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Training speakers of indigenous languages of Latin America at a US university

Anthony C. Woodbury and Nora C. England

1. Introduction

In this paper we describe our experiences training speakers of indigenous languages of Latin America in documentary linguistics at a major US university. We feel that it has had and will have benefits for community language preservation efforts, for documentary linguistics, for linguistics more generally, and for our university. We hope here to make this case; and we hope it will encourage those in other universities contemplating such a programme for themselves in a way that suits their own interests, needs, and world position.

2. The Centre for Indigenous Languages of Latin America at the University of Texas

In autumn 1998, the University of Texas (UT) announced a major initiative to increase its already considerable commitment to Latin American studies¹. A group of staff in the Linguistics, Anthropology, Spanish and Portuguese and Art History departments – Joel Sherzer, Madeline Sutherland, Charles Hale, Nicolas Shumway, Nikolai Grube, Tony Woodbury, and others – responded by proposing the creation of a Centre for Indigenous Languages of Latin America (CILLA). CILLA's purpose was to be both research and teaching, with a special commitment to bringing members of indigenous communities to UT as postgraduate students. We intended to do this by building on our existing strengths in linguistics, anthropology, and Latin American studies, and, within these disciplines, in documentary and descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. From the UT administration we sought to employ a distinguished senior Latin Americanist linguist to direct the centre, and enough support for teaching and research to get the programme functioning well enough that it could eventually rely on outside support for its activities.

By Spring 2000 – with the support of the Provost, Sheldon Ekland-Olson; Vice Provosts Gerald Torres and Victoria Rodriguez; the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School Teresa Sullivan; and the Dean of Liberal Arts, Richard Lariviere – we got a commitment to our plan. Then in Spring 2001, after conducting a search, we hired Nora England of the University of Iowa as CILLA's founding director.

¹ This commitment is demonstrated by a large interdisciplinary faculty of Latin Americanist scholars associated with the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, and the premiere Latin American collection of the Nettie Lee Benson Library.

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In the course of our discussions with England that Spring, a clearer conception of CILLA emerged. CILLA would be part of the Institute of Latin American Studies. However, the director's actual faculty 'line' would be in the Department of Linguistics, where she would have an office in the same building with Linguistics faculty and students. CILLA would have a budget for conferences, visitors, and other activities; but CILLA's centerpiece was a commitment to bring to Austin two indigenous languages speakers as postgraduate students every year. In their first year, the students would be offered an intensive course in English; the next year, they would enter either the Linguistics or the Anthropology department as regular M.A. and Ph.D. postgraduate students. As postgraduate students, they would fulfill all the normal departmental course requirements, eventually specializing so that they could pursue individual research and support projects for their own language and community.

CILLA's most notable design feature was its total focus on indigenous students. No explicit provision was made for support of other students with an interest in Latin American indigenous languages; nor indeed was any explicit provision made for research. This was because we were expecting that at a major research university, general postgraduate student interest, and research itself would 'just happen'. Postgraduate students of any background would be attracted to a programme that is thriving, and postgraduate students and faculty alike would naturally find research opportunities and take appropriate initiatives. Indeed, we already had seven students working on indigenous languages of Latin America, including one, Ajb'ee Jiménez, who was a speaker of Mam, a Mayan language of Guatemala. And three of us (Joel Sherzer, Heidi Johnson, and Tony Woodbury) had recently received major funding from the US National Science Foundation and the US National Endowment for the Humanities for a web-based digital Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA; www.ailla.utexas.org).

CILLA's first year began in autumn 2001 (reckoning by the US autumn-to-spring academic calendar). Thus, at the time of this writing (autumn 2004) CILLA just entered its fourth year of operation. Seven indigenous students are now enrolled as postgraduate students: four in Linguistics, two in Anthropology, and one in Latin American Studies. Two other students have completed a year of English, one of whom will be entering as a postgraduate student in Linguistics in spring 2005, the other, if possible, in autumn 2005. And one other student has just begun studying English. The students come from Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, and Peru; and among them are speakers of Chatino, Zapotec, three Mayan languages (Mam, Q'anjob'al, and Chol), Kuna, and Quechua.

As hoped, non-indigenous students have also been attracted to CILLA: at least 15 of them joined the six who antedated CILLA, giving a total of at least 21 non-indigenous Latin Americanists in all. As hoped, new research projects have emerged, including a major student-community co-operative project on Iquito language documentation and preservation in Peru; a student-faculty-community project on

Mayan languages of Guatemala (with a grant from the HRELP Endangered Languages Documentation Programme); a student-faculty-community project on Quiahije Chatino in Oaxaca, Mexico; and new student-community projects on Q'anjob'al, Mam, Sierra Popoluca (Mexico), and Ngabe Guaymi, Kuna, Ixil and Quechua.

