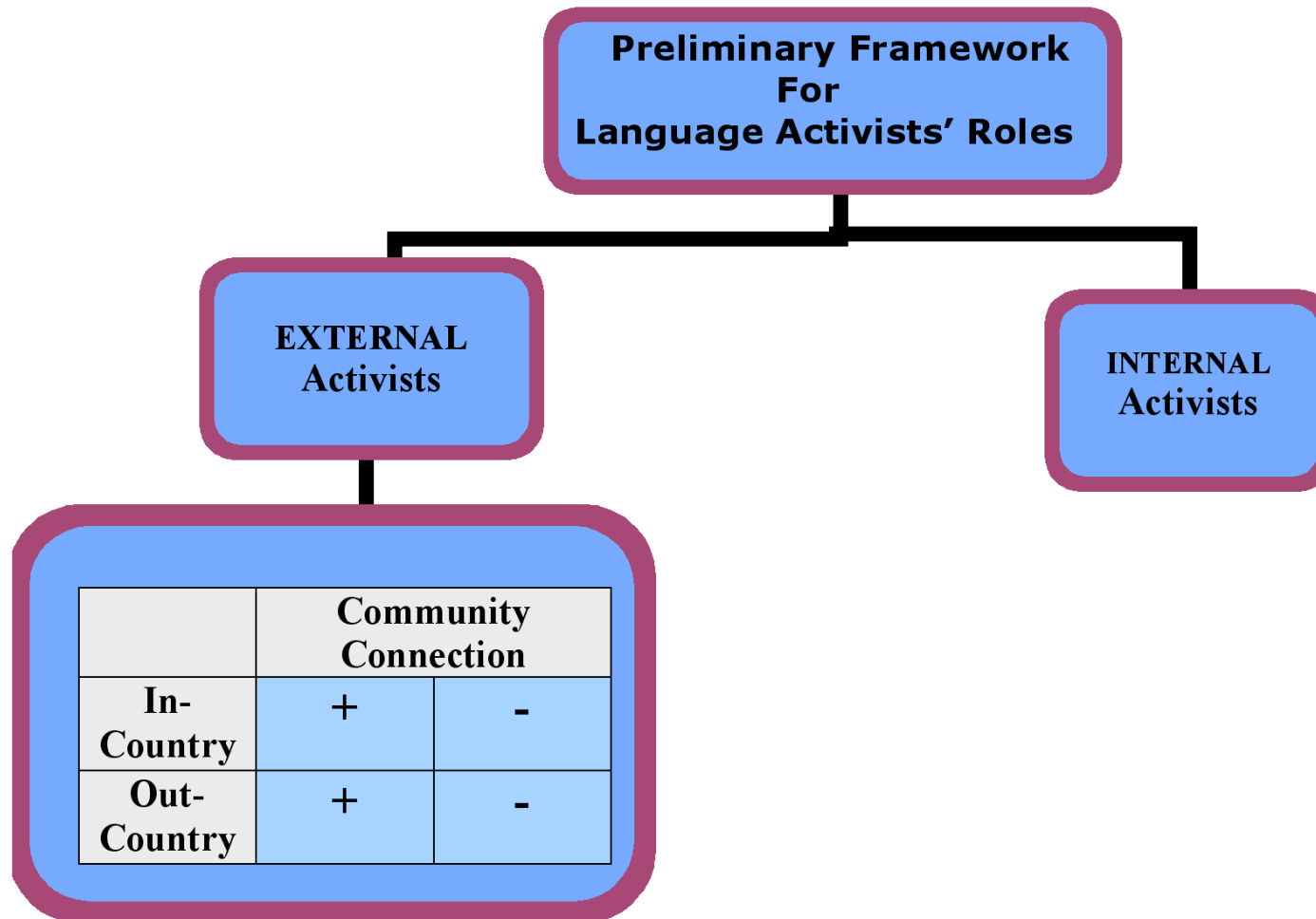
- Our preliminary framework for language activism consists of defining activists' roles in terms of identifying the settings in which activism takes place and the expertise required in diverse settings

- **Internal language activists**
 - community members who have a personal interest in their heritage language
- **External language activists**
 - people outside of the community with no personal link to the heritage language or languages in question
- For example,

- **Adeline Point**— spent her last bed-ridden years sharing her mother tongue, Musqueam, with linguists who sat at her side urgently recording the voice of this last speaker of the language
- **Patricia Shaw**— linguist who works tirelessly to teach and reconstitute the Musqueam language based on field recordings of Adeline and earlier speakers, a single book of grammar, and a dictionary.

- **In-country external language activists**
 - Indigenous people who choose not to focus their activism on their own heritage language, but rather to work with another language in their country
 - External language activists who choose to base their activities in their own country
- In-country external language activists and internal language activists share a knowledge, e.g., of political and educational systems, social and cultural features, and other language/s, such as lingua franca, the national language, etc.

- **Out-country external language activists**
 - External language activists who choose to carry out projects or activities in a country other than their own, e.g.
 - linguists undertaking international research and/or training programs
 - Indigenous language activists speaking at conferences, providing specialist advice at international meetings, etc.
 - members of organizations with international bases and activities (such as funding agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, etc).



ACTIVISM	Internal	External			
	Community-based	+Community		-Community	
	In-country	In-country	Out-country	In-country	Out-country
Expertise					
<i>Elder</i>	√	√	√		
<i>Speaker of the target language</i>	√	√	√		
<i>Speaker of the lingua franca</i>	√	√	√	√	
<i>Linguist</i>	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Technician</i>	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Educator</i>					
<i>Media</i>					
<i>Illustrator</i>					
<i>International network</i>					
<i>Politician</i>					
<i>.....??</i>					

- **5 minute BREAK**
- During the break, think about how you see yourself in relation to language activism, and how you see your current role
- We'll do brief introductions after the break

Day 1— exercise 1

- Working in a small group (~10 minutes)
 - Work with the handout of the chart and continue filling it in.
 - Brainstorm areas of expertise which language activists might contribute other than those on the chart.
 - Does this chart work?

HOMework

- Think about this framework tonight
- Talk to other people about it
 - ask them about the framework and whether and how they fit into it

Bibliography

- Florey, Margaret. 2008. Language activism and the "new linguistics": Expanding opportunities for documenting endangered languages in Indonesia. In Peter K. Austin (ed.) *Language Documentation and Description*, Vol. 5. London: SOAS.
- Florey, Margaret and Himmelmann, Nikolaus. forthcoming 2008. "New directions in field linguistics: Training strategies for language documentation in Indonesia" To appear in Florey, Margaret (ed.) *Endangered Languages of Austronesia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Penfield, Susan D., Angelina Serratos, Benjamin V. Tucker, Amelia Flores, Gilford Harper, Johnny Hill, Jr., Nora Vasquez. 2008. Community Collaborations: Best practices for North American Indigenous language documentation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 191 (187-202).
- Penfield, Susan, Flores, Amelia, and Tucker, Benjamin. 2007. *The role of the language activist in documentation and revitalization*. Paper presented at Conference on the Endangered Languages and Cultures of America (CELCNA 2007), Salt Lake City.

Web sites

Convention on Biological Diversity

<http://www.cbd.int/programmes/socio-eco/traditional/>

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible
Cultural Heritage <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich>

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous
Peoples (A/RES/61/295)

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html>