"Taking up speech" in an Endangered Language: Bilingual Discourse in a Heritage Language Classroom

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Faced with the "diversification of diversity" (Vertovec 2010) that seems to define the contemporary world, some have called for a fundamental reorientation of sociolinguistics: from a focus on languages and speakers to a focus on resources and repertoires; from unitary, localized and countable ethnolinguistic communities to diasporized (or even virtual) ones; and from fully-fluent 'native speaker' competence to "individuals' very variable (and often rather fragmentary) grasp of a plurality of differentially shared styles, registers and genres" (Blommaert & Rampton 2011, 6). The 'super-diversity' that prompts such reflections, I argue, can and should be discussed together with what seems to be its opposite: the seeming loss of diversity brought about by processes of language shift, obsolescence, and endangerment. Examination of classroom discourse on a US Indian Reservation suggests that in this community, at least, people have long since moved on from the idea that all the competences associated with "proficiency" in language need to coincide in a single person. These students are learning to speak (parler) rather than internalizing a complete grammar (langue); in this respect their project resembles that of (other) denizens of the "super-diverse" metropole.

Introduction

Here I describe how community efforts to document and teach Kiksht, an American Indian language (Wasco-Wishram dialect of Upper Chinookan), create new strategies for *the capture of speech* (de Certeau, 1997/1968) by younger generations. In this case Kiksht, often categorized as an *endangered* language, was being taught in a heritage language classroom on the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon, USA. Attention to the participation frameworks and production formats (Goffman, 1981) of classroom discourse shows how participants pool their scarce resources and collaborate to produce new voicings of Kiksht in a new register, one that is emblematic of these adult students' emergent status as *new speakers* in a context informed by globalization. Most important of all, these new voicings of Kiksht do not depend for their effectiveness on any assumption that one person possess all the forms of linguistic competence associated with the concept of the fluent native speaker. Indeed, the register itself presupposes a distribution of communicative roles—speaker, (over-) hearer, translator/interpreter, repeater, and scribe, among others—that is instantly recognizable beyond the classroom in the organization of other formal speech events in the local community.

The discourse practices developed in the classroom, in other words, enable a set of individuals with dramatically different levels of fluency in the ancestral language nonetheless to use that language effectively in public: to be seen as speakers, not by virtue of their having internalized a complete grammar and lexicon, but rather by virtue of their having *taken up speech* in a recognizable way. The pedagogical approach, modeled on the Community Language Learning framework (Curran, 1976; La Forge, 1977, 1983; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Rardin, 1977; cf. Richards & Rodgers, 2001/1986), was radically transformed and at least partially *indigenized* through a series of negotiations that seem, in retrospect, to have been crucial to the project's success. But before I describe what I will call the Wasco Class, it is necessary to put this project into a broader context.

Two Dangers

A descriptively adequate *sociolinguistics of globalization* might aspire to give a unified account of two developments, both of them widely noticed and remarked upon in scholarly literature and the mass media, though seldom[1] discussed together: (a) the emergence of new forms of linguistic *superdiversity* associated since the 1990s with migration (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; cf. Vertovec, 2007, 2010); and (b) the apparent contraction, endangerment, and disappearance of so-called "small," indigenous, and other purportedly threatened linguistic varieties (e.g., Hale et al., 1992; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; cf. Moore, Pietikäinen, & Blommaert, 2011).

Though each is often discussed as if it epitomized the contemporary moment, neither phenomenon is entirely new. Migrants have always been acquiring the linguistic resources that enable them to function in new surroundings; sometimes, e.g., under regimes of *assimilation* (or its European variant, *integration*), they have been pressured to avoid public use of their ancestral languages, if not to abandon them altogether (Rumbaut, Massey, & Bean, 2006; cf. Espiritu & Wolf, 2000; Spotti, 2011; Zhou, 2000). Meanwhile, many communities, swept up in changing dynamics of political and economic power at several scales—local, regional, global—have undergone language shift and replacement, a phenomenon witnessed in various parts of the world at least since antiquity (e.g., Swadesh, 1948; Hill, 1983; Dorian, 1981; see Silverstein, 1998 for a synthetic account of recent developments).

Viewed through the language-ideological lens of media discourse in the West, the two developments—sociolinguistic superdiversity brought about by global flows of migration, and language endangerment, framed as "the loss of the world's linguistic diversity" (Hale et al., 1992)—become mirror-images of each other: on one side, the geospatial movement of speakers (and with them, languages) has resulted in, from some points of view, *too much* linguistic diversity, too close at hand (e.g., in major European and American cities). On the other side, communities imagined as having remained rooted and immobile in their (faraway) ancestral homelands are seen as vulnerable to seemingly external forces of globalization; like endangered species, these endangered languages are simply overwhelmed, and the result is *not enough* linguistic diversity, on a global or planetary scale (cf. Maffi, 2005).

It is important, of course, to understand that the term *diversity* is being used here in more than one way. In the endangered languages literature, it is most often conceived in terms of the phylogenetic classification of languages and language

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[1] See Moore 2007 for an earlier attempt.

families as nodes in a branching family tree (*Stammbaum*). When the (large) Italian-speaking immigrant population in Australia abandoned the use of Italian and shifted to English within a few generations, it was imagined that the Italian language (as if there were any such thing) was still alive elsewhere—in Italy, for example, as well as in books, films, TV shows, and so forth; this is *language shift* (see Gal, 1979 for a classic account). When the last speaker of Eyak, Mrs. Marie Smith Jones (1918-2008) of Cordova, Alaska, died, a whole language—and, in that case, a major branch of a major language phylum (Na-Dene)[2]—is said to have *died* along with her. A major loss to Mrs. Jones's family and others of Eyak ancestry, and (albeit in a different way) to linguists interested in phylogenetic classification and/or grammatical typology, this is often termed *language death* (see Dorian 1981 for a landmark study).

