Resources for and about Indigenous languages:

developing a collection

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The issue

► There are various resources for and about Indigenous languages of Montana (MT).

► A brief survey of those resources available online reveal two issues:

  ➢ (i) Information is found in several different places

  ➢ (ii) There are inconsistencies and gaps in the information available

► One possible response to these issues: the development of a collection of resources for and about Indigenous languages of MT.

► The question then arises:

  ➢ What should this collection look like?

Incorporating guidance from libraries

▶ Interdisciplinarity is familiar to linguists; we collaborate with and seek input from other groups and disciplines.

▶ To help navigate, understand, and assess the characteristics of other resource centers, we turn to other disciplines which already focus on the curation and design of collections and ask similar types of questions...

▶ ...such as Library Sciences

Goals of this talk

▶ (i) To survey online resources centers focused on Indigenous languages and ask several questions about curation and dissemination,

▶ (ii) To survey online resources for and about Indigenous languages of MT,

▶ (iii) To incorporate a library sciences perspective and consider what a resource hub for and about Indigenous languages of MT might look like.

What is a collection?

▶ Library Sciences is a discipline that already considers many of the issues/questions that might face a linguist, language activist, or anyone seeking to develop a language resource hub.

▶ A selection of these issues/questions might include…

What is a collection? (cont'd)

▶ <u>Scope</u>: What is the scope of the collection? And how is it identified?

▶ <u>Users</u>: Who are the users? Who are the stakeholders? How are they identified?

▶ <u>Collection structure:</u> What categories are used? Is the structure familiar?

▶ <u>Dissemination/sustainability</u>: Where should the collection be housed? Who is responsible for maintaining it?

▶ <u>Resources</u>: Which resources are most useful? Which are missing/inaccessible and why? How are the resources selected? Who is considered an authority?

▶ <u>Access</u>: Who wants/needs access to which resources?

▶ <u>Effectiveness</u>: How should the collection be assessed?

Resource collections for/about Indigenous languages: a brief survey

Sample resource hubs

ANA Administration for Native Americans
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Ethnologue
Languages of the World

SPOKEN·FIRST
Your Resource for All Language-Related News in Indian Country

UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

OUR MOTHER TONGUES
DISCOVER AMERICA'S FIRST LANGUAGES

Teaching Indigenous Languages

CARLA CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Survey of California and Other Indian Languages

Sample resource hubs (cont'd)

▶ Endangered Languages Project http://www.endangeredlanguages.com

The Endangered Languages Project
A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity

▶ First Peoples' Cultural Council http://www.fpcc.ca
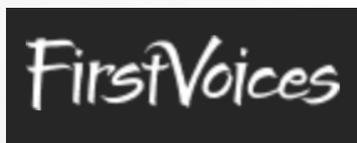
▶ First Voices www.firstvoices.com

▶ Blackfoot Language Resources: https://blackfoot.atlas-ling.ca

Scope

The Endangered Languages Project
A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity

▶ "an online resource for samples and research on endangered languages as well as a forum for advice and best practices for those working to strengthen linguistic diversity."

FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL

▶ "supports B.C. First Nations communities to maintain, preserve and restore their languages by providing funding, training and capacity building, and advocacy for language immersion, collaboration, planning, language and culture, and archiving programs"

Blackfoot
language resources

▶ Resources on dialects of Blackfoot in Canada and the US.

FirstVoices

▶ "Indigenous language archiving and teaching resource"

▶ "provides state-of-the-art technologies, training and technical support"

Users

The Endangered Languages Project
A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity

- ► For researchers, fieldworkers, speakers, communities.
- ► Users can upload materials (following posted content guidelines).

FirstVoices

- ► For "Indigenous people engaged in language archiving, language teaching and culture revitalization"
- ► Mix of publicly accessible and password protected archives
- ► "Teams of fluent Elders and technically savvy youth upload dictionaries, alphabets, songs, stories, words and phrases as well as audio and video to their community archives."

Blackfoot
language resources

- ► "Resources for teachers, learners and speakers of the Blackfoot language"

Collection structure

FirstVoices

The Endangered Languages Project
A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity

- ➢ Map; List of collection languages; Blog; Materials submission & database download
- ➢ <u>Resource categories</u>:
  - ➢ Research and linguistics,
  - ➢ Revitalization,
  - ➢ Materials,
  - ➢ Education,
  - ➢ Advocacy and awareness,
  - ➢ Language/culture/art,
  - ➢ Technology,
  - ➢ Media

- ▶ Archives: text, sound, images, videos, interactive online games
- ▶ Language Tutor
- ▶ Language Lab
- ▶ Dictionary Apps
- ▶ Keyboard App

Blackfoot
language resources

- ▶ Dictionary
- ▶ Grammar
- ▶ Stories

- ▶ Blog
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ List of other resources

Dissemination/sustainability

The Endangered Languages Project
A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity

FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL COUNCIL

- ▶ Affiliated with universities, FPCC, NSF
- ▶ Oversight by Alliance for Linguistic Diversity members, Governance Council and Advisory Committee
- ▶ "the most up to date and comprehensive information on endangered languages"

- ▶ First-Nations run B.C. Crown Corp.
- ▶ Supported by provincial legislation
- ▶ Oversight by Board of directors, Advisory Committee

- ▶ First Voices manager
- ▶ "input from over 50 community partners from across B.C."

FirstVoices

Blackfoot language resources

- ▶ Based at the University of Lethbridge; funded by SSHRC
- ▶ ~30 contributors; two digital dictionary teams
- ▶ Affiliated with the Algonquian Linguistic Atlas (Carleton U)

Indigenous languages of MT

http://opi.mt.gov/programs/indianed/reservationmap.html

Online resources for/about Indigenous languages of Montana

(a look at some sample websites)

Why an online resource center for languages of MT?

▶ State borders do not always align with linguistic borders; languages in MT are members of different language families.

▶ However, an online resource center focused on MT languages can be valuable:

  ➢ Researchers and educators within the state seek access to information

  ➢ Funding, language policies, etc., are often state centered

  ➢ Communities in MT already collaborate – could foster more collaboration

  ➢ Information can be of value to Montanans, the wider public, anyone seeking to better understand linguistic diversity in the state

Next steps

- ▶ Continue with materials analysis
- ▶ Assess the resources that are already out there
  - ➢ Which are most useful? What do users wish they could find?
- ▶ Begin user analysis
  - ➢ Identify and survey potential users to understand needs/wants
- ▶ Identify gaps in resources that may require content creation
- ▶ Approach other potential collaborators (e.g., tribal college librarians)
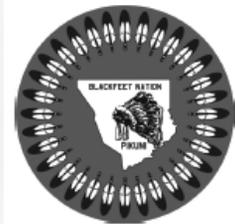
Northern Cheyenne

Implications

▶ This project highlights the value of an interdisciplinary perspective.

▶ It directs us towards a set of guidelines for resource centers for/about Indigenous languages.

▶ This approach is two-directional: the field of Library Science can also gain knowledge from the field of linguistics.

Final thoughts

▶ It is likely impossible for a collection to be everything to everyone.

▶ However, we still see value in having a collection for and about Indigenous languages of MT, particularly one that is designed to be dynamic and flexible.

▶ We seek your input on resource challenges you might have faced, solutions you may have implemented or any other questions, issues, ideas that we should consider in the development of this collection.

Thank you!

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