How Universities Can Strengthen Australian Indigenous Languages. The Australian Indigenous Languages Institute

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Abstract There is a considerable and growing interest in Australian languages, which are now widely used on ceremonial occasions in parliaments and other national institutions, as well as at sporting events. In the educational sector, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) offers a framework for Indigenous languages, while New South Wales now has Australian languages syllabuses which cater for all levels of schooling. However the severe lack of trained teachers and resources often means that the actual teaching of these languages is limited. Universities have a role to play in breaking this cycle, not only through their traditional and ongoing research into the maintenance and revival of Indigenous languages, but also through the increased provision of specialized teaching resources. It is proposed that these aims can best be achieved through the creation of an Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI). This will offer a means of developing university courses in languages that are accessible and supportive for Indigenous people and that will provide in-depth teaching of languages and related topics such as linguistics and revival and maintenance processes. By drawing on the resources of a number of universities, it can use different modes of course delivery, including summer and winter schools, online and regular semester courses, to award tertiary qualifications to prospective teachers. AILI is based upon the premise that universities are committed to Australian Indigenous languages and are prepared to play a far greater role in sustaining them.

Keywords Indigenous languages · Australian universities · AILI · Language revival · Language maintenance · Yuwaalaraay · Gamilaraay

> When are Australian universities going to do something more about supporting Indigenous languages? When are they going to set up courses? Kevin Lowe, Gubbi Gubbi academic (personal communication, 2005)

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1 Introduction

This chapter[1] proposes a larger role for Australian universities in teaching Indigenous languages. After summarizing the current state of Australian languages it considers features of revived languages, some language revival programs and their hopes and outcomes. For many languages the current outcome is simple language use, emblematically powerful but not substantially communicative. The chapter then describes one initiative which aims to address these issues, the Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI), and outlines the essential role universities can play in language revival (LR) and language maintenance (LM), as well as identifying the challenges for universities in this area.[2] While the aims of AILI are to support both language revival and language maintenance, the chapter focuses on revival, since the author has worked extensively on the revival of Yuwaalaraay [YR] and Gamilaraay [GR].

Universities, by researching and teaching languages, can help revived languages be more traditional, more internally consistent and more extensive. In the early stages of revival the research and teaching are largely done by committed individuals, but this approach is not sustainable. Although the numbers wanting to learn the language increase, the original teachers age and sometimes move on, which leaves a vacuum. The consequence of this process is that only simple language comes to be known and used.

The Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI) is a structure which will enable cooperation between universities, easy cross-institutional enrolment and flexible course delivery, thereby opening up language courses to many more students. This will give Indigenous language courses more enrolments, and make them more sustainable.

A key assertion of this paper is the need for a broadly based team, including linguists and universities,[3] to be involved in LR programs. While extensive work by linguists has been the key to many, if not all, successful language revival programs, this contribution has often not been recognized, as has the largely voluntary work that linguists provide. Lack of recognition can also stem from the fact that linguists are often the lead authors of descriptions of revival, and may be reluctant to give due credit to their own contribution to the process. The consequence has been the persistence of the implicit, false, assumption that LR is simple and does not need expertise, so this need is often neglected in revival planning and funding.

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[1] This chapter is an adaptation of a presentation at the 2017 LCNAU colloquium in Adelaide. Special thanks to Cathy Bow for extensive comments on earlier drafts. Thanks are also due to the LCNAU executive which sponsored the author's attendance at the colloquium, subsequent to his receiving the 2017 Patji-Dawes award.

[2] Amery (2007) and Gale (2011) provide an overview of the involvement of universities in teaching Indigenous languages. Amery also covers other aspects of university involvement in these languages and Gale looks at the role of TAFE in teaching them.

[3] Christie (2008) gives a detailed account of cooperation between Yolngu people and Charles Darwin University.

The revival and maintenance of Australian languages is an urgent task and universities have an important, indeed essential, role to play in that revival and maintenance. They are the places where most research is done into the languages, where high level learning occurs, particularly of revival languages, and where most research into revival and maintenance takes place. It is from here that a new impetus needs to come.