The concentration of speakers of many languages in linguistically superdiverse (and often insalubrious) neighborhoods in major European cities, on the other hand, is a crisis of a different sort, especially for liberal theorists and (other) elites in Europe and North America who assume that societal cohesion depends on wide acceptance of a single, common (standardized) language (cf. Kymlicka, 1995). Linguistic diversity in this second sense—conceived not in terms of phylogenetic affiliation but in terms of language barriers inhibiting the free exchange of messages (and strategically ignoring the widespread and obvious fact(s) of multilingualism)—is seen to pose a major threat to democracy and an impediment to the development of a fully functioning public sphere.[3]

The discourse of language endangerment has remained largely tone-deaf to the political implications of framing an apparent decrease of linguistic diversity as a loss to science (despite warnings: Hill, 2002; Mufwene, 2002). In fact, this discourse and the moral anxieties of liberal elites in Europe and North America about increasing linguistic diversity in their own backyards rest on similar foundations: specifically, a shared set of assumptions about *the speaker* and the nature of linguistic competence. In both discourses, speakers who seem to show limited, truncated, or less-than-complete proficiency—in the standard language of the so-called host community or the ancestral language of the traditional community—are a sign, and a source, of trouble.

When is a 'speaker'?

In this highly charged sociopolitical context, the emerging literature of sociolinguistic superdiversity and the more established literature of language shift and obsolescence converge: both complicate inherited notions of the unitary, fully fluent L1 native speaker as the unmarked case, the baseline, the normal starting-point for description and analysis.

An emerging sociolinguistics of globalization has begun decisively to move beyond certain anchoring concepts of an older languages-and-speakers

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[2] The consensus view of historical linguists is that the Na-Dene language phylum is divided into two branches or "superfamilies," Athabaskan-Eyak, and Tlingit. The Athabaskan language family includes such well-known entities as Navaho and the Apachean languages.

[3] Nothing could be further from the truth, of course. See Gal, 2006 on the anxieties of European elites in the face of new (and old) forms of multilingualism; see Blommaert. 2011 for a sketch of a superdiverse neighborhood in Antwerp; and see Stroud, 2004 for a case study of language-centered moral panic in Sweden.

sociolinguistics, chief among them the notion of unitary, localized and countable *ethnolinguistic communities*, and the notion that the speech of non-mobile fully fluent native speakers[4] should serve as the benchmark against which all less-than-full fluencies must be measured (cf. Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Moore et al., 2011).

In their call for a sociolinguistics of superdiversity, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) chart a movement, long underway in sociolinguistics, from a study that takes (named) *languages* and (native) *speakers* as pre-theoretical givens to one oriented instead to internally differentiated speaker *repertoires*, and to linguistic *resources* deployed to various effects in various contexts of use. Instead of "prioritizing the 'native speakers of a language', treating early experience of living in families and stable speech communities as crucial to grammatical competence and coherent discourse," Blommaert and Rampton suggest that we "dispense with *a priori* assumptions about the links between origins, upbringing, proficiency and types of language," and focus instead on "individuals' very variable (and often rather fragmentary) grasp of a plurality of differentially shared styles, registers and genres, which are picked up (and maybe then partially forgotten) within biographical trajectories that develop in actual histories and topographies" (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, p. 4-5; cf. Blommaert & Backus, 2011).

With this shift of focus, the speaker is no longer positioned as unitary. Blommaert & Rampton (2011) invoke Bakhtin's (1981/1934-35) account of *double-voicing* and Goffman's concept of (1981) *production formats* to demonstrate the variety of personal commitments speakers maintain to their different speech styles, which are often parodic, indirect, or playful. They go on:

> So although notions like 'native speaker', 'mother tongue' and 'ethno-linguistic group' have considerable ideological force (and as such should certainly feature as *objects* of analysis), they should have no place in the sociolinguistic toolkit itself. When the reassurance afforded by *a priori* classifications like these is abandoned, research instead has to address the ways in which people take on different linguistic forms as they align and disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages. It has to investigate how they (try to) opt in and opt out, how they perform or play with linguistic signs of group belonging, and how they develop particular trajectories of group identification throughout their lives. (Blommaert & Rampton 2011, p. 5)

Certainly in the case discussed below—and arguably in every case of heritage language learning—we see vivid examples of people engaging with "linguistic signs of group belonging," and "taking on" new linguistic forms and speech practices as part of a broader project of aligning and affiliating themselves with recognized (in this case, tribal) social groups.

The literature on language shift and obsolescence—especially work based on close empirical observation in contracting linguistic communities—has been complicating the notion of the unitary and fully fluent native speaker since the 1970s, albeit more from a structural (grammatical) than a functional (usage-based) perspective. This work has focused on describing the differential fluencies

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[4] The reference is to the consultants most favored by earlier generations of dialectologists, who sought out 'Non-mobile Older Rural Males (NORMs)'—"informants who were not only elderly but also un-educated and untravelled, because it was felt that this method would produce samples of the 'most genuine' dialect" (Chambers & Trudgill 1998/1980, 47).

displayed by remaining speakers in communities undergoing language shift, often creating subgroupings based on characteristic patterns of linguistic change-in-progress. Voegelin and Voegelin (1977), for example, divided remaining speakers of the Mexican indigenous language Tübatulabal into four groups: (a) speakers of complex sentences; (b) speakers of simple sentences; (c) speakers who insert Tübatulabal words into English sentences, and (d) "Comprehenders who do not speak Tübatulabal," claiming to derive their scheme from one used by "current speakers of Tübatulabal in classifying varieties of their language" (Voegelin & Voegelin, 1977, p. 333)[2].

Nancy Dorian, in her landmark studies of the East Sutherland dialect of Scots Gaelic, observed "a continuum of proficiency… from full fluency to the barest skills necessary for conversation in the dying language" (Dorian, 1977, p. 34). She used her own classification of speakers into (a) older fluent speakers, (b) younger fluent speakers, (c) semi-speakers, (d) low-proficiency semi-speakers, and (e) near-passive bilinguals. She reported that this system was sometimes at variance with classifications offered by people in the community, who tended to over-estimate the proficiency of speakers who displayed strong language loyalty (Dorian, 1982). With meticulous care, Dorian charted over a number of years people's differential control of a number of Gaelic phonological, morphophonemic, and constructional features.[5]

The inherited notion of the fully fluent native speaker—someone whose ideal and complete linguistic competence becomes a kind of baseline against which actual language skills are perpetually measured—has also been subjected to severe critique in a number of studies in the fields of educational linguistics and second language acquisition. The idea that *native speaker competence* should be the goal of all language learning, for example, has been in question in the latter field at least since the work of Firth and Wagner (2007/1997; cf. Creese & Blackledge, 2011).

