"Listen So You Can Live Life the Way It's Supposed to Be Lived": Secrecy, Circumlocution and Dictionary Creation at a New Mexico Pueblo

Erin Debenport
University of Chicago

During the last fifteen years, an increasing number of projects in linguistics and anthropology have focused on "endangered languages" and accompanying "revitalization" programs designed to promote the increased use of ancestral languages in indigenous communities. Although descriptive projects detailing the grammatical structures of non-Indo-European languages have existed throughout the history of both disciplines (e.g. Bloomfield 1957; Boas 1991 [1911]; Sapir 1990), recent discourses surrounding the proliferation of non-profit groups focused on supporting language revitalization efforts,[1] newly available government funding opportunities,[2] and the presence of academic and professional committees and conferences devoted to work involving language endangerment and revitalization projects[3] indicate that academics and community members involved see such projects as a methodological and ideological departure from previous foci, establishing this as a distinct subdiscipline of linguistics.

Because this project concentrates on recent efforts at Sandia Pueblo, an indigenous community in North Central New Mexico, to promote the use of the Southern Tiwa language on the reservation, it is inextricably connected to aspects of this sub-discipline. However, the central research questions of this project are situated against a backdrop of these discourses involving revitalization, which represents part of the larger sociopolitical context informing decisions about language at both community and individual levels. As part of the tribe's language revitalization program, tribal members at Sandia Pueblo have decided to write the Southern Tiwa language for the first time, beginning with the creation of a community dictionary. Working with a document from neighboring Isleta Pueblo written in the 1970's by Protestant missionaries, a committee selected to work on the

[1] e.g. The Indigenous Language Institute; The Foundation for Endangered Languages
[2] e.g. The NSF/NEH Documenting Endangered Languages program (DEL); The Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project at SOAS
[3] e.g. The Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA); The American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI)

language has recently completed the first draft of the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary designed to reflect the form of the language spoken at the Pueblo and to be distributed only to tribal members as a tool for language learning. The decision to produce written materials in this historically oral language is seemingly at odds with the linguistically and culturally "conservative" reputation many tribes in the Southwest share (Dozier 1963; Hinton & Hale (eds.) 2001; Kroskrity 1993, 1998, 2000), and the importance placed on controlling both intra- and intercommunity circulation of cultural knowledge at Sandia Pueblo, beliefs which make the production of written materials in the language a controversial choice.

During the creation of this document, tribal members have designed each dictionary entry to contain what they feel will be most useful to language learners. As a result each lemma contains the headword, its English translation, the example sentence in Sandia Tiwa that was created specifically for use in the dictionary, and its gloss. [4] The invention of example material diverges from the Western tradition in lexicography which typically draws on existing literature for illustrative material and envisions such sentences as a means of disambiguating the sense of individual lexical items (Jackson 2002: 26), and instead centers on imparting information necessary to "Live life the way it's supposed to be lived," as one such sentence explicitly instructs. Included below are examples of several lemmata as they appear in the dictionary:

(1) pata *blackbird*
A long time ago they used to eat blackbirds.

(2) shie *sinew, ligament*
Sew your shoes with sinew, like a long time ago.

(3) hiba kina *for sure, of course*
Surely we will need our language.

(4) d'ewan *to hang to dry*
Salt the deer meat so you can hang them to dry.

(5) b'ehla *river*
Our mother, the blue/green river is running full.

(6) hluri *to drop, to hurl, throw down*
At the sound of shots, the deer threw themselves down to the south.

These examples are representative of the majority of the illustrative sentences created for the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary in that such sentences are utilized to describe the history of the Pueblo (Example 1); instruct community members about cultural practices and priorities (Examples 2 - 4); or demonstrate components of local ceremonial speech genres (Examples 5 - 6). It is precisely these particular uses of language - instances that have the potential to communicate cultural practices specific to Sandia Pueblo - that are continuously presented by members of the community as potentially dangerous

[4] The published version of this paper will contain only the English glosses of dictionary example sentences to ensure the privacy of community members at Sandia Pueblo.

consequences of writing the Sandia Tiwa language. Thus, the dictionary emerges as a paradoxical object: seen as a tool necessary for preserving the ancestral language, but potentially at odds with locally-held beliefs regarding secrecy; at once a neutral reference work and a potential place for creatively encoding salient cultural information.

It is not the aim of this paper to expose sensitive cultural information included in the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary, but instead to outline what questions are raised by this instance of textual production and examine how to best study the reasons why the authors of the dictionary are continuously selecting particular types of example sentences and what this indicates about attitudes at Sandia Pueblo regarding secrecy, textual practice and the transition to using a written language. The first area of inquiry examines the nature of dictionaries as texts. If texts articulate the social conditions of their production and projected futures, what kinds of understandings about how texts work apply to dictionaries in this case? Why did community members at Sandia Pueblo choose to make the dictionary a central component of the newly-formed language revitalization program and the first text produced in the language? Is the document similar to other dictionaries, in both the Western and indigenous lexicographic traditions? How do tribal members at Sandia Pueblo envision this document being used in the future? The second aim of this study concerns how example sentences are functioning within this document. What types of information are being encoded within illustrative sentences? What do community members authoring such sentences think that their function should be? What are the processes of forming consensus among those creating illustrative material? Hence, this project examines both the content and conditions of the production of written materials in a community newly literate in its ancestral language.

