



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Bilingual Education Research



# Fall 2023

## Theme: Indigenous Multicultural Education

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## Message from the Chair



I am honored and excited to Chair the BER SIG during 2023-2024. Thank you, SIG Members, for entrusting me to serve in this role.

First and foremost, I would like to recognize the time, work, and dedication of the BER SIG Newsletter Working Group. This year's group is led by Chair Éve Ryan and members Karen Terrell, Mina Min, Tabitha Hornby, and Grace Cornell Gonzales. Thank you for your service and hard work in putting this thoughtfully crafted Fall 2023 Newsletter together to bring awareness about language research to our SIG members. This Newsletter features interviews with experts and their research projects which address language shift and language revitalization efforts as a call to action. Experts in Hawaiian Studies and Language, Language and Linguistics, and Yup'ik language and culture share their research about language

revitalization efforts to address the risk of Native American Indian and Alaskan Native Language loss. By sharing about their research projects, they provide valuable resources, practices, and inspiration for preserving and revitalizing their culturally rich and historically significant languages. As we learn from their experiences and dedication, we are reminded of the urgency of our collective responsibility to support and help lead these efforts to ensure the preservation of invaluable linguistic heritages.

This year's AERA theme, "Dismantling Racial Injustice and Constructing Educational Possibilities: A Call to Action," serves as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to confront racial injustice and various forms of oppression in our professional endeavors. I draw attention to the concerning policies that seek to ban Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices at public universities, exemplified by instances such as Florida SB 266 and Texas SB 17. Such policies represent a direct assault on the crucial efforts to support marginalized students, faculty, and staff, as well as the imperative task of connecting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) with vital campus resources at colleges and universities. The Newsletter that follows serves as a critical platform for highlighting the profound impact of language policies in education on programs and services which serve multilingual students across all educational levels, from early childhood to post-secondary education in Hawaii, Alaska, and Latin America. Learn about how the Newsletter Working Group and contributors to the newsletter counter aforementioned exclusionary practices by introducing inclusive language policies and perspectives intended to support the revitalization efforts of Indigenous languages.

Additionally, the repeal of Affirmative Action by the U.S. Supreme Court has resulted in the termination of race-conscious admission practices at educational institutions. These policies attempt to impose a misguided view that "difference" should be treated as neutral in every context. However, it is essential to recognize that as diverse individuals – students, faculty, staff, parents, community partners, and educational stakeholders – we each possess distinct perspectives, experiences, preferences, and values. It is precisely the rich tapestry of diversity that unites BER SIG members in solidarity. Our collective work within this community seeks to foster connections within our SIG and across members from other SIGs to facilitate the exchange of information concerning the multifaceted realm of multilingual learners, the intricate landscape of policies impacting bilingual education programs and their implementation, and the vital aspects of bilingual teacher preparation. In the face of these challenges, our commitment to addressing racial injustice and promoting educational possibilities remains resolute.

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In addition to the valuable content presented in this Newsletter, the BER SIG Executive Leadership Team and its working groups encourage our members to actively engage in discussions, research and initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational settings. Together, we can foster a supportive and empowering environment for linguistically diverse students and educators, working towards dismantling the systemic barriers that perpetuate racial injustices. Let us continue to collaborate, inspire, and take collective action, advancing multilingual education and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to strive and succeed.

Thank you for being part of our vibrant community, and I look forward to a year of impactful contributions and progress within the BER SIG and at the AERA 2024 Annual Conference.

In Solidarity,  
Magdalena Pando  
BER SIG Chair 2023-2024

*Dr. Magdalena Pando is an Associate Professor of Bilingual Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Southern Methodist University. Her research focuses on the construction of models and English language learner engagement in evidence-based argumentation and explanation, and also, teacher preparation and professional development aimed at fostering culturally and linguistically inclusive teaching methods in early childhood and K-12 education.*

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# Ask an Expert (Hawaii)

## He ‘ōlelo ola kēia, This is a Living Language: An Interview with Hawaiian Language Educator, Dr. Kekoa Harman

by Grace Cornell Gonzales, University of Washington

*From the mid-1800s through the first half of the 20th century, the number of speakers of Hawaiian dwindled dramatically due to U.S. colonization and English-only policies, and the language faced the real danger of being lost. However, a robust language revitalization movement is working to change that story. The first Pūnana Leo Hawaiian immersion preschools opened in 1983, and now it is possible to attend school from preschool through postgraduate education in the Hawaiian language. There is a system of 28 public and charter K-12 Hawaiian immersion schools, and the University of Hawai‘i offers undergraduate and graduate programs in Hawaiian, along with teacher education programs that certify Indigenous Hawaiian teachers to teach in Hawaiian-medium schools.*