Meanwhile, the ascription to speakers and to whole populations of states of *semilingualism*—of being able to speak no language tolerably (to paraphrase Bloomfield, 1927)—has been a recurring feature in expert and popular discourses centering on sources of moral panic in contemporary Europe and North America. New versions of this pernicious idea are a robust presence in educational policy discourse and in the media coverage of public education and so-called schools in crisis (Cummins, 1979; cf. De Costa, 2010; Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986; Pyle 1996). With the advent of a new regime of standardized testing, pupils labeled as "low-achieving" in US public schools once again face the likelihood of being categorized as non-speakers of any language (Macswan, 2000, 2001). Similar stigmatization awaits migrant populations in European cities when they are accused of poorly integrating themselves into their host societies, as Stroud's (2004) study of so-called Rinkeby Swedish clearly shows (compare Spotti, 2011 on Dutch language testing for immigrants). Asylum-seekers who appear—on the basis of antiquated and irrelevant forms of linguistic assessment—not to be fully-fluent speakers of their putative national languages are routinely returned into the hands of their tormentors, as Blommaert (2009) and others have shown.

Closer to home, as it were, Anne Goodfellow in a recent article asks a number of provocative questions about community-based efforts at language revitalization in

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[5] Vocative plurals, passives, negative imperatives, and obligatory morphophonemic change or "mutation" in the initial consonants of adjectives proved of particular diagnostic value (see Dorian, 1977, p. 25).

Native American communities. "When asked about the level of fluency of students coming out of these [community-based programs], presenters [at a conference] claim that the languages are not very strong, that almost everywhere they're 'dying out' and being replaced by English" (Goodfellow, 2003, p. 41). "Why," asks Goodfellow, "aren't these programs working when so much is at stake and so much tireless devotion is put into the goal of keeping these languages alive?" She continues:

> In many cases, if [students] do begin to be able to speak the language, it is in a 'pidginized' form that often combines English grammatical and phonological structures with vocabulary from the Native American language. The problem is that since this pidgin language is not considered to be the 'real' language, we constantly hear of the failure of Native language programs to produce 'fluent' speakers. (Goodfellow, 2003, p. 42)

She has a provocative suggestion: "Instead of asking why these programs aren't working … I'd suggest that *we* look at the issue of language maintenance in a new way. More specifically, we should accept these 'pidiginized' languages as new forms of Native American languages" (p. 42, emphasis mine). While I am in sympathy with Goodfellow's attempt to disrupt pervasive narratives of American Indian failure (Meek, 2011; cf. Powell, 1973 for a fascinating discussion of Quileute language teaching), it leaves some important questions un-asked—for example, the identity of "we."

More recently, Jocelyn Ahlers has examined "the public use of Native American languages by nonfluent speakers" from Northern California tribes, and her argument is

> that foregrounding the metacommunicative/pragmatic function of such language use over referential function highlights a broader Native American identity shared by speaker and audience and creates a discourse space in which a subsequent English speech event is understood by audience members to come from, and be informed by, a Native identity. (Ahlers, 2006, p. 58)

Ahlers continues,

> The question of how to make use of such limited language knowledge in the performance of cultural identity is thus an important one to communities struggling with language revitalization, especially given the central need to find a role for heritage languages in a world which favors the use of dominant languages. The public use of Native California languages and, indeed, Native American languages more generally, by speakers who are not fluent in their heritage languages, provides an example of one answer to this question. (ibid.)

Accordingly, Ahlers identifies an emerging speech style that she calls Native Language as an Identity Marker (NLIM), which seems to me to rephrase, rather than to answer, the question. It is appropriate, then, to look at a single example in some detail, this from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation community in central Oregon—arguably one of the most-studied such communities in North America.

Already by the second half of the 19th century, the Warm Springs Reservation community in central Oregon was by any standard a site of considerable linguistic and sociocultural diversity. Three indigenous groups, each associated with a distinct and unrelated language—each with a distinct *contact history* under colonialism—comprise the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs: Sahaptins, Wascos, and Paiutes.

Sahaptins, also referred to as the "Warm Springs tribe," have always been numerically dominant, and have defined what gets displayed as traditional Indian culture at major ceremonials and before tourists (e.g., at the tribally-owned resort and casino). Typically for a culture of the Plateau type (in the parlance of an older culture-area anthropology), their traditional societies were egalitarian and mobile, the traditional economy based on hunting-gathering and fishing.

Wascos[6] have always been a much smaller group numerically than Sahaptins. Traditionally a polyglot, class-stratified and rank-obsessed society, typed as Northwest Coast and centered on permanent winter villages along both banks of the Columbia River, the Wascos and their Chinookan congeners were a slave-holding and slave-trading people. Their mercantile economy rested on the surplus wealth generated by fantastically rich salmon fisheries at the Long Narrows of the Columbia (near the present-day city of The Dalles, Oregon). Soon after the establishment of Warm Springs Reservation, the Wascos settled around the Agency headquarters, positioning themselves as cultural and economic brokers. Already by the late 19th century, Wascos were occupying a disproportionate share of economic and political power in the reservation community, especially in roles that called upon their prodigious linguistic skills as interpreters, translators, and—more frequently than among either of the other groups—literate, educated users of English.

A smaller group of Northern Paiutes arrived at Warm Springs in 1872. Traditionally a monoglot, highly mobile, highly egalitarian people of the Great Basin type, Paiutes had been among the slaves captured, owned, and traded by Wascos in pre-reservation times. By the late 19th century, then, multiple displacements of culturally and linguistically distinct indigenous peoples had created a new community at Warm Springs marked by a high level of cultural and linguistic diversity. The three ancestral languages—all of them now considered endangered—are genetically unrelated to each other and typologically very divergent.[7]

Intermarriage between Wascos and Sahaptins has been going on for centuries; intermarriage between either of these and Paiutes took place only rarely until the Warm Springs community became fully established in the 1870s, but extensively since then. The result, of course, is that the majority of people in the community today can claim ancestral ties to at least two, and often all three, of the Confederated

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[6] For a report on Upper Chinookan language and mythology, see Sapir 1907; for texts in Wishram, see Sapir 1909; for texts in the closely related dialect of Clackamas, see Jacobs 1958; for a grammar of Wishram, see Dyk 1933; for Wasco-Wishram contact history, see D. French 1961, and for ceremonialism at Warm Springs see K. French 1955; for more recent treatments of Chinookan language and society, see Hymes 1966, 1974, 1981, and Silverstein 1976, 1984; for Kiksht as an obsolescent language, see Moore 1988, 1993, 2009.

