

Sociolinguistics, endangered languages and revitalisation: a fertile and/or fraught relationship?

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Sociolinguistics, like any other discipline, has experienced a substantive expansion of its areas of focus as well as changes in its theoretical underpinnings and methodological approaches. Of particular interest to the investigations around language endangerment and the revitalisation of severely threatened and near extinct languages are three developments:

- (1) A dominant focus on the **city** or urban environment as the primary locale for sociolinguistic explorations, such as the documentation of linguistic landscapes, the language practices of various urban speech communities and ethnolinguistic groups (e.g., immigrants, youth);
- (2) The '**theoretical turn**' in relation to the concept of language, i.e. moving away from viewing language as a 'stable', 'fixed' system to one that focuses on the 'fluidity' and 'dynamics' of language, as expressed through language practices;
- (3) A considerable shift in methodological approaches with (much) more prominence given to qualitative methods, particularly various forms of ethnography.

In this talk I will explore and discuss how these shifts affect the sociolinguistic examinations of severely endangered languages: do they benefit or hinder revitalisation work?