

# **The role of the archive in Indigenous language revitalization: The case of Chumash**

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## **Abstract**

Chumash languages are a group of languages spoken by the Chumash people, the Indigenous people of the central coast of California. Today, all Chumash languages are in various states of reclamation, as all first-language speakers passed in the 20th century. The Chumash people, who today constitute multiple communities, are engaged with language reclamation through working with documentary material in the archive created by American ethnographer John Peabody Harrington. Through an exploration of the different ways that four of these communities have used this archival material, I highlight the need for collaboration between Indigenous community members, linguists, and archivists. By analyzing four unique problems that arise when working with Harrington's papers (orthography development, lack of living speakers, glossing and organization, and cultural groundedness), I argue that the use of the archive in Indigenous language reclamation is not solely about looking for linguistic data, but often about supporting a larger project to reclaim history and heritage as well as language. By making decisions about how to interpret Harrington's notes in pedagogical grammars, language programs, and integration of Chumash languages into the public sphere, Chumash people show how they are agential in remaking and redefining their languages from the archive, as well using it to learn their languages.

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## 1 Introduction

This thesis examines the role of the archive in the creation of Indigenous language revitalization projects where the last first-language speaker has passed away. As more and more Indigenous communities' languages are threatened by language shift brought on by colonialism and contemporary globalization, the use of archival material becomes more relevant with every passing year. Language revitalization, broadly defined, is an umbrella term used for communities seeking to re-valorize their language, reaffirm its place in society, and encourage transmission between generations. Language revitalization projects can range widely in their goals and their approach to revitalization (Hinton 2001: 5).

For Indigenous communities, language revitalization is more than simply a project of maintaining a language's use. By staking a claim to the language of one's people, Indigenous people also assert the claim to their ancestry, heritage, and inhabitancy of colonized lands (see Coronel-Molina 2016, Hinton 2003, Morgan 2009, National Congress of the American Indian 2024, Viatori and Ushigua 2007). They are asserting the importance of maintaining an Indigenous identity in the face of an assimilationist settler-colonial state. Re-valorization of Indigenous languages is the reassertion of the right to exist (Simpson 2017). It is this intersection that leads Indigenous language advocates to label certain language revitalization programs language reclamation, in which Indigenous people are not simply encouraging use of their languages, but reclaiming it from a history of colonial dispossession that originally discouraged use (Hinton 2017).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I use reclamation to refer to programs that focus on simultaneous sociocultural and linguistic valorization, drawing on Leonard's (2017) description of language reclamation as a decolonial process of a community to claim its right to speak its language. I use revitalization to refer specifically to programs where language vitality itself is central. Note that there is significant overlap between the two.

Because of the historical conditions of colonialism that decimated many Indigenous communities in the United States, many Indigenous communities today have access to very limited resources for language reclamation programs. Language reclamation projects shift more towards a simultaneous linguistic-cultural revitalization, in which success is not based on the target language's replacement of English, but limited but active use of the language, as is the case of Kaurua in Australia (Amery 2001). Dr. Leanne Hinton, linguist at the forefront of Indigenous language revitalization, further claims that:

While many would argue that full-immersion programs are the surest route to language revitalization and maintenance, few communities have the resources necessary to see them through. Therefore, in many communities, the local language is taught only as a secondary subject (i.e. as a "foreign" language); other communities, usually those in which there is only a very restricted command of the language, have opted to emphasize the teaching of songs, culturally significant terms, and ceremonies in a local language. Though such education is not geared towards fluency, it reinforces highly symbolic uses of the language. (Hinton 2001: 50)

This thesis approaches the role of the archive in developing language reclamation programs with this framing in mind. I focus on four Chumash communities of the Central Coast of California who all are actively working to reclaim their language through use of archival material created by American ethnographer John Peabody Harrington. As more and more Indigenous communities begin to bring a focus to language revitalization, these papers, as representative of linguistic archival material more generally, serve to complicate the discourse surrounding strategies and theories of language revitalization projects. Because many models depend on the presence of fluent or semi-fluent speakers, such as the Te Kohanga Reo or language nest model used in Māori revitalization, serve to connect fluent elders to young children, many Indigenous California languages like Chumash do not have a clear path forward (King 2001: 121). The California Master/Apprentice program that connects one speaker to one learner similarly depends upon a living speaker (McIvor et al 2023: 725). As Hinton notes, to

effectively create new speakers through revitalization is “to find ways of helping people learn the language in situations where normal language transmission across generations no longer exists” (Hinton 2003: 45). This makes Chumash efforts at revitalization through the archive extremely important to understanding contemporary Indigenous language reclamation projects.

The Harrington papers are housed in the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives (NAA) in Washington D.C. Microfilm copies of the material are also held by University of California Berkeley and by various other universities, archives, and libraries in California. Chumash community members largely access material in this manner, but inherent in this dynamic is a debate about whether these materials should be repatriated to the communities they describe. This repatriation can be more broadly defined as knowledge repatriation, and refers not only to Indigenous communities’ access and control of physical objects, but of cultural knowledge (see Plumb et al 2024 and Dobrin & Holton 2013). Chumash communities hold varied opinions about what knowledge should be publicly accessible; as a middle ground, the material is now only available to view in person at the NAA by non-Chumash individuals; Chumash community members may access it online and on microfilm outside the archives.<sup>2</sup>

Through an analysis of the particular problems that arise when working with the Harrington papers and the solutions that Chumash people have responded with, I argue that use of the archive in Indigenous language reclamation is not as simple as looking purely for

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<sup>2</sup> The dynamics involved in this control of knowledge makes it important to acknowledge my own positionality in accessing these materials. I am a non-Chumash person and accessed Harrington’s papers at the NAA. This ability to visit is a privilege that many do not have, further exemplifying the disparities between the resources available to Indigenous communities in the United States and those with a proximity to power and economic structures such as the university. Drawing on Chetty and Gibson’s (2024) discussion of the individual’s role in facilitating decolonization within the institution, I view lifting up Indigenous efforts at language reclamation and valorizing Indigenous voices within the linguistics department through the subject matter and Indigenous oral histories and testimonies within this thesis as my role. I am originally from San Francisco, California which is Ohlone territory and borders Chumash territory. As someone planning on going into library and archive science, I care deeply about equitable access to archives, the debates surrounding knowledge repatriation, and how these things manifest in the places that I consider my home and hope to use my background in linguistics to do so.

linguistic data, as language revitalization is never solely about language but reasserting an inherent right to land, language, and culture. Through interpretation of Harrington's notes into contemporary pedagogical grammars, language programs, and public revalorization of Chumash languages, Chumash people are not just using archival material to learn their languages, but remaking and redefining them on their own terms.

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 The state of Chumash languages**

The Chumash languages are a family of languages historically spoken by the Chumash people of the central coast of California. There are six attested variants named for the Spanish missions that the speaker communities were closest to (Klar 1977: 1). The languages that are the focus of this analysis' exonyms are Ineseño, Barbareño, Ventureño, and Obispeño. The endonym of each language respectively is Samala, Šmuwič, Mitsqanaqañ, and Tilhini. The Tilhini-speaking community refers to itself as Yak titʷu titʷu yak tilhini (YTT or Northern Chumash) and will be referenced as such. When discussing the source material, the name of the source will be used. When discussing languages and communities, the endonym will be used, drawing from the importance of naming conventions that communities have expressed (see: Leah Mata, YTT, on her frustration with classification of material under Obispeño rather than YTT Northern Chumash in Gehr 2012: 210).

These four communities serve as interesting comparative points because the documentary material available on each of them is largely the same. They are all languages in the Chumash family and are located in the same geographic area, yet their language revitalization efforts have differed significantly, making the role of the source material and the archive an interesting site of

study. The two communities not included in this study, Purisimeño and Cruzeño, do not have unified governing bodies or communities that actively claim heritage today, making analysis of revitalization efforts require fieldwork that does not yet exist. As a result, they are not included in this study, but future research would be fruitful.