[7] Sahaptian (the language family to which Sahaptin and Nez Perce belong) and Chinookan were both included by Sapir in his proposed Penutian phylum (CITE).

Tribes of Warm Springs (if not also to fur-trade era French, Scottish, and Hawaiian ancestors, as well as to African-American, Filipino, and other relatives). It was not until the advent of identity politics in the 1990s, however, that individuals began in a public way to *choose* which of the three cultural/linguistic traditions to identify themselves with—and this is the context in which the Wasco Class emerged.

Despite all the historical and cultural differences between the three tribal groups, since the 1970s it has been a political necessity to ensure that equal time, space, institutional support, and resources are given to support the teaching of each of the reservation's three ancestral languages. Indeed, a tripartite principle governs everything from the logo of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs— three teepees in a row—to the composition of the various Tribal Committees that are responsible for running much of the reservation on a day-to-day basis.

In 1992 the principle of three co-equal tribes was further enshrined in the Warm Springs public sphere in a new and important way: in a tribally owned and operated Museum at Warm Springs, whose architecture and exhibit spaces are organized in a relentlessly tripartite fashion.

The Wasco Class

In the fall of 1992, new pilot projects were funded for all three languages at Warm Springs. Instruction in all three continues to this day, but from the start the Wasco Class stood out for a number of reasons. One reason was that many people in the community may simply have considered that Kiksht—the Wasco language—was already dead.

Another important reason had to do with its students. Not only was demand for classroom instruction in this notoriously difficult language unexpectedly high; it also came from surprisingly high places in the local community. One active participant was the Director of Economic Development for the Confederated Tribes; another was the president of the tribally-owned Warm Springs Power Enterprises, which operates a hydroelectric dam, and had at the time an annual operating budget of $30 million; another was Public Information Director for the Tribes, and managed the Tribes' two commercial FM-radio stations; yet another worked as an administrative assistant to the Tribes' CEO and Secretary-Treasurer, who himself had served in Washington, DC as the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the first term of the Reagan administration. Others included the two Wasco members on the Culture and Heritage Committee—about a dozen students in all, ranging in age from 22 to 50. All were from families with at least some Wasco ancestry, but a notable handful came from families that most people would not have identified as Wasco until now; these people appeared to have made a personal choice to adopt Kiksht as their tribal language.

Another reason why the Wasco Class attracted notice and comment was the willingness of Mrs. Gladys Thompson—by all accounts (including my own) the best speaker of Kiksht, but someone who had heretofore avoided involvement in language revitalization activities—to take on the role of primary instructor. Mrs. Thompson agreed to do this only if two conditions were met: (1) that her friend and fellow Kiksht speaker—really, a semi-speaker (by her own account and mine)— Mrs. Madeline Brunoe McInturff, be willing to assist her; and (2) that all duties involving writing the language—including teaching the alphabet (a local variant

on standard Americanist orthography)—be handled by the reservation's Tribal Linguist, a Brooklynite by birth with an undergraduate anthropology degree who had done graduate work in folklore with Dennis Tedlock at Boston University and had been employed by the Tribes since the 1970s.

The class met Tuesdays and Thursdays over the lunch hour in a double-wide trailer whose interior had been converted for office and classroom use, nestled behind the old red-brick elementary school (a building laden with childhood memories for most of the participants—but itself soon to be replaced by a new $5 million Early Childhood Education Center). Someone always brought lunch, and before and after the class session itself the students—high-level executives and administrative personnel on their lunch break—engaged in friendly banter and water-cooler conversation.

Classroom activities, as I observed and participated in them in 1992-95, presented a fascinating hybrid. In keeping with the pedagogical framework of Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976), students would come to class with English words and phrases in mind—sometimes written down, sometimes not—for which they requested Kiksht equivalents. They referred to Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff as "the Grandmas," but in the classroom their primary addressee was Mrs. Thompson. One by one the students would offer up a sentence or two in English, while the Grandmas (with the Tribal Linguist standing behind them) listened intently.

Eventually—sometimes after an extended pause to search her memory, and hushed consultation with Mrs. McInturff in Kiksht—Mrs. Thompson would respond, usually just once, in her impeccable Kiksht, addressing her answer as much to her counterpart Mrs. McInturff as to the student. Mrs. McInturff would then turn to face the student, and repeat for the student what Mrs. Thompson had just said, perhaps more loudly, slowly, or several times—as many times as needed. The student interlocutor would attempt to reproduce the Kiskht utterance, with active coaching and encouragement from Mrs. McInturff, while Mrs. Thompson sat impassively, sometimes chuckling as the student struggled with the notoriously thorny phonology of Kiksht.

The Tribal Linguist, meanwhile, would have been writing the word or phrase out on a large, easel-mounted newsprint pad visible to everyone, which Mrs. Thompson ignored; when I was there she tended to be sitting with her back to the easel, her arms folded across her chest, facing Mrs. McInturff. The whole process was repeated with each student interlocutor in turn.

Before proceeding further into the interactional details of heritage language pedagogy in the Wasco Class, it might be useful very briefly to review the framework of Community Language Learning (CLL), which was the model being emulated there. CLL, it will be recalled, grew out of the psychotherapeutic counseling approach of Carl Rogers, and was designed specifically to address the anxieties and fears of adult language learners (Curran, 1976; La Forge, 1977, 1983; Rardin, 1977). It starts from a radical disjunction between the role of the *language counselor* (sometimes termed *knower*), and a group of students (*clients*), who sit in a circle, outside of which sits the counselor or knower. As learning progresses, learners gain both language knowledge and self-confidence, moving through several stages; a brisk summary of the account offered by Richards and Rodgers (2001/1986, p. 90-99) will serve our purposes here:

STAGE 1

The client is completely dependent on the language counselor.