2   State of Australian Languages

While there can be discussion about the details, there is general agreement about the current state of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) languages—languages spoken in Australia since before European colonization. The two National Indigenous Languages Surveys (NILS), the first in 2005 (McConvell et al. 2005) and the second by Marmion et al. in 2014, give an overall picture and also map the direction of change. The second report (Marmion et al. 2014, p. xii) puts the number of Australian Indigenous languages at "over 250" and found a decline both in the number still spoken (down from 145 to 120), and in the number considered strong (down from 18 to 13). Hinton (2001, p. 3) points out factors which lead to such language endangerment, including in Australia: "A language that is not a language of government, a language of education, nor a language of commerce or of wider communication is a language whose very existence is threatened in the modern world."

However, while for many years the situation was universally one of decline, there has recently been a change. NILS states that, of the 100 or more "severely endangered" languages "perhaps 30 or more are seeing significant increases in levels of use as a result of language programs." (Marmion et al. 2014, p. xii).

3   Language Revitalization[4]

Australian work on Indigenous languages has no doubt been influenced by similar language revitalization around the world. Austin (2014, p. 2) describes revitalization as "involv[ing] activities aimed at reversing language shift and redressing the

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[4] There is considerable variety in the terminology used in describing work on languages whose use is declining or has declined. Amery and Gale (2008, pp. 340, 342) use "revival" for such work. The term "revival" has become widely used in Australia since the development of the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) in 1993. This chapter uses "language revival" (LR) for work with languages whose speakers can use only a few words, or less, of their language, and refers to work with relatively strong languages as "language maintenance". The term "language revitalization" refers to the continuum whose endpoints are revival and maintenance (Austin and Sallabank 2011, 2014).

loss of speakers and domains of use". Austin and Sallabank (2014) document many instances. Hobson et al. (2010) cover much Australian activity in the area. A history of such programs is given in Amery and Gale (2008). They go into detail for three languages, including the two they have been closely involved in, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri.

Australian language revival has also been influenced by local factors. Amery and Gale (2008, p. 339) point out that "[c]ontemporary language revival efforts in Australia emerged in the wave of social reform following the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972." Recent years have seen a significant increase in the number of languages being worked on and in the size of individual language programs. Many of these are funded by the Commonwealth government[5] or State governments.[6]

4   Outcomes of Language Revival[7]

Later sections of this chapter discuss in more detail the functions and properties of revived languages. They always have an emblematic function, but the extent to which they can be used communicatively varies enormously. There is great variation in the extent to which the traditional language is retained. There is clear potential for a revived language to fragment into many varieties. Currently there is political commitment to, and funding for, language revival. There is no guarantee, however, that this will continue.

A revived language may become fully functional, with Hebrew in Israel perhaps providing the only example. But the situation of Hebrew, as the dominant official language of a country, with all that that entails, is vastly different from that of Australian revival languages. The ideology behind the founding of Israel also strongly supports the nation having its own distinct language.

Currently in Australia the most common outcomes are more modest, such as simple songs (often "heads, shoulders, knees and toes"), learning a few words for body parts, rote-learned speeches of welcome or acknowledgement, and using Indigenous place names.[8] It will become clear that many hope for much more than this.

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[5] See https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/indigenous-languages-and-arts-program

[6] See, for example, https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/our-agency/staying-accountable/ochre/nsw-government-aboriginal-affairs-strategy. Other funding is through education departments.

[7] See Giacon and Lowe (2016).

[8] Events where extremely simple language is used are often reported as doing much more: for instance, "saving a language". See Simpson (2016), also http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-10/artists-work-to-save-indigenous-language-through-music/9133118, and many similar reports. These events, though important, are but one step on a very long journey, and I doubt it really helps to portray them as more than that.

I now consider some concepts important in discussing language revival. The outcomes of overseas Indigenous revival and maintenance may suggest what the longer-term Australian outcomes might be, but it is important to recognize the many local differences. Examples include: Māori and Hawaiian, which are spoken by much larger populations; many North American tribes, which have much clearer and more established governance than Australian language groups; and groups which have formal treaties with governments. Factors such as these have considerable impact on the future of languages.

5 Emblematic and Communicative Language

The author has met many Indigenous people who were forbidden to use their languages in school. Some school staff and employers punished those who used their language. Any use of an Indigenous language, particularly in public, is thus a repudiation of those practices and can be a source of pride to Indigenous people (e.g., Cavanagh 2005). The fact that the language is being used is what matters. This can be called emblematic[9] or symbolic language use. On many occasions the author has seen people weeping tears of pride on hearing a song or short speech in language, particularly when sung or spoken by Indigenous children. Recent speeches in Indigenous languages by public figures such as politicians are emblematic language use and are often reported in the media.[10]

However, many would also hope for communicative language use, that is relaxed and relatively fluent everyday use of the language to discuss a wide range of topics. This is a much more challenging task than simple emblematic use of language. The New South Wales K–10 Aboriginal Languages Syllabus (Board of Studies, New South Wales 2003) and the ACARA (2015) document on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) languages in schools certainly assume substantial communicative language. For instance, the latter proposed 670 hours of study of a language by Year 10.