Figure 1. Map of Chumash speech communities (Golla 2011: 194)

The Chumash languages are currently considered dormant, sleeping, or in a state of revitalization.<sup>3</sup> There are active language reclamation efforts being spearheaded across multiple communities to revitalize the languages, as the last first-language speakers of Chumash

<sup>3</sup> There are many terms that Indigenous people use to describe their languages after the last first-language speaker has passed. The term 'extinct' to refer to these languages is often considered a poor choice due to its inability to convey the potential for revitalization, in addition to flattening the historical context of linguistic persecution that led to the current situation of Indigenous communities. Preferred terms are 'dormant,' 'in a state of revitalization,' or 'sleeping' (Hinton 2001: 4).

languages passed away at various points during the 20th century. The last speaker of any of the languages was Mary Yee, a Šmuwič speaker and linguist, who passed away in 1965 (National Park Service). Maura Sullivan notes that the study of Chumash languages in the field of linguistics has often relied on the phenomenon of ‘the last speaker’ (McCleod and O’Rourke 2015), using terms like ‘new speakers’ and ‘last speakers’ as a marker of authenticity (2024: 49). In order to avoid reductionist analytical frameworks, the successes of these revitalization programs cannot solely be measured in the production of new speakers, but also in language regaining cultural capital through limited public and private use.

Although there are active efforts at reclamation, they are in various stages of development, partially because of the sociopolitical situation of Chumash communities. Samala is spoken by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, which is the only federally recognized Indigenous group amongst Chumash communities. YTT Northern Chumash are recognized by California at the state level. Both Mitsqanaqañ and Šmuwič have unrecognized and more fragmentary communities (Ranch 2012: 24). Complicated relationships to linguists in academia and access to government and non-profit funding complicates reclamation efforts.

## **2.2 Features of Chumash languages**

In her rendering of a Chumash family tree, Kathryn Klar groups the languages as descendents of proto-Chumash, and then fragmenting into proto-Southern Chumash and Northern Chumash (1977: 38). Tilhini is classified as Northern Chumash, while Samala, Šmuwič, and Mitsqanaqañ fall under the sub-category Central Chumash of proto-Southern Chumash. Mutual intelligibility is debated, but Klar argues that the Central Chumash languages are mutually intelligible while there is no evidence for any other languages (1977: 10).



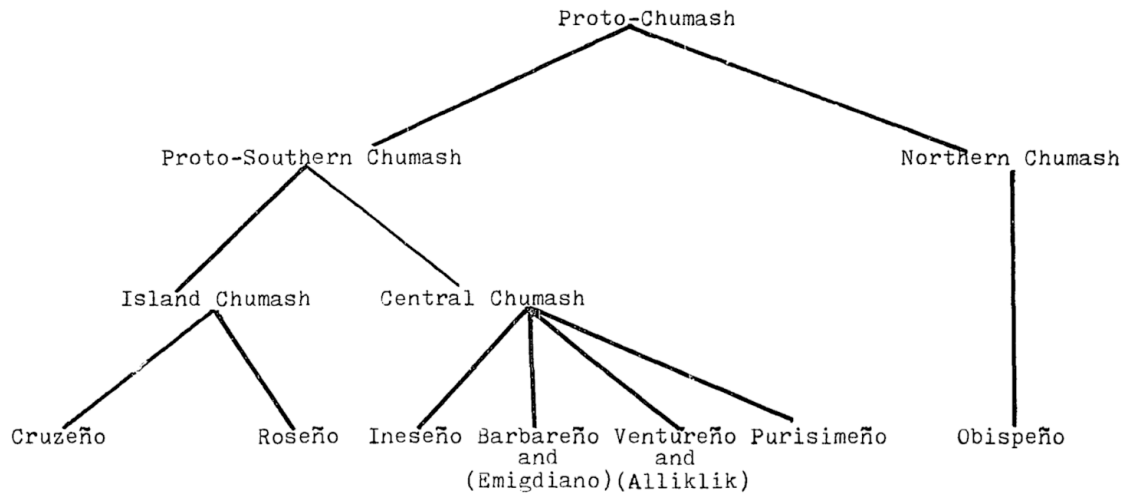


Figure 2. Klar's reconstruction of the Chumash family tree (1977).

Chumashan languages have a Verb-Object-Subject structure. They are highly polysynthetic, with most structures being agglutinative and segmentation of words into morphemes relatively straightforward (Ono 1996: 15). The languages are incredibly phonologically complex, with extensive occurrences of glottalization, vowel epenthesis, vowel harmony, and sibilant harmony (Applegate 1972).

### 2.3 Archival documentation of Chumash languages

The vast majority of our records of Chumashan languages come from the papers of John Peabody Harrington (1884-1961). Harrington, an ethnographer for the Smithsonian Museum's Bureau of American Ethnology, documented an extensive list of Indigenous languages mostly along the West Coast of the United States. He produced an enormous amount of material documenting both language and culture, very little of which was published. Of particular interest to him were the Chumash people and languages (Klar 1991: 381). Within Harrington's notes

stored in the National Anthropological Archives, there are over 80 linear feet and 168 boxes worth of information recorded about Chumash languages (Smithsonian 2011: 114).

Harrington was known for his excellent ear and recorded phonetic information relatively consistently across his notes (Klar 1977: 4). For this project, data will be drawn from across the following sources, representing only a miniscule sample of Harrington's papers:

- A. Obispeño Field Notes (Box 378)
- B. Obispeño Grammatical Sketch (Box 378)
- C. Barbareño Field Notes (Box 410)
- D. Barbareño Grammatical Notes (Box 439-472)
- E. Ineseño Field Notes (Boxes 388-391)
- F. Ventureño Field Notes (Box 509)
- G. Venureño Encyclopaedia (Box 525-526)

Naturally, the vast array of material preserved by Harrington puts Chumash in a privileged position compared to other dormant Indigenous languages that are less well documented. Nevertheless, even with such a robust corpus, the challenges of working from the archive emerge when delving into Harrington's papers.

Far more extensive surveys of this material have been conducted by linguists and community members alike. For a more complete overview of the grammar of Chumash languages, see Beeler 1970 (Šmuwič), Ono 1996 (Šmuwič), Applegate 1972 (Samala), Klar 1977 (historical Chumash), Klar 1991 (Tilhini), Beeler 1964 (Mitsqanaqañ). Rather than aiming to analyze a particular facet of Chumash grammar like past linguists have, my thesis is specifically interested in the intermediary space between the original archival material and the work itself that must be done to interpret it into a parsable dataset for Chumash communities seeking to use it for language revitalization programs. Naturally, the linguistic grammars that have been produced lay in this intermediary space and are important to this exploration, but are not the focus.

### **3 Analysis**

In the following sections, I outline particular problems that arise when working from the archive with these sorts of materials for language revitalization through an exploration of the sources listed A-G above. Broadly, I sketch the particularities of the original orthography vs. contemporary orthography development (3.1), the stagnant nature of the material and linguistic innovation without living speakers (3.2), unconventional glossing and organization of the material (3.3), and developing culturally grounded reclamation programming from archival material (3.4). Each of these sections is intended to highlight both a challenge that comes from the site of the archive, but also the potential for fruitful development.

Making the archive a site of productivity for Indigenous California languages has been an ongoing project by community members, archivists, and linguists for almost three decades through Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival's Breath of Life (BOL) workshop. The weeklong workshop connects Indigenous people, archivists, and linguistic mentors to each other in order for participants to learn about their languages, develop a project, and take it back to their communities ([www.aicls.org/?page\\_id=566](http://www.aicls.org/?page_id=566)). There have been several Chumash participants throughout its running; Leah Mata of YTT has been several times, with her original goal of being to bring back songs in Tilhini to sing to her children (Gehr 2012: 177). The work done at BOL is extremely topical to this analysis, and will be referenced as a part of the ongoing work in the archive.