1. First, he expresses only to the counselor and in English what he wishes to say to the group. Each group member overhears this English exchange but no other members of the group are involved in the interaction.

2. The counselor then reflects these ideas back to the client in the foreign language in a warm, accepting tone, in simple language in phrases of five or six words.

3. The client turns to the group and presents his ideas in the foreign language. He has the counselor's aid if he mispronounces or hesitates on a word or phrase. This is the client's maximum security stage.

STAGE 2

1. Same as above.

2. The client turns and begins to speak the foreign language directly to the group.

3. The counselor aids only as the client hesitates or turns for help. These small independent steps are signs of positive confidence and hope.

In subsequent stages (3-5) the student/client grows in confidence and accordingly the role of counselor/knower diminishes. In some versions of CLL, individual interactions between each language learner (in turn) and the counselor are conducted in a whisper, out of the earshot of other students/clients.

What first struck me about the procedures being followed in the Wasco Class was the way that the Grandmas' whispered consultation with each other—in what seemed to be a mixture of Kiksht and English—took place *backstage* (Goffman, 1959): the students, the Tribal Linguist, and I were obviously *unratified overhearers* (Goffman 1981) during this phase of the activity, and we all behaved accordingly, munching on carrots or returning to our sandwiches. Here was Kiksht actually in use, and it was not only not being documented, it was being politely ignored by the rest of us. When the Grandmas emerged from their backstage consultation, they would retake the floor in a new kind of role-relationship, with Mrs. Thompson enunciating the phrase or sentence once, and Mrs. McInturff repeating Mrs. Thompson's Kiksht utterance to the student, eliciting—in a second layer of repetition—the student's attempts to reproduce it.

Such an arrangement does seem to establish Mrs. Thompson in a position of authority, as the preeminent source for all things linguistically Wasco. Her presence was necessary, then, but her own speaking role in the classroom was also quite circumscribed. Some of this is represented in schematic form in Figure 1 below.

After several sessions I started experiencing *déjà vu*. Classroom discourse, loosely based on the principles of CLL, seemed to shift between and among a limited set of recognizable production formats and participant frameworks (Goffman, 1981) that in fact recalled nothing so much as the arrangement of speaking roles

that would be in place on any important public occasion in the Warm Springs community. In their *memory ethnography* of traditional Wasco-Wishram culture, for example, Spier and Sapir (1930) identified a named procedure of Chinookan ritual speech called *k'ix ʷulalix*, denoting the practice of ritual repetition of chiefly speech by a special paid functionary:

> Chiefs were provided with spokesmen . . . who repeated to the gathering in a loud voice what their principals said. . . . It is well to note that this is a pattern of Wishram[-Wasco] procedure; a shaman also had his spokesman who repeated aloud what the spirit communicated to the shaman. The characteristic functionary of Northwest Coast chiefs will be recognized here. (p. 213)

Figure 1

The Wasco Class, 1992–1995

(a)   **(b)**   **(c)**

<FRONTSTAGE>   <BACKSTAGE>   <FRONTSTAGE>

[English]   [Kiksht – English]   [Kiksht]
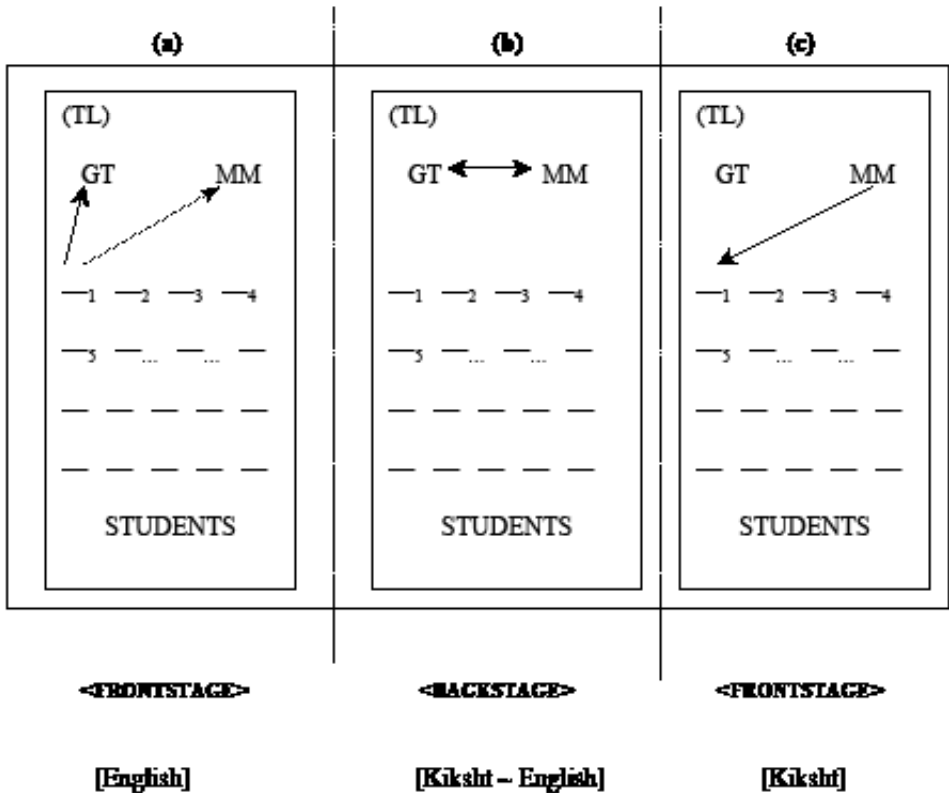
GT = Gladys Thompson
MM = Madeline McInturff
TL = Tribal Linguist

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Note that the chief here is the *principal* in Goffman's (1981) terms—the one who has a stake in the utterance qua speech act. The spokesman is perhaps both the *author* (the one who "encodes" the utterance, puts it into words), and the *animator*, the physical source of the utterance; primarily, at least, the latter.

