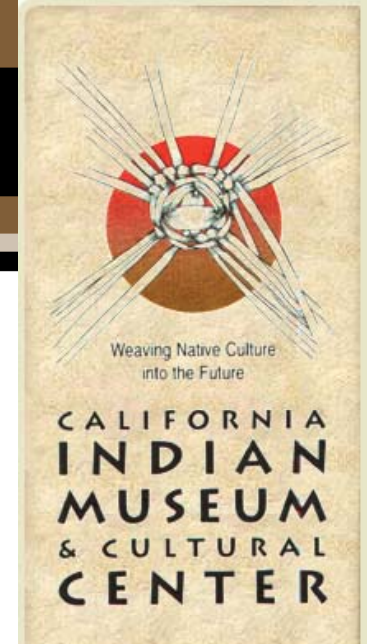


Pomo Language Status Report



“Our language is part of our culture and we should have some type of tool to pass on. It is very rare for my generation to speak the language let alone know someone who can.”

Pomo Language Assessment and Documentation Project Goal

To increase Pomo community knowledge of the status of all the Pomo languages currently in use and develop new resources that can be used to spur language growth.



Pomo Language Status Report

This report was generated by the results of the Pomo Language Assessment conducted during 2011.



The assessment activities were conducted with Pomo tribal community members throughout Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties. The activities were performed by The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center (CIMCC) in accordance with the Pomo Language Assessment and Documentation project funded by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA).

Why are we dedicating so much time towards planning?

“To teach our language effectively, planning is crucial. In the case of planning language programs community-wide, it is important that an overall plan be prepared that would encompass preschool through adult learning in both formal institutions (schools) and community programs. This will ensure that learning is continuous and will avoid unnecessary complication (20).”

“The plan must be based on the philosophy of the people, and the goals must be clearly articulated by them. For example, is the goal to be able to converse in the language? Is it to attain literacy? How will this be accomplished stage by stage? Who will be the teachers? What materials will be required? What teaching methods will be employed? How will progress be assessed (20)?”



2010–2011 Survey Results

In 2010–2011, the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center conducted a needs assessment to identify the various dialects of the Pomo languages.

Part one of the survey addressed speaker identification and fluency. It asked respondents to gauge their level of speaking or fluency of the Pomo language.

- 33.2% Beginners with limited vocabulary and conversational comprehension
- 5.1% Intermediate speakers (extensive basic vocabulary and able to follow directions)
- 2.6% Native speakers (spoken since childhood, understanding most of the vocabulary, cultural reference, and nuances)
- 57.3%** **Do not speak or understood the Pomo language.**

2010–2011 Survey Results: Speaker Identification

Respondents who stated they understood a Pomo tribal language but did not speak it, stated their Pomo language/dialect and level of understanding. These included the following dialects:

- Upper Lake Pomo
- Kashia
- Coastal Central Pomo or Point Area
- Stewart's Point Rancheria
- Big Valley Pomo
- Pinoleville Pomo
- Southern Pomo
- Northern Pomo
- Eastern Pomo
- Northern Pomo Little Lake/Sherwood
- Yokayo/Hopland Central Pomo
- Little Noyo River Pomo

Some respondents stated their fluency but did not state which dialect of the Pomo language they understood

2010–2011 Survey Results: Speaker Identification

Respondents were asked if they had studied or were currently learning a Pomo/tribal language.

- 13.4% had studied Pomo in the past
- 19.1% were currently learning a Pomo/tribal language
- 67.5% were currently not learning a Pomo/tribal language



2010–2011 Survey Results: Previous Language Assessments

Part of the survey addressed language preservation programs and resources within the respondents' tribal groups whether they spoke Pomo or were currently learning the language. Individuals who responded represented 21 different Pomo tribal groups.

In response to whether or not their tribal group had conducted a previous language assessment:

- 13.0% yes
- 24.5% no
- 62.5% unsure whether or not an assessment had been conducted

Of those who said that their tribe had conducted an assessment the majority were not sure when it was conducted. Some responded 1-5 years ago, others said 10-11 years ago, and one said it was ongoing.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Fluency in Pomo Language

Respondents were also asked whether or not the number of fluent and passive speakers within their community had been identified.

- 19.9% their tribe had identified the number of fluent speakers
- 19.1% their tribe had not identified the number of fluent speakers
- 61.0% unsure whether or not the number of fluent speakers had been identified



2010–2011 Survey Results: Fluency in Pomo Language

Respondents were also asked if they had identified the number of passive speakers within their community. Passive speakers are characterized as individuals who have knowledge and understanding of the language but generally refrain from speaking it.