CILLA has also had an active interest in establishing and maintaining relationships with scholars in Latin America. It sponsored four conferences: "Linguistics at the Service of Indigenous Languages" (Spring 2002), "Fostering Indigenous Literatures of Latin America: Documentation, Archiving, and Education" (Spring 2003), "Conference on Indigenous Languages of Latin America - I" (Fall 2003), which is to be repeated biennially; and "Language and Cultural Maintenance in Mesoamerica" (Spring 2004). We have had Dr. Roberto Zavala Maldonado of CIESAS-Sureste, Chiapas, as a visiting faculty member (Fall 2003) and have plans to host Dr. Paulette Levy (UNAM, Mexico) in Spring 2006.

CILLA has also experienced major growth in two ways. In Spring 2004, we appointed Patience Epps, a specialist in Hup and other indigenous languages of the Vaupés River basin of northern Brazil. She will begin as assistant professor of linguistics in autumn 2005. And in September 2004, UT entered into a formal relationship with the Ford Foundation's International Fellowship Programme, according to which Ford will support and send to UT up to 15 students, many of them indigenous students, from five Latin American countries seeking postgraduate degrees in a range of disciplines, including linguistics and anthropology. In what follows, we wish to elaborate on certain aspects of the enterprise.

3. The core idea of CILLA

The investigation, documentation, and preservation of indigenous languages in Latin America and elsewhere have different stakeholders whose agendas overlap partly but not totally. Members of indigenous communities describe spiritual, political, economic, and social motivations for language documentation at least, and often, where feasible, for language preservation. Linguists as a group – whether or not they are from the community – seek to investigate indigenous languages for their bearing on questions of prehistory as well as questions of linguistic universality and diversity. And a wider public has seen diversity and its maintenance as a humanistic value.

Basic documentation and accurate description are foundational for all these agendas, while other enterprises – such as orthography design and language planning on the one hand, or historical reconstruction and linguistic theory-testing on the other – may be more parochial. The core idea of CILLA is to offer state-of-the-art training in documentation and description to new generations of community language activists, treating it as the common ground across agendas.

It is possible for us as linguists to take this approach now that documentary linguistics has been conceived of as a field apart from historical linguistics and grammatical theory (Himmelman 1998, Woodbury 2003). It is quite clear that the fusion in the past of documentary linguistics with historical or theoretical enterprises made it harder for linguists to fit their work with the language work envisioned in communities. Indeed, there were and are many cases of unequal collaboration in which a traditional linguist's agenda took the front seat.

Furthermore, we believe that out of a common focus on documentary linguistics by students and researchers and by community members and non-community members, new, better, and deeper understandings of indigenous languages will arise. We also believe we will find new and unforeseen uses for documentation, and that community and academic projects will spill into each other in mutually beneficial ways. This is especially likely to happen as agendas are shared and 'interest groups' blurred within and beyond our academic community.

4. Who joins this programme, and how?

There may not yet be a generic answer to the question "who joins the CILLA programme?" In the last three years, we have circulated widely a call for applications in Spanish, and have received a number of applications. Among the qualifications we have sought are the equivalent of a BA, an aptitude for formal analysis, a strong commitment to community language maintenance, and, preferably, a recommendation from someone in a position to predict success in a programme such as ours. In some cases prospective students have applied 'cold' and been accepted; in others they were encouraged to apply by colleagues of ours at their home institutions; in others they were people known directly to one of us through our own activities in Latin America; and in one case, a visit and an eventual application arose out of a casual conversation among strangers in a Mexican cafe. Likewise, backgrounds have varied. Several students came to us with excellent prior preparation in linguistics in their home country, including, for example, two who had studied linguistics at Oxlajuuj Keej Maya' Ajtz'iib' (OKMA) in Antigua, Guatemala and co-authored important linguistic works on their own languages, and two who were finishing their MAs in linguistics in Mexico. Others have had backgrounds in language and education. And one had almost no background in language study but an extremely strong background in and commitment to community level activism.

At this point, it is hard for us to know if, at one extreme, we have addressed most of the pent-up demand for a programme such as this; or whether, at the other extreme, the interest and talent to which we have had access is only the tip of the iceberg. We shall see.