#### **3.1 Orthography development**

This section will discuss the ways that working from archival material when there is no traditional orthography for the language described in the archival material presents a challenge

for revitalization. One of the particular challenges of any language revitalization effort is developing an orthography that meets the needs of the population using the language. Harrington's notes in the archive help inform this process of development, but also present unique challenges in the interpretation of his own particular notation. How a working orthography is developed when working from Harrington's notes is the subject of this section.

The IPA interpretation of Harrington's notes that appear here are drawn from a variety of sources. Linguistic dissertations previously mentioned (Beeler 1964, 1970; Ono 1996; Applegate 1972; Klar 1977, 1991) and contemporary dictionaries provide much of the groundwork for understanding and predicting the meaning of the notation. Where an IPA interpretation has been taken from a secondary source, it is cited as such. If not cited, it is based on secondary sources' accounting of the patterns that occur in the notes, the phonology of Chumash languages, and my own judgments. However, as the focus of this section is the role of the archival material itself in the development of contemporary orthography, a more in-depth analysis of Harrington's notation and glossing choices would be fruitful for future research.

### *3.1.1 Harrington: A good orthography?*

A 'good' orthography is measured by various means, such as one-to-one correspondence between speech sound and symbol, accessibility to the general public, and today, a consideration of compatibility with technology (Gehr 2012: 215). The orthography Harrington used in terms of one-to-one correspondence was a good one. He uses the same symbols consistently across his notes. However, in terms of the second metric, he uses an array of linguistic glossing conventions both conventional and unconventional. This makes interpretation of the material at times difficult, despite the fact that he is largely consistent with his diacritics across his papers (Applegate 1972: 2). In my discussion of Harrington's orthography, I highlight three major

issues: inconsistent diacritics, the difficult interpretation of glottalization, and challenges for word processing.

In cases of language revitalization where sustained use of the language by non-linguists is the goal, the second feature of an orthography is particularly important. Linda Yamame (Rumsen Ohlone language activist and scholar) comments on the importance of developing an orthography from Harrington's notes on Rumsen Ohlone for her community, as well as compatibility with technology:

Another challenge will be to decide upon an orthography that can be easily interpreted by the average person. I would like to avoid using specialized symbols to write our language and hope to find a way to use the alphabet available on any home computer. This is an important step in preparation for teaching the language to others (Yamame 2001: 431).

This leaves Harrington's papers needing an intermediary between original orthography and one that serves the purposes of the community. As well as the typical challenges to interpreting handwritten notes, Harrington's attempts to document a wealth of phonetic information often had him use diacritics that were not part of a standard repertoire. For example, in example (1) below, he uses the circle diacritic now associated with voicelessness in IPA to indicate something else. Harrington makes note of voiceless echo vowels in other places, but because the vowel does not follow other environments where devoicing of a vowel occurs, it is unlikely this is what is indicated. I speculate that this indicates stress falling on the final syllable, the "less common" between stress patterns that Harrington notes (Barbareño Field Notes). This diacritic is used only sporadically across the papers, making establishing a pattern for interpretation difficult.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| (1) hup`ʃitʃəmʃu | [Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 415] |
| hup'ʃitʃəmʃu     | [IPA]                                   |
| their (2) cradle | [gloss provided by Harrington]          |

Another place where the challenge of using Harrington's orthography emerges is in the case of glottalization. Chumash languages make extensive use of glottalization, through glottal closure before sonorants, glottal release after non-continuants and spirants, as well as glottal stops denoted in the same way after continuants (Applegate 1972: 234). Harrington denoted glottalization broadly with an apostrophe ['], but also uses forward apostrophes [ˈ] and acute and grave accents, as well as the half moon diacritic in a small portion of his Barbareño Field Notes. Some phrases can be relatively straightforwardly interpreted. Both examples below use grave accents above the final consonant, rather than an apostrophe following it. This pattern is easily interpretable as glottalization of this consonant. The acute accents do not seem to indicate glottalization, as the acute accents fall on vowels rather than the consonants Harrington has noted to have glottalized equivalents.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (2) títhísa<br>tit <sup>h</sup> is'a<br>arriba<br>above                        | [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 55]<br>[IPA]<br>[Harrington gloss] |
| (3) títhímò<br>tit <sup>h</sup> im'o / tit <sup>h</sup> imʔo<br>abajo<br>below | [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 55]<br>[IPA]<br>[Harrington gloss] |

However, the use of the grave accent over the consonant does call attention to the fact that beyond very few examples such as these, Harrington transcribed glottalization sequentially rather than as coarticulation, and as such, there is no distinction between glottal closure and release, which is problematic for making decisions about how the language will be spoken today (Applegate 1972: 220). As a result, those studying the papers can make informed guesses about glottalization in Chumash languages, but have no way of knowing if their interpretation is what Harrington heard. Klar argues for a pattern of glottal closure before sonorants and word-final

spirants versus glottal release after non-continuants and non-final spirants, which would indicate that, if Harrington did intend to mark coarticulation in examples (2) and (3), example (3) follows Klar's hypothesis while (2) breaks it (Klar 1977: 234). However, we cannot truly know if Harrington intended to mark a coarticulated *m* in (3) or a glottal stop. As Beeler says, in Harrington's notes it is "impossible to distinguish between pre-glottalized, glottalized, or post-glottalized consonants, and this feature is marked as if glottal closure were simultaneous with the articulation of the consonant, or cluster" (1970: 15).

In other places, differentiating between acute accents and apostrophes is more difficult, and it is unclear what is indicated. In (4) below, an apostrophe marks glottalization, but contains various acute accents still to be dealt with. Here, I believe that the acute accents indicate devoicing on the final *a*, indicating the stress on the marked vowels and lack thereof on the final /a/. Returning to Harrington's mention of echo vowels, this /a/ occurs in the right environment for it to match this pattern, like that of the example he gives of water [ʔoʔo] (Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410).

(4) tikfá'a	[Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 9]
tikfaʔa	[IPA]
aquí	[Harrington gloss]
here	

Below is another example where the notation is even more complicated. Here, acute accents follow a letter, in this case <p>. Chumash languages also make extensive use of aspiration, which Harrington most often denotes with these forward-facing marks. However, vowels are not aspirated, differentiating examples like (4). Also to note is that in his Barbareño Field Notes specifically, he indicates that he uses consonant plus <h> to denote aspiration, as we can see in example (3) (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 55). This IPA interpretation is far

more uncertain than the majority of words, given the extensive use of markings up to interpretation. Cases such as this exemplify the challenges of working exclusively from the archive, in which Harrington's orthography is all one has to work off of.

- (5) p'i''ip''i' [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 3]  
 p<sup>h</sup>iʔip<sup>h</sup>iʔ [IPA]  
 tu dil [Harrington gloss]  
 you tell him

### 3.1.2 Contemporary orthographic imaginings

How have contemporary revitalization programs dealt with the problem of orthography development? Most communities have maintained an orthography that resembles Harrington's, with some changes. Šmuwič Community language program orthography, developed by Richard Applegate, has kept Harrington's orthography other than four sounds. <K> is rendered <q>, <ʃ> as <š>, <tʃ> as <č>, and <ə> as <ɨ>.

The Samala orthography is also designed by Applegate, and he uses the same orthography as that of Šmuwič. These orthographies standardize Harrington's way of marking glottalization. With stops, affricates, and fricatives, they mark glottalization following the sound symbol. With sonorants and word-initial vowels, glottalization precedes the sound symbol (Šmuwič Grammar 2017: 27). This makes pronunciation predictable, rather than Harrington's marking where he heard it. Below is an example of the similarities between Harrington and Šmuwič community orthographies; the orthography is the same although the second <o> has been dropped (See section 3.2.2 for further discussion of the choice to drop it).

