DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 758 FL 024 067

AUTHOR Krauss, Michael E.
TITLE Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present, and Future. Alaska Native Language Center Research Papers No. 4.
INSTITUTION Alaska Univ., Fairbanks. Alaska Native Language Center.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-933769-34-2; ISSN-0883-8526
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 121p.
AVAILABLE FROM Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, P.O. Box 757680, Fairbanks, AK 99775-7680.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alaska Natives; American Indian Languages; Athapascan Languages; Bilingual Education; Diachronic Linguistics; *Eskimo Aleut Languages; Futures (of Society); Geographic Distribution; Inupiaq; *Language Maintenance; Language Planning; *Language Role; Language Usage; Mass Media; Native Language Instruction; Public Policy; Regional Dialects; Uncommonly Taught Languages; Yupik
IDENTIFIERS *Alaska; Alutiiq; Eyak; Haida; Tsimshian

ABSTRACT

Three papers (1978-80) written for the non-linguistic public about Alaska Native languages are combined here. The first is an introduction to the prehistory, history, present status, and future prospects of all Alaska Native languages, both Eskimo-Aleut and Athabaskan Indian. The second and third, presented as appendixes to the first, deal in greater depth with the future of all the languages and then with the past, present, and future of the Alaskan Indian languages. The main paper contains: a section devoted to Haida and Tsimshian; general prehistory of Eskimo-Aleut languages and of Athabaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit; notes on the present status of Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit, of Eyak, of the Athabaskan languages in general, of Aleut, and of Eskimo languages in general; and an overall assessment of the future for Alaska Native languages. The paper on the future of Alaska Native languages, looks at whether the future holds survival or extinction, the role of schools, bilingual education, and mass media in saving the languages, and community responsibility for cultural survival. The third paper, on Eskimo languages, discusses general status, government policy concerning language education and maintenance, and specific situations of Alutiiq, Central Alaskan Yupik, Siberian Yupik, and Inupiaq. (MSE)

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ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTER RESEARCH PAPERS

Number 4

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

by
Michael E. Krauss

1980

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This series of working papers is published at irregular intervals. The papers deal with advances and problems in linguistic research in Alaskan and related Native American languages: Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, Eskimo-Aleut, Haida, and Tsimshian. The papers will often be of greater length than are normally published in journals. Many have been circulated informally among specialists in their fields before publication here, and are now made generally available for the first time.

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ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTER
RESEARCH PAPERS

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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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First Printing, August, 1980	500 copies
Second Printing, October, 1980	300 copies
Third Printing, August, 1981	300 copies
Fourth Printing, March, 1982	400 copies
Fifth Printing, July, 1982	400 copies
Sixth Printing, August, 1982	500 copies
Seventh Printing, March, 1985	300 copies
Eighth Printing, July, 1986	500 copies
Ninth Printing, February, 1988	500 copies
Tenth Printing, September, 1989	500 copies
Eleventh Printing, September, 1990	500 copies

INTRODUCTION

This volume presents together three recent (1978-1980) papers written for the non-linguistic public on Alaska Native languages generally. The first is a major paper which I prepared as a brief introduction to the entire subject, prehistory, history, present status, and future, of all Alaska Native languages. The first of the two shorter papers here presented as appendices to the major paper is an outgrowth of the last part of the major paper, on the future of Alaska Native languages. The second shorter paper deals with the past, present, and future specifically of the Alaskan Eskimo languages.

The major paper, "Alaska Native Languages: Past, present, and future" was first presented in Leningrad, May 29, 1979, at a symposium held jointly by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences, to be published in 1980 under the title "Yazyki korennogo naseleniya Alyaski: Proshloe, nastoyashchee i budushchee." A modified version of it was presented at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, October 16, 1979, under the auspices of the Harvey Lectureship. This further revision was written in March 1980 for publication in this series.

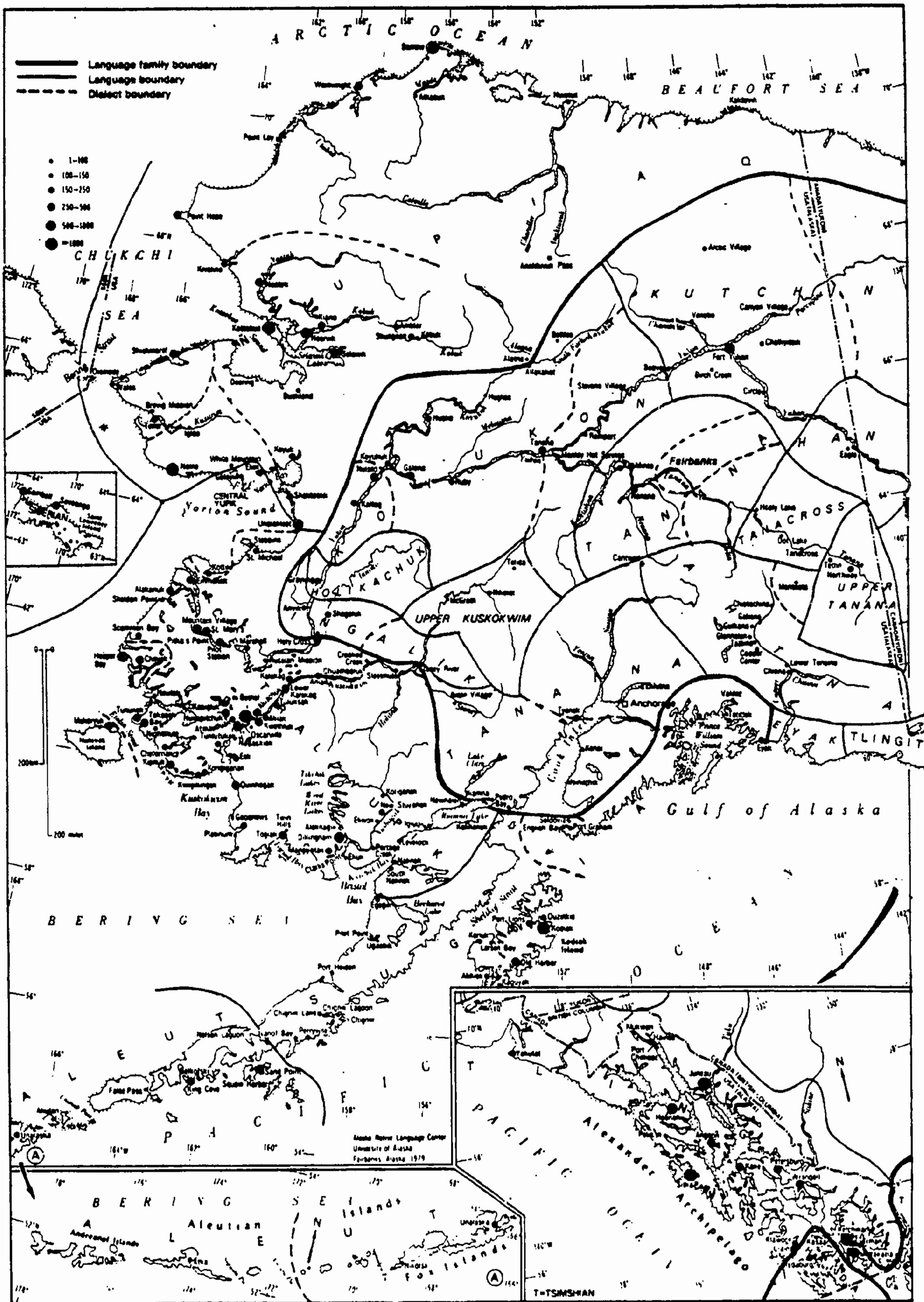
Appendix I, "The Future of Alaska Native Languages," was first published in the Tundra Times (Anchorage; vol. 17, nos. 15:1,4, 16:1,4, 17:1,6-7, 18:1,6) April 9, 16, 23, and 30, 1980, and reprinted as a supplement to the newsletter of the Bilingual

Education Technical Assistance Center, Tacoma Public Schools.

Appendix II, "Eskimo Languages of Alaska, Yesterday and Today," was first presented at Aarhus University, Denmark, in October, 1978, at a symposium on "Majority Language Influence on Eskimo Minority Languages." It was published in both the English and Danish volumes of the proceedings of that conference (Eskimo Languages: Their Present-day Conditions, pp. 37-50, and Eskimosprogenes vilkår i dag, pp. 37-50, ed. by Bjarne Basse and Kirsten Jensen; Aarhus: Arkona, 1979). It is here reprinted with the kind permission of Forlaget Arkona, Aarhus.

I consider it most important that these papers become available to the Alaskan public; I present them here in the hope they may be helpful to those who care about Alaska Native languages, a subject with which I have been concerned for the past twenty years.

For more detailed history, discussion, and full bibliography I refer to earlier reports I have published (Krauss 1973a, 1973b, 1979a, 1979b); to the Bibliography of Educational Publications (McGary 1979), and to the catalogue of the Alaska Native Language Center library (Krauss and McGary 1980), a massive annotated bibliography of the Indian languages. The references given in the major paper include only selected works, especially more recent ones. In these papers I also imply reference to the map Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska (Krauss 1974a), most useful for a graphic visual understanding of much of the discussion. The map and this volume are in an important sense companion pieces.



Adapted from a version of the map Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska (Alaska Native Language Center, 1974), as published in Cartactual No. 78 (1979), No.4, map I.

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1. Introduction: Continental Perspective

Alaska is the homeland or birthplace, better perhaps the "cradle of civilization," of two great North American language families: the Eskimo-Aleut and the Na-Dene. Both of these language groups have spread far beyond Alaska, especially the Inupiaq Eskimo to Canada and Greenland, and the Athabaskan Na-Dene to Canada and the southwestern United States. These groups are now flourishing, both with larger populations than ever before in history, and with ever greater numbers of speakers at the extremes, particularly in the form of Greenlandic for Eskimo and Navajo for Athabaskan.

A most salient characteristic of these distributions is that in both these language families by far the greatest diversity (and therefore the greatest historical depth, even if we had no other type of evidence) is to be found in Alaska. In Alaska alone we find both Aleut and Eskimo, and within Eskimo, both Yupik and Inupiaq; and in the case of Na-Dene, we find Tlingit and Eyak and about ten of the thirty Athabaskan languages. However, Alaska, large as it is, constitutes only a small proportion of the territory now occupied by these languages, and an even smaller proportion of their population. The number of Eskimo-Aleut people is now over 100,000, of whom about one-third live in Alaska. The number of Athabaskans is now 200,000, with only about 8,000 in Alaska, 22,000 in Canada, and in the southwestern United States 20,000 Apaches and 150,000 Navajos. This type

of proportion is even more dramatic in the case of number of speakers as opposed to the population, since very many Native Americans now speak only English, having lost their ancestral language. In the case of Inupiaq, the populations are 12,000 for Alaska, perhaps 20,000 for Canada, and 42,000 for Greenland (to which might be added 6,000 in Denmark itself), totaling 80,000. Of these, almost all Greenlanders speak the language; most Canadian Inuit also do; but only 5,000 of the 12,000 Alaskan Inupiat speak it. In the case of Athabaskan, most Apacheans, including Navajos, still speak Athabaskan, as do most Canadian Athabaskans, but in Alaska only 2,500 of 8,000 still speak Athabaskan. At least in the case of Inupiaq Eskimo and Athabaskan, then, both language families successfully competing for survival in the modern world, their fate is far less fortunate in their birthplace than in their "new worlds." Not all Alaskan Native languages are in a state of decline today, however. Their present status merits systematic examination, which I will treat in the second part of this paper after discussing their pre-contact history. In the third part of this paper I shall even endeavor to predict something of their future, and make recommendations to improve it.