The distinction between emblematic and communicative language is very important. Emblematic language can be very simple. Children singing "heads, shoulders, knees and toes" in language is very powerful, but they can learn this in perhaps an hour. Thousands of hours are needed to learn to speak a language communicatively and fluently. While emblematic language need not be communicative, communicative use of a revival language is emblematic.

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[9] Simpson (2014) uses the term "emblem language".

[10] Not all reactions to language use are positive: the Prime Minister, Mr. Turnbull, was praised for speaking in Ngunawal the same week Bess Price was reprimanded for speaking Warlpiri in NT Parliament: https://blogs.crikey.com.au/fullysic/2016/02/18/i-am-determined-to-be-tenacious-in-relation-to-the-use-of-my-language-bess-price-and-breaking-the-english-hegemony-in-nt-parliament/

In some situations it does not matter much if emblematic language use is inaccurate. But as soon as the audience understands the traditional language, inaccurate language use is noticed. Some years ago two groups of Yuwaalaraay (YR)[11] people attended a conference. The first group gave a presentation in YR. Many others at the conference were greatly impressed by their confident use of YR. The event, for these hearers, was emblematically powerful. The reaction of the second YR group, who had learnt more, however, was very different. To paraphrase their comments: "It was a shame job. They pretended to be talking but they had so much wrong. Wrong pronunciation, no suffixes. They should not have done that."

If the presenters had used correct Yuwaalaraay-Gamilaraay (YG), everyone would have been delighted. The issue is not so much that learners do not get it all right. Rather it is that there needs to be a pathway for learners to improve their knowledge and an explicit acceptance that in this journey all are learners.

6   Communicative Traditional Language

The very word "revival" says that the aim is to "revive" the traditional language.[12] In other words a revived language purports to maintain the features of the traditional language: semantics, syntax, phonology, pragmatics, and so on. The difficulty of this task is generally underestimated (Simpson 2016).

To be communicative the revived language needs also to be standardized and comprehensive. Any realistic approach to the revival of an Australian language takes into account that these are very challenging aims. In fact none of them are totally achievable.

For one thing, constant reference to "the" language can create the impression that there is a fixed and single reality which is being discovered or uncovered. On the contrary, a set of historical records can have many possible interpretations, depending, among other things, on the knowledge of the interpreter. In many cases of language revival one person has been largely responsible for the currently used interpretation, the de facto standardized version.

A "comprehensive" language is one which can be used to talk about all major aspects of life. In revival, there needs to be language development to fill the many gaps in the historical sources, and to provide the lexicon needed to talk about new realities. In the early stages of revival this tends to be done by an individual or small

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[11] The author has worked mainly on Yuwaalaraay (YR) and Gamilaraay (GR), together referred to as YG. YR is the smaller but much more extensively recorded language. It is very similar to the much more widespread GR. Much of GR revival has depended on traditional YR material. YG are from northern inland New South Wales (major towns include Moree, Tamworth, Gunnedah and Lightning Ridge) and adjacent Queensland. For information on Gamilaraay, see Giacon (2017) and yuwaalaraay.org

[12] Ngarrindjeri is an exception, since most of the information comes from the community (Amery and Gale 2008, p. 367).

group, thus maintaining the unity of the language. This can easily change as more are involved in the revival. Multiple versions of the language can easily develop.

Often small groups, perhaps as small as one family or one teacher, work in isolation. They inevitably develop a local version of the language, and so multiple versions of the revived language emerge, many of them short-lived. This can be largely avoided if there is good analysis of the traditional language, if there is a process enabling an agreed approach to be taken when the analysis is not certain, if the normative or standard version of the language is taught, and if there is a central body to decide when, as inevitably happens, there are choices to be made. A structure which enables and encourages cooperation across the language group is essential.