- (6) 'ò'ò [Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410]  
 ʔoʔo [IPA]  
 water  
 'o' / 'o' [Šmuwič Community Dictionary 2015: 133]



Mitsqanaqañ's online dictionary, as well as Timothy Paul Henry's dissertation (a full pedagogical designed to be used by the community) uses a similar orthography to Applegate. Rather than the <c> used to represent the alveolar affricate [ts] by Applegate, Henry uses <ts>. Henry also makes the choice to mark nasals and glides with an apostrophe above the symbol to indicate simultaneous glottalization rather than a glottal stop: *ṃ*, *ṇ*, *ỵ*, *w*. Below is an example of how Henry has transcribed the word 'body' from Harrington's notes. As you can see, he uses *ṃ* in place of *m'* (he has also shifted glottalization of the first *m'* to a word-initial glottal stop; why I am unclear but this example is used to demonstrate the development of contemporary orthography not sound precision).

(7) am'am'y	[Harrington Ventureño Encyclopedia: 525]
ʔamam'ə / am'am'ə	[IPA]
'amamə	[Henry 2012: 157]
body	

YTT is the only community that uses entirely IPA as an orthography. They do not offer justification for this choice in their publicly available material, but there are various pros and cons in the choice of any language to use IPA as its standard orthography. IPA of course has a one to one sound correspondence and is well-equipped to demonstrate features like aspiration and glottalization that appear in Chumash languages. On the other hand, the symbols are unfamiliar to the vast majority of audiences making them harder to master and write, are difficult to type on a standard keyboard, and writing out every sound with IPA can be overwhelming for users.

If we return to the third consideration of a strong orthography in the contemporary world, that of a compatibility with computer technology, IPA often is seen to have more pitfalls than positives, as it can be extremely difficult to type on a standard keyboard. For example, Applegate

discusses using word processors when designing the orthography for Šmuwič. Talking about <'>, he says: “Word processors like Word tend to convert this symbol into an open quote as ‘ik<sup>h</sup>u and ‘it’i. I have a strong preference for close-quote ’ik<sup>h</sup>u and ’it’i because it has a closer resemblance to the actual phonetic symbol for glottal stop — ʔ” (2017: 28). The automatic conversion of <'> to <‘> is a real factor when designing an easily accessible while still logical orthography for contemporary use, exemplifying the considerations that go into the metric of ‘good’ for an orthography.

Community members have continually referenced the importance of an orthography for continued language use in their communities. Leah Mata (YTT Northern Chumash) talks about how despite the perception that designing an orthography is just figuring out how to spell things, it is more than that. In response to this she says: “And I’m like no, it’s not. It’s grammar. It’s how are we going to coin new words. It’s all of those things. It’s not just spelling” (Gehr 2012: 215). Without an orthography designed for use by non-linguists, language reclamation is significantly hindered. Quirina L. Geary (Mutsun Ohlone) discusses the process of creating an orthography for her language, saying “You know, it was funny, because our linguist didn't like the way [the orthography] looked. She showed it to another linguist. They were saying, well why don't they use this instead. But we stuck with it. This is what we wanted. And it's just the easiest thing to type. And for them they wanted the symbols, I guess. We're like no, because that turns people off” (Gehr 2012: 199). Because of that orthography, Geary was able to create a Mutsun textbook, language tapes, translated stories (including Dr. Seuss and traditional stories), and a phrasebook. Both of these testimonials exemplify the importance of translating Harrington’s original notes into a functional orthography for revitalization.

### 3.2 Consulting living speakers

The difficulty of interpreting an orthography that is static archival material is compounded by the difficulty of not being able to consult living speakers. In this section, I detail the challenges of creating language-learning resources without access to existing speakers through examples from Harrington's notes, how scholars and communities have addressed these challenges, and how language revitalization programs with existing speaker bases differ.

#### 3.2.1 Places of ambiguity

One of the particular challenges of the lack of living speakers when confirming information found in the archive is in places of ambiguity in the notes. For example, glottalization in the below examples (8)-(11) is marked inconsistently in the two contrasting pairs of imperatives and their negative equivalents when applied to the second-person marker [p/pʰ]. (9) is not glottalized while (11) is. This could be explained by the differing environments following the marker, as (9) is followed by a vowel and (11) by a stop.

(8)	'úwá'a ʔuwaʔa lloa! Cry!	[Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18] [IPA] <sup>4</sup> [Harrington gloss]
(9)	kə'nə'púwá'a kəʔnəʔ-p-uwaʔa NEG-2-cry no lloes! Don't cry!	[Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18] [IPA] [my gloss] [Harrington gloss]
(10)	kult'an'ə kult'an'ə come! Eat!	[Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18] [IPA] [Harrington gloss]

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<sup>4</sup> The plain verb is used without the second person marker *p-* when giving a command (Henry 2012: 255).

- (11)      kə'nə'p'kúlt'en'e      [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18]  
             kəʔnəʔ-p'-kult'en'e      [IPA]  
             NEG-2-eat                      [my gloss]  
             no comes!                      [Harrington gloss]  
             Don't eat!

However, viewing the example below, we see that the marker is again glottalized but preceding a stop (albeit a different one).

- (12)      t'ə'ne'                      [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18]  
             t'əʔnəʔ                      [IPA]  
             habla!                      [Harrington gloss]  
             Speak!
- (13)      mop'tə'nə'                  [Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 18]  
             mo-p'-təʔnəʔ              [IPA]  
             NEG-2-speak                [my gloss]  
             no hablas                    [Harrington gloss]  
             Do not speak!

The reader has no idea if this is marked intentionally, or if there is a pattern between the [p/p'] glottalization that we can follow. This scenario highlights the places where living speakers' input is invaluable. When working with living speakers, examples (8)-(13) could be elicited again to confirm if what Harrington was hearing and transcribing as accurate. We could also elicit a further list of contrasting imperatives with their negatives in order to establish when and why <p> is glottalized. This is a case where the stagnation of the archive is a barrier to contemporary language development. In other communities that have developed language learning materials from archival materials, such as the Wampanoag, they have been able to rely on living speakers of closely related languages (Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project 2024); however, as Chumash constitutes its own family this is not feasible.

### 3.2.2 Reclaiming language for contemporary use

Contemporary community resources have made decisions about how to interpret Harrington's notes regardless of ambiguity. This can be seen in example (6) with the decision to drop the final [o] in [ʔoʔo]. Example (7) also demonstrates this, as Henry makes the decision to make the glottal stop word-initial rather than glottalize the [m] (<am'am'y> to <'amamə>). Ideologies of linguistic purity, i.e. the notion that the only 'authentic' form of speech is that of pre-contact or first-language speech, often permeate the discourse behind language revitalization efforts. This is also a concern of some Indigenous language learners who fear that they would not be able to communicate with their ancestors. In the case of Wergaia, an Aboriginal language of the Wotjobaluk people in Australia that has only survived through documentation from the 1850s, Wotjobaluk students expressed concern about "the authenticity of the reconstructed language. They asked whether traditional Wotjobaluk people would be able to understand them" (Reid 2010: 249).

Leanne Hinton, however, argues for a different vision of language reclamation. Disenchanted by the lack of speakers being produced by formal bilingual education programs, Hinton advocates for language revitalization buoyed by both private and public use, rather than solely in schools (Gehr 2012: 115). One model she advocates for is the Yurok (California Indigenous) Language Pod approach, in which language-learners meet and practice with each other, despite non-fluency. She says explicitly: "I don't care whether language revitalization results in languages that are the same as what they were" (Gehr 2012: 135). This multidisciplinary approach has had much success in the Yurok community, and they now report 11 fluent, 37 advanced, 60 intermediate, and 311 basic speakers of the language up from only 30 people in 1996 (The Yurok Tribe).