Variants of this participation framework can be observed in what is known about the conduct of shamanistic curing sessions, as David French, drawing on fieldwork at Warm Springs in the 1950s, pointed out:

> During a curing session, a shaman no longer speaks directly to the others who are present. His voice is low in volume, and he may make disconnected or seemingly incoherent remarks. A Chinookan term, *qičemlit* (translated 'he utters' by an informant), refers to noises made by the shaman that include imitations of guardian spirit animals. . . . At least some of the remarks and noises of the shaman are repeated to the audience by a functionary hired for that purpose. . . . The data indicate that the functionary alternates between taking the role of the shaman and playing the role of an observer who is describing what the shaman and the spirit are doing. (D. French, 1958, p. 258-259)

Notice how in the shamanistic curing session, discourse moves back and forth between two major phases, each with its own characteristic allocation of speaking roles and participant alignments: a backstage phase in which the shaman imitates the utterance of the guardian spirit animals, and a frontstage phase in which the repeater/translator turns to address the singers and onlookers directly, seemingly alternating between mimetic reproduction of the ongoing dialogue between shaman and spirits (in which s/he is animator only, and the shaman and spirits are authors and principals), and narrating what s/he sees and hears in the third person, as it were (see Figure 2).

Similar participation frameworks are in place at many public ceremonials at Warm Springs today. At any given time, there are a handful of adults in the community who are known to be available for hire to perform in the role known in local non-standard Reservation English as a *Loudspeaker*:

> When a spokesman is hired for one of these ceremonies, it is customary for a sponsor, or a person desiring that an announcement be made, to speak in an ordinary manner; the functionary repeats the words in a louder voice, employing a characteristic style. . . . An ideal pattern is that neither the sponsoring family, nor any person who is the focus of attention in that family, communicates directly with the public; communications are mediated through a spokesman. (D. French, 1958, p. 261-262)

Notice again the shifting back and forth between backstage interaction involving the head of the family sponsoring the ceremonial and the Loudspeaker, and frontstage speech in which the Loudspeaker addresses the public. In the backstage phase, the sponsor might instruct the person functioning as Loudspeaker in a perfunctory manner—perhaps, "Tell 'em we're happy they came"; the Loudspeaker might then turn to face the audience and, in a clear voice appropriate for an occasion of public speaking, say: "Dear Friends, the X Family would like to welcome everyone to this Memorial Dinner in memory of their dear deceased relative …."

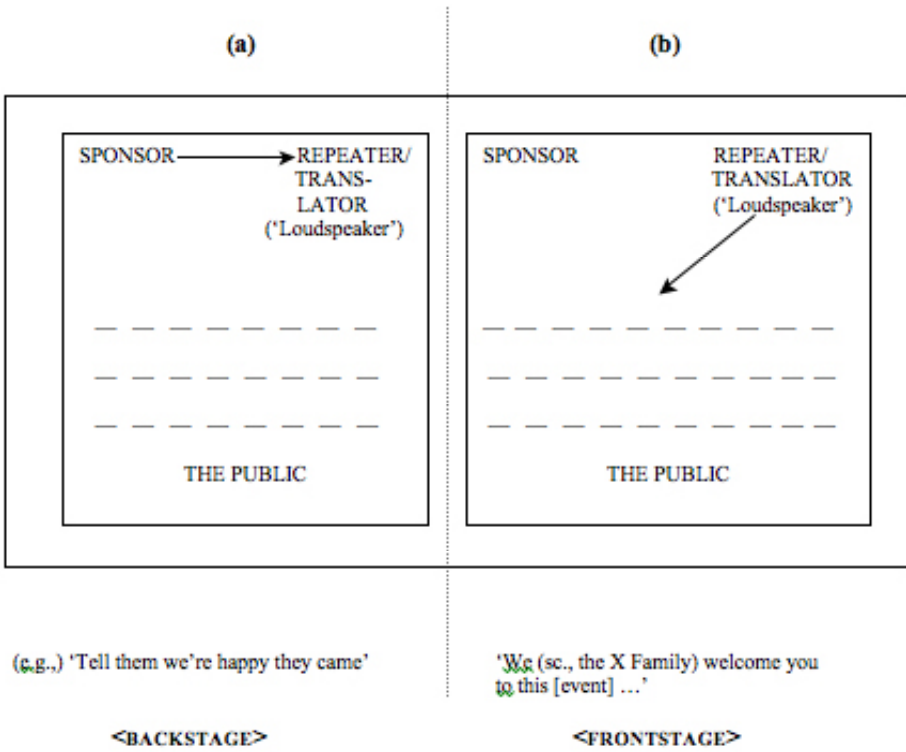## Figure 2

Shamanistic curing sessions
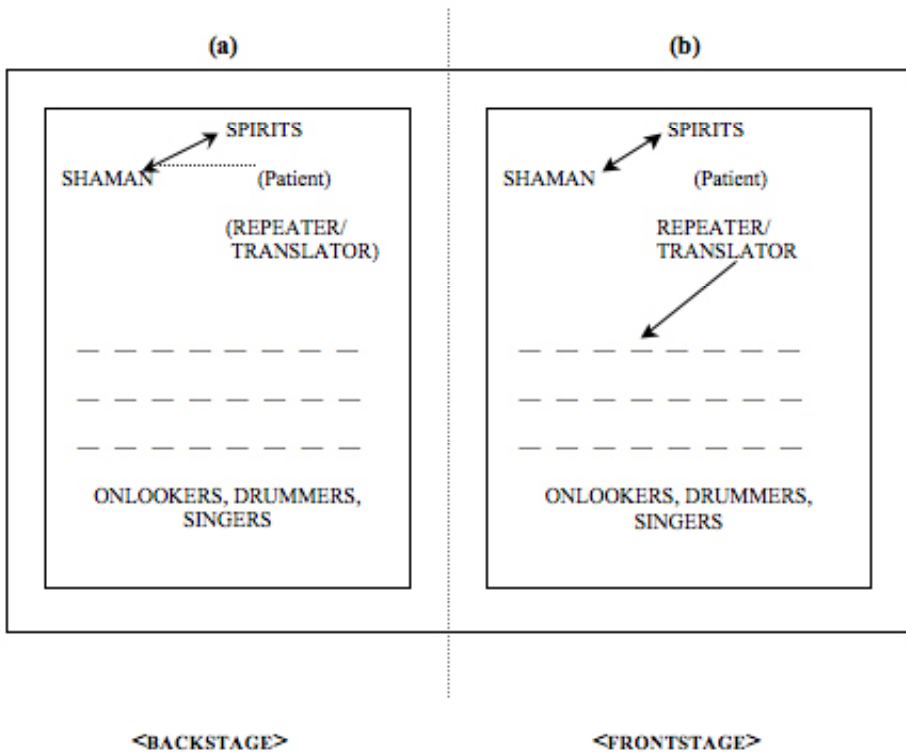
Today, all such events make use of modern PA systems for amplification. The instructions from the sponsor to the Loudspeaker take place off-mic; the Loudspeaker's utterances directed at the public are very much on, and through, the microphone and sound system (see Figure 3).