- 11.9% passive speakers had been identified within their community
- 18.1% passive speakers had *not* been identified
- 70.0% unsure whether or not they had been identified



2010–2011 Survey Results: Participation & Availability of Language Courses

Respondents were also asked additional questions about participation, availability of language courses in their community, and the lessons or techniques applied to teach the language.

- 24.6% able to participate in a language course in their community
- 65.9% not able to participate in a language course in their community
- 9.4% not able to participate in a language course outside of their community

- 38.4% their tribe and/or an individual offered a language course in the past
- 18.3% language courses had not been offered in the past
- 43.4% unsure whether or not they had been offered

The results indicate that many of the communities shared an active interest in teaching the language; however, funding and resources have been obstacles to being able to offer the language courses with regular consistency.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Community Challenges

One of the most common challenges shared among the respondents was the lack of funding.

Another major challenge mentioned repeatedly was inter-tribal and tribal politics between family members, community members, and teachers.

Other obstacles cited include the variations in the way the language is spoken and used (slang, formality, and dialect), the lack of knowledge among community members regarding class availability and accessibility, lack of interest, participation, and commitment by community members, lack of teachers (elders and linguists), lack of elders available to engage in master/apprentice relationships, the availability of teaching methods that address diverse learning styles (auditory and visual learning) and disabilities, lack of methodology or pedagogy to produce Native speakers, need for preservation program to be staffed by community members, and a need for pre-school aged immersion programs.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Benefits to the Community

Respondents were asked whether or not language courses were currently being offered within their community.



2010–2011 Survey Results: Language Preservation Challenges

The respondents were asked to rate the following list of challenges to language preservation and revitalization efforts in terms of whether they agreed or disagreed with the phrase. The respondents were asked whether they strongly disagreed, somewhat disagreed, were neutral, somewhat agreed, or strongly agreed. The following list highlights the highest rated category for each challenge:

- Lack of interest among community members: neutral (28.6%)
- Lack of interest among youth: somewhat agreed (29.9%)
- Lack of resources for consistent programs: somewhat agreed (33.8%)
- Lack of funding for consistent programs: strongly agreed* (34.7%)*
- Frustration among elders regarding community commitment: neutral (35.4%)
- Student frustration regarding ease of learning and recall: neutral (37.4%)
- Lack of opportunity to converse in own language: strongly agreed* (32.5%)*
- Leadership doesn't see language preservation as important: neutral (29.9%)

2010–2011 Survey Results: Community Challenges

Respondents were also asked to identify other preservation/revitalization challenges that were not listed on the survey. Some respondents replied having barriers such as, people not getting along because of tribal enrollment issues, problems with alcoholism and drug abuse, insensitive views towards Native people (stereotypes and racism), poverty conditions, and other family disputes. Some of the respondents have limited technological capacities.



2010–2011 Survey Results: Online Course & Interactive Website Design

In the effort to create a needed resource within the community the respondents were asked whether they felt that a Pomo language online course and interactive website would be a valuable language learning resource to enhance their language preservation efforts.

- 68.7% yes
- 8.7% no
- 22.5% unsure

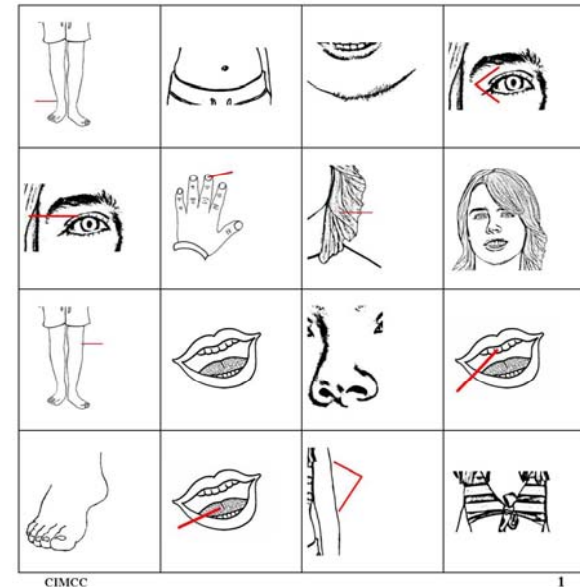
Respondents commented that this is a great resource for youth since they enjoy this style of learning and are savvy with technology.