Chumash communities have made active choices in shaping the way their languages are spoken in a contemporary context. Hinton highlights the role of the archive in this process in California:

I see language revitalization in the future in California as being a combination of what the archives can give in the way of language knowledge and processes such as language pods that create language use. I'm most excited by people that are using their languages at home with their kids. And I hope that will go on. I see the future as being more and more apprentices from the Master-Apprentice Program starting to use the archives more. But since language revitalization, in my mind, is defined as people using the language again, rather than just learning about it, I hope that people will be able to use Breath of Life and archival materials to bring them back into oral use (Gehr 2012: 135).

The decision to drop the final [o] in [ʔoʔo] is a good example of the ways that community members are using archival materials to bring languages back into oral use like Hinton hopes they will be. Recalling the example:

- |      |           |   |
|------|-----------|---|
| (14) | 'ò'ò      | [Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410] |
|      | ʔoʔo      | [IPA]                                   |
|      | water     |   |
|      | 'o' / 'o' | [Šmuwič Community Dictionary 2015: 133] |

Here, we see the decision to drop the final [o] of Harrington's original transcription. This decision would be impossible to make without Harrington's notes on articulation: "The timbre of the second (voiceless) ò seems to be quite nasal, although the mouth is open. The first syllable seems longer than the second. hukò'ò - my water. hè't'ò'ò - this water" (Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410). In this way, the Šmuwič community, as well as other Chumash communities, are not only using Harrington's notes, but shaping the path of their own language development through the decisions they make on how to interpret them. Regardless of whether or not the language is being spoken exactly as it was, it is being spoken, which is what Hinton argues to be the most important part of revitalization. Through the decisions each community makes, they are

reclaiming their autonomy over their language despite the lack of living speakers, exemplifying the power of language reclamation.

A lack of living speakers also forces language-learners, linguists, and community members to seek out alternative ways of filling the gaps of necessary vocabulary and knowledge. Again calling on the example of Wergaia, Julie Reid (linguist and teacher of a class of Wotjobaluk students) explains how in her class, she and her students would use several methods to create new words where they needed them. The first was borrowing words from neighboring or even unrelated languages (2010: 249). Because Chumash languages constitute their own family, this method is somewhat more difficult. However, there are examples in Harrington's notes in which speakers use borrowings from other California and other North American Indigenous languages. For example:

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (15) | 'axi<br>homosexual, transvestite<br>from Mojave 'ʔaxi' | [Harrington Ineseño Field Notes, quoted in<br>Applegate 1972: 155]       |
| (16) | tʃʷoq'<br>blackbird<br>from Yokuts 'tʃʷak' '           | [Harrington various Chumash languages, quoted in<br>Applegate 1972: 155] |
| (17) | noq'oc'<br>iron<br>from Tejon Yokuts 'nok'oc' '        | [Harrington Ineseño Field Notes, quoted in Applegate<br>1972: 156]       |

As is evident from these examples, language contact between Chumash and other California languages resulted in borrowings into Chumash by the early 20th century, when Harrington did his field work. Applegate cites Tejon Yokuts and Tulareño Yokuts as the most frequent borrowings into Chumash (1972: 154). Today, communities have the option to borrow from these and other languages that show up in Chumash as recorded by Harrington, in part because Harrington also did field work with these language communities. As a result, the archive

can serve as a site for building a contemporary vocabulary, not just through the search for Chumash words, but through the process of borrowing from other languages recorded in the archive, as is the case for Wergaia.

Another option that Reid gives is to borrow from languages unrelated to the language of study. She gives the example of English, and the phonological changes to English words that must occur to be adapted into Wergaia (2010: 250). Chumash languages borrowed many words from Spanish in the early 20th century, and had several English loans as well. Because of the record of these loans, the sound changes required to adapt these languages into a Chumash phonology is established and can be built on to introduce words that the community needs, like ‘text’ or ‘google’ (Reid 2010: 249). Below are several examples borrowed from Spanish:

- (18)      makina                      [Harrington Ineseño Field Notes, quoted in Applegate  
              machine, auto                1972: 157]  
              from Spanish ‘máquina’
- (19)      ’ekwela                         [Harrington Ineseño Field Notes, quoted in Applegate  
              school                            1972: 158]  
              from Spanish ‘escuela’

Henry also attests several words to English borrowings in his grammar of Mitsqanaqañ:

- (20)      ’opxon̄                            [Henry 2019: 95]  
              to be an orphan; to be orphaned  
              from English ‘orphan’
- (21)      ’awtomobil                      [Henry 2019: 76]  
              car; automobile  
              from English ‘automobile’

Harrington’s notes illuminate possible paths forward for adopting contemporary concepts and vocabulary into Chumash. However, as the archival material is stagnant, the development and direction of this adoption is at the discretion of contemporary communities and language learners. This is both empowering in the concrete vocabulary produced through reclamation of



language, but also highlights the places where the wisdom of living speakers could supplement static material.

### 3.3 Glossing and organization

Another challenge unique to the archive is the way that Harrington both organizes and glosses his papers. This requires extensive time to be put into compiling usable linguistic data across the papers as opposed to the efficiency of eliciting from living speakers, and even when compiled, Harrington's irregular glossing makes it extremely difficult to establish the manner in which the language is actually working. Without a trained linguist, archival materials are difficult to work with for community members interested in language reclamation, highlighting the need for intermediary analysis like Applegate or Klar, as well as the importance of the role of linguists and language mentors in BOL.

Harrington frequently glossed Chumash words in Spanish, as many of his consultants were more comfortable speaking in Spanish than in English (Klar 1991: 381). This mix of English and Spanish can create confusing glosses even for a speaker of both languages. When recording lists of words that share a common affix, he often does not gloss the affix itself or glosses each word/phrase irregularly and in a mix of English and Spanish. For example, in the Obispeño Field Notes, he lists two prefixes, *ku-* and *tfo-*. He glosses *ku-* as 'to be about to, ya' and leaves *tfo-* unglossed (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes). Below is a table comparing the glossing of the two word lists.

**Table 1: *ku-* and *t/o-***

(1a) <i>ku-</i> to be about to, ya [already, by now] <sup>5</sup>	(1b) <i>t/o-</i>
(2a) kumaKʃa I am going to die	(2b) tʃu misnahokona vamos, quiero a dormir [Let's go, I want to sleep]
(3a) kumtutʃath`ə ya me voy [I'm leaving now, I'm already leaving]	(3b) tʃustutʃi ya viene [He is already coming]
(4a) kustu'u/o ya está lloviendo [It's already raining]	(4b) tʃostu'u ya está lloviendo [It's already raining]
	(5b) tʃu ts'oqo' vamos a dormir [We are going to sleep]
	(6b) tʃosKsa jamKoKo se en caso mi perro muera... [in case that my dog dies...]
	(7b) tʃostu'u/o cuando llueva; winter [when it rains]
	(8b) `amə tʃoptutʃi cuando vuelvas... [when he returns...]
	(9b) tʃutʃipi'i/o pronto! [soon!, now!]

We can see that *t/o-* clearly communicates a similar grammatical phenomenon to *ku-* of being about to do something or of something already happening. (4a) and (4b) both ostensibly mean the same thing; they are glossed the exact same. Why are both of these forms possible with the same verb but different prefixes? (3a) and (3b) also use the same *ya* + Spanish simple present glossing structure, although this differs from the present progressive that is used for (4). The nuances of what these prefixes communicate exactly are lost in the glossing that is not standard, even across only one language. Additionally, *t/o-* appears to have some additional meanings that

<sup>5</sup> When brackets appear following Spanish in Harrington's notes, they contain my English translation.