*A native of Maui, Kekoa L. Harman is an associate professor of Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language at Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. He has taught from the infant level at the Pūnana Leo (language nest) up to the collegiate level in Hawaiian-medium education. He and his wife, Pelehonuamea, who is an educator at Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, a K-12 Hawaiian medium school, have raised their four children in a Hawaiian speaking household. I met with Dr. Harman to learn more about his own connection with Hawaiian language education, the successes and challenges for the language revitalization movement, and what other Indigenous language and bilingual educators can learn from the work of Indigenous Hawaiian language educators.*

**Grace:** Tell me a bit about your personal connection to and history with Hawaiian language education.

**Dr. Harman:** I started off in Hawaiian language education back in the late 90s, around 98, when I started my undergraduate work here at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. I had boarded at a boarding school, Kamehameha Schools, for six years, from 7th grade through 12th grade, and then spent one year at the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Washington. So going away, leaving home from an early age, from 13 years of age, I felt like I had a very strong desire to reconnect with my ‘āina hānai, which is the place where I was raised, where my kupuna, my elders are. I had that desire to return back. And I think my desire to learn the Hawaiian language goes hand in hand with that longing for identity and a reconnection with who I am and where I come from. That really was a strong desire that made me want to continue traditional dance, hula, and join a hālau.

When I started at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, there were different opportunities to be involved with the Language Nest preschools, the Aha Pūnana Leo. That was my part time job when I was doing my undergraduate work. My wife, Pelehonuamea Harman, also was in the Hawaiian Studies Program here at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani and she also started working in the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and then went into teaching at Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, the K-12 Hawaiian-medium school in Kea‘au.

From there, from that foundation, our family grew. Our firstborn was born in 2001, and it became more apparent to the both of us as Hawaiian language speakers that not only do we have a responsibility in the work that we do professionally as educators, but to also make the Hawaiian language the primary



language of our home, of our household, starting off with our first born in 2001, and then from then having her go into the Pūnana Leo Language Nest program and then continue on into Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u. Our son was born in 2005 and then he went into the infant/toddler program of the Pūnana Leo and then graduated from the Pūnana Leo Preschools, continued on into Nāwahī. And then our daughter also, who was born in 2006. So that was a quick turnaround for us as far as being Pūnana Leo parents, Language Nest parents—when we do the math, we were there for 8 or 9 years straight as parents! But it was important for understanding how we make that connection between all of us, within our family, with the Language Nest and then their progression in education from K through 12 and beyond, how the language becomes a part of their lives in a way that's meaningful and relevant beyond the classroom.



Our youngest was born in 2020, so there's quite an age difference between her and our oldest who was born in 2001. She was born right before COVID and that really was such a blessing in many ways because we got to spend a lot of time at home speaking to her in Hawaiian, time that we didn't have with the other children, and the whole family was there. So, she picked up quite a bit while we had that time together in quarantine.

This has also been a journey for us professionally. I'm at the College of Hawaiian Language, now an associate professor at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, and Pele is at Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani, where she's reaching her 20th year of teaching there. We've been in this for a while

now and we've seen our children grow up through this. Our daughter, our oldest, just graduated from Dartmouth College this past year. We thought about how that would actually work out with her being so far away from us and really jumping into immersing herself into an English-speaking Ivy League school, how that would be a different experience for her and how she would be able to use her skills, her Indigenous skills that she was reared in, in that type of environment. With all humility, we are very proud of her doing that and coming back and still desiring to continue her education. It's been a nice ride so far!

**Grace:** What would you say are the major successes and major challenges facing Hawaiian language education now?

**Dr. Harman:** This year the Pūnana Leo is celebrating its 40th anniversary, which is quite an accomplishment in terms of sustaining and growing these programs from the preschool level all the way up to the college level. And there continues to be a demand. The demand grows every year for enrollment at Pūnana Leo preschools and at Hawaiian medium schools throughout the state. We see more and more students interested in taking Hawaiian language at the university level. But that is a trend that we're seeing, I think, statewide—the number of speakers is growing. With that, there is a lot of growth in the programs. How do you keep up with that demand and ensure the quality of the program and that you are able to grow capacity for people to come into the programs? I think that's been on my mind a lot lately and I think for many of my colleagues too.