2. Haida and Tsimshian

There are two other Native American language families represented in Alaska, but unlike Eskimo-Aleut and Na-Dene

(Athabaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit), they are only marginally part of the Alaskan scene as relatively recent introductions from Canada, and even that only because of the particular shape of the territory now known politically as Alaska. These are Tsimshian and Haida.

Note that I have included Tlingit with Athabaskan-Eyak in the grouping named "Na-Dene" and that I do not include Haida. The omission is certainly intentional. Recent research in Alaska has yielded increasing evidence of a genetic relationship between the lexicon of Tlingit and that of Athabaskan-Eyak, although this relationship remains a very problematic one, with a relatively small number of cognates buried within a large mass of apparently non-cognate lexicon; it is a relationship not at all congruent with the much closer grammatical relationships, probably pointing to some type of hybridization especially in the case of Tlingit. Recent research in Haida, on the other hand, done in Canada by Robert Levine (1977, 1979) and by us in Alaska, most starkly contradicts the claims made by Sapir (1915) and others that Haida is genetically related to Athabaskan-Eyak and Tlingit, which I have here called Na-Dene. I should probably always say simply Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, and abolish the term Na-Dene as a mistake. Haida is certainly not a part of it; as far as we can tell, Haida is therefore a linguistic isolate.

Haida expanded into Alaska about the same time as or shortly before Europeans began to arrive there. Haida came to Alaska from the northern dialect area of the Queen Charlotte Islands and took over the southern half of Prince of Wales Island, then Tlingit territory, probably in the latter half of the 18th century. The total Haida population, once perhaps 10,000, is now only about 1,700, 70 per cent of it remaining in Canada.

The Tsimshians arrived in Alaska still later, in 1887, under the leadership of the remarkable and autocratic missionary William Duncan. Because of disputes within the Anglican Church, Duncan resettled his Tsimshian followers from their colony of Old Metlakatla in British Columbia to New Metlakatla in Tlingit territory on Annette Island, where they now number about 1,000. Eight thousand Tsimshians remain in Canada. Tsimshian is, of course, not genetically related to any Alaska Native language. Sapir and others have claimed a genetic relationship between Tsimshian and the Penutian language family to the south, but I consider the evidence for this very slim.

We thus have two numerically minor and marginal recent introductions to Alaska of two language families, the Haida and Tsimshian, both of which I consider genetic isolates. The main Alaskan picture and the concentration of this presentation remain on the Eskimo-Aleut and Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit families.

3.1 General Prehistory

From the distribution of the most important language and dialect boundaries within Eskimo-Aleut, the area of oldest Eskimo-Aleut habitation would seem to be Beringia, that is the western parts of Alaska (a point which I believe is corroborated by the archaeological evidence). Although Athabaskan now occupies nearly all the rest of the main part of Alaska, it is probable that it has not been in close contact with Eskimo for very long, because we see no profound influence or diffusion in great quantity between Eskimo and Athabaskan, and practically no trace of any such contacts or influence at the extremes of the expansion. If for instance Proto-Eskimo, perhaps less than 2,000 years old, and Proto-Athabaskan, not much older, had been in close contact, we might expect to find at least some Athabaskan loans in Greenlandic and Eskimo in Navajo.[1] Furthermore, judging from the relationship and location of Eskimo and Aleut on the one hand and those of Tlingit, Eyak, and Athabaskan on the other, it would appear that the latter family originated well to the east of the former. It also follows that there may have been for a long time considerable space in between the proto-languages of these two language families. What languages were spoken in that space we can never know much about. Perhaps they were (now extinct) languages related to

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[1] At the most we have found one of each. We are still gathering evidence that the Alaskan Athabaskan and Labrador Inuit words for 'frog' are related, and also that the Navajo term for 'pot' may be related to a diffused term in Yupik and Aleut.

these two families, and/or (now) extinct branches of them, and/or languages of other families now entirely extinct or represented only elsewhere. We must not forget that all the languages we find today, even moribund relics like Eyak, are themselves the relatively few victors in the constant struggle for linguistic survival, surviving long enough to be at least documented, as compared with the many more languages which have disappeared forever without a recognizable trace. We can only reconstruct fragments of linguistic prehistory, never the whole picture--I daresay the same must be true of other disciplines.

I shall venture here only briefly into speculations on the prehistoric geographical configurations within Eskimo-Aleut and Tlingit-Athabaskan-Eyak before proceeding into the historical period.

3.2 A Note on the Term "Aleut"

There is widespread misunderstanding concerning the term "Aleut" and what people are designated by it. The Russians called "Aleuts" not only the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands they first encountered, but also the Yupik Eskimo-speaking peoples of the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Island, Kenai Peninsula, and Prince William Sound. However, they recognized the language of the latter as different, and called it "Kadyakski" Aleut. All these peoples, the Aleutian Aleuts, the Pacific Gulf Yupiks, and also some of the Central

Yupiks of the Bristol Bay area, who were all profoundly influenced by the Russians, still retain their Russian Orthodox religion and Russian names, call themselves Aleuts, and are so considered by Alaskans generally and by the census. Thus popularly the term "Aleut" includes speakers of three languages, one of them the Aleut of the Aleutian Islands and Pribilofs, also considered Aleut in linguistics and anthropology, and two Yupik Eskimo languages: some Central Yupik in Bristol Bay, and the Yupik language of the Pacific Gulf. Pacific Gulf Yupik was called "Sugpiaq" on the 1974 map *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska*, but is perhaps better called "Alutiiq," the version in this language of the term "Aleut."

3.3 Eskimo-Aleut Prehistory

The split between Eskimo and Aleut is linguistically rather profound, the equivalent of at least 4,000 years of linguistic separation. By "equivalent" I mean literally "as if" there were 4,000 years of separation, since probably there has been no separation, and the two language groups are still neighbors.[2] A plausible theory is that there was

[2] Here and elsewhere by giving approximate dates I am of course indulging in a kind of glottochronology, to which I attach very little objective value. However, I do here imply subjective value to these estimates, based vaguely on linguists' experience with other datable language families, rough relative quantification of vocabulary similarity by lexicostatistical lists, and by some consideration of summaries of archaeological and ethnological research.

at one time along the coast of Western Alaska a continuum of Proto-Eskimo-Aleut dialects, albeit probably as usual an uneven or "lumpy" continuum, and that only Proto-Eskimo and Proto-Aleut and some of their descendants survived. The dialects which developed on the Aleutians expanded toward the mainland and the dialects of Proto-Eskimo nearer Bering Strait expanded north and also south, assimilating or exterminating all dialects intermediate between Eskimo and Aleut, so the two now meet abruptly near Stepovac Bay on the Alaska Peninsula. It remains a remarkable fact that (aside from obvious and fairly superficial diffusions) the language of Greenland is just as close to the language of the Aleutians as the language of Kodiak Island is to the language of the Aleutians, and of course, Kodiak and Greenlandic Eskimo are much closer to each other than either is to Aleut.

The Eskimo language group is in turn rather clearly divided between Yupik and Inupiaq. Greenland and Nome are linguistically closer to each other than either is to any form of Yupik. The Yupik-Inupiaq boundary has shifted southward along the coast of Norton Sound, an area which does not form a geographical boundary, but is simply where Proto-Yupik and Proto-Inupiaq have finally met, having eliminated all intermediate dialects.

Inupiaq has spread dramatically across the Arctic into Canada and Greenland in relatively recent times, not much over 1,000 years. This of course does not imply that no

other forms of Eskimo were ever spoken before in Canada or Greenland, but only that Inupiaq is the latest wave, which has certainly replaced any earlier forms of Eskimo-Aleut in those areas.

Yupik probably spread from southwestern Alaska across the Alaska Peninsula into the Kodiak and Chugach regions in fairly recent times also, since although there would be rather low mutual intelligibility at the Alaskan Yupik extremes of Chugach and Norton Sound, there is a fair amount at the border near Bristol Bay. We have called Alaskan Yupik two languages (Central Yupik and Sugpiaq or Alutiiq), but they are closer together than Alaskan and Siberian Yupik, which are certainly different languages with very little mutual intelligibility. However, I suspect that Central Alaskan and Siberian Yupik were at one time connected by a continuous chain of Yupik dialects along Seward Peninsula and across Bering Strait, thence along the coasts of Chukotka and thence to St. Lawrence Island. In relatively recent times whatever Yupik dialects remained on Seward Peninsula, probably intermediate between Alaskan and Siberian Yupik, were eliminated by Inupiaq expansion, thereby increasing the isolation of Siberian and Alaskan Yupik.[3] On

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[3] Some startling support for this theory of connection via East Cape (Naukanski) between Alaskan and Siberian Yupik came in 1978 when I played to a group of St. Lawrence Islanders and Central Alaskan Yupiks a tape recording of the famous Naukanski Nututein telling a Raven and Wolf story. None of these young Alaskans had of course heard Naukanski

the Siberian side also in recent times, the continuum of Siberian Yupik dialects was interrupted by Chukchi expansion or reclamation of territory, leaving three separated groups of Eskimos speaking three varieties of Yupik. These are East Cape (the Naukanski), Indian Point (the Chaplinski), and Sirenikski, a divergent and extremely important relic of dialects spoken perhaps much farther west along the southern coast of Chukotka.[4] St. Lawrence Island once supported a population of perhaps 2,000, but that was reduced in the famine and plague of 1878-79 to about 300, which wiped out

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3 (cont.)
before. To our surprise the Central Yupiks understood the story as well as or even better than the St. Lawrence Islanders. This does in fact confirm what can already be seen in Menovshchikov's recent grammar (1975) of Naukanski, that Naukanski does indeed have certain traits more similar to Central Yupik than to Chaplinski. One striking example is the first person singular verbal ending, St. Lawrence Island *-unga* with the *ng* dropped in both Central Alaskan and Naukanski Yupik, *-ua*.

Furthermore, the intervening dialects of Inupiaq, Qawiaraq and especially Wales, show certain phonological innovations (consonant weakenings) which are related to prosodic (accentual) phenomena in Yupik. Though these are clearly Inupiaq dialects, they thus show important influence from Yupik, which according to this hypothesis very probably was a linguistic substrate. However, the prosodic pattern underlying these Inupiaq developments is that of Alaskan Yupik, different in certain points from that of both Naukanski and Chaplinski Siberian Yupik. This indicates that the Yupik on the Seward Peninsula replaced by Inupiaq was an Alaskan rather than a Siberian type.