*ku-* does not; it appears also to have some sort of subjunctive meaning based on (7b) and (8b). It is also unclear if all of the phrases that Harrington has listed under *t/o-* are in fact using the same prefix. He also transcribes some of the phrases he lists with <tfu>; it is unclear if this is a normal phonological process or he has mistaken this use for something else. Without a linguist to analyze each term and the morphemes that make it up, these word lists are very difficult to use.

Beyond the struggles in interpreting the nuances of meaning here, Harrington also does not indicate why or when each prefix is used. This typifies the struggles that people engaging with the material come up with again. Community members participating in BOL have expressed frustration of this manner with Harrington's notes (Gehr 2012: 206). This problem demonstrates how difficult the archival materials are to work with without a trained linguist and the need for intermediary analysis.

Much of Harrington's field notes are also written as a narrative with linguistic data mixed into it. For example, in the Ineseño Field Notes we find the following passage.

- (22) The harpoon is called *tiwoj*.  
*nokjatiwoj a'okowojotf*, voy a fizgar salmon. [I am going to get salmon]  
*maktiwoj*, mi jarpon. [my harpoon]  
 They used a *palo de kwe'* and the point was of *hueso* [bone]. It was fixed in the hole in the end firmly with *brea*. Used for salmon only.  
 The *tiwoj* was used here by the *pescadores* [fishermen]. *Habia un Indio viejo Chumash aqui llamado konojo* [There was an old Indian Chumash man here named *konojo*] at Arroyo Hondo . He had his *tiwoj* there and a modern boat. Inf. never saw a *cayuco*. *Ya se habia acabado todo* [Everything had already finished]. He used the *tiwoj* for fishing in the sea.  
 (Harrington Ineseño Field Notes: 391)

In this passage, we can identify the beginning of a possessive pattern:

- (23) *tiwoj*  
 harpoon
- (24) *mak-tiwoj*  
 POSS.1-harpoon

However, within this whole passage we only have one example of this pattern. In order to flesh out a complete understanding of the possessive, we would need extensive wordlists to understand what kind of possessive this is and establish phonological patterns. With the narrative structure of the notes, these examples have to be found through meticulous reading of all material. As a result, combing through the papers to identify sources of linguistic data is extremely time consuming. This is another challenge of working from archival material, rather than elicitation from speakers, which is far faster in creating these kinds of lists. This passage also demonstrates the need for understanding both English and Spanish to decipher the information about Chumash language and culture encoded in the notes.

### **3.4 Cultural groundedness**

In this section, I explore the ways that cultural knowledge is encoded in Harrington's notes and how this information is incorporated into contemporary Chumash language reclamation projects to demonstrate the ways that using the archive is never exclusively about gathering linguistic data, but tied to cultural and political revitalization of Indigenous communities. Cultural groundedness refers to the ways that language and culture are inherently tied in language reclamation projects because of the sociopolitical situation of Indigenous communities in the United States.

#### *3.4.1 Two sides of reclamation: language and culture*

Language revitalization is in many ways a political statement for Indigenous communities. By staking a claim to the language of one's people, Indigenous people also assert the claim to their ancestry, heritage, and inhabitancy of colonized lands. As a result, the stakes of

language revitalization in Indigenous communities, including Chumash ones, are often much higher, and intimately tied with an assertion of the importance of maintaining cultural traditions in the face of an assimilationist settler-colonial state. It is this paradigm that leads Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson to say that “cultural revitalization is a related set of skills and activities and often overlaps with language revitalization efforts among Native communities” in her work *As We Have Always Done* (2017: 21).

This is the context in which Chumash revitalization programs exist. Henry discusses the ways that he has chosen to integrate the cultural dimension of Mitsqanaqañ into his pedagogical grammar:

To study Ventureño without making it relevant to culture is to present the language as sterile with no ties to any real human experience. To present Ventureño Chumash culture without considering how Ventureño Chumash thought is reflected in the Ventureño language is to have a very impoverished understanding of how the Ventureño people understood, interpreted, and acted on the world around them. Therefore, this work makes a serious effort not to separate the language from the culture.” (Henry 2012: 49)

Henry states that his goal for his grammar is to allow for learners to engage with source material, largely from Harrington’s notes, to be able to read narratives, myths, instructional texts, Catholic confessions, translations of other languages, prayers, and advice. While this goal is different from speaking in everyday life, Henry offers engaging with one's ancestors as a legitimate form of language reclamation.

The unique situation of Indigenous languages makes forms of non-traditional language reclamation that have as much to do with culture as language language revitalization unique in these communities. L. Frank, one of the founders of Breath of Life and a Tongva/Ajachmem artist, writer and tribal activist, has said about motivations for learning her own language: “When I get to the land of the dead, I need words to get to where I need to go all the way” (Gehr 2012:

70). Language reclamation often has higher stakes spiritually as well as politically, which cannot be achieved without an inherent cultural groundedness.

#### *3.4.2 Cultural & personal information encoded in Harrington's papers*

Because of the unique positionality of Indigenous languages in today's world, reading Harrington's notes and working from the archive is never as simple as looking purely for linguistic data, in the same way that language revitalization for Chumash communities today is never about the language divorced from culture. Harrington's notes contain a plethora of information about the Chumash communities he was working in that goes beyond purely linguistic information. As demonstrated by example (22), much of the work is written in informal narrative structures. Within the papers, culturally grounded information can largely be separated into two categories: people and community structure, as well as information about way of life.

##### People and community structure

The information that Harrington includes about Chumash individuals and community structure can allow for Chumash people today to trace their lineage to the early 20th century. It provides documentation for who knew who, who was related to who, and who knew what. The main way that this information was documented by Harrington is through his attestation of where he got his information from beyond his consultants. He includes information about how people are related, who told who what, and where the information he is documenting originated from.

In the Obispeño Field Notes, Harrington names the person and place where is getting his information: Juan Solano at the County Hospital in San Luis Obispo in 1912 (522-1). He makes reference to several people who speak other California Indigenous languages:

- (25) Lorenza Cooper very old woman lives on Los Caryacos knows Luiseño language (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 454)
- (26) Josépha Dórame is an old woman. Lives at Poso talks from San Juan Bautista language lived here many years (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 454)

Each of these examples gives names for community members, as well as information about how they fit into the community and the wider geographic organization of Indigenous California people. He then attests information about other Chumash people to another Chumash man, Ignacio Cordoba, for who he also gives his occupation as janitor at Arroyo Grande (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 522-9). Cordoba is the source for the information about several individuals that Juan Solano gives and Harrington records, including:

- (27) Manuel Morales is a very old Indian living at Port Hartford, Ignacio says (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 523-10)
- (28) Luis Morei died 9 years ago (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 535-21)
- (29) Miguel Avila, father of Juan Avila... (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 536-21)

Attestation of information is important in crediting the Chumash people who made possible the existence of the archival material that reclamation is based on today. Despite the fact that the papers are the documentary work of Harrington, he would have nothing without his language consultants. The encoding of this kind of information also allows Chumash community members to connect to their ancestors named in the papers who provided information. For example, Leah Mata of YTT started researching Tilhini in the 80s, contacted linguist Katherine Klar, and was told that her work on Tilhini was based on information that Mata's grandmother had given to Harrington (Gehr 2012: 206). Mata's study of Tilhini is deeply personal both because of her connection to her community, but also because of her grandmother's presence in

Harrington's papers. In this way, the archive can serve as a site of reclamation of heritage and culture through the names and places entombed in the notes.