**Grace:** How does the Hawaiian language revitalization and education movement connect with other Indigenous language revitalization/education movements?

**Dr. Harman:** We do have quite a few visitors from tribes throughout the continental US, and then also internationally we have relationships with our Māori relatives in New Zealand. That's also an important part of our culture, that we're able to host people and exchange in this way in order for all of us to grow. So, I think that

will continue to be not only a dream, but something that we want to make sure we're able to continue and sustain and grow in these years ahead.

It's a very human struggle. I think that it's universal in that sense, especially when you look at people's desires to hold onto their language and where they come from, who they are, what the stories of their kūpuna or elders, ancestors, are. To understand that in order to have a stronger connection to the land and to the place that we live on, the place that we dwell on, especially for ancestral lands. I think if you do not understand the language and you do not understand these stories, you're missing something. You're missing a piece of your identity and who you are.

But I think the interaction with other Indigenous language revitalization and education movements is this understanding that you cannot wait for things to happen or to have the most ideal situations for this. It's not going to happen like that. Just do it. Don't wait for permission. Don't wait to have a lot of money or resources to do these things that you need to get started. You need to speak to your elders; you need to document these things. You need to record their oral histories. If you do have native speakers alive, record them, videotape them, meet with them so you have this type of documentation. How do you utilize those elders as resources in your educational programs, in order to make that connection intergenerationally and have elders speaking to the younger ones, which is a very natural way of passing on the language? And then those children will carry on this as they develop and get older—they'll see importance in these efforts that have been made by so many, in order for the language to live.

**Grace:** What do you think bilingual educators in general can learn from the Hawaiian language revitalization and education movement?

**Dr. Harman:** I think the thing that continues to be on my mind for all of us as Indigenous language educators, heritage language educators, is how do we continue to play a part in creating these environments, what we call honua in Hawaiian, where we can use our language and push ourselves beyond the boundaries of the classroom? And that excites me in interacting with my students, too—that we all have a responsibility and a role in growing our speakers so that they do have that desire to go beyond even what we've created for them and taught them. And there's a lot of hope there that we can continue to push the boundaries in the usage of these languages. That's the most important thing for us, that he 'ōlelo ola kēia. *This is a living language.* We make sure that it is a living and thriving language.

*For more information on Dr. Harman and his family:*

“The Inspiring Quest to Revive the Hawaiian Language” by Alia Wong

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/one-family-quest-revive-hawaiian-language-180976225/>

*For a longer interview with Dr. Harman:*

Gonzales, Grace Cornell. (2017). "Our Language Lives by What We Do: An Interview with Hawaiian Educator Kekoa Harman." [Rethinking Bilingual Education: Welcoming Home Language in Our Classrooms](#). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking School

*Grace Cornell Gonzales is a doctoral candidate in Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Washington's College of Education. Her research focuses on multilingual literacy pedagogies, as well as equity and family engagement in dual-language schools.*

# Ask an Expert (Alaska)

## An Interview with Dr. Catherine (Keggutailnguq) Moses

by Dr. Éve Ryan, University of Alaska Fairbanks

*Dr. Catherine (Keggutailnguq) Moses (cmmoses@alaska.edu) teaches in the Linguistics Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her research focuses on bilingual Yugtun-English education. Her latest publication is entitled “[Collaborative Dialogue for Ellangellerkaq and Crosslinguistic Awareness in Third Grade Yugtun English Bilingual Research Centers: A Teacher Action Research Study](#)”.*

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you introduce yourself?

**Dr. Moses:** Angayuqairutegka Yugtun Yugissauullruuq Igvaq-wa. Aatallemkun apaurluitka Apauullruuq, maurluitka-llu Maassaluullruluni. Aanallekmkun apaurluitka Angukarauullruuq, maurluitka-llu Nanirquksuarauullruluni. Yugtun atqa Keggutailnguuguq.

My parents were Pauline Kameroff-Prince-Hunt and Frederick Prince. My maternal grandparents were Theresa and Stepka Kameroff. My fraternal grandparents were Pauline and Charlie Prince. My Yugtun name is Keggutailnguq and my English name is Catherine Moses. I hold a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies within applied linguistics from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The title of my dissertation is: “Collaborative Dialogue for Ellangellerkaq and Crosslinguistic Awareness in Third Grade Yugtun English Bilingual Research Centers: A Teacher Action Research Study.” I currently teach in the linguistics program at UAF.