Even in the most favourable circumstances, the revived language will include elements of the reviver's language, and will be hybrid. As Zuckermann and Walsh (2011) point out, Modern Hebrew is hybrid, combining elements of biblical Hebrew and the languages of the revivers, primarily Yiddish. While revived languages will inevitably be hybrid, there is some choice as to the degree of hybridity. Giacon (2017, p. 7) states:

> Revived YG will be a hybrid of traditional YG and English. The degree of English in revived YG can be influenced by the material available about traditional YG and by the effort put into learning the traditional language. **Any features of traditional YG that are clearly stated can potentially be part of rebuilt YG. Any features that are not explicitly stated, taught and well learnt will not be part of rebuilt YG unless they also happen to be part of English.**[13] (my later emphasis)

That is, the extent of hybridity depends on how comprehensive the analysis of the traditional language is, on the extent to which language development involves traditional patterns, and on how much of the analysis is learnt by speakers. With ongoing research more is learnt, such as the politeness rules for Gumbaynggirr listed in Morelli et al. (2017), which are the result of over 25 years of work on the language. Similarly, the structure of YG exclusive pronouns (Giacon 2017, p. 341) and the complex rules for the use of free and bound pronouns in Ngarrindjeri (Gale et al. forthcoming) have only recently been described. If learnt, these features can be part of the revived languages.

The hopes for relative fluency are thus achievable, but they will require changes in the approach to LR. There are no systematic studies of the language levels achieved by Australian LR programs, but the writer's experience of the outcomes and the lack of emphasis on expertise in the awarding of grants both indicate that current programs are not structured to achieve fluency or consistency.[14]

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[13] In some cases adult learners engage with the historical materials and absorb complex structures of the language. In the author's experience this is true but quite rare.

[14] There is an urgent need for independent evaluation of language revitalization programs so that funding can be more productively allocated and programs made much more effective. See Simpson (2016) for comments on lack of evaluation of apps that are echoed by many working in revitalization.

7 Examples of Language Revival

Language revival builds on records of the language and generally on previous analyses and wordlists or dictionaries, and on broad linguistic knowledge, particularly knowledge of related languages. See, for example, Giacon and Lowe (2016) who discuss key elements of New South Wales revival. For the programs considered here, more recent work began with a small group consisting of community members and a non-Indigenous linguist. The linguists worked with historical materials, and, in some cases with very limited remnant knowledge of the language. Through their research the linguists developed an increasing, but always partial, understanding of the languages. Simultaneously they often took on the task of teaching community members, including some who would in turn teach others. A further result of the linguists' research was the development of learning materials, some published and others privately produced.[15] In some other languages the linguists researched and published grammars, but did not remain involved in the specific language long-term. When the revival expands or when the linguist moves on, learners rely largely or solely on written materials, rarely an effective way of learning language.

Often the initial core group do much unpaid work, as do some others who become involved in revival. A teacher who has a large number of high school Gumbaynggirr classes states: "Being 'on the spectrum' meant I could put in the long long long long hours needed to learn [the language]" (Larry Hancock, personal communication, 2016). This person was also an experienced Japanese teacher and so had many of the skills for learning and teaching language, as well as extensive Gumbaynggirr resources. The example shows what is achievable, but does not provide a model that most others can follow.

YG revival builds on GR material recorded from the 1850s to recent times, and on YR, whose records begin later but are more extensive, including tapes from the 1970s. From these were developed more recent YG analyses, including Williams' *Grammar of Yuwaalaraay* (1980), and Austin's *Dictionary of Gamilaraay* (1992), later published online (Austin and Nathan 1996). These effectively established an orthography for YG. The production and launch of the online dictionary importantly involved close cooperation between linguists and community. There was very limited learning or teaching of language at this stage.

The next phase of YG activity involved further research, community discussion, classes and cooperation with schools. Revival was initially based on Williams (1980) and Austin (1992) and then increasingly on research using original sources, including tapes from the 1970s of senior Yuwaalaraay people, mainly Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece. Publications included an edited historical source (Sim and Giacon 1998), a high school text (Giacon and Betts 1999), a wordlist (Giacon 1999), a word book with CD (Walgett Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay Language Program 2002), a dictionary with learner's guide (Ash et al. 2003) and later an electronic version of

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[15] Some of the main works published by these programs are: Amery (2000, 2010), Morelli (2015), Morelli et al. (2017), Grant and Rudder (2001, 2010, 2014), Giacon (2001, 2017), Ash et al. (2003).

the dictionary (Giacon and Nathan 2008), which included a substantial amount of spoken language from the Yuwaalaraay tapes.