5. What do students study?

A part of CILLA's initial design was to offer a year of English for students who needed it. Of the 10 students associated with CILLA, six already had excellent English and did not need the year; four took advantage of it.

CILLA itself is a unit of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies with an office on the extreme east end of UT's rather sprawling campus; but it is not a postgraduate department. CILLA students actually study for their degrees in the Department of Linguistics, on the extreme west end of campus, or the Department of Anthropology, which is roughly in the middle. Both are large, diverse departments for their disciplines, with 17 faculty members in Linguistics, and 31 in Anthropology. Students follow the normal programme of study in their discipline, exactly the same programme followed by every entering student, whether or not they have anything to do with CILLA: in linguistics, this means Syntax I and II, Phonology I and II, Historical Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Semantics; in anthropology, it means the core courses in Social and Linguistic Anthropology, and, optionally, other subfields. From there, the CILLA students normally specialize, depending on their department, in either documentary linguistics or linguistic anthropology, respectively; but again, not as part of some separate "track", but simply choosing the options most relevant for their own work. At this point the CILLA students in both linguistics and anthropology normally end up taking a number of courses in common, including Tools for Linguistic Description, Field Methods in Linguistic Investigation, The Structure of language X (most recently, Mayan languages and Chatino), Linguistic Anthropology, Video in Linguistic Anthropology, and others.

There is also considerable overlap of CILLA faculty: Crowhurst, England, Woodbury, and now Epps are linguistics department members while Hale, Sherzer, Stross, and Keating are in anthropology; but England and Woodbury have courtesy appointments in anthropology while Keating and Sherzer have courtesy appointments in linguistics. This means that they can (and do) advise and supervise students in the opposite department.

In both departments, the period for basic coursework is about three years. While getting their disciplinary and subdisciplinary bearings, a key goal is to offer indigenous students whatever it takes to get them up and running as scholars on their own language. Given the variety of circumstances, this has worked differently in different cases. In the cases of three students, Ajb'ee Jiménez, B'alam Mateo-Toledo, and Juan Jesús Vázquez, who are Maya language speakers with significant prior background working on their languages, this was accomplished through a general course offered by England on the structure of Mayan languages, which drew on England's own background as a Mayanist and an extensive literature. A quite different situation arose with Emiliana Cruz, a speaker of Chatino, a relatively scantily-described Otomanguean language of Oaxaca – in her case, Woodbury volunteered to work through the literature

with her, and, at the same time, join her in primary investigation of her own language through introspection, phonetic/phonological analysis, and text study. Although this work began in the context of a Structure of Chatino class in spring 2003, in which other postgraduate students and staff participated, it has continued on a “conference course” level and morphed into a collaboration involving other Chatino speakers as well.

Eventually, CILLA students, like all students, do projects of their own: papers for classes, master’s theses, Ph.D. qualifying papers, and eventually doctoral dissertations. This work is often based on community research projects for which they seek (and have received) support.

6. How do CILLA students fit in their home academic departments?

When building a programme within a programme, the embedded programme can become institutionally, intellectually and socially isolated. It is obviously a matter of degree; and there are arguments both for and against isolation. Such isolation is an issue, in any case, among syntacticians, phonologists, sociolinguists, and descriptivists in linguistics or among archaeologists, social, physical, cultural and linguistic anthropologists.

Our approach to this question in both departments has been to offer strong programs while encouraging a free flow of students across disciplinary lines, and, consequently, some blurring of students’ subdisciplinary identity. Indigenous students in linguistics will generally focus on documentary linguistics but not always exclusively. B’alam Mateo-Toledo, for example, is active among the department’s syntacticians. Likewise, non-indigenous documenters – Latin Americanist and otherwise – are often also, to varying degrees, syntacticians, semanticists, or phonologists. Likewise, although indigenous students in anthropology will generally focus on linguistic anthropology, there is at least one whose primary direction has been toward social anthropology. In any case, there is no institutional difference in any way in the programmes or degree requirements of indigenous and non-indigenous students, or of CILLA and non-CILLA students, in either department; and this further contributes to our overall goal of intellectual integration.

There are several ways that we encourage this further. First, as noted, all the students take the same core courses. In linguistics, this means that CILLA students in linguistics will enter as part of a typically large (15 or more recently) first-year class who take all the same classes and who may be said to ‘bond’ over the experience with their colleagues, regardless of their ultimate disciplinary trajectory. The same is the case in anthropology, except that the focal ‘bonding’ group, the linguistic anthropologists, is much smaller.