**Dr. Ryan:** Can you please tell me about your research?

**Dr. Moses:** I conducted my research at Nelson Island School in Toksook Bay with third grade students during students’ bilingual research centers or BRCs. Third grade is the first year that students are introduced to BRCs and during this time, the students are not limited to which language they can use while speaking or taking notes on the topic of interest. The final product, however, has to be in the language of instruction. So, in my class, the students’ final product had to be written in Yugtun.

During the time of my 9-month data collection, I had 12 students: 9 were Yugtun first language and 3 were English first language students. I focused on a small group of 4 students: 2 English first language students and 2 Yup’ik first language students.

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you tell me about some of the major findings of your research?

**Dr. Moses:** One of the findings I learned was that teachers need to be aware that bilingual students do not necessarily separate the two or more languages they know, and as teachers, we need to work with the students that come to school with what they know and work from there. (...) The students that come in, they come in with more than what we think they know. It might be that they can put them into good academic sentences or words, but they know this stuff that we think they don't. So, working with those two languages is very important, as I've seen in my research where students are using either Yugtun or English. Sometimes they'll use

both in one sentence, but they know what they're saying or want to say. I've learned also that, especially in small groups, students learn more from using the language themselves. Like our Elders used to say: "You won't learn to do something until you take your hands and handle that stuff." It might be cutting fish or sewing a fur hat; you won't really understand it until you take it and feel it with your own hands and make it or eat it. But you know, each time you do it, you get better. So, I think that it's the same with using or applying language: each time you try it again, you say it better than you did before, and you learn to own that language at the same time.

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you tell me about the community you did your research in?

**Dr. Moses:** In Toksook, there's about 700 people, and most everyone speaks Yugtun as their first language. Whenever there's a community meeting, the whole meeting can be in Yugtun, so it's still strong in the community. But the little ones are coming in more and more speaking in English. So, we're experiencing that language shift. And it's up to us to find ways to help their parents or encourage Yugtun speaking. We really don't want to lose it. We can say a lot about our Yugtun language because it's connected to who we are and who our ancestors, our grandparents, were or are, and what has been passed on through them: our ways of living, our ways of being, and even acting. (...)

In Toksook, before the dual language program, our Yup'ik curriculum was Yup'ik Language Development (YLD), where Yugtun was taught in kindergarten through third grade most of the day, and ESL was taught in increasing increments from 30 minutes in kindergarten to about 45 minutes or an hour in third grade. We decided to go into dual language in the year 2012 after a group of us local teachers with another teacher, we decided to have a community awareness event where we talked about the language and what our hopes were for the community. Because before, for me as a third-grade teacher, I used to feel like just when the students were getting the meat of the language by the end of the year, the next year in fourth grade, they go to full English where they get Yugtun for about an hour, and suddenly there's a big drop. In my readings, I learned that that form of bilingual education was a weak form, and we learned that dual language, at least the 50/50 model, was a strong form of bilingual education. So, our hopes were there. We've yet to see how well it is going. And there are many other factors, such as staffing or, you know, the parents that speak English to their kids. It's sad to say that more and more young parents especially, are speaking to their children in English, and not too much in our language, which is Yup'ik. And English, like they say, it's everywhere. (...)

**Dr. Ryan:** Is there anything else that you would like to share with the bilingual education community?

**Dr. Moses:** I really encourage the parents to pass on their heritage language to their children, because it's so important that they know their language. (...) It does connect to our beliefs, our values, who we are. I often remember my mother who learned some English in her later life. It was mostly broken English. One time, I heard her speak to one of her grandchildren. She was trying to talk about a Yup'ik saying that gives young people advice about life. And I could see that it was very hard for her to get that idea across, and I could also see that my nephew really didn't get the message right. And that was very sad to see. English was a barrier. As children, my mother would sit us on a bench while our grandfather sat in front of us and would talk to us. We couldn't really say anything, but out of respect, we would just listen. And then when he leaves, I remember one time, I asked my mother a question about something he said, and she couldn't answer that right then. And all she said was: "When you get older and have more experience, you'll understand what he meant." That often comes back to me. Some sayings don't take one time, but you have to hear them over again and be able to apply them to your own experiences, where one day you'll say: "Oh, so that's what they meant."