L. Frank offers a quote on the archives as a linguistic and cultural resource, with Indigenous people today seeing themselves and their families reflected in archival material:

And they have people come through there and to relate and make the archives come alive. You know, "My great-great grandmother made that." "My great-great-grandfather said that." The people who house the tapes, they saw the generations connecting... It was good because all those people who collected that information in whatever format, you know, now this is why they did it. Or this is why their informants, consultants, gave them the information. (Gehr 2012: 87)

There are many more examples of Harrington attesting information to those who provided him the information, first hand or through several intermediaries. Similar to the Obispeño Field Notes, the Barbareño Field Notes also includes a list of names of consultants and their addresses. He also includes a note who knew what about the priests and missions (Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410-2). In one case, working with a man named Julio Ignacio, he describes a family and its members:

- (30) Maria Ignacio (Ind. name forgotten) was the mother of José Ignacio. Died 20 or more years ago. José Ignacio used to peddle pears on the streets, etc... José had an uncle named José Venadero. He was a deer hunter with esa jara [this rockrose bush]. He se perdió en la sierra, no le encontraron [He got lost in the mountains, they never found him]. (Harrington Barbareño Field Notes: 410-2)

In the Ventureño Field Notes, he also includes a list of names, addresses, and time of recording the information. When working with a Mitsqanaqañ man named Juan Ventura, he situates his position in the community through his relatives, like examples (29) and (30). For example:

- (31) Juan has a brother, two years elder than he, who went off to the encinas and has been gone two years now and nobody has heard from him. Juan does not know what show this was. (Harrington Ventureño Field Notes: 509-1)



Another consultant was Fernando Librado. Harrington's notes with Librado are written in the first person, in which Harrington describes the journey they took together. He talks about dinner, surveying the ranchería, and visiting various people (Harrington Ventureño Field Notes: 509-2). In the Ventureño Encyclopedia, Harrington also frequently (though not always) attests the entries to specific consultants. As is evidenced by the examples above, Harrington's notes contain far more than pure linguistic data. In this way, using these notes operates in tandem with larger Chumash reclamation efforts to reclaim Chumash history and heritage, as well as language. The following example exemplifies the real impact that the record of personal and cultural information can have on contemporary communities:

- (32) 16 years ago Ignacio Cordoba helped dig 62 bodies from old Indian mission graveyard on north side of mission between mission and Chorro St. Those that had skull with natural sufiial cross on the head were pronounced by priest to be xion, others not. Were buried in S.W. corner of present cemetery, without names, al together, no stone or any thing to mark. Coffinless, wrapped in blanket. (Harrington Obispeño Field Notes: 948-3)

In the text, Harrington accounts for a mass grave of YTT people buried in the mission's graveyard. Through the account that has survived in the archive, Chumash communities can reassert the dignity of their dead that have suffered atrocity at the hands of Spanish colonialism (and later American colonialism). The description of each person buried "without names" with "no stone or any thing to mark," "coffinless, wrapped in blanket" is a haunting reminder of the atrocities Indigenous communities have faced, as well as a testament to the endurance of contemporary communities who are using the archives to reclaim their history.

### Way of life & culture

The second broad type of cultural information encoded in Harrington's papers is information about way of life, including traditional arts, how people sourced food, and more.

Recalling example (22) about the *tivoj* or harpoon, the reader can glean information about how Samala people used the harpoon, the role of fishing in everyday life, and usage of canoes. In the Ventureño Encyclopedia, there is also a description of a canoe called “Palatino’s Canoe” that includes anecdotes about the specific type of canoe. For example, the notes describe how a man was once killed by one running into his groin, and that is why the canoes’ hulls are now blunt (Harrington Ventureño Encyclopedia: 525-4).

Information about traditional dance shows up frequently across the notes. In the Ineseño Field Notes, there is a map of the fiesta de [festival of] Santa Inés, which is described as “two rows or lines of ramada and between was the dance ground” (Harrington Ineseño Field Notes: 391-3). The Ventureño Encyclopedia also includes an entry that reads: “The Indians never used yellow paint in their dances. They used only red, black and white paint in their dances” (Harrington Ventureño Encyclopedia: 525-4).

Weaving practices similarly appear frequently. The Barbareño Field Notes include an entire section on weaving vocabulary and the Ventureño Encyclopedia similarly includes dozens of entries on basket-making. While this information certainly provides opportunities for cultural revitalization, Hinton also discusses how community members in the archives (specifically during BOL) have an agential role in shaping the information preserved:

The participants will sometimes have information to add to what the archives already hold. So like who somebody was, the name of somebody, a remembrance of the event, you know, sometimes, somebody who was a child present when an anthropologist was there and can say something about that. And I think sometimes with the physical materials at the Hearst Museum, people will know something about the, like what a particular design of basket meant or something like that. (Gehr 2012: 133)

Through working with the archives, communities can both reclaim traditions that may have been lost outside of the material, but also intervene in the way that their history is

preserved. This process mirrors the way that while language is being recovered from the archive, community members today are also shaping the course of the language's development. Language and culture are inherently tied in reclamation efforts.

#### **4 Contemporary reclamation efforts**

A discussion of how communities have used archives has been inherent to the analysis presented above of the archival material. However, each community has taken different approaches based on the material and the resources available to them. An overview of each community's language reclamation efforts is given below in order to demonstrate the wide range of possibilities for what a language reclamation program can look like, based on largely the same archival material.

##### *4.1 Samala*

The Samala language, spoken by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, is the only federally recognized community out of the four presented here. This means that they have access to federal resources that other groups do not. For one, the tribal government governs not only enrolled members but a physical reservation space. They also have an economic arm, Chumash Capital Investments LLC, that is able to invest in ways that other groups are not.

The main pillar of Samala language revitalization is the Language Program, which was funded by an Administration of Native American (ANA) grant only available to federally recognized groups, with the goal of establishing a speaking curriculum. The program, established in 2008, was guided by longtime partner of the community Dr. Richard Applegate, who wrote his dissertation on Samala and has been continually mentioned throughout this thesis. He is also responsible for the published dictionary, *Samala-English dictionary: a guide to the Samala*

*language of the Ineseño Chumash People*. The language program began with six Language Apprentices hired by Culture Director Nakia Zavalla and Applegate, and expanded to bring on more apprentices in 2013 (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, [chumash.gov](http://chumash.gov)). All of this work, from dictionary and grammar to language teachers and curriculum development, was based upon Harrington's notes, but was brought to fruition because of access to resources to fund its development.

Also in 2008, California Assembly Bill 544 passed to establish a separate teaching credential for teaching Native American languages in California schools. Federally recognized tribes, such as the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, are able to test teacher applicants on their language and received tribal sponsorship for a teaching credential from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing ([chumash.gov/culture](http://chumash.gov/culture)). Similarly, in 2015, AB 163 was passed to allow for applicants to teach courses in Native American languages and culture in California public schools. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians currently has two state-credentialed language teachers, Nakia Zavalla and Kathleen Marshall, and four cultural and community teachers, Levi Zavalla, Tani Zavalla, Isabella Marshall and Sofia Mata ([chumash.gov/education](http://chumash.gov/education)). Again, these language teachers received their own instruction in Samala from material based on Harrington's notes and mediated by Applegate.

There are also ongoing efforts in the community to make the language enter the public sphere. One such initiative is Samala road signs. Another example of Samala entering the popular sphere is through media; Karissa Valencia, an enrolled member of the community, was a part of creating a Netflix show called "Spirit Rangers" which depicts a fictional Samala Chumash homeland and incorporates Chumash language and culture into it (Sullivan 2024: 32).

#### 4.2 YTT/Tilhini

The Yak tiṭvu tiṭvu yak tilhini (YTT) community is recognized by the state of California, but not federally recognized and therefore ineligible for the same benefits as Santa Ynez. They have a nonprofit organization instead, YTT Northern Chumash Nonprofit, which is a 501(c)(3) state and federal recognized organization that serves as the legal entity for yak tiṭvu tiṭvu yak tilhini Northern Chumash Tribe (YTT Northern Chumash Tribe, [ytnorthernchumashtribe.com](http://ytnorthernchumashtribe.com)).