2010–2011 Survey Results: Online Course & Interactive Website Design

Respondents were also asked to rate the following list of the online course and website components in order of their importance. Respondents chose from a scale of No Importance, Somewhat Important, Important, Very Important and Great Importance. The following list shows the highest rated category for each component:

- Online Dictionary 38.2% Great Importance
- Pronunciation Guide* 50.6% Great Importance*
- Picture Dictionary 40.6% Great Importance
- Sample Conversations 44.8% Great Importance
- Common Questions and Answers 45.0% Great Importance
- Storytelling* 47.7% Great Importance*
- Games 31.9% Great Importance
- Posters 28.0% Great Importance
- Flashcards 40.9% Great Importance
- Video Lessons* 47.7% Great Importance*
- Audio Lessons* 52.5% Great Importance*



2010–2011 Survey Results: Online Course & Interactive Website Design

The highest rated online course and interactive website components were audio lessons, a pronunciation guide, storytelling, and video lessons. The lowest rated component was posters.



*Documenting and Maintaining Native American Languages for the 21st Century:
The Indiana University Model:*

“Future generations are going to need sound and written archives as well as dictionaries and textbooks. The smaller the number of active speakers still using the language, the more critical these extra resources become for anyone who is trying to teach or learn the language or who wishes to improve their proficiency.

Students must hear the words spoken by proficient speakers engaged in active discourse to become comfortable with the language. Grammars, dictionaries, and readers--perhaps as multimedia "talking books"--as well as music on audio cassettes or CDs are all valuable tools for learning. Students also need a record of the histories and other stories passed down by earlier speakers of the language, so they can hear the discourse of their parents and grandparents.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Historical Loss of Language

Several outside factors have contributed to the historical loss of language within Pomo communities. The vitality of many indigenous languages was destroyed by federal policies that targeted Native peoples and cultures for extermination. The loss of tribal lands, and genocide of whole communities, disrupted the continuity of Native languages and cultures.

During the mid to late 1800s, the federal government sought to “assimilate” Native peoples. Many Indian children were removed from their families and tribes and placed in boarding schools. At the boarding schools the English language was the only language that was allowed to be spoken. Federal officials believed that if they erased tribal languages they would also erase tribal customs, traditions, cultures, and way of life.

In the 1950s, the federal government set forth the Termination acts and the Relocation program. Termination was applied to forty California Indian tribes, essentially erasing their governmental authority and the trust status of their lands. Relocation provided government sponsored job training and housing assistance off reservations in the urban centers of Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Hundreds of families were encouraged to move away from their communities and into the city where the government had hoped their cultural distinctiveness would disappear.

Despite these efforts tribal and cultural heritage was not destroyed. The overwhelming ability of Native people to prevail over the forces of genocide and colonization is a true testament to the Indian community’s strength and character. It goes without saying that damage has been done, but by working together Native peoples can heal and revitalize the wealth of our cultures.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Contemporary Challenges

Today Indian communities face many issues that reach beyond the scope of historical challenges. Time and distances are modern challenges. Economic and educational opportunities often require many tribal members reside outside of their communities. Furthermore, educational and employment opportunities are only available to those who speak English. Thus, the economic and social necessity of tribal languages has diminished.

The meaning and the usefulness of the language are contained in its' nuances. It cannot be learned without its cultural context. Thus, knowledge of traditional practices and cultural heritage are key components of language preservation. They must be integrated into a modern context.



2010–2011 Survey Results: Contemporary Challenges

The Internet creates an opportunity to share information across time limitations and physical boundaries. However, it also creates many questions related to the protection of cultural integrity, accessibility by non-members of the community, as well as copyright and licensing ownership.

We must work through these issues to determine the parameters of sharing language resources in the digital era.



Pros and Cons of Technology

PROS

- Students Regularly and Commonly Interact with Technology
- An Alternative Way to Communicate and Interact with language
- Accessibility/Convenience
- Self Paced
- Can Track Your Own Progress
- Games=Unconscious Digestion
- Self Publication/Less Expense and Time in Developing Resource Materials

CONS

- Face to Face Communication is the Best Way to Learn
- Have to Know How to Use it
- Have to Understand its Limitations
- Supplement not Supplant
- Start Up and Maintenance Costs
- Quickly Becomes Outdated
- Training and Usability
- Mono vs. Multi Generational
- Ownership/Licensing

2010–2011 Survey Results: Contemporary Challenges



Rebuilding a tribal community of speakers will require commitment and perseverance. The best way to foster the use of language is to utilize it in a daily context. The best way to teach language is the “old way”: spend time with your family using the language. Urge your family members to communicate their needs and everyday activities in the Pomo language, such as, “I’m hungry” or “What’s for dinner?” Language resources such as orthographies, flash cards, phrase books, and others should be created and distributed specifically to community members so that they can be used at home. Play games with your children that reinforce language learning.