Second, both within and beyond CILLA, we avoid practices which construct the student-staff relationships as exclusive (“she’s my professor,” “he’s my student”). For example, students are not beholden to one academic staff member for their financial support; and we actively encourage co-supervision of doctoral dissertations. This makes it possible for students to feel freer to follow their interests. Indeed, our most advanced indigenous student in linguistics, B’alam Mateo-Toledo, has worked closely with at least five different staff members in linguistics and is likely to set up a doctoral committee with members specializing in syntax, the syntax/semantics/pragmatics interface, and descriptive linguistics.

Finally, the CILLA academics themselves are involved in multiple subdisciplines in their teaching and research. In our own cases, for example, we occasionally teach and publish in linguistic theory, historical linguistics, and sociolinguistics, and work with our colleagues in all these areas. And our CILLA colleague Megan Crowhurst is in fact primarily a theoretical phonologist.

In sum, we feel that this arrangement and approach has achieved a strong integration of indigenous students with other students, as well as an integration of Latin American linguistics and documentary linguistics into the overall enterprises of the department.

It is also appropriate at this point to note that despite all of this integration, we also take steps to maintain CILLA’s sense of intellectual and social community. As noted there have been four CILLA-related conferences since CILLA’s inception. And three or four times a semester, CILLA students and staff meet in the evening at a private home, usually England’s, for informal talks and general conviviality. Both the conferences and the informal meetings are conducted mostly in Spanish. The non-indigenous students find this particularly helpful, because it gives them more opportunities to practice their Spanish out of the field. The indigenous students feel less communicatively constrained than they do in their classes, at least in their first year or so.

7. How does CILLA foster student and faculty research?

As noted, our focus is on training; research is supposed to ‘just happen’. This is exactly what has occurred. The following are examples.

7.1 The Iquito Language Documentation Project

This was first conceived of as a voluntary project by Christine Beier and Lev Michael, postgraduate students in Anthropology, together with members of a local community for the documentation of their language, Iquito, a moribund language of the Peruvian Amazon. It has involved a eight postgraduate students plus several Peruvian students over three years and has received major funding from ELDP. It has provided initial

fieldwork experience for students and material for their Ph.D. qualifying papers and master's theses. Alongside documenting the language, the project is producing language teaching materials and members are training local community language specialists who work year round. The project has become a model for postgraduate student and community co-operation in research, and has cemented our ideas about the fusion of community and academic agendas around linguistic documentation.

7.2 Mayan Languages Documentation Project

England and B'alam Mateo-Toledo, a linguistics postgraduate student and native speaker of Q'anjob'al (Mayan), have been working on a documentation project in four Mayan languages that is administered by OKMA, a Guatemalan linguistic research institute. The projects are carried out in conjunction with speakers of the languages, are directed by speakers of Mayan languages who are already experienced in linguistic research, and provide training in linguistics for community members and supervisors as well as documentation of the languages. This project too has major funding through ELDP and NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

7.3 Chatino Language Documentation Project

Emiliana Cruz, Hilaria Cruz, and Tomas Cruz – postgraduate students, respectively, in anthropology, linguistics, and Latin American studies and all members of a Chatino community in Oaxaca, Mexico – are working together with Woodbury on a project to document their Chatino variety as well as to work with local school teachers and language activists to prepare them to teach in and about the language in the schools in the village of Cieneguilla de Quiahije. One of the principal aims of the project is to encourage the continued use of Chatino as a way of stemming the language loss faced there, as by many other indigenous-language communities in Mexico and elsewhere. The project is also a demonstration of linguistic research and activism on a shoestring: other than summer research support for Emiliana Cruz, it has been easily manageable out-of-pocket, without high budgets, high pay expectations, or grant-getting headaches.

7.4 Individual student field documentation projects

Recent projects include individual doctoral dissertation work on Tepehua (Totonacan; Mexico) by Susan Kung, supported by a US National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research grant and a Fulbright fellowship; Sotapanec (Mije-Soke; Mexico) by Lynda de Jong Boudreault, supported by an IIE Fulbright Garcia-Robles fellowship; Q'anjob'al (Mayan; Guatemala) by B'alam Mateo-Toledo (not supported yet, he has done preliminary work through a UT Liberal Arts Graduate Research Fellowship); and Ngabe (Chibchan; Panama) by Mark Brown. In all cases but Q'anjob'al, these projects are expected to lead to grammars as doctoral dissertations; but these grammar-dissertations all are expected to be corpus-based works, founded on

a base of documentation. Furthermore, in all of the grammar cases mentioned, the documentation also serves as a basis for community language preservation efforts of one kind or another. In the case of Q'anjob'al, the focus is syntax and semantics, but the documentary and community basis are the same.