Now we can see how the Wasco Class ingeniously laminated a participation framework derived from a long tradition of Chinookan ritual speech onto the pedagogical framework of CLL.

In 1992-95, the Wasco Class was a heritage language class for adults, a practicum on linguistic field methods, a ritual performance, and a networking opportunity. It was also the backstage area and a rehearsal space for another event: the Grand Opening ceremonies for the tribally owned Museum at Warm Springs a quarter-mile down the road. The students in this class would appear onstage at this major public event, flanked by Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff, and would speak Wasco in public in a way that demonstrated, in a locally newsworthy fashion, the continued presence of the language in the community. As the date of the Grand Opening approached, rehearsal efforts became more concentrated.

Figure 3

Public ceremonials (chiefly speech in former times)

(a)   (b)

| SPONSOR ──────→ REPEATER/ TRANS- LATOR ('Loudspeaker') | SPONSOR   REPEATER/ TRANSLATOR ('Loudspeaker') |
| THE PUBLIC | THE PUBLIC |

(e.g.,) 'Tell them we're happy they came'   'We (sc., the X Family) welcome you to this [event] …'

<BACKSTAGE>   <FRONTSTAGE>

The Museum's Grand Opening ceremonies, held on March 13, 1993, had three major segments, one for each of the reservation's three tribes. The second, entitled "Welcome," was the responsibility of the Wasco Tribe, who welcomed distinguished guests and outsiders, including the current and former governors of the State of Oregon, and a US Senator.

During their segment of the ceremony, the students in the Wasco Class took turns stepping up to the microphone, each reciting his or her own Kiksht utterance, together with its English translation. Some used note-cards, others had committed everything to memory (see Figure 4).

Analysis and Conclusion

The specific case I have discussed involves classroom instruction in Kiksht (Wasco-Wishram dialect of Upper Chinookan), an American Indian language that would be deemed severely endangered or even moribund by most standards. The students are adult language learners who come to class already heavily invested in learning the language. In fact, for them—American Indian adults on a reservation

Figure 4

Transformations of event structure and participant roles:

From classroom discourse to podium performance

Wasco Class

Warm Springs Museum
Grand Opening

<BACKSTAGE>

<FRONTSTAGE>
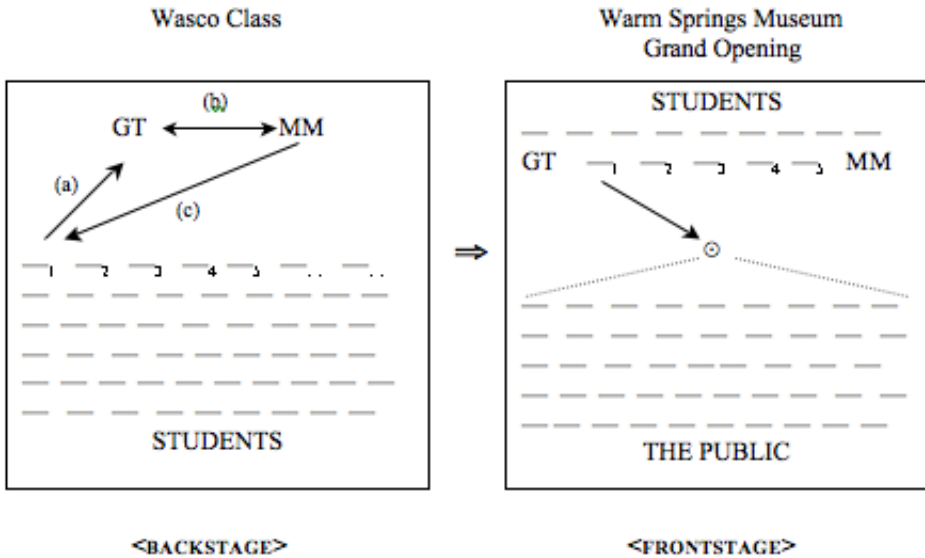
in Oregon—it is a process of re-acquisition, of re-possessing a language that has in a sense been theirs all along.

The students' predicament—that it is their own language, even though they do not know how to speak it—is shared by many who live in communities where one or more ancestral languages is falling rapidly out of use. Their project of reclaiming their own ancestral language—and through it, culture—is not atypical of contemporary indigenous groups caught up in processes of globalization (Silverstein, 1998).

Within the Warm Springs community, the Wasco Class was seen by some—not without justification—as an attempt by a local elite to (yet again) seize the advantage by positioning itself in direct proximity to a new and emerging form of cultural capital: an endangered heritage language. The same people who gained an advantage in the 19th century by abandoning their traditional language and traditions and taking up Euro-American dress and language were gaining an advantage in the 21st century by reclaiming their traditional language and culture. But were they the same people? The purpose of the Wasco Class participation in the Museum Grand Opening ceremony would seem to be to assert, and performatively to entail, just such a linkage. And given the complex history of intertribal relations in the Warm Springs community sketched above, what better evidence of cultural continuity could one wish for?

But conceived more broadly, in the framework of a contemporary sociolinguistics of globalization, this is a project of taking up speech (de Certeau, 1997/1968)—of being seen to deploy a linguistic resource effectively in concrete contexts of social interaction. It is a project that adult language learners in reservation communities share with millions of others who understand themselves as members of diasporized linguistic communities, as migrants, or as newcomers. They discover that their host country has placed the onus of integration on them, and is closely monitoring their speech for signs of its incompleteness (Spotti, 2011; Milani, 2007). What seems to set apart American Indians and other erstwhile indigenous peoples is that they became *displaced people* without ever leaving home.