The community has ongoing efforts at creating speakers through online language classes and mentorships. Based on the needs of the community, online language resources make more sense to prioritize, as opposed to the Samala community, which has access to physical land. Here, Leah Mata presents her hopes for the future for the possible directions that language revitalization could go:

...because our tribal community is very scattered, I think using technology, such as creating interactive lessons that could be accessed through a tablet or computer, where it could be graded or kind of interactive in that if you miss something, it kind of shows you why or how, with different levels of lessons. And I would love to see—and this is really futuristic—I would love to see it move into a way where we could be creating lessons that are like at a three or four-year proficiency that would allow our young students to use that as their language criteria for accessing four-year universities. (Gehr 2012: 238)

YTT also partners with California Polytechnic State University of San Luis Obispo. Through their partnership, not only does the community receive resources to be able to continue language revitalization efforts, but students at Cal Poly are made aware of the land they are living on and of Chumash history and culture, indirectly contributing to the goals of reclamation of land and culture, as well as language.

However, without steady sources of funding, the community still faces challenges. For example, linguist Dr. Katherine Klar has been a longtime resource for the community on Tilhini. Mata says: “When we talked to her [Klar] recently about trying to secure funding to hire her so

that we have more access to her. But it's hard to come up with money, and funding is tight and competitive. So if we don't have the funding, then that's the only time I have access to her is through Breath of Life" (Gehr 2012: 230). It is only through BOL that the community has guaranteed access to that linguistic resource; the language is not accessible because of the financial barriers in the way. Mata has been to BOL many times since its inception, and the gap in pedagogical resources developed and published in Samala versus Tilhini exemplifies how it is not for lack of trying or commitment that communities are in different stages of revitalization despite similar material to work from.

YTT knows intimately the importance of the archive and the people who are able to interpret the data into parsable linguistic information. On their homepage, they have a section dedicated to Harrington and his work ([yttnorthernchumashtribe.com](http://yttnorthernchumashtribe.com)). They also have a dedicated page to Rosario Cooper, the YTT woman who Harrington obtained most of the data recorded on Tilhini from ([yttnorthernchumashtribe.com/language-development](http://yttnorthernchumashtribe.com/language-development)). They acknowledge and pay respects to their ancestors, those who worked to preserve the language, and the documentarian.

#### 4.3 Šmuwič

The Šmuwič community is not state or federally recognized. In fact, within the 7,000 square mile region of the Chumash heartland (south-central region of western California between Malibu and San Luis Obispo), there are at least 16 federally unrecognized groups self-labeled as bands, tribes, or councils (Ranch 18). Two of the biggest are the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation (CBNC), a multi-community organization whose ethnicity has been subject to intense debate as core members can neither demonstrate genealogical inheritance nor historical documentation and the Chumash Barbareño-Ventureño Band of Mission of Indians (BVBMI) (Ranch 93). Scholar Kohanya Jessica Ranch says:

The Chumash social network is, instead, comprised of diverse and mobile groups and individuals in constant flux throughout political, ideological and geographical spheres. This is especially the case for urban Californian Indians who do not live together on a permanent land base/reservation, but embody histories of displacement and must integrate available and changing public and private spaces to organize, instill their practices, and accommodate fluid schedules and physically distanced tribal members. (Ranch 19).

This makes revitalization for Šmuwič and Mitsqanaqañ communities both difficult to facilitate for Chumash people themselves, but also hard to track the initiatives taking place. However, in the case of Šmuwič, Applegate has also partnered with the Šmuwič Language School at Wishtoyo's Chumash Village, a part of the nonprofit Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation (similar to the structure of YTT's). Applegate wrote both a Šmuwič-English dictionary, as well as a grammar for the language ([mati-waiya.squarespace.com/cp-chumash-language](http://mati-waiya.squarespace.com/cp-chumash-language)). This demonstrates that it is entirely possible to develop similar pedagogical material across Chumash languages based on Harrington's notes, but it is securing funding and connections with linguists that ultimately facilitate the use of archival materials. Anecdotally, Dr. Mara Sullivan, community member and scholar, says:

Currently, our community has a variety of ways that the language is being used. Several Chumash language classes are taught, sometimes through local Native American resource groups or as private classes. Other people, like myself, do their best to learn the language on their own and maybe share things or interact with other speakers here and there but not in an organized way. (Sullivan 2024: 32)

Despite the fact that the organizational, political, and financial situation of Šmuwič people and community, they are still finding ways to reclaim their language, based on Harrington's documentary material.

#### *4.4 Mitsqanaqañ*

The Mitsqanaqañ people are in a similar state to Šmuwič, as discussed above. Nevertheless, there is an online dictionary ([ciapps.csuci.edu/ChumashDictionary/Home/Search](http://ciapps.csuci.edu/ChumashDictionary/Home/Search)) that is available free for open-access use. Timothy Paul Henry's pedagogical grammar written for his dissertation is also a testament to the ongoing efforts at creating accessible resources to be used to learn the language. Henry operates under the BVBMI mantel and has himself served as a Mitsqanaqañ mentor at BOL several times, supervised fieldwork in Mitsqanaqañ communities, and created a variety of pedagogical lessons and resources (Henry 2012: xi).

Henry's dissertation, published through the University of California Santa Barbara, also indicates the ways that university resources and funding can be mobilized for the sake of language revitalization in the communities whose land the universities occupy. However, it is only through this access that Henry is able to do work to support the community. Access to physical archives and archival material is often difficult because of travel costs and working full time, and it is through the university that Henry has gained access to it. Another dissertation out of UCSB by Jean-Michel Valentin Ricard in 2023, entitled "Securing State Support for Indigenous Language Revitalization: Lessons from Aotearoa New Zealand to the Chumash Homelands" speaks again to the mobilization of university resources, as well as an increased cultural consciousness of the situation of language revitalization in Indigenous communities.

## **5 Conclusion**

While the last first-language speakers of Chumash languages have passed, through use of the archive contemporary communities are remaking the language of their ancestors into their own. Working with data purely from the archives presents a unique set of opportunities and



challenges alike. In this thesis, I have identified four major challenges in Harrington's notes and how Chumash people today are taking these challenges in stride to take steps towards language reclamation: orthography development (3.1), lack of living speakers (3.2), glossing and organization (3.3), and cultural groundedness (3.4). Through an integrated approach utilizing cultural groundedness in language revitalization, communities are revalorizing their languages in the private and public sphere. Use of the archive is not simply mining for linguistic data, but reclaiming heritage and reasserting the right to exist authentically as an Indigenous person.

In Section 4, I further demonstrate how difficult these initiatives are to continue and the perseverance of community members in searching for the resources to continue to fund them. One salient aspect that arises in this conversation is the role of the university in supporting these projects. Henry, whose thesis was supported by and published through the University of California Santa Barbara, has argued that universities in fact have an obligation, not just the ability, to support this kind of work (Henry 2012). In *Decolonizing Linguistics*, Anne Charity Hudley pushes for decolonization at the institutional level, which includes acknowledging the Indigenous land and knowledge that universities are built on (2024: 448). Within linguistics departments, she calls on departments to "actively and purposefully recruit and retain Native linguists as faculty and students" (Charity Hudley et al, 449). She gives the example of the University of Arizona's American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) and the University of Oregon's Northwest Indian Language Institute as examples of this work already being done (Charity Hudley et al, 450).

The difficulty in pursuing Indigenous language reclamation projects logistically further demonstrates the need for collaboration between community members, linguists, and archivists. Breath of Life exemplifies this in many ways, showing that this collaboration is possible and can

be successful. Despite the fact that all four Chumash communities have very different geopolitical positions today, they have, in various ways and to different extents, been able to reclaim their languages from the archive. By exploring how they have done this, I hope to highlight the essential function of archives for language revitalization and how language ideologies and lived realities affect the process of this language reclamation.

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