There is also a considerable interest in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistic issues. Among linguistic anthropology students, Laura Cervantes defended a dissertation on language and poetics in ritual music in a Costa Rican Bribri community; Kerry Hull defended a dissertation on the maintenance, use, and form of poetic language in Ch'orti' (Mayan); Chris Beier and Lev Michael are doing dissertation fieldwork on discourse patterns connected with both grammar and culture in Nanti, a Campa language of Peru; and Vivian Newdick is studying political discourse in Tzotzil speaking communities in Chiapas. Among those entering in autumn 2003, Simeon Floyd — who began in Latin American studies — came with a background of research on naturally occurring narrative in Quechuan languages and is now beginning documentary work on a Tupian languages in Brazil; Maria Garcia, is working on narrative in an Ixil community in Guatemala; and Kayla Price is exploring issues of orthography in Kuna communities in Panama, and is involved as well in ongoing documentation of Kuna natural discourse together with Joel Sherzer.

Among linguistics students, there has been a focus on the sociolinguistics of language maintenance and language shift: Michal Brody has recently defended a dissertation on writing and literacy in the Yucatán; and among recent students, Cynthia Anderson has begun work in a Nahuatl-speaking community in Guerrero, Mexico, on processes of language shift; and Taryne Hallett, who took part last summer in the Iquito project and plans to take part in others, proposes a comparative study of sociolinguistic issues and factors connected with language maintenance efforts in Latin America that incorporate community-based linguistic documentation.

8. How are CILLA students financially supported?

Part of our purpose in describing our experiences is to encourage others in linguistics departments to consider doing the same. But a major issue — which will differ considerably from department to department — is the funding of students.

At this moment, the University of Texas has among the lowest tuition fees in the US (and even lower for Texas residents). UT linguistics students generally support themselves with outside fellowships from the US National Science Foundation; or they may work on a year-to-year basis as teaching assistants, assistant instructors, or research assistants, either in linguistics or some other department; or they may find other employment around Austin. Later, they often get outside support for their doctoral research. Obviously, this a-la-carte approach to funding is an option for our students because fees are not sky-high. Moreover, it has led to an approach on our part

where entering postgraduate classes can be — and recently have been — in the range of 20 students per year.

Our flexibility for enrolling students has been an important asset in the development of CILLA, for never has it seemed that by accepting CILLA students, we have to cut down on students with other interests. It does, however, potentially increase the demand for the assistantships available in linguistics and anthropology, one of our main means of support.

When CILLA was in its planning stages, we told the Provost and Deans that a novel program centered on training indigenous students had high potential for attracting foundation support; but that it would need some initial investment on the part of the university. The university was (as already noted) generously forthcoming, offering us support for two students a year to study English for the first two years; and packages of guaranteed assistantships for CILLA students in their first years, contributed variously by the College of Liberal Arts, the School for Graduate Studies, and the Anthropology and Linguistics departments; and support for CILLA's administration, including its grant-getting efforts. However, by 2001, when CILLA actually got started, it was clear the US stock market had crashed, foundations had much less money to spend, and finding long-term support proved more difficult than anticipated.

Still, CILLA and its students were successful in obtaining outside fellowships and project support; and the support of the UT administration was unwavering. But this hardly covered our long-term plans and needs. Then in May, 2004 — almost out of the blue — UT was contacted by representatives of the Ford Foundation's International Fellowship Program (<http://www.fordifp.net/>), which provides opportunities for advanced study for "candidates from social groups and communities that lack systematic access to higher education." They were interested in establishing a relationship with UT whereby up to 15 indigenous (or otherwise educationally marginalized) students from Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Peru, and Chile could come to UT, with their support, taking postgraduate degrees in a range of disciplines, including linguistics and anthropology. We believe that from their point of view, CILLA represented a viable starting point for such a venture since we were already hosting indigenous Latin American postgraduate students at UT, had established a vibrant student community, were aware of immigration and other technical issues, and had strong home institutional support. An agreement was signed in September 2004, by which time Linguistics was receiving its first Ford-IFP postgraduate student. By this arrangement, we hope that Ford and CILLA will benefit mutually from each other's recruiting efforts, and that our (eventual) students will benefit from both Ford's support for their postgraduate studies and for the enlarged indigenous Latin American postgraduate student community (even beyond CILLA) that Ford will facilitate at UT.