2010–2011 Survey Results: Recommendations

In the efforts to create a needed resource within the community the respondents were asked to characterize what resources might assist to their learning the Pomo language. The following list shows the response percentage for each component.

•More Time	44.9%
• DVDs	64.5%
• CDs	59.4%
• Community Classes	65.6%*
•Books	54.0%
•Dictionaries	46.0%
•Podcasts	21.0%
•Online Courses	40.9%
•Community College Courses	27.2%
•Workbooks and CDs	54.7%
•Flash Cards	53.6%



Awakening the Languages: Stages of community and Language Revitalization

- Commitment of the Heart

“A strong belief underlying Native languages is that they are the soul and spirit of the people, and you cannot measure what language means to the people (115).”

- Awareness of the Reality of Language Situation

“The language is no longer heard as the medium of socialization and enculturation; it is lost or on the brink of being lost. Oftentimes, it is difficult to accept this reality, difficult to understand what went wrong (without blaming outside forces), and difficult to know what to do to counter such language shift. It is especially difficult to accept that we need a ‘plan’ and the development of ‘tools’ to assess and address this situation (115).”

Awakening the Languages: Stages of community and Language Revitalization

- Committed experimentation

“Such actions to reverse language shift include: transcribing, translating, and interpreting archival documents such as audio, taped oral traditions; creating space for language and culture within Head Start, elementary and high school curricula; after school community language programs; developing language materials and curriculum within grant programs; compiling, developing, and publishing dictionaries; establishing orthographies; developing and piloting grammar lessons; conducting immersion camps; conducting literacy development workshops; hosting tribal language summits; attending language institutes; and establishing a networking system of collaboration and co-operation among different programs. Such activities are occurring with or without tribal, state, or federal support (115).”

- Re-contextualizing language and culture

“When activities attempting to reverse language shift occur, often times the “heart of the people” (the language) becomes objectified. Objectified, it is no longer a living, dynamic means of expressing emotions, maintaining intimate relationships, and projecting a unique world. Instead, it becomes a language of study. This is a stark reminder that schools and classrooms continue to be perceived as a place where Indian students are taught the white man’s ways in the white man’s manner” (115).

Awakening the Languages: Stages of community and Language Revitalization

- Transforming the Culture of the School

“Teachers must realize that they are the carriers of linguistic and cultural knowledge. They must strengthen their knowledge and experience of their heritage language and culture. They cannot afford to feel “inadequate and incompetent”, especially when they compare themselves with other “non-Native” teachers” (116).

- Re-creating Classrooms

“Heritage language teachers are often given the tremendous responsibility of developing language curricula and language materials and of teaching the language. Under such pressure, it is difficult for them to remember to utilize their speaking ability in a classroom setting in order to maximize their fluency”(116).

- Changing attitudes from Hurt to Responsibility

“It is true that the parents and grandparents of most of the language teachers and learners today were not allowed to speak their language; they were punished horribly if they did, and they have carried these fears of language learning with them ever since. However, in the past few years, there has been a change in attitude from one of “we can’t because” to “it is my responsibility to teach my language” or “it is my responsibility to learn.” Language is a responsibility, not a privilege.

Indigenous Language Revitalization and Technology

“Using technologies such as chat, email, forums, text messages, wikis, and blogs are just a few spaces in which Indigenous languages can be promoted. Application of these tools allows for connections with other speakers and learners all over the world without leaving the comfort of your home” (171).

Low-tech initiatives emphasize one sensory mode, allowing the learner to receive the Indigenous language through sight or hearing. More specifically, the user visually sees the language either in printed material (e.g., books) or on screen (e.g., subtitles), or audibly via a speaker or sound system. Included in in this category are the following technologies: printing press and audio media comprised of radio programs, audio recordings, audio books, videos, movies, and television programs” (173).