First it is necessary to examine how concepts that are felt to be specifically Sandia are present in such texts. Here, Michael Silverstein's work concerning the relationship between language and culture will be used to frame an analysis of the semiotic concepts involved with encoding cultural concepts in Sandia Tiwa Dictionary example sentences. While space does not permit a full discussion of this framework and how it will be brought to bear on the present project, for the purposes of this paper several examples from his 2004 work "'Cultural' Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus," and 2006 article, "Old Wine, New Ethnographic Lexicography" to illustrate how these theories apply to the present project.

In these papers, Silverstein outlines how cultural concepts are semiotically communicated in language and how methodologies employed by linguistic anthropologists have made possible the study of these phenomena. His analysis details how stereotypic information is invoked and reinforced through discursive interaction, how the use of words and expressions allow interlocutors to index particular systems of knowledge, ways of speaking and the values associated with such forms, often which have institutional support or are framed by other forms by institutional backing. These local forms are therefore made salient indexically in speech situations and are validated or transformed through the same channels.

Although in the latter article Silverstein is focusing on outlining how to go about responsibly studying how elements of culture are apparent in and reinforced indexically through the use of wine registers, he makes explicit that this approach could also be

applied to any examination of how words and expressions index specific social practices, using dictionaries as an example of one such instance, saying:

> To be sure, dictionaries do describe the properties of forms as grammaticosemantic units…[b]ut additionally, through usage notes (synonymy, phrasal collocations including a particular form, etc.) and register alerts ("Slang," "Obscene"), they give normative indexical properties of a lexeme's appropriateness-to and effectiveness-in contexts and/or cotexts of occurrence. Where to use if; what - socially speaking - will happen if you do (Silverstein 2006:13).

This not only makes clear that the intuition that specifically "Sandia" knowledge is being communicated in such a limited form as a dictionary example sentence, but also highlights the need to delineate "coherent patterns" within both illustrative material and lengthier narrative genres, to describe how such forms are designed to encourage particular types of groupness for future speakers of Sandia Tiwa, and also to connect these forms with their current and imagined occasions of use, speech situations that are themselves shaped by larger contextual factors.

Another aspect of Silverstein's framework that illuminates the present project is his discussion of what types of forms and stereotypes are being invoked and transmitted in discursive interaction and associated texts. In these two papers he presents examples of how conceptual frameworks (or "-onomies" as he calls them), are embedded in events of discursive interaction, as well as knowledge about local speech forms, culturally appropriate stances and linguistic ideologies, seen in the Sandia Tiwa example sentences that either explicitly instruct imagined future speakers or index narrative genres in the language.

Additionally, this framework also aids in explaining the presence of cultural concepts in language, in particular, Silverstein's assertion that culturally salient forms are especially evident during ritual acts where their structure is established and their social significance revealed and validated. He states,

> We see that any schemata of cultural conceptualization are ultimately anchored and given felt or intuited 'presence' for their users by the authorizing or regimenting forces that emanate from ritual centers of institutionality (Silverstein 2004:644).

When considering textual practice at Sandia Pueblo, it is appropriate to consider the act of creating example sentences as an emergent ritualized activity, and institutionally sanctioned situation where explicit attention is being paid to the construction and distribution of textual forms that serve as models for future learners of the language and have the potential to regiment behavior, making this an ideal site to study "cultural concepts" in Sandia Tiwa.

An additional component of examining locally-held beliefs involving the dictionary project at Sandia Pueblo is to explore the tradition of lexicography, to compare the reasons behind the creation of such documents and the inclusion of illustrative material compared

to the situation at Sandia Pueblo. In her introduction to the edited volume *Lexicography and the OED,* Linda Mugglestone traces the history of the Oxford English Dictionary, the document cited by Lexicographers as the foundational work in the field. Summarizing the goals of the groups of lexicographers who authored the OED, she states:

> In a role as historian rather than a critic the maker of the dictionaries was henceforth to act as a prime linguistic witness to the shifting nuances of speech, divorced alone from fallible notions of its needful 'fixing' and from the conceptualization of change as inevitable decline Mugglestone 2000:3).

Impartiality, completeness, and a purported aversion to standardization are also reasons given for dictionary creation in the Western tradition by Howard Jackson in his book *Lexicography: An Introduction,* where he emphasizes the possible economic utility of dictionary writing stating in an aside, "There is some benefit in specifying as wide a market as possible for one's product!" (Jackson 2002:162).

At Sandia the utility of dictionary writing lies in the belief that such a document will be useful as a pedagogical tool, and that it can serve as a means of preserving and standardizing a language. This reflects the reasoning behind dictionary creation at Sandia, where community members want to select the "best" word and the "correct" forms in order to make a document suitable for use in language revitalization efforts. Also, no import is placed on writing a dictionary for economic reasons, with the understanding that only community members will have access to the document.