While our funding story is highly individual, we believe that the some of it is generalizable to other situations. Crucial for us have been:

- an awareness of our own departmental funding situations before CILLA, and how CILLA might fit within them;
- broad-based institutional interest, commitment, and support, from upper administration to our department colleagues;
- constant effort to find outside funding;
- detailed attention to the development of a strong, supportive intellectual and social community within CILLA; and
- a high level of academic visibility.

9. Impact on communities

It is certainly too soon to speak more than speculatively about the impacts of CILLA's training of indigenous Latin American students; but for us and anyone contemplating something similar, it must be kept in mind.

We turn first to the impact on communities. We get some idea of some of the immediate impact from the work that our students are already doing through OKMA in Guatemala, and in the Chatino community in Mexico. In the case of OKMA, B'alam Mateo has emerged as an even more effective general advisor than England has been, and has become almost indispensable to the documentation projects. He co-ordinates one of the teams and also helps all the teams with technical issues. The community researchers on his team are rapidly becoming the best trained and most engaged of the new researchers. He has at the same time established and maintained good contact with people in both his own community and the OKMA documentation community he works with who are interested in their own languages, and has helped them get additional training. As an 'insider' he has been a most effective voice for establishing very high standards of professional contributions to linguistics by members of OKMA.

In the Chatino community, we have found extremely high levels of interest in literacy and language study. People of all ages have participated in long and technically detailed short courses; and the reception and support of local traditional authorities has been warm. All of us involved in the project believe that our ability over the course of our work to fashion a practical and adequate orthography for a language presenting an unusually difficult segmental and tonal phonology has been a part of the programme's popularity, and of speakers' success in learning to write (see Dimmendaal and Lüpke, this volume, for further discussion of the importance of orthography development).

More generally, the greatest impact is likely to come through the work that our students do once they have their degrees. Among them, we note a very strong commitment to return and undertake community work. Different individuals in different local situations are likely to go on to a fairly wide range of activities; we can only speculate about what they will involve. However, one of the reasons why we are

as confident as we are that these activities will be productive and interesting is the experience that England has had with OKMA. Although OKMA is not a university programme, it has trained new researchers in linguistics since 1990, and has conducted several major linguistic research projects during that time. Individuals trained at OKMA have, in some cases, remained at OKMA working on research and further training projects, thus giving others the benefit of their expertise. Others have worked for the linguistic communities established by the Academy of Mayan Languages, while still others have worked for various educational NGOs or foundations. Many have studied linguistics at one of the Guatemalan universities, and the group as a whole has taken a definite leadership position in linguistic matters in Guatemala. We expect that our postgraduate students, when they return to their countries, will also take leadership positions in both technical linguistic and language policy matters. We further hope they will be able, one way or another, to share their expertise with other speakers of their languages and use it to whatever purposes they find most urgent, compelling, or interesting. And finally, we expect that they will continue to contribute to the very best documentation possible of their own and other indigenous languages.

There is also a strong sense on the part of all CILLA participants – students and faculty – that the community potential of well-trained linguists is simply something to be explored as it happens.

10. Impact on linguistics

As academic linguists ourselves, it is somewhat easier for us to discuss the impact on the field of linguistics of training speakers of indigenous language of Latin America in a setting like CILLA.

For descriptive or field linguistics, construed narrowly as the creation of grammars, texts, and dictionaries for the world's languages, we find that our training efforts directly address just about all the key, burning issues, from narrow matters of practice, to broader topics of importance to the whole discipline.

First, while we recognize that both non-native and native speaker linguists bring crucial perspectives to the description of any language, the real issue for most of the world's languages, and nearly all indigenous languages of Latin America, has been the absence of native, not non-native linguist input. Particularly in the areas of semantics, syntax, lexicon, and ethnography of speaking, the point scarcely requires argument.