# Ask an Expert (Alaska)

## An Interview with Dr. Sally (Angass'aq) Samson

by Dr. Éve Ryan, University of Alaska Fairbanks

*Dr. Sally (Angass'aq) Samson is Assistant Professor of Yup'ik Language and Culture at the University of Alaska Kuskokwim Campus, whose research focuses on bilingual Yugtun-English education. Her latest publication is entitled: "[Elitnaurilleq piciryarmtenek qanemcitgun: a participatory teacher action research study to improve language and literacy instruction in a Yup'ik immersion school.](#)"*

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you introduce yourself?

**Dr. Samson:** Angass'augua, kass'atun Sally Samson. Nunapicuar miunguunga taugaam Ekvicuar miuni yuurtellruunga. Angayuqaagka Qakvaralria, Calvin Coolidge aanaka-llu Qalut'aq Sophie Coolidge. I am Angass'aq, in English Sally Samson. I am from Nunapitchuk, but I was born in Eek. I recognize my parents, which is customary in our culture.

I graduated in a small village called Nunapitchuk. My school life was here in the village where most parents would send their children off to boarding schools. My dad decided that no, I wasn't going anywhere. I was going to stay with them. I'm glad he did that. And then, after high school, I went off to Fairbanks. I attended University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and received my BA in Education. And then, I was teaching at the immersion program here in Bethel, which is a Yugtun program. Our language we call Yugtun, which literally means "like a person" and we call ourselves Yup'ik, which literally means "genuine or real person". So anyway, while I was teaching there, I attended UAF again through the linguistics department, and received my master's degree there in 2010. And so, I thought I was done. But then, that didn't happen. (*Laughs.*) (...) I received my Ph.D. just this May. It took a while; it was a long hard battle. But I did it.

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you tell me about your research?



**Dr. Samson:** When I did my master's, I was conducting teacher action research in my classroom, and I focused on how to teach writing to my kindergarten classrooms who are just learning the language. And my thought was: I wonder if I'm just hindering my students by teaching them how to write so early in their learning in the language. And so, my focus was teaching writing through Yuraq, which is our traditional dancing. So, in the classroom, the students are learning not only the language, but also our traditions, which is Yuraq. In that dancing, they learned to sing in the language, and dance, drumming. They're actually telling a story through their drumming and their dancing. But they don't know what they're singing about. And so, I thought maybe it will help to teach them the meanings of those songs and movements, and at that same time teach them about writing. I didn't only focus on writing. I also focused on reading, literacy. And I had so much success teaching it that way in my classroom that I really wanted to show it, share it with my colleagues. But I had no way of sharing it with them. Opportunities never came up. So, when I was thinking about what research I'm going to conduct for my Ph.D., I was thinking, when I went through my master's, I learned so much. And I felt like I was hoarding that knowledge within myself which is really against our culture. In our culture, we are taught if you have knowledge, share it. That way, you're helping your community. So, I spoke with my colleagues, who are all

Yup'ik teachers teaching in our language. Two themes came up. One was the students' level of speaking in Yugtun was going down every year; they seem to speak less and less. And the reading program that we were mandated to use was very difficult to teach. (...) It was heavy phonics instruction and we realized that by using that program, we were leaving out the language instruction. And we attributed that to why our students were struggling with learning the language and to stay in the language. And so that became the focus of my research: how can we embed the language instruction with literacy instruction. So, we looked at the reading program we used and modified the lessons and included our language and the way our language is structured. The title [of this research] is "Elitnaurilleq piciryaramtenek qanemcitgun: a participatory teacher action research study to improve language and literacy instruction in a Yup'ik immersion school". That first part is translated as "teaching our culture, our way of life through stories".

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you tell me about some of the major findings of your research?

**Dr. Samson:** We researched articles on best practices for second language instruction and acquisition and learned more about how our language is structured. And after that, we modified the lessons to focus on morphemes, not letter sounds, but morphemes. Words are structured ... There's little bits that have meaning. So, we decided we need to focus on those morphemes and teach them. And so, by focusing on those meanings, and how to attach - we call them the post bases - which are suffixes and endings, how can you use that with other roots or bits to make meaning? By focusing on those parts of our language, we found that students were staying more in the language. We saw improvements in their reading, in their writing. That was a very big eye opener. And we didn't really know what impact it had on our students until the following year. That year, I was teaching second grade, and we focused on first grade students with the first-grade teachers in my research. And then the following year, those students, when they came to my classroom, they were staying more in the language. And I could do more with them, which was so amazing cause the students I had before, they would tend to speak in English a lot in the classroom, and I had the hardest time teaching them our language. But with those former first grade students, I was able to do a lot more with them.