There are many parallels between YG revival and that of other Australian languages. Wiradjuri and Kaurna are based largely on nineteenth-century written sources. Gumbaynggirr has extensive and detailed historical sources. Using these and previous analyses Morelli has developed a much more detailed understanding of the language, which he used in teaching and later published (Morelli 2008, 2015).

There is the potential for many to achieve substantial knowledge of a revived language. However, in the absence of detailed research into the actual use of these languages, assessments of their use are generally impressionistic. Marmion et al. (2014, p. 8) give their assessment of Kaurna, and this may well describe the situation of many reviving languages:

> [it] had not been spoken on a daily basis since the 19th century, and had no full or even part-speakers throughout most of the 20th century. But over the last three decades there has been much intensive and dedicated work on reviving Kaurna (Amery 2010), resulting in *a small number of people who can say some words and sentences*. (my emphasis)

However, Amery (personal communication, 2019), who is closely involved with the language, has a more positive assessment of the level of use of revived Kaurna. Nonetheless, it is common for revived language to plateau at a relatively low level of knowledge and use.

8   Results of Language Revival

Discussion of Australian LR is limited by the lack of published research, particularly on the language outcomes. There is some information on the process and background, generally written by people closely involved in the process (e.g., Amery 2016; Amery and Gale 2008). Cavanagh's 2005 report on the positive effects of a Yuwaalaraay school program focuses on the social impact rather than on actual language learning. This discussion will therefore largely draw on the author's long-term involvement in YG and discussions with people involved in other programs.

There has been a great increase in the awareness of Indigenous languages and in the use of words, phrases and formulaic texts in many of them, as well in in the use of newly assigned Indigenous place names. Signs which include Indigenous languages are more and more common. "*Yaama*" ("Hello") and other greetings and farewells are quite common in Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay country and elsewhere. Over 2000 copies of the *Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Dictionary* have been sold, and YG resources continue to be downloaded and sold. Tens of schools have YG programs. There are TAFE and university courses in Gamilaraay.

While the reaction of students and parents to school and pre-school programs is generally enthusiastic, particularly at the initial stages, both groups lament the lack of opportunity to learn more. The quality of language varies considerably, particularly once people move on from set texts (e.g., songs, greetings) and single word

uses, such as naming things. It is not unusual for even fundamental grammatical features such as case suffixes and verb inflections to be totally absent or badly misused. Pronunciation and inflection are often inaccurate. In part this is understandable, given that in most cases people now teaching YG in schools have done only introductory courses or are self-taught from published materials.

Even texts on prominent public signs often show a lack of language knowledge. For example the Indigenous area of an adult education centre in Gamilaraay country has an acknowledgement of country in both English and "Gamilaraay":

> The English begins: X acknowledges that this building …
> The Gamilaraay begins: X *winangay nhama nhalay.*

The GR "translation" is not a translation, but a series of GR words fitted into an English structure, at best a relexified English. Differences from traditional Gamilaraay include: X is the subject of a transitive verb, so would have an ergative suffix, $-gu$. *Winangay* is the citation form of a semantically complex verb, which in the *Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Dictionary* is glossed "understand, know, remember, think, love". It has been widely used to translate "acknowledge" and "respect". With the last two uses it is transitive. The normal translation of "acknowledges" is *winangaylanha*, the present continuous form, while *winangay* is future. Complement clauses such as the one in the above are formed with the subordinate suffix, not with a demonstrative. The word order exactly follows the English.

On the country of another group, a sign in the local language has the English "We X people welcome you…". The language version, however, would traditionally be translated, "We welcome you X people" since the words "X" and "people" do not have the ergative suffix found on all the nouns and adjectives in the subject of a transitive verb.

One GR text for adult classes has numerous errors and shows little awareness of appropriate translation. It even calques the greeting "good day".

These are examples of what one GR person with considerable experience in language calls "dictionary language". People look up an English word in the dictionary, see a YG word, and without much or any attention to the detailed dictionary entry or to grammatical information, cobble together a sentence.

