Developing documentary resources in contexts of critical endangerment





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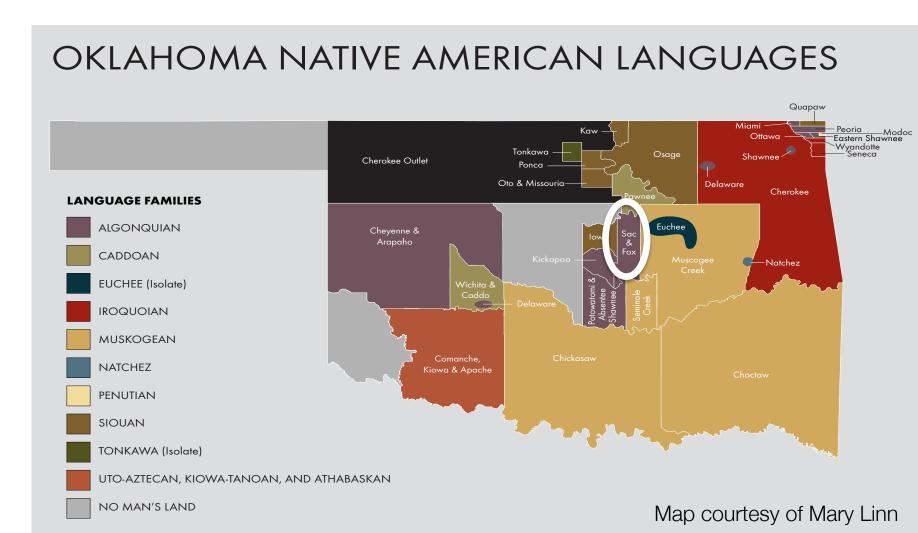


BACKGROUND

Sauk language (Sac and Fox; ISO 639-3: sac)

 Language of Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma (4,000) enrolled tribal members)

- Algonquian language, closely related to Meskwaki and Kickapoo
- Critically endangered: <5 L1 speakers, handful of L2 learners



PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION

Published materials

- Two academic articles (one on orthography, one on phoneme inventory)^{1, 2}
- Pocket-sized phrasebook³
- Concise dictionary (~1,400 words)⁴
- MA thesis on Sauk neologisms⁵
- Community-based materials:
 - Primer, in-house audio and pedagogical materials
- Scholarly materials on Meskwaki (Fox) and Kickapoo
- No reference or pedagogical grammar
- No published Sauk textual materials at time project began

Unpublished materials

- Some extant documentation, but largely inaccessible:
 - Not assembled or developed
 - Stuck in older formats



SAUK

DIGITIZATION, TRANSCRIPTION, AND PUBLICATION OF SAUK NARRATIVES (NSF/DEL; 2014–2019)

Motivations

- Disuse and inaccessibility: The little extant documentation is not going to any apparent use, risks becoming completely inaccessible
- 2. Need for exposure: With active language program, advanced learners need more opportunities to hear and use the language (esp. male speech)

Goal: Preserve and develop historical recordings of firstlanguage speakers of Sauk

PROJECT MATERIALS

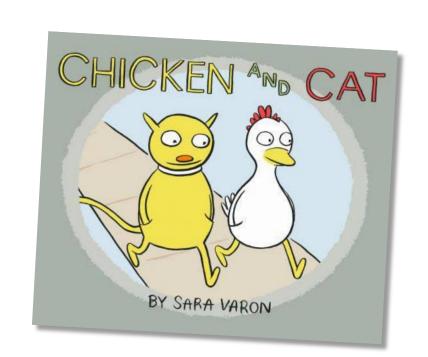
Recording type	Dates recorded	Number	Duration
Legacy recordings	1990s	10	7h03m
Contemporary recordings	2005–2013	47	13h57m
	Total:	57	21h00m

Legacy recordings from documentation projects:

- Contents: Interviews, oral histories, and narratives told by members of the last generation of individuals raised in Sauk-speaking households
- Topics: personal narratives of growing up in traditional Sauk homes during the 1920s and 1930s, account of the Sauk migration to Oklahoma, descriptions of traditional Sauk practices and values

Contemporary recordings from community-based revitalization programs:

 Contents: 48 Sauk-language narrations of wordless storybooks, one two-speaker conversation (53 min.)



"Transcribing recordings of the Sauk language provides the experience of listening to fluent speakers that are no longer living. The benefits of transcribing are numerous and the practice of listening to Sauk recordings multiple times and obtaining meaning and translating it in an accurate way rivals the benefits of a Master-Apprentice program."

-Katie Thompson

Workflow

- Assemble and digitize all materials
 - Organize digitized recordings and create metadata
- Produce oral and written annotations in Sauk and English using SayMore and ELAN software
 - Review transcripts and enter into FLEx database for analysis
 - Publish and disseminate texts in an accessible format

Archive project materials

DISCUSSION

Challenges and responses

- Perceived lack of materials → incorporation of "grey" literature
- Geographic distance -> oral annotations, involvement of learners
- Availability of speakers → oral annotations
- Quality of legacy recordings -> planned digital "cleaning" of selected recordings
- Language ability of annotators -> targeted consultation with speakers, division of tasks among project team members

Themes

- Importance of "grey" literature
- Documentation can support language revitalization efforts:



Nayêshi Williamson Cushing, OK



Tools that are available now minimizes burden on Elders, while still reflecting their knowledge and being useful for pedagogical applications

Provides exposure to meaningful language for learners

Ability to involve team members with differing levels of language proficiency

Even in a highly endangered context, with unknown amounts of documentation, few speakers, and minimal resources, corpus development is feasible and beneficial.

Applications and next steps

- Continue annotation, analysis, and review
- "Clickable stories" on www.talksauk.com
- Published text collection
- Potential expanded Sauk dictionary

00:08:43.401	No	Type1:text	Type2 : translation	Type3 : note
☐ ► ▷S 🥩 Loop Mode Time Interval: 00:08:34.631 - 00:08:43.403	69	ayohi kêhi chîtapiwa neniwa êwâpataki mathenahîkani	here the man sits reading a paper	
0:08:35.000 00:08:40.000	70	kâpi kêhi pathathêni kêko kâpi	the coffee is hot, this coffee	
→ → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → 	71	ôni mana kêhi kwiyathêhêwa kîpôthiwa neshwâshika têtepithâhani okâteki	and this is a little boy riding around on four wheels on his feet	p. 12 English trans: rollerskates
Rate 100	72	anemoha kêhi âhkwapiwa nepêwa	the dog is resting he is sleeping	
Settings	73	mehtekwâkîkiki kêhi mani	this here is the forest	
Automatic playback of mediaCreate missing annotations	74	atêwi ôni nepi, nepi ôni îni nepîki	it has it and water, water and this pond	
Show tier names	75	thîpowi ê-nâhîni ê-kîh- nepîkiki	riverwhat-you-call-itpond	
Colors only on "No." column Navigate across column	76	mana kêhi chîmânani pôthiwa	this is the boat he is riding	
Scroll current annotation to center Configure	77	mana kêhi êtashikîkiyothêwâchi ayohi êhâhkwapiwâchi	this one finished walking around here and is resting	
	78	ôni mana pahkahâkwâha ôni kâshoha kewâki meko nôtamôki meshkimotêhani	and this chicken and cat are still carrying backpacks on their back	p. 13

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