These differences between the Western tradition in lexicography and the situation at Sandia Pueblo are mirrored in the reasons for including example sentences. Authors describing the Western lexicographic tradition typically conceptualize such sentences as tools useful for disambiguating the senses of individual lexical items. In her article, "Time and Meaning: Sense and Definition in the OED," Penny Silva discusses how the Oxford English Dictionary was designed to break the previous association between lexicography and philology by using example sentences to "differentiate between sense and etymology," formally relegating information about word origin to a separate part of the lemma. Charlotte Brewer's piece ," OED Sources," argues that example sentences were included in dictionaries in order to specify the particular source of the word, having been taken from existing texts, which was seen as a way of avoiding earlier prescriptivism in lexicography.

All of these reasons contrast sharply with the experience of many indigenous language lexicographers, who do not have a written tradition to infer etymological information or from which to cull example sentences. As made clear by the examples included above, the example sentence and its English translation comprise the majority of each lemma in the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary. It is precisely this emphasis on the example sentence that leads to their emergence as a highly creative textual form in Sandia Tiwa.

Another facet of examining the ideological aspects of emergent textual practices involves detailing how people at Sandia use written texts as members of a community in the process of developing a written tradition. Here, Robert Moore's 2006 paper,

"Disappearing Inc.: Glimpsing the Sublime in the Politics of Access to Endangered Language," is particularly applicable. In discussing the vast amount of materials concerning language revitalization that have recently appeared, Moore locates two predominant stances toward the creation of textual materials present in discussions by both linguists and activists working within this subfield, memorialization and regenerativity. He defines these, saying:

> The stance of Regenerativity/Resonance…is clearly indexical: here the written marks can be 'read' as pointing back toward an original oral/aural utterance - itself an emblem of its context, a swatch of sociocultural order - or forward, to the next re-utterance or re-animation. Memorialization - i.e., using writing to capture a permanent record of a grammatical structure for posterity - is associated with a now familiar media discourse of indigenous languages as 'endangered species' (Moore 2005:4).

He goes on to outline how these orientations in turn inform decisions about language revitalization programs and relations to text, which Moore discusses in connection to both obsolescent Kiksht and the experience of Native language learners interacting with archival materials collected by the linguist John Peabody Harrington. Moore finds that members of Native communities engaged in language revitalization efforts are interacting with and "consuming" Harrington's texts in ways that were unintended by their author and that differ from ways in which academics have approached his works.

Moore's work contributes to several aspects of understanding the macro- and micro-level ideologies informing decisions about textual practice at Sandia Pueblo as well. The dictionary, as well as other texts produced as part of the tribe's language revitalization program, is depicted as a tool that can be used to resurrect the language from its current state, indexically connecting what are felt to be important aspects of Sandia history and culture to current and future learners. Concomitantly, the focus on producing "good" example sentences and culturally appropriate language learning materials makes clear that including information on "being Sandia" is part of memorializing the grammar of Southern Tiwa.

Moore's discussion of these two stances also helps to theorize the roles of the idealized ancestor and the imagined future speaker. When creating example sentences and choosing between particular pronunciations or constructions, community members at Sandia often refer to "what old timers used to say," and look to the past for ideas for what culturally relevant topics to include. Similarly, by including salient information in the sentences, community members are envisioning the future speakers of Southern Tiwa whose abilities to infer traditional practices from textual materials will be as important a skill as his or ability to correctly infer grammatical information.

These two idealized roles Moore explicates also rest on his discussion of temporality, and the ways in which Native North Americans are engaging with the texts, who is sanctioned to read, speak, and write these languages as well as other aspects of what Moore calls the "politics of access to 'endangered' languages." Discussing Harrington's papers, Moore shows how texts that have been separated from their sites of production can

allow for larger textual distribution within communities and new ways of engaging with such materials. Similarly, the inclusion of salient cultural information in the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary makes possible the future use of dictionary sentences for learning about local practices, instead of using such material only to differentiate senses or model grammatical regularities.

This paper has offered a description of the methodological and theoretical frameworks that should be included as part of an examination of how ideologies involving secrecy are creatively circumvented by including salient cultural knowledge in the Sandia Tiwa Dictionary sentences. These methods include focusing on describing generic forms in the language, describing the mechanics behind encoding cultural concepts in dictionary example sentences, as well as enumerating language ideologies involving dictionaries themselves and the proper use of written material at Sandia Pueblo. These separate analytics make clear that by embedding cultural information within illustrative material speakers of Sandia Tiwa are modeling locally appropriate stances of indirectness and secrecy while indexing emergent ideologies that envision dictionaries as authorless, and examples sentences as neutral tools for sense differentiation. This is accompanied by beliefs that the new textual forms possess regenerative and memorializing properties making traditional narrative genres and cultural practices accessible to imagine future speakers of the language.

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Erin Debenport
University of Chicago
Department of Linguistics
1010 E. 59th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
erin@uchicago.edu