[4]The Yupik language of Sireniki Collective is now Chaplinski, and Old Sirenikski is nearly extinct, now spoken by only two elderly women. There is a sketchy Soviet description of this language by Menovshchikov (1964).

most of the villages, except for Sivuqaq (Gambell). Undocumented dialects may also have been wiped out. Gambell (i.e., now all St. Lawrence Island, including Savoonga) dialect is nearly identical with Chaplinski, perhaps more so than one might expect with over 40 miles of difficult ocean separating the two points. I do not know if the near identity is partly explainable by resettlement of Gambell by mainlanders since the famine.

3.4 Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit Prehistory

Concerning prehistoric Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit geography, I shall discuss first Athabaskan, then Eyak, then Tlingit. The limits of diversity within Athabaskan indicate that Proto-Athabaskan was probably still some kind of linguistic unity until about 2,000 to 2,500 years ago. The areas of heaviest differentiation are in the interior of what is now Alaska, the Yukon and perhaps northern British Columbia. One can only guess where within this territory the homeland of Proto-Athabaskan was. Since the Eskimo and Athabaskan contact in Alaska does not seem very old or intense, and since both Eyak and Tlingit are in southeastern Alaska, it would seem likely that the location of Proto-Athabaskan was in eastern Alaska, and probably also northwestern Canada, especially in southern Yukon and perhaps also northern British Columbia. From here Athabaskan territory must have expanded farther west into Alaska, and also south and east

into Canada. Pacific Coast Athabaskan, consisting of about five languages in northern California and southern Oregon, all now extinct or nearly so, appears to be an offshoot of western British Columbia Athabaskan, perhaps the Babine area. Pacific Coast Athabaskan may have arrived at its present location more than 1,000 years ago. Apachean, including Navajo, appears to be a separate later offshoot from northern Athabaskan which arrived in its present territory less than 1,000 years ago and from a different area of the north, with closest linguistic affinities toward Sarcee. Eastward expansion in the direction of Chipewyan and Hudson's Bay also appears to be relatively late, considering the decreasing density of language and dialect differentiation toward the east.

Eyak is a mystery. It appears to be the result of a clean split of Proto-Athabaskan-Eyak into Proto-Athabaskan and Eyak. Its earlier distribution was somewhat more southeasterly than it is now, from Yakutat to Controller Bay. Amazingly, Eyak is linguistically no closer to its modern neighbor Ahtna than it is to Navajo. It appears to be separated by an additional 1,000 years from Proto-Athabaskan.[5]

[5]The lowest scores for percentage of cognates on a 100-word list within Athabaskan are now about 59%, whereas the scores between Eyak and any Athabaskan language range narrowly from 28% to 36%, with Navajo and Ahtna, for example, each at 32.5%. The Tlingit-Athabaskan and Tlingit-Eyak percentages are far lower, strongly incongruent with the relatively close grammatical similarities between Tlingit and Athabaskan-Eyak.

The Eyaks were very probably of interior origin with a land-based economy. They never became sea mammal hunters like the Eskimos or Tlingits. It is very hard to understand where the Eyaks could have been located to remain completely isolated, as they must certainly have been, from Athabaskans for 3,500 years, given the present geography.

Tlingit is a single language with easy mutual intelligibility from one end of its area to the other. It is in fact remarkable that the great geographical distance between Yakutat and Ketchikan should be occupied by a single language, on the rich Northwest Coast otherwise crowded by so many small language areas. Within this Tlingit area the greatest dialectal divergence is clearly at the southern end, implying more recent expansion northward. Indeed, Tlingit expansion into Eyak territory toward Yakutat and beyond was still taking place in historic times. Given these geographical considerations, I am beginning to believe that the homeland of Proto-Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, which was perhaps contemporary with the homeland of Proto-Eskimo-Aleut, was at an even greater remove southeast of it, perhaps not even in Alaska at all.

4.1 History: The Russian period

I shall now treat the history of Alaska Native languages during historical times. This history can obviously be divided into the Russian period, 1741-1867, and the American,

1867 to the present. The Russian period, lasting roughly 120 years, can for our purposes be rather meaningfully divided into three forty-year periods: 1745 to 1785, 1785 to 1825, and 1825 to 1865. The first period affected only the Aleuts profoundly; it was essentially the conquest of the Aleutians by Russian fur hunters under very little government control, who came as near as they could to exterminating both the Aleuts and the sea otter. The Aleut population was in fact reduced from about 16,000 to about 1,600.

The second period began with the permanent settlement of the Russian-America Company under Shelikov at Kodiak, and increased government control. During this period, in addition to the Aleuts, the Pacific Gulf Yupik people in particular were profoundly affected; their population too was reduced, though somewhat less severely than that of the Aleuts, from 10,000 to 3,000. During this period the Alutiiqs (and some Tanainas) along with the Aleuts were deployed widely along the whole Pacific Rim from the Kuriles to Ross Colony in California, in the still expanding quest for sea otter skins. The treatment of the people improved from outright atrocity and massacre to mere enslavement and exploitation. To a much lesser extent, this period also affected the Central Yupiks and Tanaina Athabaskans. It also affected the Tlingits, as the Russians expanded their

activity farther southeastward, finally concentrated at Sitka, but the Tlingits were especially resistant to Russian domination.

The last forty years began with the arrival in 1824 of Ioann Veniaminov in the Aleutians. This very capable and humane missionary brought with him a period of enlightenment and benign Russian influence in the colony. I would go so far as to say that the third Russian period in Alaska was not only more beneficial in the history of Alaska Native languages and cultures than the earlier Russian periods, but also more beneficial than any of the following American periods. The Russian Orthodox Church and its educational system brought a type of culture change to the Native peoples whom it most affected which greatly strengthened the status of the Native languages. Veniaminov, working with the Aleut chief Ivan Pan'kov, had by 1826 already adapted the Slavonic alphabet to Aleut and had translated a catechism. Their revised Aleut catechism, published in 1834, was the first book printed in any Alaska Native language. Several more were to follow in Aleut between 1840 and 1903. In 1847, Tyzhnov, Zyrianov, and Uchilishchev published the first catechism in Alutiiq. A primer and the Gospel of Matthew followed in 1848. In the 1840s and 1850s religious works were also translated into Tlingit and Central Yupik; some were published, but not until the 1890s. Veniaminov's

orthography for Aleut and its adaptations to Alutiiq and Central Yupik were quite remarkable for their time.[6] More important even than the publications in Aleut and the two Alaskan Yupik languages were the manuscript traditions and above all the widespread literacy that developed, at first in connection with the Church and church school activity, which in the case of Aleut finally developed into a general tradition of literacy including even considerable secular writing. These traditions were beginning to flourish at the time of the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867.

As of 1867 a large number of Natives, especially of the groups mentioned, naturally knew Russian, but probably all Alaska Natives still at least spoke their native languages, and some could even write them. Not all language areas were affected, of course. The Russian influence on Native languages may in fact be nicely measured by the number of Russian loan words still in use in them today, most of them nouns for new material culture items. In Aleut there are about 400 Russian loans; in Alutiiq over 350; in Tanaina over 350; in

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[6]Because of the nature of the Tlingit sound system, far more different from European languages than even Eskimo-Aleut, the Tlingit orthography was much less successful. For instance, Veniaminov and Pan'kov recognized and provided nicely for the difference in Aleut between k and q, x and x̣, γ and γ̣, also valid for Eskimo. However, Tlingit g and G, k and q̇, k' and q', x and x̣, and x' and x̣' must have been overwhelming indeed.

Central Yupik, about 190; in the Athabaskan languages other than Tanaina, far fewer (Koyukon, about 85; Upper Kuskokwim, about 65; Ingalik, Tanana, and Ahtna, about 50); in Eyak there are about 30, mostly through Alutiiq. In Tlingit, however, there are only nine, a linguistic reflection of Tlingit resistance to the Russians, which was matched by their better known military resistance. In Inupiaq there are about 15 Russian loans, but mostly in the Seward Peninsula area, and in Siberian Yupik on St. Lawrence Island there are apparently only three.[7] All known Alaska Native languages thus survived the Russian period, although in the areas of strongest Russian influence their traditional cultures were profoundly affected by trade and especially by the Orthodox religion. In surviving the Russian period, several Alaskan languages were in fact strengthened by the development of literature and literacy.[8]

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[7]In fact, we have the ironic situation that European trade loanwords are generally American in Siberian Yupik, including the USSR (from American traders and whalers), whereas they are Russian in Alaskan Yupik. Thus for example, Alaskan Yupik *maass'laq*, Siberian Yupik *para* 'butter'; Alaskan Yupik *miilaq*, Siberian Yupik *suupa* 'soap'.

[8]The structure or grammar of the languages themselves remained intact and pure, as the influence of the Russian language was limited to the loanwords. It is entirely wrong to speak of Aleut or Alutiiq, for example, as any kind of mixed Native-Russian jargon. The Russian element in even these languages is much smaller than the foreign element in any European language. Even Alutiiq and Aleut are thus far "purer" than European languages, and incomparably more so than English, which has many thousands of loanwords.

4.2 The American period, 1867-1960

During the first twenty years of the American period, 1867-1887, very little occurred to affect the status of Alaska Native languages or even Native cultures. The American administration did little more than begin to explore the vast territory. There were no American schools for Native people or even American churches. A kind of uninvited exception was the case of Fort Yukon in Kutchin Athabaskan territory, founded in 1847 by the Hudson's Bay Company, well beyond the Canadian border. The Anglican Church, which had a missionary policy favoring written translation of religious material into Native languages, began publishing in Kutchin in 1873. This was the work of Archdeacon Robert MacDonald, whose Kutchin publications numbered over thirty printings between 1873 and 1912, including the entire Bible (1898). This established another Native religious literary language in Alaska.

During the first 20 years of American administration, then, there was at least no interference with the maintenance or cultivation of Alaska Native languages, and relatively little disturbance of Native culture. Moreover, literature in Aleut and Alaskan Yupik continued to flourish and develop, especially in manuscript tradition. The Russian Church maintained its influence unchallenged in those areas. For this reason, apparently, it did not feel a strong need to publish any more of the literature.

This initial 20-year quiet period of "neglect" was the least harmful period of American rule for Alaska Native languages, but the situation was to change drastically during the second American period, 1887-1910. During this time there was intense development in the canning and mining industries which suddenly discovered riches in Alaska: salmon and gold. During this time many thousands of adventurers from outside invaded Alaska, bringing with them alcohol and disease along with severe social and economic disruption. The canning industry affected the entire Pacific Coast and Bristol Bay area, and the gold rushes the entire Seward Peninsula and much of the Interior. Furthermore, whaling had started earlier, in the Bering Sea region, but now began to affect the Inupiaq North Coast intensively.