Indigenous Language Revitalization and Technology

“Mid-tech initiatives are bi-sensory, allowing the learner to receive the indigenous language through sight and hearing and/or rewire the use of a keyboard and mouse (point and click), and access to the internet. Some examples of this category include the following technologies: audio media accompanied by texts which comprise of audio recordings accompanied by a transcript, audio/digital story books accompanied by the story, video/movie and television programs with subtitles in the Indigenous language and web-based media... ..the indigenous language is seen and heard, as opposed to being seen or heard” (174).

“High-tech initiatives allow for asynchronous communication [blogs, email, discussion boards], synchronous communication [telephone, chat, webcam, audio video conference] or multimodal interactivity between the user and the technology. In this category, input and output of the indigenous language are key factors. Communities involved in Indigenous language education and revitalization have recently entered this domain and are exploring ways to utilize modern technology to promote the use of their Indigenous language. By using technologies that are ‘hot’ and ‘popular’ in today’s market, communities can use this as a strategy to engage youth to learn their language” (175).

What is Not Necessary!

Money

“Having little money actually helps the community and the students be active parts of the class and to be more responsible for learning.”

Tribal Support

“Do not wait for tribal council support, Seek tribal and community support and involvement as you do the work. Successful programs incorporate the entire community.”

A Large Number of Speakers

“If you have 12 speakers and produce four new speakers through a master-apprentice program, it is better than 10,000 speakers doing nothing.”

2010–2011 Survey Results: Recommendations

Additional Recommendations Include:

- Use daily greetings in conversation
- Teach conversational phrases that link and contextualize cultural history and practices
- Support tribal members in obtaining degrees in linguistics
- Create website and audio tools that provide sound and visual of words being spoken
- Create language immersion opportunities and host immersion events
- Teach **people** that mistakes are part of learning and not to be afraid to make them
- Teach phrases that are applicable to situations to connect words to real life experiences
- Create games that incorporate the Pomo language
- Foster pride in Pomo identity
- Create tools that are applicable to our daily routines and lifestyles
- Let children organize events around language
- Enact stories with song and dance

2010–2011 Survey Results: Recommendations

CIMCC is in the ongoing process of developing an online Eastern Pomo Dictionary as a part of our Pomo language resources, which can be found on our Pomo Language Repository page:

<http://cimcc.org/epomo/>

The site is ‘intended to demonstrate the use of Pomo language and support local tribal efforts to teach and preserve Pomo language.’ It can be used to look up and listen to Pomo words and their pronunciation and is being continually added to. The site allows this information to be shared for personal use and learning.



This is an example of the use of technology to share language resources and assist in the learning and preservation of the Pomo language.

Those interested in this website and the resources that it contains may also be familiar with or want to explore:

Big Valley Rancheria: Bahtssal Language Teaching and Learning Aids

http://www.big-valley.net/lang_home.htm

Native Languages of the Americas: preserving and promoting American Indian languages

<http://www.native-languages.org/>

Where Do We Go From Here? Document, Document, Document!

Successful Native Language Program Goals:

Extensive, Innovative Language Documentation (with written and sound archives) preserving as much material as possible in various Formats

Use of documentary records as a basis for creating an array of teaching materials to preserve and revitalize

Use of latest technology to create both documentary records and teaching materials

Adoption of a Multidisciplinary approach that combines methods from linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and education to produce the most effective learning tools possible.



How to Teach When the Teacher isn't Fluent

- In order to approach some possible ways that a non-fluent teacher can teach effectively, I will focus primarily on the situation that many communities are in today: there are elderly fluent speakers in the community—too old to teach a class full of energetic children, but still able to be of great help as a partner in language teaching. These elders can also be the “language mentors” to the teachers who are not (yet) fluent. We will call the non-fluent teachers the “teacher-learners,” since they are both teaching and learning the language. These teacher learners may also frequently utilize the help of linguistic materials that are available in the language, and sometimes enlist the help of linguists as well.

Why are you interested in learning Pomo Language? -Responses from Pomo Youth

To continue my education and to learn my culture. To also learn and preserve it. My mom has been involved with language preservation. I like technology and would like to learn ways to document and preserve that way.

Because language is important for Pomo people. Us young kids have to learn our language while our old people are still alive.

So the language won't die and teach other children.

I wanted to help restore the Pomo heritage in my community and pass the skills to my future family.

My grandma knows words and so does my auntie. I like to play the PS3 and maybe I can learn how to do language that way.

To learn more about the history of my culture and language. Writing is a strong point for me and something I enjoy. I'm also strong with computer skills. I could be a good historian for our tribe.

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