**Dr. Ryan:** Can you tell me about the school you did your research in?

**Dr. Samson:** Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Immersion program opened in 1995. There were a group of parents that really wanted their children to be taught in Yugtun and the schools here were English only. At the time, there was a "Yup'ik" (*uses air quotes*) class which wasn't really a Yup'ik language class. In the early grades, like kindergarten, they were taught colors in Yugtun, counting in Yugtun, and a group of parents weren't happy with that. So, that's how the immersion program opened. (...) I taught in the immersion program for 19 years. When I first started there, the school district was using the balanced literacy approach. And we found a big success with that because we were able to assess their language knowledge and their reading and writing. And so, when I was teaching years before, students were able to stay in the language. We were able to converse with them in the language. When they go out to play, they would stay in the language. (...) And then No Child Left Behind was passed and the big push for phonics instruction was occurring. And so, our school district switched from balance literacy to phonics instruction. We saw a really big difference. And after a couple years of implementing that phonics instruction, teachers were starting to complain about the reading. They had no fun teaching it. And the parents would also complain, saying their children did not like reading anymore. And also, we had to use those mandated materials. They were actually translations from English. And that was really hindering our program.

**Dr. Ryan:** Is there anything else that you would like to share with the bilingual education research community?

**Dr. Samson:** When I was researching collaboration and professional development for teachers, I happened to come across some articles on Lesson Study, and the more I read about it, the more I really wanted to implement that with my colleagues. Lesson Study is a collaboration of teachers conducting teacher action research. So, it's not just one person conducting research, it's a collaboration of teachers going through research together. When I read about that, I thought: "Wow, that really fits into our culture". Because traditionally, the communities were run by a group of Elders, not just one person, but a group of Elders. And the men would teach young boys how to live a good life, how to survive in the wilderness, and how to live in harmony in their community. And then the women would teach the young girls how to live, how to care for their catch, and how to be effective mothers. That's how I looked at the Lesson Study: a group of us working together to improve our school and our instruction.

*Dr. Ève Ryan (eryan9@alaska.edu) is Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her work focuses on language and literacy development, second language acquisition, and language assessment.*

## Research Briefs

### **From Decolonization to Indigenization: Pushing the Research Boundaries in English Language Teaching**

Research Brief by Claudia Gutiérrez, University of Washington  
Introduced by Grace Cornell Gonzales, University of Washington

*The intense global pressure to prioritize learning English in school settings can displace Indigenous students' home languages and devalue their multilingualism. Claudia Gutiérrez, a Fulbright doctoral candidate in language, literacy, and culture, shares about her research in Indigenizing English language teaching in Colombia and her community-based research with the Wayuu people through this research brief. Drawing on decolonial theories, land-based pedagogies, and Epistemologies of the South, her research revolves around the exploration and implementation of equitable teaching practices for ethnic minoritized students across all levels of education. Her current research explores how coloniality in language and education policies influences school curricula in schools specifically intended to serve Indigenous students, and the possibilities school-community collaborations open to disrupt this reality and to Indigenize English Language Teaching.*

Education and English language policies continue to shape the linguistic landscape globally, by increasing minoritized communities' pressure to learn English; a pressure that often leads to the displacement of Indigenous students' home languages within school settings (Rorick, 2019; Tavares, 2022) and, subsequently, within their own communities (Motha, 2014). This reality has not gone unattended by scholars and researchers who, for a while now, have theorized about and put into practice possible avenues to decolonize English Language Teaching (ELT); a field that is colonial in nature both in the Global North, Canada being a prime example, and in the Global South (Macedo, 2019).



As a Latina, researcher, and language instructor, with my colleagues we embarked in this decolonial quest a few years ago while working with Black and Indigenous university students

in Colombia who, in order to graduate, had to demonstrate English proficiency regardless of the languages they already spoke (Usma et al, 2018). While our various efforts to decolonize English instruction had powerful impacts on these students' cultural and linguistic identities (Gutierrez et al., 2021), I cannot be oblivious to the critiques Native and non-Native scholars have offered to decolonial work that often leaves out attention to the land (Tuck & and Yang, 2012), to Indigenous voices, and knowledge systems (Grafton & Melançon, 2020; Pardy & Pardy, 2020) and that co-opts and tokenizes Indigenous topics (Volfová, 2015). These sound critiques have raised questions about whether it is possible to decolonize a field that is colonial at its core, and whether to prevent superficial approaches to decolonial research in ELT, it is necessary to Indigenize this field instead.