If people learnt more about a language there could be much more communicative use, and a language could be much closer to its traditional form. The aim of the Australian Indigenous Languages Institute is to make it possible for people to learn Indigenous languages in depth. Early in revival, the initial researchers did this teaching, but at later stages a different approach is needed, since the initial researchers are no longer as active and many more people want to learn. Formal qualifications are vital for those who are employed to teach language. Universities can provide the institutional support and formal qualifications and AILI can develop flexible and appropriate course delivery.[16]

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[16]While there are instances of substantial non-university courses—Muurrbay/Steve Morelli's Gumbaynggirr and Mary-Anne Gale's Ngarrindjeri—they depend on those teachers doing much unpaid work and so are less sustainable in the long term.

Another vital need is for an organizing structure for each language.[17] This can prevent the language from fragmenting into many versions and can make more effective use of funding. Currently subgroups within a language can work separately, resulting in a wasteful duplication of resources.

9 Australian Indigenous Languages Institute

For language revival in Australia to progress there needs to be research into traditional language materials, soundly based language development and high level teaching of the language. By their very nature and function, universities are the ideal places for these tasks. Of course university staff need to be part of a team, headed by the people of the language, and including others from government and education authorities.

The development of an Australian Indigenous Languages Institute (AILI) came out of many discussions about the state of language learning. These identified gaps in the current approaches to language revival and maintenance, and identified the need for:

- An expansion in the number of Indigenous languages taught at university level (currently only six);
- Development of more advanced courses for individual languages;
- Additional high-level language research and development, through university staff who teach languages and through the work of research students;
- More teaching of related subjects such as language revival and maintenance and language teaching methodology;
- Further research into the processes, outcomes and benefits of language revival and maintenance which would help to set the direction of future work in these areas;
- A range of qualifications from graduate certificates to PhDs in Australian language, including degrees that would qualify people to teach Australian languages at an advanced level in schools and TAFE;
- Flexible and creative delivery of courses, including summer and winter courses, mixed mode courses (with online and face-to-face components) to make such training more accessible, particularly to those outside the major cities;
- Close cooperation between universities to make cross-institutional enrolment straightforward.

Another factor to consider is the strong connection between language and country. Maintaining this connection is one of many challenges of language work. Often most of the people of the language live off country and it is generally much more

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[17] Gumbaynggirr revival is much stronger for being based at Muurrbay Language and Culture Centre. The New South Wales government has established language nests which may, in time, coordinate work across languages.

convenient to run courses where the facilities, teachers and most of the learners are, predominantly in large cities. AILI hopes to have courses on country in the future.

To pursue this work, an organization would need an administrative structure, probably small and part-time, similar to those found in overseas institutes. It could also work with existing bodies, including First Languages Australia and Living Languages.[18]

The first AILI activity was held in January 2018, coordinated by Charles Darwin University and using their Sydney premises. It offered three summer intensive courses in Sydney: "Introduction to Yolngu Languages and Culture" and "Linguistics for Indigenous Languages" [CDU]; and "Gamilaraay One" [ANU], but only Gamilaraay attracted enough students. These included cross-institutional enrolments and Gamilaraay people who were auditing the course. The same courses were offered in January 2019. Gamilaraay and Linguistics attracted sufficient enrolments for the courses to proceed.

AILI can learn from similar overseas institutes. The University of Arizona has hosted the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) for many years. It provides a wide range of programs and courses specifically targeting language revival and maintenance.[19] The University of Alberta has a similar program in its Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), which provides a wide range of courses including many in each language.[20] Many universities in Aotearoa/New Zealand offer comprehensive Māori programs, including those where theses are written in Māori. The University of Hawaiʻi also offers a wide range of courses in the local language, and theses can be written in Hawaiian.

The beginning of AILI was in fact prompted by Kevin Lowe's attendance at both North American institutes. This led to three summer schools at the University of Sydney, 2007–2009, with Gamilaraay, Gumbaynggirr and Wiradjuri courses. Discussion of teaching Indigenous languages at university continued. Giacon and Simpson (2012) raised the issue at the 2011 Languages and Culture Network of Australian Universities colloquium and it was discussed at the Australian Linguistic Society's (ALS) 2014 and 2015 conferences. At the 2016 ALS conference a subcommittee on Teaching Australian Indigenous Languages at University (TAILU) was formed. The 2017 LCNAU colloquium featured a stream highlighting the work of teaching Indigenous languages at universities and an Indigenous languages cluster was formed within LCNAU.