Even more significantly for the languages, however, the American church missions and schools began in Alaska during this period. As under the Russian administration, the only schools at first were church schools. The first Commissioner of Education for Alaska (1885-1908) was the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson. Jackson, like Veniaminov, was a very capable and energetic man with many interests--it was he, for example, who introduced the reindeer herding industry to Alaska. Unlike Veniaminov, however, Jackson was adamantly opposed to the use of Native languages in education or religion.

It is important at this point to distinguish two missionary groups (in addition to the Anglican and Russian Orthodox) whose language policy was somewhat independent of Jackson's, basically favorable toward Native languages. These are the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Moravian churches, which both arrived in Central Yupik territory in the late 1880s. The Roman Catholics were Jesuit priests who established several missions especially in the Yukon delta area of Central Yupik, and to a lesser extent in the lower Yukon regions of Ingalik and Koyukon, and in parts of the Inupiaq Seward Peninsula. Many of the priests tried to learn the Native language and to use it in the liturgy. Prayer books in Koyukon and Ingalik were printed in 1904, and in Central Yupik in 1899. Some of the priests also did remarkable linguistic work, the most dramatic example being Jules Jetté's massive and priceless manuscript Koyukon dictionary (1915). The Catholics did not establish any strong literacy movement, however. The Moravians established themselves in the Kuskokwim delta area of Central Yupik. Some of them also began to learn the language and write it, and significant literacy did result from their work. Publication began in 1902 and continued to include a complete New Testament (Drebert 1956).[9]

[9]This movement continued in spite of opposition by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its predecessors, who carried out throughout Alaska policies of heavy suppression of Native languages from 1910 to 1960. The work of the Moravians was thus quite exceptional during this time, and may be largely responsible for the relatively strong position of the Central Yupik language in this Kuskokwim heartland.

The arrival of the Catholic and Moravian competition in the Central Yupik area undoubtedly played a role in motivating the Russian Orthodox Church to begin publishing. Between 1893 and 1903 the Russian Orthodox Church printed 14 books in three languages; many of the books had existed in manuscript for many years already: two prayer books in Central Yupik, including work written forty years earlier by Veniaminov's Aleut assistant Jakov Netsvetov; three books of the New Testament and collections of prayers and sermons were published in Aleut in San Francisco and New York, along with a Tlingit liturgy, prayer book, and catechism; and the older Aleut materials (Veniaminov's Gospel of Matthew, *Guideroad to the Kingdom of Heaven*, Primer and Catechism) were reprinted in St. Petersburg; only the Kodiak Matthew, Primer, and Catechism were for some reason not reprinted.

Continuing extensive publication by the Anglican Church in Kutchin (MacDonald), 1873-1912, has already been mentioned. The Anglicans also printed considerable material in Haida (Harrison and Keen) and Tsimshian (Ridley) for their Canadian missions. During the same period the Episcopal Church, the American equivalent of the Anglican, extended its efforts in the Athabaskan interior and began to print liturgical materials and hymns in Upper Koyukon (Jules Prevost).

This period 1887-1910 was, however, ultimately a tragic turning point in the history of Alaska Native languages. At the same time that the earlier educational and religious

literature favoring the use of the Native languages continued in most places where it was established, there was an extremely powerful force in the opposite direction launched by Sheldon Jackson and most of the Protestant missionaries under his influence. Sheldon Jackson epitomized the Victorian-era American educational and social philosophy of the "melting pot" wherein all the diverse nationalities in American society were to assimilate to the Anglo-Saxon Protestant American ideal. What applied, for instance, to Italian immigrants, applied even more strongly now to the native races of North America. To complete the "winning of the West" and the white man's "manifest destiny," the American Indian was to be converted to the white man's religion, assimilated to his culture, and forced to abandon his native language. The older educational policy of the Russians, Moravians, and Catholics was during this period to give way to the anti-Native language policy of Jackson and the Protestant sects under his influence: Presbyterians at Sitka, Wrangell, Gambell (St. Lawrence Island), and Barrow; Methodists at Unalaska and Unga; Swedish Evangelical Lutherans in Yakutat and Unalakleet; Congregationalists at Wales; Quakers in the Kobuk area. These were among the earlier mission schools established by Sheldon Jackson in a kind of apportionment of the territory to the different sects.

One of the initiators of this anti-Native language policy, perhaps even before his colleague Sheldon Jackson,

was S. Hall Young. Writing in his autobiography,[10] for about 1880, Young makes the following very clear statement:

> One strong stand, which so far as I know I was the first to take, was the determination to do no translating into the Thlingit language or any other of the native dialects of that region. When I learned the inadequacy of these languages to express Christian thought, and when I realized that the whites were coming; that schools would come; that the task of making an English-speaking race of these natives was much easier than the task of making a civilized and Christian language out of the Thlingit, Hyda and Tsimpshean; I wrote to the mission Board that the duty to which they had assigned me of translating the Bible into Thlingit and of making a dictionary and grammar of that tongue was a useless and even harmful task; that we should let the old tongues with their superstition and sin die--the sooner the better--and replace these languages with that of Christian civilization, and compel the natives in all our schools to talk English and English only. Thus we would soon have an intelligent people who would be qualified to be Christian citizens.
>
> The Board moved, at first slowly and afterwards strongly, in the direction of this recommendation. They relieved me from finishing the task I had begun of translating the Bible. Our ideas were adopted in other missions. When the Sitka Training School, afterwards called the Sheldon Jackson Institute, was built, English was the only language used on the premises, and always at Fort Wrangell from the first we had made and enforced this rule. To our stand in this regard more than to any other one thing is due, I believe, the exceptional progress of the Southeastern Alaska natives in civilization.

Young voices very well here the thinking of these founders of the Alaskan educational system concerning a Native language policy for the Territory. He also reveals, incidentally, that the Presbyterian Church policy itself was originally pro-Native language, like that of the Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Moravians, and Anglicans-Episcopalians.

[10] Young (1927) p.259-260. I am indebted to Michael Waggoner, University of Alaska, for calling my attention to this passage. For another clear statement on language policy see Appendix II, page 95.

The United States Bureau of Education, which by the end of this period administered most schools for Alaska Natives, continued a language policy which was predictably the same as that set by Jackson. From about 1910, the American schools and probably by then also most of the mission schools completely forbade the use of Native languages. Children were physically punished for speaking their own language at school. Great efforts were made to discourage the children from speaking the language under any circumstances. Parents were also urged to speak only English to their children insofar as they were able. In the already literate Aleut area, the last of the native Aleut religious schools, which taught both written Aleut and Russian, was forcibly closed in 1912.

From about 1910 to about 1960 a deathly silence descends over the Alaska Native language scene. This third period, half a century long, of complete suppression, was to prove fatal for many of the Native languages. During this time the school system was transferred from the U.S. Bureau of Education to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which together with most of the mission schools continued the active anti-Native language policy. Even some of the churches that had earlier used the Native languages in their services were now increasingly using only English.

4.3 History of linguistic research, 1805-1960

At this point it may be useful to summarize the earlier history of linguistics in Alaska. The Russians had done some admirable linguistic work in Alaska, e.g. Rezanov's six extensive vocabularies (1805), Veniaminov's sketches of Aleut (1846), Tlingit, and Pacific Gulf Yupik (1846), Netsvetov's Atkan dictionary (ca. 1860). In the American period Boas and Swanton worked extensively on Haida and Tlingit in the 1886-1910 period (Boas 1917; Swanton 1905, 1908, 1909), Jetté on Koyukon (1915), the Jesuit Barnum (1901) and the Moravian Hinz (1944) on Central Yupik, and Chapman (1914) on Ingalik. Particularly significant also was the Russo-American linguistic work of Bogoraz (1913) on Siberian Yupik (on the Jesup Expedition, 1901) and of Jochelson (1925) on Aleut (on the Ryabushinski Expedition, 1909-10). Between 1910 and about 1950, however, linguistic work on Alaska Native languages also declined. Some was carried on entirely outside Alaska by Edward Sapir (Kutchin and Ingalik, 1923), by Boas (Tlingit, 1917), and by Velten (Tlingit, 1939-1944). De Laguna rediscovered Eyak on a 1933 archaeological expedition and provided enough linguistic material (Birket-Smith and de Laguna 1938) to demonstrate the importance of the newly rediscovered language, already approaching extinction. Jay Ellis Ransom, a schoolteacher at Nikolski, did some work with Aleut (Ransom 1945). John P. Harrington

of the Smithsonian studied Aleut, Tlingit, and some Eyak, 1940-1942. In 1948-52 Gordon Marsh made some significant contributions to Aleut linguistics. In 1950 Knut Bergsland of the University of Oslo began his long and valuable commitment to Aleut, and published an important volume of texts in Western Aleut (1959). L. L. Hammerich of the University of Copenhagen also helped to define Alaskan Yupik dialects during the 1950s and documented that of Nunivak. An especially important event was the development of an Inupiaq orthography by Roy Ahmaogak, working with the linguist Eugene Nida in Oklahoma in 1946. This achievement will be mentioned again later because of its importance for modern Inupiaq literacy.

4.4 Recent History, 1960-1980

1960-1970 was a new transitional period of rebirth of interest in Alaska Native languages and a shift of developments in their favor. This is perhaps best understood in the larger context of American social philosophy. After World War II and with the decline of colonialism, particularly in Africa, the right to self-determination of smaller and especially of non-white peoples became better recognized in the United States. An important point in the development of human rights in the U.S. was the Supreme Court desegregation ruling of 1954. This began the civil rights movement which intensified dramatically during the 1960s. The rise of the

Black minority extended to other racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. These developments were felt in Alaska as well.

I arrived in Alaska in 1960 as a young man with an interest in Alaska Native languages both from a linguistic and a social point of view. I began at the University of Alaska the first academic courses in the Alaska Native languages, in early 1961, using the classroom setting to do fieldwork in Central Yupik with a view toward developing a practical writing system for it and writing a grammar of it. At the same time, I was successful in obtaining government support for research in the Alaska Native languages, particularly Athabaskan and Eyak, as it was urgent to document these languages before they disappeared forever. I spent a large part of my research effort those first years on surveying the Athabaskan languages to define them as they appear on the 1974 map, and from 1963 to 1969 worked with the last speakers of Eyak to document that as thoroughly as possible before its extinction. I found it much easier to get support to teach the languages in a University setting and to do scientific fieldwork than to gain any support for their use in the schools, however--to get the schools to relent in their pressure to complete the Anglicization of the Native children. Our work in preparation for the re-establishment of bilingual education in Alaska, therefore, had to stay basically behind the scenes during the 1960s.

Another important development during this decade was the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics or Wycliffe Bible Translators. This organization, whose purpose it is to translate the Bible into many of the world's languages, began operation in Alaska in 1959 and worked along with us at the University during the 1960s in the development of modern practical writing systems and basic literature in Tlingit (Constance Naish and Gillian Story), Siberian Yupik (David Shinen), North Slope Inupiaq (Donald Webster and Roy Ahmaogak), Kobuk Inupiaq (the late Wilfried Zibell), and four Athabaskan languages considered still viable: Kutchin (Richard Mueller), Koyukon (David Henry), Upper Kuskokwim (Raymond Collins), and Upper Tanana (Paul Milanowski).