Now, with a stronger understanding of the deeper implications that arise when engaging in decolonial work in ELT, so that decolonization does not turn into a mere metaphor (Tuck & and Yang, 2012), I have revisited our past research work. I critically reflect on the shortcomings of my own and other decolonial research efforts in ELT, and describe ways in which these critiques have encouraged me and other scholars to push the boundaries by striving to Indigenize this field. Drawing on the work of Native scholars, Epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018), and Land-based Pedagogies (Simpson, 2014), I will describe what this move from decolonization to Indigenization in ELT entailed for my current research with the Wayuu people in Colombia.

Proposed as a community-based design research, data was collected through talking circles and semi-structured conversations. Results of this Indigenizing initiative shed some light on the central role schools and community members must have in the design of research projects intended to sustain Indigenous languages, amidst the demands colonial language and education policies place on schools. Similarly, this research speaks to the tensions that arise when creating these collaborations, such as attention to differing language ideologies across participants, participants' command of their Native and other colonial languages such as Spanish and English, and attention to power relations among all participants. This work is expected to add to the Indigenization of the ELT field in ways that contribute to "the return of lands and waters and the transformation of social relations based on Indigenous systems of law, governance, and care" (Tamiak, 2022, p.292). Finally, this work has implications for researchers, school teachers and administrators, and policymakers interested in Indigenous language sustenance and interested in exploring the potential ELT holds to resist the relentless annihilation of Indigenous languages.

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## **Assessment of Indigenous Language DLBE programs in the US.**

By Tabitha Hornby, National Louis University

Indigenous languages are disappearing. According to the Administration for Native Americans, more than 245 distinct Indigenous languages exist or have existed in the United States, yet 65 of them are already extinct and 75 languages are endangered (Goodman, 2023). Indigenous DLBE programs in collaboration with their communities are working to rectify the alarming rate of endangerment to their languages. But DLBE goes beyond just language.

The National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs states the primary goal of indigenous DLBE is to secure the survival of Indigenous languages and “to provide educational opportunity, increase student success, increase student awareness and knowledge of the culture and history, and increase student and community pride” (2023). Providing students and communities with a sense of belonging and, in Lakota, Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ (interconnection), indigenous DLBE programs go beyond supporting the development and sustainability of language, to the sustainability of a culture and a way of life.

Out of more than 3600 dual language programs across 44 states counted in 2021, only 41 of the reported programs teach an indigenous language, Hawaiian (27), Haitian Creole (3), Yup’ik (2), Lakota (2), Lushootseed (2), Makah (2), Diné (2), and Cherokee (1), as reported by the American Councils Research Center

(ACIE, 2021). These numbers are troubling. Colleges and universities are helping to support this work, for example, by offering language classes in Potawatomi, but by the time students are in college, it may be too late for native-like fluency (Goodman, 2023). Early learning programs are also a way in which the tribal communities are revitalizing their language and culture (Grunewald, 2016)

Current policies are impacting indigenous DLBE as well, as the Biden administration has signed two bills around native language in 2023 (Dower, 2023). The first, the Native American Language Resource Center Act, supports the creation of native language resource centers, including educational, providing community support to create grants and organizations for native languages. The second, Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act, creates support for interagency work in the reclamation efforts of native languages. Each supports the development and promotion of native language education programs, including DLBE, reinforcing teaching in and through native languages, as well as providing professional development and certification for teachers.

In closing, Hale and Lockard (2023) have hope that with the “growth of the Indigenous way of life and knowing” stemming from each Indigenous child in an educational setting, the Indigenous culture, language, and identity can be protected and celebrated.