In these communities, a little of the ancestral language goes a long way. What seems to be crucial in a number of cases is not that new speakers control all, or even most, of the resources of the language as it was spoken in previous generations. What is crucial is that they acquire, along with the phonemes and (some of) the morphemes of the ancestral language, a sense of its proper use in display: as a new generation takes proprietary control over their elders' language, it is important that they do so with propriety, and in a way that shows respect for those elders and their traditions (cf. Meek, 2011; Ahlers, 2006; Nevins, 2004; Goodfellow, 2003).

Even knowing a few words or phrases of an ancestral language—or, perhaps, more robust genres of performance such as traditional songs—enables younger people in these communities to think of themselves, and in fact to be, something other than monolingual speakers of English (Ikuta, 2009).

In the process, the endangered ancestral language is neither returned to the status of a primary daily medium of interaction in the community, nor does it completely disappear: it is, rather, transformed so as to take on new and specialized functions. And it is this fact of *functional* recategorization and (re-)enregisterment of such languages that is reflected in the patterns of structural and grammatical change that we observe in the speech of younger generations of new speakers. What is at issue here and elsewhere, I would argue, are not any putative facts about language *attrition* in the mental competences of individual speakers and semispeakers, but a set of sociocultural and functional facts, tied to processes of globalization, that have redistributed the rights and obligations associated with language forms to new kinds of participants, and new frameworks of participation, to none of which the inherited model of the fully fluent native speaker is adequate.

The collaboration and pooling of linguistic resources that can be observed in this case is typical of both so-called small and endangered varieties that remain in use on special occasions, and of language learning in contemporary settings of globalization and superdiversity (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011)—but it only becomes visible when we move beyond the unitary fluent native speaker. It becomes analytically useful if we attend to the way that the role of speaker can be decomposed, not only into different *kinds* of speakers and semi-speakers (based on the differential degrees of fluency observed), but also into speech-event role-fractions like animator, author, and principal. Indeed, the very effectiveness of the utterances I've been describing in fact rests on the presupposition that the role of speaker can be so subdivided. All the participants in the Wasco Class, in other words, presupposed what contemporary sociolinguistics is only now coming grips with: the fact that *speaker* is not a unitary role or a pre-theoretical given, but

a makeshift, a covering label for a range of footings and participant alignments (Agha, 2007, p. 391)[25].

Now, what of the students as second-language learners? Whose linguistic competence was on display that afternoon at the Museum dedication ceremony? My own informal observations suggest that out of 12-15 students, at least 3 or 4 became quite proficient, both in colloqiual Kiksht and the public speaking register, and enjoyed using the language informally amongst themselves inside and outside the classroom. Others acquired a more limited range of usage; some had continuing problems with phonology, and on the day of the Museum Grand Opening produced a memorized string of phonemes. Of course, at the public event, all of the students, whatever their degree of fluency in Kiksht, were in one way or another repeating what they had been taught by the Grandmas—but it is essential to see that that is precisely what made their public utterances legitimate and effective, whatever their individual fluencies or internal grasp of the grammar.

This is neither an exotic phenomenon, nor is it specific to situations of language shift and endangerment. The organization of dialogic interaction in the Wasco language classroom is clearly rooted in specific traditions of Chinookan formal speech—but the diversity of participant role-fractions, and the modes of participation they enable, are in fact neither unique nor culturally specific, but typical of multilingual communities.

In his now classic study of language *crossing* among adolescents, for example, Ben Rampton noted that "Panjabi was suited to interethnic jocular abuse precisely because of its status as a *language learner variety* among white and black adolescents" (Rampton, 1995, p. 175; emphasis in original). "This might seem surprising in view of the value set on linguistic skill in jocular insult exchanges," writes Rampton, "but since most young people of Caribbean and Anglo descent were expected to be almost completely ignorant of the language, even a little knowledge could be lauded as exceptional ability" (ibid.). Not only that, but "ignorance of propositional meaning and a pressing dependence on the linguistic models just recently provided by bilinguals also meant that rudimentary utterances in Panjabi as a second language were actually well fitted to turn structure in joking abuse sequences" (ibid.). What is this but the transformation of an erstwhile linguistic variety (Panjabi) into a register designed to take on specialized micro-functions in minimal forms—just what has been observed of so-called endangered languages in continued use?

The performance of the Wasco Class at the Museum Grand Opening in 1993 was a major public success—it wowed the audience. Many people in the community told me that they had not heard so much "Wasco language" spoken in public for decades. After this, many things changed:

- Teaching of Kiksht was expanded to include 1st and 2nd graders, and continues today. Two younger women—Radine Johnson, Mrs. Thompson's granddaughter, and Val Switzler—took over teaching responsibilities, and continued their own language learning: Ms. Johnson via an ongoing master-apprentice relationship with her grandmother, Ms. Switzler by undertaking graduate study in Linguistics. Both are highly proficient speakers of Kiksht.
- Anglo linguist consultants with easel-mounted pads (or tape-

recorders) are no longer a presence in the classroom (both Ms. Johnson and Ms. Switzler are now fully literate in Kiksht).

- A vast archive of recordings of Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McInturff—a much larger sample of the language than any previous fieldworker has ever managed to collect—continues to be amassed via digital audio and video.

"Taking up speech" is an English translation of a French catchphrase, *la prise de parole*. Today it seems to belong to two distinct registers: one having to do with the activity of public speaking—as an internet search term it turns up the web pages of speech therapists and other professionals with expertise in elocution, corporate communications, and media training—and one having to do with the strikes and protests of May 1968 in France. It provides the title of a pamphlet published in October of that year by Michel de Certeau, in which he records his experience of those events: "a throng became poetic," he wrote; "everyone finally began to talk: about essential things, about society, about happiness, about knowledge, about art, about politics" (de Certeau, 1997/1968, p. 13).

The lessons to be learned from the case discussed here are perhaps less dramatic, but both senses of the phrase seem relevant. The more immediate implications were neatly summed up by Ms. Johnson in a recent conversation with a visitor to her Wasco Class with 1st and 2nd graders, with which I will conclude:

> Radine Johnson said, "Our language doesn't work on an agenda. It's learned by hearing and repeating it, and that's what we do. It will never work in lesson plans, because there's always so much to learn, even about a single word." (A single Wasco verb, for example, can have 40,000 separate conjugations). (Haynes, 2004, p. 95)

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