In 1967 a Federal Bilingual Education Act was passed, permitting for the first time instruction in languages other than English to children in public-supported American schools. It must be noted, however, that this law only <u>permitted</u> but did not <u>require</u> that children whose primary language was other than English be provided with bilingual education. In 1968 my colleagues and I at the University submitted to the State Commissioner of Education a proposal to begin the use of Native languages in certain Alaskan schools where the children spoke Central Yupik. The Commissioner rejected the proposal on the grounds that this would, among other things, "undermine the authority of the teachers in the classroom." He was of course correct in a sense, since the teachers in those

classrooms at that time could not speak Yupik and were extremely unlikely to learn to do so. Having a teacher who could teach in Yupik would, without being a racial requirement, practically guarantee Yupik control of the classroom. By that time, however, social unrest was rapidly intensifying and the rise of ethnic minorities was gaining articulate support. In 1970 the Bureau of Indian Affairs, together with the State-Operated School System, was persuaded to experiment with bilingual education in four Central Yupik schools. A unified Central Yupik writing system had just been developed in our work at the University in the 1960s. For the first time in about sixty years, Alaskan Native children were to be taught in school in their native language, and would learn how to read first through it.

In December 1971 the self-assertion of Alaska Natives culminated in the passage of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act. Six months later, encouraged by the dramatic success of the bilingual education effort in the Central Yupik area, the Alaska State Legislature enacted, on June 9, 1972, a pair of bills on behalf of Alaska Native languages. The first bill made Alaska one of the first states to require that children be introduced to education in their native language. It stipulated that every school with 15 or more students[11] whose dominant language was other than English

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[11]Subsequently amended to 8 or more, the minimum number of students required for a school.

must have a teacher who is fluent in that language, a program and written materials in that language. However, the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in Alaska are not subject to Alaska State laws. Yet the majority of children who speak an Alaska Native language are in BIA schools, and are thus not legally protected by this law. BIA compliance is basically voluntary. Moreover, there are two opposing views of the purpose of bilingual education programs, "transitional" and "maintenance" programs. The "transitional" views bilingualism as temporary: as soon as the children know enough English, the Native language need no longer be used in the school and is abandoned; the "maintenance" view is that even as the children learn English, they should continue to cultivate their native language in school, to maintain rather than abandon it. Almost all of the bilingual programs for Native-speaking Alaskan children are unfortunately of the "transitional" type in principle and in practice, and have no positive interest in the survival of the Native language. Very few schools have any Native language curriculum beyond the third grade.

At the same time as the state legislature passed the Alaska Bilingual Education bill, it also established the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The Center is responsible for scientific study of all the languages native to Alaska, for developing writing systems and literature for bilingual programs, and for

training writers and teachers in these languages. Limitations on budget and staff make it impossible for the Center alone to train all the teachers and produce all the schoolbooks; it has trained the "first generation" of teachers and writers of most of the languages, and produced the first books. Since then other educational agencies have undertaken the responsibility for the further development and maintenance of the Native language programs in the schools. For instance, very many of the school texts since 1976 have been published under the direction of Tupou Pulu by the National Bilingual Materials Development Center, University of Alaska, Anchorage, which has responsibility under ESEA Title VII to produce written materials for bilingual programs throughout Alaska. An excellent example of a local agency producing materials in one language is the Inupiat Materials Development Center at Barrow, which since 1975 has printed many Inupiaq texts, among them some of the best of Alaska school texts.

The staff of the Alaska Native Language Center now consists of eleven full-time linguists, some of them Alaskan Natives working on their own languages, and about as many Native language specialists who work with linguists on a part-time basis. Many of us travel frequently to Alaskan villages and towns, holding literacy workshops, working with school curricula, training teachers, and assisting Native writers. Another activity of the Center is the maintenance of an archival library whose holdings include almost every

printed document, and much of the unpublished material, that has been written in or on any Alaska Native language. This collection, now amounting to over 4,000 items, is both a record and a resource for language work in the state. The collection is currently being catalogued; the catalogue will constitute a comprehensive annotated bibliography of all Alaskan Native languages. In compiling the indexes for the bibliography of names of writers, informants, and linguists, even we were amazed to find that the known individuals who have contributed to the documentation of Alaska Native languages over the past 200 years number by now over 3,000.

All Center staff are active in basic research on Alaskan languages. Part of the research support comes from the state of Alaska, and part from federal sources; for instance, a major responsibility of ANLC for 1979-1982 has been the Alaska Native Language Dictionary Project, supported by the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are in the process of compiling more or less definitive dictionaries of ten languages (Alutiiq, Central Yupik, North Slope Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Alaskan Haida, Tlingit, Eyak, Ahtna, Tanaina, and Koyukon), further mentioned in the sections on the specific languages below. Because of the concentration of expertise in several languages of both major families, we are able to pursue this work in the context of close coordination and of considerable advances in the general and comparative study of both these language

groups, in which, I feel certain, the Alaska Native Language Center provides important scientific leadership.

5. Present Status of Alaska Native Languages

I shall now proceed with a description and assessment of the status of each of the Native languages in Alaska individually, its location, population, number and age of speakers, degree of viability of the language, together with some information about its use in education, literature in it, and linguistic work on it.

In the case of Tsimshian, at most 200 of the 1,000 Tsimshians at Metlakatla speak the language, almost all of these over 40 years of age, including certainly no children. Since about 1970 there have been occasional beginnings of language study in the school. The first new linguistic work on Coast Tsimshian in over 60 years (since Boas's extensive research) was that of John Dunn, who wrote a dissertation on the phonology (1970), a school dictionary (1978), and a grammar (1979) of the language. Since around 1977 a standard practical orthography has been adopted by the Metlakatlans and Canadian Coast Tsimshians, but thus far almost no new literature has been published in the language.

Of the 500 Alaskan Haidas, most of whom live at Hydaburg and Ketchikan, at most 100 speak Haida, the youngest of these in their forties. The first extensive research on northern Haida in the seventy years since Swanton's was

begun in 1972 with the development of a modern writing system, this first new literature and school programs and the formation of the Society for the Preservation of Haida Language and Literature being largely the work of Erma Lawrence. Lawrence and Jeff Leer published an important preliminary dictionary (1976), including a good grammatical sketch by Leer. Leer is now compiling a comprehensive Alaskan Haida dictionary.

The general Tlingit population is about 10,000 living throughout southeastern Alaska, with about 500 in Canada, where Tlingit territory expanded in the 19th century. Nowhere do children speak the language; the youngest speakers are in Angoon, where Tlingit was taught to children into the 1950s. The number of Tlingit speakers is now at most 2,000, the youngest in their thirties. In 1959 Constance Naish and Gillian Story of the Summer Institute of Linguistics began their work in Tlingit, which during the 1960s produced a practical writing system and the beginnings of a new literature. Some traditional texts have been edited and published by Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, who also wrote a useful learner's introduction to Tlingit (1976). A verb dictionary (1973) and revised noun dictionary (1976) by Naish and Story are available. Leer is now compiling a definitive dictionary of Tlingit. In the 1970s Leer also documented a relic Tlingit dialect at the southernmost end of Tlingit territory; the dialect, Tongass, was by then spoken only by Emma Williams

and the late Frank Williams. This important dialect has an archaic system of vowel modification which has partly merged into a simpler tone system in the rest of Tlingit. Leer reports on this dialect in his recent and important *Tongass Texts* (Williams, Williams and Leer 1978).

In about 1890, when canneries were first built in the Cordova and Copper River Delta area, there were still about 250 Eyaks. Fifteen years later there were hardly more than fifty. The Eyak language is an important heritage and also a tragic lesson for all Alaskans, for Eyak is now nearly extinct, with but three fluent speakers remaining. When I began my intensive research in this language there were four, Anna Nelson Harry, Sophie Borodkin, Marie Jones, and the late Lena Nacktan. (The late George Johnson and Mike Sewock also remembered some of it.) During the 1960s I spent a great deal of my time documenting all I could of the language from these people, whose cooperation and complementary abilities made it possible to piece together a rather comprehensive record of the language. I finished a preliminary edition of the *Eyak Texts* (Krauss 1970a), a reasonably extensive corpus including some remarkably fine texts especially by Anna Nelson Harry, supplemented somewhat during the 1970s; I also published a preliminary dictionary (1970b,with concordance of the entire corpus), about 4,000 pages, of which I am now editing a condensed version for wider publication.

Ahtna Athabaskan is a well defined language, not readily intelligible to any other Athabaskan; its closest relative is Tanaina. Of a total population of 500 in 11 villages in the Copper River region, there are no more than 200 speakers, the youngest in their twenties. The Mentasta dialect is somewhat divergent, showing influences from the Tanana River languages. The first extensive linguistic work on Ahtna was begun in 1973 by James Kari. In 1974 a practical alphabet was designed. Some school material has now been published in the language, especially under the direction of Mildred Buck, and also an extensive noun dictionary by Buck and Kari (1976). A comprehensive dictionary of Ahtna is now being compiled by Kari. Note also a bilingual volume of texts by John and Molly Billum and Mildred Buck (1979).

The Tanaina language, like Ahtna well defined and not intelligible to any other, but closest to Ahtna, is spoken in two major dialect groups around Cook Inlet. Note the distribution into Upper and Lower Inlet dialects, rather than eastern and western. The Kenai Peninsula dialect is nearly extinct with two speakers remaining. One of these, Peter Kalifornsky, has become a creative writer of his language, and recently published a sizeable anthology of his works (1977). The Upper Inlet dialect at Eklutna and Tyonek is also moribund, with perhaps 30 speakers. Most Tanaina speakers live at Nondalton and its far inland extension at Lime Village. There are no speakers under 30 even at Nondalton,

but at remote Lime Village (total population about 40) there are perhaps four or five young children who speak Tanaina. Of the total Tanaina population of about 900, at most 250 speak the language. A modern writing system for the language was established in 1972. There are occasional language classes at Nondalton and Tyonek, and about 30 booklets have been printed in Tanaina. In 1973-75 Joan Tenenbaum did fieldwork on Tanaina at Nondalton and published a series of texts (1976) and a grammar of the verb (1977). James Kari has done extensive fieldwork on the language since 1972; he has published several important texts by Peter Kalifornsky, Shem Pete, and others, a major noun dictionary (Kari 1977), and is now compiling a comprehensive dictionary. Kari and Albert Wassillie of Nondalton, author of many of the schoolbooks, also published a school dictionary (1979).

