

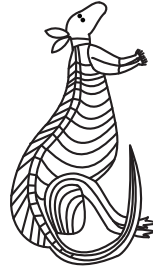


Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici

## Laboratorio demo-etno-antropologico

Lab



Dea

Martedì 20 marzo 2018  
ore 14 -16

Palazzo Marcorà Malcanton, I piano, Sala Geymonat

**GREGORY ANDERSON**

(Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, University of South Africa  
& Freie Universität Berlin),

terrà una conferenza su:

# THE ECOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AND THE THREAT TO LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN ASIA

## Abstract

The distribution of endangered languages in Asia, and the degree to which shift to socially dominant languages has already occurred, are grounded in the types of ecologies of endangerment found. Viewed from the macro-level, one can attribute these differing ecologies to a host of inter-connected historical and socio-political developments that have local or supra-local manifestations and ramifications. Asia differs from areas such as Australia, North or South America where language endangerment is widespread and heavily advanced with regards to their different ecologies of language endangerment: in Asia language shift is typically the result of implementing relatively recent neo-colonialist policies under the guise of national development or identity building strategies, rather than the effects of long-term settlement colonization. However, while the manifestation of these different socio-political ecologies that each favor language loss are indeed different and tied to the political histories of the polities involved, they are also not infrequently historically inter-dependent due to the peculiarities of late 19<sup>th</sup> through early 21<sup>st</sup> century historical events throughout Asia.

Understanding the varied but related ecological circumstances that have led to the present-day situation in Asia can help shape priorities of both specific languages in need of documentation from the scientific perspective, what restorative processes or policies might be implementable for such linguistic communities and why they may or may not work. The presentation begins with the Russian language empire (Anderson 2015), comparing two vastly different parts, Siberia (Anderson 2017a, 2017b) and the Caucasus. The language endangerment situations are rather different across these two due to very distinct local ecologies, the former more akin to the New World/Australian settlement colonies, but the latter quite distinct from that. Also, Soviet ethnic policy and language ideologies had significant impact on countries in interior Southeast Asia, so I turn next to a brief discussion of the ecology of language endangerment there. I then address neocolonialist national development schema that pervade and typify the modern nation-states of insular Southeast Asia/southwest Pacific, here exemplified by Indonesia, and the Subcontinent and Himalayas region represented by India (Anderson and Jora 2017) and finally finish this tour reviewing Asia with a brief discussion on the ecology of language endangerment in Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands. Southwestern Asia is part of the ecology of endangerment that encompasses northern Africa and will not be addressed here. The differing ecologies of endangerment found in these areas have had distinct but profound impacts on both the extent and degree of language shift to the dominant languages but also on the types of restructuring observed in the subjugated languages today. Data used come from fieldwork and published resources.

Anderson, Gregory D. S. 2015. Russian colonialism and hegemony and Native Siberian languages. In C. Stolz (ed.) *Language Empires in Comparative Perspective*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 113-139.

Anderson, Gregory D. S. 2017a. Consequences of Russian Linguistic Hegemony in (Post-)Soviet Colonial Space. In R. Korkmaz and G. Dogan (eds.) *Endangered Languages of the Caucasus and Beyond*. Leiden: Brill, 1-16.

Anderson, Gregory. D. S. 2017b. The changing profile of case marking in the northeastern Siberian area. In Raymond Hickey (ed.) *Cambridge Handbook of Areal Linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP, 627-650.

Anderson, Gregory. D. S. and Bikram Jora. 2017. The linguistic ecology of 'particularly vulnerable' tribal groups in Middle India: State-mediated ethno-linguistic erasure and neocolonialist development. *Texas Linguistics Forum* 60: 1-14.

## Nota biografica

Short bio-bibliography Gregory D. S. Anderson

- AB in Linguistics from Harvard University; PhD in Linguistics from University of Chicago
- Founder and currently Director of Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages and Research Fellow University of South Africa
- Former appointments at University of Manchester (UK) and University of Oregon.
- Former Fellow, National Geographic Society
- Extensive fieldwork experience in Siberia, India, Papua New Guinea, , Nigeria, Micronesia, Vanuatu, Paraguay, Bolivia, Australia, Chile, Canada, Russia (European part), USA, and Zimbabwe
- Specialties in Munda languages, Turkic languages of Siberia, languages of West and Central Africa (Benue-Congo, Chadic, Central Sudanic, Bantu), Papuan languages; Oceanic languages; Tibeto-Burman languages; Salish languages, Algonquian languages; Zamucoan languages; Yeniseic languages; Burushaski; language endangerment, historical linguistics, verbal typology, language contact
- 10 completed and archived major funded language documentation projects supported by among others National Science Foundation (US), National Endowment for the Humanities (USA), Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Documentation Program (UK), National Geographic Society (USA), Volkswagen Stiftung/Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen (Germany) and Christensen Fund (USA)
- 11 Books including *Auxiliary Verb Constructions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; *The Munda Verb. Typological Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; *Language Contact in South Central Siberia*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Current books in preparation include *Language Extinction* (Cambridge University Press) and *The Gta? Language. Texts, Lexicon, Grammar*. (Brill Publishers).
- Over 100 refereed articles published including in edited volumes and journals such as *Linguistic Typology, Oceanic Linguistics, Studies in African Languages, Turkic Languages, International Journal of American Linguistics, Indian Linguistics, Language and Education, Journal of South Asian Languages and Linguistics, Language and Linguistics Compass, Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area, Studies in Language, Mon-Khmer Studies, Ural-Altische Jahrbücher, Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* and *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics*
- Co-star of the film *The Linguists*. Ironbound Films, 2008.