Second, we feel that speaker training responds directly to questions of academic responsibility. Especially since the 1970's, academic field linguists, as well as communities, have articulated differences between academic and community agendas about local languages. Many linguists have made significant efforts to bridge these differences; and it has become common for (non-indigenous) postgraduate students to enter the 'field' with an expectation that, in addition to fulfilling their academic goals,

they should work for the community. While we consider this highly laudable and worthy of encouragement, there has been very little institutional involvement or support for this aspect of the field linguistic enterprise from universities or from the reward system of academic linguistics – postgraduate students are often on their own (see Austin (2003:10) for related remarks). In contrast, we feel that by seeking indigenous students and by an openness to community agendas about language, we are creating just the involvement that had been missing. Moreover, by training indigenous students, we also shift some questions of responsibility from the ‘quid pro quo’ of (non-indigenous) linguists and institutions to the ‘giving back’ that will be asked of indigenous speaker-linguists.

Third, we feel that this work is a key part of a revolution now taking place within ‘descriptive linguistics’ about its own very nature. This revolution centers the enterprise not on its analytic artefacts — grammars and dictionaries — but on the nature and process of documentation itself, as elaborated in Woodbury (2003). As already noted, we see documentation as the common ground between community and academic endeavors about language. We also see it as opening up major new areas for methodological development in linguistics, for example, new to analysis, and computational record-creating and archiving (see further Johnson, and Nathan, this volume).

Finally, we see speaker training (and the shift to documentary linguistics) as converging with another and even more general discipline-wide revolution also well-underway, namely a shift from a focus on linguistic universality, to a focus on the relationship of linguistic universality to linguistic diversity. We see this revolution in effect in formal phonology, syntax, and even semantics, where there has been ever more focus on comparative issues after a period of concentration on relatively few languages; in functional grammar; in explicit treatments of the relationship of universality, typology, and history as Nichols 1992; in the focus in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology on multilingualism and language shift (e.g., Woolard and Shieffelin 1994, Silverstein 1998) and issues of cross-cultural linguistic categorization (Pederson et al. 1998).

11. Impact on the university

The benefits that accrue to the university as a result of expanded and better articulated attention to indigenous languages are important. The University of Texas is a leader in Latin American Studies, but has lacked a teaching and research programme that pays specific attention to indigenous issues. Since language is still quite important to the majority of Latin American indigenous communities, it is an excellent area in which to begin building a coherent programme revolving around issues that are of particular, rather than general, interest to indigenous students. Before the establishment of CILLA, there were precisely two indigenous Latin American postgraduate students at UT (one

with interests in language, as previously mentioned, and one with other interests). Now there are eight enrolled students, another to begin in January 2005, and another in intensive English. The agreement that has been reached with Ford-IFP opens possibilities for attracting additional indigenous students in a variety of fields, and the presence of a core group of indigenous students already on campus makes UT a more attractive proposition for them. We or our students have begun to answer inquiries about how others might be able to come to UT for postgraduate work.

Within the Department of Linguistics itself, there are two benefits that stand out. One is that the training of speakers of indigenous languages enables us to have a tangible role in the shaping of a new kind of linguistics department that welds together what have often been seen as antithetical, or at best very independent, aspects of the discipline, namely its theoretical enterprise and its engagement with languages and their speaker communities. Our students are beginning to assume what we have often had to struggle with — that theory and description are intimately connected and that data collection and analysis is accomplished by working in, and whenever possible *for*, a community of speakers. They are becoming linguists in a context of integration rather than polarity (see Grinevald 2003).

A second benefit is the interaction that has already developed between students who are speakers of indigenous languages and those who are not, but who wish to work on them. It is quite noticeable that both groups of students are enjoying this opportunity. The atmosphere in classes and in the student lounge, hallways, and elsewhere is distinctly lively. Indigenous students bring up matters for discussion in class that, while not absent from classes without them, are markedly more remote. These include the politics of field situations, the utility and applicability of linguistic materials to educational and communicative problem-solving, or the connections between class materials and data in less commonly studied languages which are actually spoken by members of the class. The non-indigenous students provide a community of students with common interests for the indigenous students, something they are often completely lacking in their home countries, often serving as a bridge for them into their new surroundings and facilitating their involvement in the linguistic 'mainstream.' Both groups co-operate with regard to mastering linguistic material and in planning research and getting access to field sites. For instance, two students, one indigenous and one not, are currently planning doctoral research that will in part be complementary. The indigenous student will be developing a large corpus in his native language for working on syntactic and semantic problems, while the non-indigenous student will be working on the computational aspects of corpus management for the same language. We see other complementary projects developing in the future. The most apparent benefit to the students is that they are all convinced that what they want to do is important to the department, gets a lot of support, can be done in an exciting intellectual environment, and is a real strength at this university.

12. References

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Appendices

A. CILLA Faculty

Megan Crowhurst. Assistant Professor of Linguistics. Interests: Phonology; Zapotecan; Tupian languages of Bolivia.