The name Ingalik is now reserved for the well defined language spoken at Anvik and Shageluk, by the Indian people at Holy Cross, and on the middle Kuskokwim. On the Kuskokwim it is nearly extinct, replaced by Yupik and English. There are no children speaking the language anywhere, the youngest speakers being people in their twenties at Shageluk. Of a total population of 300, at most 100 speak Ingalik. The Holikachuk language has only recently been defined; it is that of the Innoko River at the village of Holikachuk, moved during the 1960s to Grayling on the Yukon. This language is intermediate between Ingalik and Koyukon, partly intelligible

to both, a bit closer to Koyukon linguistically but closer to Ingalik socially. The total Holikachuk population is 160, but there are at most 25 speakers of the langugae, all over 40 years of age. Jeff Leer and I designed writing systems for Ingalik and Holikachuk in 1974. James Kari began extensive linguistic research on these languages in 1976 and has published a preliminary noun dictionary for each (Kari 1978a, 1978b). No sustained school programs or written literatures have yet developed for them.

Koyukon occupies the largest Athabaskan territory in Alaska and has the largest population, about 2,200, of whom, however, only about 700 can speak Koyukon, none of them children. The youngest speakers, probably at Allakaket, are in their twenties. The language is distributed in three dialects in a dozen villages along the Yukon and Koyukuk rivers. A modern orthography and literature were begun in the 1960s by David Henry of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Considerable documentation, writing, and transcription of traditional texts have been done, with over forty booklets published. Eliza Jones of ANLC, a native speaker of the language, has transcribed much as yet unpublished text material, has published a school dictionary (1979) and an important book of texts from Chief Henry of Huslia (1979). She is now compiling a comprehensive dictionary of Koyukon, incorporating also the remarkable work of Jules Jetté, already mentioned. Chad Thompson, also of ANLC, has

written a useful study of the Koyukon verb (1977).

The Upper Kuskokwim area was erroneously included by Osgood (1936) with Ingalik. The language is in fact sharply distinct from Ingalik and from any other of its immediate neighbors. However, it has so many similarities to Tanana that Upper Kuskokwim and Tanana might have been considered two rather different dialects of the same language, were it not for the 19th century intrusion of Upper Koyukon into the Minchumina area, now separating Upper Kuskokwim from Tanana. Though the intrusive group is itself now extinct, the social connections between Upper Kuskokwim and Tanana have been weakened for more than a century. Upper Kuskokwim is spoken at Nikolai, population 95, and at tiny Telida, population 15, and by some of the Athabaskan population at McGrath. Of a total population of 150, perhaps 140 still speak the language, including the children at Nikolai and Telida. Even there, however, the younger children are becoming increasingly dominant in English, so this language too will soon begin to die. Raymond Collins of the Summer Institute of Linguistics began work at Nikolai in 1964. He established a practical orthography and together with Betty Petruska has by now produced over 30 booklets in the language, especially for the school program there. This has been bilingual since 1972, but probably too late to halt the decline of the language. Collins and Petruska recently published a school dictionary of the language (1979).

The _Tanana_ language is now defined as that formerly spoken along the Tanana from Minto to the Goodpaster River. Of a total population of about 350, there are at most 100 speakers. The Goodpaster dialect has one speaker, the Salcha dialect two; the Chena dialect at Fairbanks has been extinct since 1976. Most of the remaining speakers, all over 40, speak the Minto-Nenana dialect. I did the first major linguistic fieldwork on this language in 1961-62, including an unpublished collection of texts and a preliminary noun dictionary (Krauss 1974). There is a practical orthography but no language program in the schools. The first text in this language was published in 1979 (Titus and Titus 1979).

The _Tanacross_ language is partly intelligible with both Tanana (especially the Salcha-Goodpaster dialects) and with Upper Tanana, but cannot reasonably be called the same language as either. I had formerly included it as a "transitional" dialect of Tanana, but there are as many important ways in which it differs from Tanana as ways in which it differs from Upper Tanana. Of a population of about 160 at Healy Lake, Dot Lake, and especially Tanacross, about 100 speak the language, including to some degree the older (but not the younger) children at Tanacross. A practical alphabet for this language was established in 1973 and about ten school booklets have been published in it, and most recently a book of traditional texts (Paul 1980).

The Upper Tanana language is spoken at Tetlin and Northway with a total population of about 300, of whom perhaps 250 still speak the language. Many of the children, especially the older ones, speak the language to some extent; however, it is doubtful, as in the case of Tanacross and Upper Kuskokwim, that the decline in use of the Native language can be halted. Upper Tanana is distinct from all its neighbors but closest to Tanacross. During the 1960s Paul Milanowski of the Summer Institute of Linguistics established a writing system; since then he and especially Alfred John have produced about 25 booklets in the language for the school programs, and most recently a school dictionary (Milanowski and John 1979).

Han is spoken in Alaska only at Eagle near the Alaska-Canada border. It is sharply distinct from all its neighbors, although it resembles Kutchin much more closely than any other. In Canada, where it had the burden of hosting the Klondike Gold Rush, Han is nearly extinct. In Eagle, native population about 50, there may be 20 speakers, some perhaps still in their twenties. A writing system has recently been established, and one of the younger speakers, Ruth Ridley, is now writing the first Han text transcriptions. A preliminary noun dictionary is being compiled by John Ritter.

The total population for Kutchin in Alaska and Canada is about 2,400, with 1,200 on each side of the border. There are about 500 speakers in Canada and 700 in Alaska,

more in Alaska because in the Canadian villages none of the children speak the language, whereas in a few of the Alaskan villages, particularly Venetie and Arctic Village, the children generally do speak Kutchin. Venetie and Arctic Village are in fact the only Athabaskan villages left in Alaska where the children still speak predominantly Athabaskan and where there is any strong chance that Athabaskan may survive indefinitely as a spoken language in Alaska. As already mentioned, Kutchin was the first Athabaskan language in Alaska to develop an extensive written literature, now over 100 years old, in the form of the religious works of MacDonald (1873-1912). This foundation of literacy may be responsible for some of the relative strength of the language. A modern writing system was designed in the 1960s by Richard Mueller of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and in this orthography nearly 90 booklets for the schools have been produced by Katherine Peter and others. There is also a large corpus of unpublished material, some transcribed in 1923 by Edward Sapir, and more recently a very large amount especially by Katherine Peter at ANLC. A school dictionary was recently published (Peter 1979). There is considerable current activity in Kutchin linguistics.

We now turn to the present situation of the other major language family of Alaska, the Eskimo-Aleut languages.

Aleut is a single language, with two distinct but

mutually intelligible dialects, Eastern and Western, the dividing line falling east of Atka Island. Of a total population of 2,000, about 700 speak the language. The youngest speakers of Eastern Aleut are people in their teens, at Nikolski; Western Aleut is now spoken only on Atka Island, since the few Attuans who survived World War II never returned to Attu, and the Attuan subdialect of Western Aleut is now practically extinct. The entire Aleut population was displaced during World War II and severely affected. Atkan Aleut is, however, still a viable language, with all the children in the village of Atka speaking it. Knut Bergsland of the University of Oslo, who has done outstanding linguistic work on Western Aleut since 1950, as mentioned above, designed a modern Roman writing system for the language, based on the Slavonic, and working especially with Moses Dirks of Atka assisted in the development of a bilingual curriculum which began in the school in 1972. More than 40 booklets have been produced for this program. Aleut is also taught as a second language at Unalaska in the Eastern dialect area, and about twenty books have been published for this program, mostly by Olga Mensoff. School dictionaries for both dialects were recently published (Bergsland and Dirks 1978, Bergsland et al. 1978), a dictionary of Atkan by Bergsland is forthcoming, and Bergsland continues to work on a comprehensive Aleut dictionary and grammar.

Alutiiq (Pacific Gulf Yupik, also known variously as

Suk, Sugpiaq, and Sugcestun) is closely related to Central Alaskan Yupik. Alutiiq is divided into two dialect groups, the Chugach dialects of English Bay and Port Graham on the Kenai Peninsula, and what is left of the Prince William Sound Chugach at Tatitlek, Valdez, and Cordova; and the Koniag dialects, spoken on Kodiak Island and most of the Alaska Peninsula. Of 3,000 Alutiiqs, about 1,000 still speak the language. The youngest speakers of the Koniag dialects are in their twenties, but the Chugach dialect is spoken by some children in English Bay (population 60) and to a lesser extent Port Graham. The youngest children of even these communities, however, are becoming dominant in English, so it is doubtful that the language will survive indefinitely. The first extensive modern linguistic work on the language was done by Irene Reed in the early 1960s, after nearly a century of linguistic neglect since the Russian period. In 1973 Jeff Leer began work on the language, solved certain intricate phonological problems and developed a practical orthography, recently published brief dictionaries for both dialects (Leer 1978a, 1978b), and continues at present compiling a comprehensive dictionary of it. More than 30 booklets for the schools, especially those of Port Graham and English Bay, have been published under Leer's editorship, working with Derenty Tabios and others. A second-language program is beginning to take shape on the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak and a few booklets have recently been published in the Koniag dialect.

Central Yupik is numerically the most prominent of Alaska's Native languages both in terms of the size of its population and the number of its speakers. The Central Yupik population now numbers more than 17,000, of whom most, perhaps 14,000, speak the language. It is a single language with three general dialect areas, Bristol Bay, the Kuskokwim, and the Yukon. There are two especially divergent local dialects, Nunivak Island and Hooper Bay-Chevak, showing certain affinities with Alutiiq. The language is strongest in the Kuskokwim region, where it is the first language of entire communities. In many communities of the Bristol Bay and Yukon areas, Yupik is no longer spoken as a first language by some or any children. There seems to be no doubt, however, that at least in the Kuskokwim heartland, Central Yupik will continue to grow and flourish. Its future is further brightened by the widespread and successful bilingual education programs of the region. As mentioned above, it was here that modern bilingual education began in Alaska in 1970. Since then more than 200 schoolbooks have been developed in the practical orthography, covering entire areas of the primary curriculum, under the capable leadership of Irene Reed, who established the Eskimo Language Workshop at the University of Alaska, and since 1974 the Yupik Language Workshop at Kuskokwim Community College in Bethel. Reed, Osahito Miyaoka of Otaru University on Hokkaido, Steven Jacobson, Paschal Afcan, and I developed during the period

1967 through 1976 a teaching grammar of Central Yupik (Reed et al. 1977), the first such work published for an Alaska Native language. Jacobson's comprehensive dictionary of the language will be published in 1980. Courses in Central Yupik have been offered at the University of Alaska since 1961, first by Reed, later by Miyaoka, and since 1974 by Jacobson. More than 200 speakers of Central Yupik have had training there or at Kuskokwim Community College in Bethel, allowing them to teach as bilingual instructors from primary grades through college in classrooms in their region. In addition to materials for the schools, government informational publications of many kinds are now translated into Yupik for distribution throughout the area, where not only schoolchildren but also adults are increasingly literate in the modern writing system.