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# Resources & Organizations for Indigenous Bilingual Education

By Mina Min, Appalachian State University

<https://livingtongues.org/educational-resources/> Educational and curriculum planning resources for endangered languages

<https://nativecases.evergreen.edu/> Case studies resources for culturally relevant curriculum and teaching

<https://etc.umn.edu/> Resources for Curriculum to Help Indian Youth Transition Successfully from High School to College

<https://fourdirectionsteachings.com/index.html> Audio narrated resources for learning about indigenous knowledge and philosophy from five diverse first Nations in Canada

<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/honoringtriballegacies/> A collection of teaching resources created by indigenous curriculum designers and allies for inclusive education in social studies, STEM, language, and other subjects

<http://apps.educationnorthwest.org/indianreading/> Supplementary reading and language development program resources for Indian and Non-Indian children

<https://lessonsofourland.org/> Discover innovative curriculum resources that integrate Native American stories, lessons, and games into regular classroom instruction

<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/time-immemorial-tribal-sovereignty-washington-state> The *Since Time Immemorial Curriculum* endorsed by all 29 federally recognized tribes and its 'Ready to Go' lessons

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/voices-native-youth-report-volume-iii/> Report aiming to increase awareness of issues affecting Native youth and promote potential solutions

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications/language.html> Resources are available for publications to assist Alaska Natives, government agencies, educators, and the general public in gaining access to understanding indigenous languages

<https://www.ssila.org/en/home> Association for those who are interested in the linguistic study of the languages of the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America

[https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/state-art-indigenous-languages-research?TSPD\\_101\\_R0=080713870fab200008e75704541b5374825a1d20998d477c5694227f44cf657c1bb4f70dbd57f45f08bf40359b143000777d7d63ef369856ebf152393c0fd02e2a4b4670bc742845d4004c517eda3f4434d377f51fbaf9a960c3e4296b012fd2](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/state-art-indigenous-languages-research?TSPD_101_R0=080713870fab200008e75704541b5374825a1d20998d477c5694227f44cf657c1bb4f70dbd57f45f08bf40359b143000777d7d63ef369856ebf152393c0fd02e2a4b4670bc742845d4004c517eda3f4434d377f51fbaf9a960c3e4296b012fd2) UNESCO report that collects articles for assessing the status of indigenous languages in research.

<http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/kwo/kumuwaiwai.php#section3%22> Resources on Hawaiian language, history, culture, and educational resources

<https://www.pieganinstitute.org/> Resources for Blackfeet Tribe of Montana language education

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Artwork

## Roots & Routes: Building Collective, Community Knowledge







**What do you dream of?**

To have a place that could be the Hmong homeland









Photos from Roots & Routes/ Raíces y Rutas/Nrhiav Koj Lub Suab. Community workshops to explore how our roots and journeys shape us. [https://rootsandroutescnc.org/?page\\_id=119](https://rootsandroutescnc.org/?page_id=119)



# Policy Updates

By Tabitha Hornby, National Louis University

Thank you to our SIG members for your contributions in helping us stay informed about what is happening in bilingual education contexts. We appreciate your time, expertise and contributions and the ways they help to keep us informed.

**State:** West Virginia

**Recent Policy News:** West Virginia University Budget Cuts Take Out Entire Department of World Languages, Literatures, & Linguistics.

## **Brief Overview:**

West Virginia University, citing budget cuts, dissolves the entire Department of World Languages, Literatures, & Linguistics. On August 10, 2023, WVU provost, Maryanne Reed, recommended this elimination of the department faculty and student programming. After appeals hearings, on August 29, 2023, updates include that they will still eliminate the Department but still allow students to take Spanish and Chinese courses face-to-face. This recommendation continues with the elimination of all undergraduate world language majors and 2 master's programs in linguistics and TESOL. Of additional concern is the language requirement for graduation will be eliminated for other majors, according to [WVUs own press release](#).

**Link(s):** <https://community.wvu.edu/~jokatz/Closure/>  
<https://wvpublic.org/wvu-adjusts-cuts-to-world-languages/>

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For future newsletters, if you would like to contribute updates of policy creations, reforms, or challenges in your area, please go to the form found with the QR code or [here](#) to share. The form will ask you for your name, institution, and role, as well as your community/state/country/region, the policy, along with a brief summary of the policy and its connection to bilingual education. These updates will then be reviewed by our newsletter team and chosen for inclusion in our next newsletter.



*If you have any questions, please reach out to the newsletter chair, Ève Ryan, at [eryan9@alaska.edu](mailto:eryan9@alaska.edu).  
Thank you, in advance, for your consideration regarding contributing to this important effort.*

*This newsletter was formatted by Dr. Karen Terrell. Dr. Terrell ([klterrell@loyola.edu](mailto:klterrell@loyola.edu)) is an Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education at Loyola University Maryland. Her research focuses on content-and-language integration for diverse learners, mathematics education, technology integration, and assessment.*

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