Currently Australian universities conduct substantial research into Australian Indigenous languages, but little of this is directly related to language revival and maintenance, or to the learning and teaching of Indigenous languages. There are currently six ATSI languages taught at university,[21] three of them relatively strong: Pitjantjatjara, at the University of South Australia, Yolngu Matha and Arrernte at

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[18] Formerly RNLD (Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity). See www.firstlanguages.org.au

[19] https://aildi.arizona.edu/

[20] https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute

[21] See ulpa.com.au, which lists languages available at university in Australia.

Charles Darwin University;[22] and three being revived: Gamilaraay at the University of Sydney and ANU, Wiradjuri at Charles Sturt University, and Kaurna at the University of Adelaide. Curtin University has a non-award Nyungar course.[23] Only Yolngu Matha and Gamilaraay go beyond a one-semester introductory course.[24] Yolngu Matha is available online, but the other courses require attendance in person. The University of Sydney also has a Master of Indigenous Language Education, a block release program which has been a major force in raising the standards of language revival in Australia and in preparing Indigenous people for that work. Most graduates, however, have not studied their language in depth.

Australian universities will continue their extensive research on the relatively few strong languages. AILI envisages that they will take on an expanded role in ATSI language revival and maintenance, researching and teaching the languages. While most past university research was on stronger languages, important work was also done on languages now being revived. Of particular relevance to both YR and GR is Williams' (1980) *Grammar of Yuwaalaraay*, based on her 1976 ANU Honours thesis. Donaldson's *Grammar of Wangaaybuwan* (1980) has also been important for YG, providing many insights into the closely related Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay languages. And obviously it is a key part of Wangaaybuwan revival.

While a number of recent revival grammars have originated in language centres (Lissarrague 2006, 2007, 2010), Morelli (2008, 2015), others have originated in universities, including Amery (2000, 2016), Eira (2010), Besold (2013), and Giacon (2017).

While grammars are essential for language learning, there are a number of challenges universities face in supporting language revival and maintenance:

- Universities do not have a tradition of teaching Australian Indigenous languages, so there is little internal experience, support or advocacy.
- Substantial preparation is needed to set up courses, and so substantial funding. For most languages there are few if any qualified and available staff, people with a good knowledge of the language, teaching skills, connection with the language community, and the desire and availability to work in a university. Most potential staff would need time to learn the language and develop teaching resources, and, very importantly, would need time to establish relationships with the people of the language. See Christie (2008).
- Few students are aware that Indigenous language courses are available. Nor do these courses generally enhance employment prospects, so classes tend to be small.
- There can be the assumption that a language should be taught by a person of that language. There are very few Indigenous people currently qualified for the task.

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[22] Charles Darwin University has an online course in Bininj Kunwok.

[23] https://www.edx.org/course/noongar-language-and-culture

[24] At one stage three semesters of Pitjantjatjara were available at university level. Now only one unit is offered, as a summer intensive (Amery 2007, p. 335).

- Protocols can be challenging, including negotiations with the language group whose land the university is on. Often there is very little information about the local language, and teaching a language from elsewhere can be politically sensitive.
- Some community members involved in LR may be unfamiliar with working with universities.
- Published analysis of LR can downplay the role of linguists in existing programs, and so people may not realize the need for this expertise. At times they portray LR as relatively simple, so not needing advanced skills, and therefore omitting any role for universities.

10   Conclusion

Over recent decades there has been a wonderful growth in awareness of, pride in, and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Through the efforts of community and scholars some languages of which only a few words were being spoken are now much more vibrant. Greetings and songs are being regularly used, place names and signs in language are proliferating. Other languages hope to follow that path. Many language groups hope to climb the Everest of moving from generally simple, emblematic language to a much more complex, shared language, a substantial, communicative language which retains as much as possible of the traditional language.

To move beyond simple language, the language needs to be well described, it needs community energy, it needs a unifying structure which covers both linguistic and administrative functions, and it needs in-depth teaching and learning. In particular those teaching the language in schools and those developing resources need to know it very well.

Currently no reviving language has an adequate base for learning substantial communicative language. A very small number of languages have university or similar courses, and most consist of only one unit, nowhere near what is needed.

AILI is an attempt to provide accessible, in-depth teaching of languages and related topics such as linguistics and revival and maintenance processes. It intends to use different modes of course delivery, including summer and winter schools, online courses and regular semester courses. It draws on the resources of a number of universities and will award tertiary qualifications. AILI assumes that universities are committed to Australian Indigenous languages and are prepared to make the considerable effort needed to teach them.

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