Siberian Yupik is spoken by the entire population of St. Lawrence Island in Alaska, in the two villages of Gambell and Savoonga. This includes all the children, making Siberian Yupik the Native language in Alaska which has increased most dramatically in its numerical strength. Severely reduced by famine and plague a century ago to fewer than 300 survivors of a population at least five times that, the St. Lawrence Island population has made a remarkable recovery, and is now approaching 1,000. This includes significant immigration from the Chaplinski dialect area of Chukotka as late as the 1920s. The dialect of St. Lawrence Island is still nearly

identical with the Chaplinski dialect of the U.S.S.R. No doubt because of their well defined and separate island world, of which they are still basically the masters, St. Lawrence Islanders have maintained the full vigor of their culture and language along with the modern material advances from which they also benefit. St. Lawrence Island is certainly a major exception to the usual recent language history pattern in Alaska. Except for one missionary booklet in 1910, nothing was printed in the language for St. Lawrence Island until the 1960s, when David Shinen of the Summer Institute of Linguistics devised a modern orthography and printed three booklets in it. In 1971 at the University of Alaska we revised the orthography and began the modern written literature for St. Lawrence Island. Bilingual education programs began in its schools in 1972, and by now over 100 booklets in the language have been produced for the schools, written especially by Vera Oovi Kaneshiro, Grace Slwooko, and Raymond Oozevaseuk. Steven Jacobson has written a preliminary grammatical sketch of the language (1977) and is presently working on the compilation of a comprehensive dictionary for it.

The main dialect of Siberian Yupik spoken in the U.S.S.R. is Chaplinski, identical with that of St. Lawrence Island, as mentioned above. The Chaplinski population in the U.S.S.R. is about 800, now concentrated in two locations, (New) Ungaziq and Sireniki. East Cape (Naukanski) is the other

main dialect group, population about 350, forcibly evacuated and dispersed from the ancient East Cape village of Nevuqaq in 1958, at the height of the Cold War. After the consolidation of Soviet power in the area in the 1920s and the expulsion of American traders, the Soviets began seriously and idealistically to implement their policy of bilingual education to include even this small group of Eskimos, according to their principle that every Soviet nation, no matter how small, has a basic right to the cultivation of its own language and an introductory educational system in it. In 1932 the first Soviet Siberian Yupik schoolbook was printed, to be followed by about 50 more between 1935 and 1959, an admirable effort, all in the Chaplinski dialect, the official standard. However, during the Cold War and the 1960s this output ceased, the communities were relocated, and instead of bilingual education the children were put in Russian-speaking day-care centers and boarding schools, under an assimilationist policy that in some ways resembled the American. Now there are probably no children speaking the Naukanski dialect, and probably also none or very few speaking even Chaplinski, in spite of continuing Soviet propaganda claiming that the system has supported the cultural life and morale of these people, and in spite of printing new schoolbooks in the language in 1974. Ironically, in spite of professed national policies, the Siberian Yupik language is flourishing in the United States and dying in the U.S.S.R.

If the St. Lawrence Islanders do not very soon regain the permission they enjoyed until 1947 to visit their kin in Siberia, they will find they have a common language only with the oldest generation there. The area remains completely closed to Westerners at this time. The Bering Strait Wall has been a tragedy for the Siberian Yupik people.

Inupiaq in Alaska is at the western end of a vast Inuit dialect continuum which now spans the entire American Arctic from Bering Strait across Canada to Greenland. Within Alaska there are four markedly different but still mutually intelligible dialect types, in two main groups: Northern (North Slope and Malimiut) and Seward Peninsula (Qawiaraq and Wales). The total population in Alaska is about 12,000, of whom now only about 5,000 are speakers of Inupiaq, including only a small proportion of children. The Qawiaraq dialect (originally of the Nome area, but expanded during the past century to Shaktoolik and Unalakleet) has no speakers under 20 years of age, having been most severely affected by the Nome Gold Rush and subsequent developments. The Wales dialect has probably no speakers under 10 years of age, although some teenagers on Diomede and amongst the King Islanders (all moved to Nome) can speak it still. In the Malimiut dialect area of Kotzebue Sound, the Noatak and Kobuk rivers, and its early historical southward extension to Shaktoolik and Unalakleet, the only villages where many children still speak the language are on the Upper Kobuk at

Ambler, Shungnak, and Kobuk. On the North Slope, Wainwright is the only place where most of the children now speak Inupiaq, though many do at least to some extent at Anaktuvuk Pass, Nuiqsut, and to a lesser degree at Barrow. Inupiaq had very little contact with the Russians, so there was no major effort to establish a written literature in it in Alaska at all until very late, two centuries behind Greenlandic and one century behind Canadian Inuit. The work of Roy Ahmaogak and Eugene Nida in 1946 achieved a scientifically excellent orthography (though a slightly impractical one, using some special phonetic symbols), but this came at a highly unfavorable time in terms of school policy, so for a generation the writing system was used only in the churches. Ahmaogak and Donald Webster of the Summer Institute of Linguistics published a complete New Testament (1966) and during the 1960s the late Wilfried Zibell also began printing materials in the Malimiut dialect. In 1971 we began to teach Inupiaq at the University of Alaska and in the next year the first Alaskan educational programs in it began in Barrow. These have spread rapidly throughout most of the area. There is certainly significant literacy, and no fewer than 350 booklets of considerable variety have been printed by various agencies for the schools in all dialects, especially of course the North Slope and Malimiut. The Inupiat Materials Development Center at Barrow has printed a large number of particularly fine school texts. A preliminary dictionary

for these two dialects was published in 1970 (Webster and Zibell 1970), and now in press is a much better school dictionary, prepared under the editorship of Edna Ahgeak MacLean, president of the North Slope Borough Language Commission, which supports much of the language work in the area. MacLean, a native speaker from Barrow, is currently editing a definitive dictionary for the North Slope and finishing a full pedagogical grammar of the language from materials she has developed at ANLC for the teaching program at the University, for which she is also responsible. Larry Kaplan, also of ANLC, has written on the phonology of Alaskan Inupiaq dialects (1979) and is engaged in continuing fieldwork.

By now, however, the future of Inupiaq as a spoken language in Alaska is gravely threatened. The Qawiaraq dialect may well be extinct in forty years and the Wales dialect in seventy. By the end of this century there may be no children at all learning the language even in the North Slope and Malimiut dialects, especially if past trends continue. A renewed cultural perspective is the only strong hope for the future of this language in Alaska. This great hope is a renewed sense of the international Inuit world not only in Alaska but also in Canada and Greenland, by overcoming the artificial, effectually colonial barriers externally imposed by the separate American, Canadian, and Danish administrations. This can now under modern conditions easily be achieved through improved cultural exchange,

transportation, communication, and education. Without this, I believe that the Inupiaq language in Alaska will not survive the next century.

6. The future for Alaska Native languages

I am at a point now to consider the future of Alaska Native languages in general. We can no longer avoid facing the tragic consequences of the American suppression of this century, as the next century, nearly upon us, will as an inevitable result become the age of extinction of most Alaska Native languages. The first half of the coming century will probably see the death of the very last speakers of fifteen of the twenty languages. In the case of the moribund languages, those no longer spoken by any children, it is an unfortunately simple matter to estimate a probable date of extinction, by adding to 1980 the remaining life expectancy of the youngest speakers, which we shall base on a generous total life expectancy of 75 years. Thus, not allowing for miracles, Eyak will probably not survive this century; Alaskan Tsimshian, Alaskan Haida, Holikachuk, and Tanana will probably be extinct by 2015; and Tlingit, Ahtna, Ingalik, Koyukon, and Han will probably be extinct by 2030. Furthermore, Alutiiq, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Tanaina, and Upper Kuskokwim have an extremely doubtful future, with a few small children able to speak the languages, but those children already English-dominant; again, not

allowing for miracles or radical changes, they will probably be extinct within a lifetime, by about 2055. By that year, then, probably only five of the twenty Alaskan languages will still be spoken. Of these, Western Aleut at Atka and Kutchin Athabaskan at Venetie and Arctic Village might conceivably survive indefinitely under ideal conditions, which might have to include continued isolation, hardly likely. Inupiaq might survive also, but only if great strengthening of international awareness and communication comes in time. Central Alaskan Yupik and Siberian Yupik have by far the best chance of survival, because of the still large concentration of speakers of all generations in the Kuskokwim region and a few other parts of the Central Yupik area, and Siberian Yupik because of its isolation and great vitality on St. Lawrence Island. Both languages now also have excellent beginnings of educational programs and written literatures.

It is of course important to emphasize that these predictions are based on our experience and knowledge of the way things are presently going, and do not take into account on the one hand miracles or radical social changes favorable to their survival. The tragic end result of the way things are going does indeed point out the importance of considering measures for adequately favorable change, if such is possible. On the other hand, we must face an at least equal likelihood that things may take a turn for yet worse, that social,

demographic, and technological developments (such as the spread of television) will bring still more unfavorable pressure against the survival of these languages, that they will be obliterated by English at an ever accelerating rate.

I view the obliteration of Alaskan Native languages by English as an unnecessary final tragic chapter in the continuing conflict in American history, the "winning of the West." The physical genocides of the nineteenth century were replaced in the twentieth by cultural genocide in the classroom: "cowboys and Indians" moved into the schools, and extermination and removal were replaced by assimilation. With bilingual education and the development of the printed word in Native languages, Native languages have at least begun to fight back in the battle of the classroom, but the battle is far from won, and in the case of many Alaskan languages it is already far too late.

It is clear that educators and linguists must continue to cooperate and serve community needs in the development and improvement of education and literature in those languages which the schoolchildren still speak. We must also consider, however, what are the goals of bilingual education in the case of those languages which are already moribund. For one thing, it is the task of linguistics to document or preserve as complete as possible a record and description of all these languages for posterity, regardless of their likely fate as spoken languages. This much is clear: that it is

reasonably well within our capabilities and also our intentions now to produce detailed descriptions of their grammars, comprehensive dictionaries of their lexical inventories, and extensive records of them in text, especially narrative, including at least a large sample of traditional oral literature. This work will be of lasting great value to the people themselves and also to the world at large, and on this we at the Alaska Native Language Center place high priority. In the educational systems for those areas where the languages are moribund, again, we cannot realistically expect true revival of the spoken languages, but we can develop appropriate and effective programs of teaching them as second languages to the children, so that coming generations learn at least a sample of their ancestral language, enough for them to maintain respect for it and their heritage and to continue some ceremonial and artistic use of it. Extensive knowledge of the languages and the tradition of teaching them in the schools would have to be maintained by small, specialized groups within the cultures who would also have the good linguistic work mentioned above to rely on. In that way these languages too can continue to play an important role in the future of the people.

In those areas where the schoolchildren still speak an Alaskan language, increased efforts must be made to improve and extend the use of the language in the schools. Educational, social, organizational, and political work must be done to

bring this about, and eternal vigilance kept to maintain it. In such areas there still may sometimes be found, in this day and age, educators of the old assimilationist school, who are either hostile or indifferent to the survival of Native languages. Agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs do not change attitudes quickly, nor do many of the experienced educators of this type often hired by local school systems. In most elementary schools where there are children still able to speak an Alaskan language, there is still practically no Native language curriculum beyond the third grade, and in very many cases little or none even in the lower grades. If used at all, Native languages are merely tolerated in a policy still aimed at transition to English. The tragic consequences of this have already been clearly demonstrated.