Nora England. Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology and Director of CILLA. Interests: Mayan languages; descriptive and documentary linguistics; American languages; language ideologies; language and identity.

Patience Epps. Lecturer in Linguistics. Interests: Documentary and descriptive linguistics, Indigenous languages of Brazil, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics.

Joel Sherzer. Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics. Interests: Language documentation and archiving; speech play; areal linguistics of Latin America; the Kuna language of Panama.

Tony Woodbury. Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology and Chairman of Linguistics. Interests: Documentation and language endangerment; Chatino; Alaskan Yupik and other Yupik-Inuit-Aleut languages.

B. CILLA Steering committee

Megan Crowhurst, Assistant Professor of Linguistics

Charles R. Hale, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Ajb'ee Jiménez-Sánchez, doctoral student in Anthropology

B'alam Mateo-Toledo, doctoral student in Linguistics

Joel Sherzer, Liberal Arts Foundation Centennial Professor in Anthropology; Director, Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America

Nicolas Shumway, Tomás Rivera Regents Professor of Spanish American Literature; Director, Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies

Gerald Torres, H. O. Head Centennial Professor in Real Property Law

Tony Woodbury, Professor and Chair of Linguistics

C. CILLA Students

Cynthia Anderson. Linguistics, entering class of 2003. Interests: Nahuatl documentation and sociolinguistics; Iquito syntax.

Christine Beier. Anthropology, entering class of 1999. Interests: Nanti discourse and culture, Iquito documentation.

William Blunk. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Yucatec Maya, verbal art and language in culture.

Lynda de Jong Boudreault. Linguistics, entering class of 2001. Interests: Iquito, Sotepan, descriptive and documentary linguistics, language teaching materials.

Michal Brody. Linguistics, entering class of 1995, PhD granted 2004. Interests: Yucatec Maya writing and literacy.

Mark Brown. Linguistics, entering class of 2000. Interests: Ngabe/Guaymi, Iquito, syntax and language description.

Emiliana Cruz. Anthropology, entering class of 2002. Interests: Chatino (her native language) documentation and description; community language activism.

Hilaria Cruz. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Chatino (her native language), documentation and description; community language activism.

Tomas Cruz. Latin American studies, entering class of 2003. Interests: Chatino, identity and decision-making.

Simeon Floyd. Latin American Studies, entering class of 2002. Interests: Quichua, Amazonian languages, multilingualism.

Maria Garcia. Anthropology, entering class of 2003. Interests: Ixil literacy and oral history.

Taryne Hallett. Linguistics, entering class of 2003. Interests: Iquito, sociolinguistics, community language/linguistics projects.

Molly Harnisch. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: descriptive and documentary linguistics.

Kerry Hull. Anthrology, entering class of 1994, PhD granted 2003. Interests: Ch'orti' poetics.

Ajb'ee Jiménez. Anthropology, entering class of 1999? Interests: Mam (his native language), community, identity, and language politics.

Katandria Johnson. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: sociolinguistics, speech pathology, documentary linguistics.

Felix Julca. Linguistics, entering class of 2005. Interests: Quechua (his native language), language and educational policy.

Susan Kung. Linguistics, entering class of 1996. Interests: Tepehua, descriptive linguistics.

Ausencia López Cruz. Intensive English, 2003. Interests: Zapotec (her native language), grammar.

Lev Michael. Anthropology, entering class of 1999. Interests: Nanti, Iquito, descriptive and documentary linguistics, discourse, phonology, grammar.

Vivian Newdick. Anthropology, entering class of 2001. Interests: Political discourse.

Aaron Ponce. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Descriptive and documentary linguistics.

Kayla Price. Anthropology, entering class of 2003. Interests: Kuna discourse.

Brianna Rauschuber. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Descriptive and documentary linguistics, phonology.

Vidal Carbajal Solís. Intensive English, 2004. Interests: Quechua (his native language), language policy.

Wikaliler Daniel Smith. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Kuna (his heritage language), documentation and description.

B'alam Mateo-Toledo. Linguistics, entering class of 2001. Interests: Q'anjob'al (his native language), other Mayan languages, particularly Awakateko and Mocho', syntax, syntax/semantics/pragmatics interface, language description and documentation.

Juan Jesús Vázquez. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Ch'ol (his native language), grammar.

Coral Waters. Linguistics, entering class of 2004. Interests: Descriptive and documentary linguistics.