As threatening as the school situation still is, a graver threat to the survival of Alaska Native languages is now upon us. This is the inevitable and rapid spread of radio and especially television to every village and home. The cultural and linguistic battleground is now shifting from the classroom to the living room. Within a few short years, practically every Native-speaking home will have a color television set receiving several channels of the usual commercial and educational programming in English to flood the home for several hours a day. The battle of the living room will be fought with what I call "cultural nerve gas"--

insidious, painless, and fatal. The fate even of Siberian and Central Yupik could be sealed in a decade of this. Yet there is hope here too, for much more easily than an educational system (which requires much time and effort for the development of an alphabet, literature, teacher training, and literacy), television and radio could quickly be adapted to the service of Native languages. In contrast with the time it takes to learn to write and read, it takes little training to speak one's own language into a microphone, and no training to learn to enjoy hearing a broadcast in it. Furthermore, the technology of television has fewer cultural strings attached to it than do educational systems; it is much more readily convertible to the service of any language and culture. In fact, one must not think mainly of translated commercial or educational programs, or Native imitations of successful commercial or educational programs, but of actual Native content in Native languages, for example village news networks, Native cultural events, much of it village-produced for broadcast to other villages in the same language area. However, if this is not done soon and imaginatively, the potential these media have for strengthening Alaskan cultures and languages will be lost in their destruction. The final tragedy is unnecessary and can still be prevented, but only by understanding, determination, and courageous effort. Linguists, educational administrators, teachers, local school boards, and parents must work together to convert the

schools from the destruction to the strengthening of native languages. Imaginative and determined media personnel and villagers must work together to convert television and radio to the service of this heritage.

Finally, we must understand and remember that the only way a living language is transmitted from one generation to the next is by parents speaking that language to their children. A school and even a television set which inundates the children with another language, say English, do not themselves alone prevent the children from becoming bilingual, still able to speak their parents' native language, provided the parents speak that language to them, fully realizing that that is the only way the children will learn it. The amount of time the children are involved with the English-speaking school or television will of course detract from that spent with the Native language, but the ability to speak more than one language well is in fact very common throughout the world; it is perfectly normal and healthy. The most destructive effects of the school and media are in the attitudes they impose on both parents and children. They cannot take the knowledge of the Native language away, but through generations of punishment and brainwashing in English-only schools, and now more swiftly through the stunning and stupefying power of television, they destroy or paralyze the parents' will to transmit the Native language and the children's will to learn it, unless the

language is also respected, used, cultivated, and celebrated in them. With adequate Native-language programs in the schools and on television and radio, the basic responsibility for the survival of the Native language is more clearly seen to be where it has always been, with the parents to speak it to their children. Not bilingual education, not even bilingual television can themselves keep Alaskan languages alive; only parents speaking the languages to their children can do that, as has always been the way.

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APPENDIX I:

THE FUTURE OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

1. Survival or Extinction?

The time has come to face the real future of Alaskan languages. There is no more time to waste deluding ourselves about the unpleasant and tragic aspects of this. Alaska Native languages are entering a period of final crisis for their future as living languages. Most of them are about to die.

The only way a language can survive as a living spoken language is if children learn that language as their first language and transmit it to their own children the way it was transmitted to them. All Alaska Native languages which have survived to this day have of course survived by this means and only this means. The language has been handed down for countless generations who have cultivated it, shaped it, perfected it according to their own culture into an intellectual heritage of complex beauty, unique to each people.

The thread can be broken irreparably in one generation. The generation that is now able to speak Native and English, but is speaking English only to its children, is directly

responsible for abandoning this heritage, irrecoverably. It is Native language suicide. That is a heavy responsibility to bear towards the coming generations. Such a decision should only be made consciously with full awareness of its consequences.

As far as we can predict from the present situation, the first half of the 21st century will see the death of the very last speakers of most Alaska Native languages. In fact, it is all too simple to calculate the approximate date of extinction of most of these languages. We need merely to add to 1980 the remaining life expectancy of the youngest speakers of the language, based on a generous estimate of, say, 75 years. If, for example, there is no one under 20 able to speak Koyukon, the language could be expected to become extinct about 55 years from now, in 2035, give or take a few years. (It does not matter how many people speak the language if the youngest children do not; even a language with a million speakers will not last significantly longer than one with a hundred, unless the children are learning the language. The only difference is minor: of a million people probably a few more will live to be very old, thus adding a possible 25 years at most before the still inevitable extinction.)

The youngest speaker of Eyak is past sixty. The youngest speakers of Alaskan Tsimshian, Alaskan Haida, Holikachuk, and Tanana are past forty. The youngest speakers of Tlingit,

Ahtna, Ingalik, Koyukon, and Han are in their thirties or twenties. Thus, the way things are going, and not allowing for miracles, of these ten languages Eyak will probably be extinct within this century; Alaskan Tsimshian, Alaskan Haida, Holikachuk, and Tanana will probably be extinct by 2015, and the very last speakers of Tlingit, Ahtna, Ingalik, Koyukon, and Han will all be dead by 2030. Next, there are five Alaskan languages which some children are able to speak to some extent in one or two communities, but these are already English-dominant or rapidly becoming so: Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) (at English Bay only--everywhere else, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula and Prince William Sound no children speak the language), Tanaina Athabaskan (only at tiny Lime Village--everywhere else around Cook Inlet there are no young speakers), Upper Tanana (especially at Tetlin), Tanacross, and Upper Kuskokwim (especially at Nikolai). Again not allowing for miracles or radical changes, these five languages too will probably all be extinct within a lifetime, by about 2055. By that year, then, probably only 5 of the 20 Alaskan languages will still be spoken: Western Aleut (at Atka only); Kutchin Athabaskan (at Venetie and Arctic Village only); Inupiaq Eskimo (only in the Upper Kobuk and at Wainwright); Central Yupik (mainly in the Kuskokwim region); and Siberian Yupik (at Gambell and Savoonga). Of these, Western Aleut and Kutchin might conceivably survive indefinitely under "ideal" conditions; such conditions would probably have to include

continued isolation, but this is hardly likely. Inupiaq might survive in a few places also, but only if there comes in time great strengthening of awareness of and communication with the rest of the Inupiaq world in Canada and Greenland, of which Alaskan Inupiaq is only a small part. The way things are going, however, these languages too are likely to become extinct before the next century is over. Central Yupik and Siberian Yupik have by far the best chance of surviving indefinitely; Central Yupik because of the still large concentration of speakers of all generations in the Kuskokwim region and a few other parts of the Central Yupik area, and Siberian Yupik because of its isolation and great vitality on St. Lawrence Island.

We at the Alaska Native Language Center feel the responsibility for doing what we can to promote the survival of Alaska Native languages as living spoken languages. For this reason I am describing quite frankly what I fear is coming, without mincing words. I sincerely hope I am wrong. I hope that there are more, younger speakers of the languages than I know of. I hope that some parents at least are indeed consistently speaking the languages to their children, and I have simply not heard of them. I would welcome hearing from anyone who has information that I do not, where I am wrong in these mournful predictions. I am certain that I am not wrong in one thing: if the parents do not speak the language to the children, the language will die.

What I am certain that we as linguists and Native language specialists at ANLC and elsewhere can do (with adequate support) is to document the languages well, by compiling good comprehensive dictionaries of their vocabulary, good grammars of their structure, and also writing down texts, including stories and legends in the language, to preserve at least a significant part of their oral literary tradition. In this way an adequate record of the heritage can be kept for posterity, in the form, however, of some books on the shelf. In this sense at least, the language can certainly be saved. This important work is also the necessary basis for the development of teaching grammars and other materials for Native language programs in the schools.

2. Can school save the language?

Some people may believe that "bilingual education" is going to "save" Native languages. This is simply not so. English-only education, especially with prolonged periods away from home at boarding school, can kill a Native language. However, school could not do the reverse, bring a Native language back, unless it were Native-speaking only and involved a boarding school or the like, where children were discouraged from speaking anything but Native. Certainly no Alaskan "bilingual education" programs ever remotely resembled this.

In speaking of "bilingual education" we must carefully distinguish between programs for communities where children still speak the Native language as their first language ("first language" bilingual programs), and programs for communities in which children do not speak the language ("second language programs", not strictly speaking bilingual education, but something resembling more the way European languages are taught academically as second languages in traditional American city schools).

I shall here discuss realistic goals for the second language programs, where Native language is taught in school to children who do not learn to speak the language at home. Such programs can not teach the children to speak the language in a fluent way resembling their parents' or grandparents' native ability. That can only come from the parents or grandparents. The school can teach the children about the language, and teach the children words and phrases in it. Some children will learn quite a lot that way, but realistically, most will learn only a bit, even in a good program with well trained teachers and good materials.

Nevertheless, even that little bit is very important. It will at least give the children an idea of what their ancestral language was like, a sense that they know some of it, have some association with it, that it is still around. This knowledge will also enable them in a very real way to continue much of their culture actively in songs and

ceremonials. In this way the language will still continue to play some kind of role in the community, having a place of honor and respect, as an important part of whatever can be preserved of traditional culture in an advancing society. In this way it can still give essential life to the culture of the people.

Within the society there will have to be a small core of people whose specialized role in the community will be to preserve the language tradition by teaching it in the schools, generation by generation, even after the last native speakers have died. They will have to have in some sense a profound knowledge of the language, and for this the technical work of language specialists and linguists to document the languages now while they are still alive will be essential. The preservation of all Alaska Native languages in this way is still possible, as I have said. Its success will depend on the linguistic work that is done now (dictionaries, grammars, texts) and then on the materials and training available to the teachers.

I have some confidence that these goals of continuation in an academic or school setting can be achieved, and do not believe that they are going to face much political or administrative opposition. On the contrary, the support for them seems to be increasing and probably will continue to do so provided the programs are good. (Why is it, in fact, that <u>after</u> they realize their children no longer speak the

language, parents and children finally regret abandoning their language? Then they want to do something about it, but not before. The key is to realize what they stand to lose before they lose it, not after.)

There is, in fact, a very important way in which Native language programs in the schools, even good ones, may actually be doing more harm than good for the future of Native languages in these communities where the children do not know the language or have only a partial command of it. Many parents who are not speaking their Native language to their children are aware, dimly or keenly, that they are responsible for the impending extinction of their language, and feel to some degree relieved of this uncomfortable burden of responsibility by the program in the school. I have heard many times, "The school can save our language," that the school instead of the parents can teach the language to the children. I repeat, this is simply not true. As I have already described, the school cannot transmit the language at all as a parent talking to his child can. Those who claim that the school can save the language and that therefore the parents do not have the responsibility to talk it to their children, are fooling themselves. Parents must not expect this, and the school must not claim it. Otherwise the program is doing more harm than good in a community where the parents can speak the language to their children and are not doing so, counting instead on the program.

Better to cancel the program if then the parents will instead speak more Native to their children.

So long as there are parents or even grandparents who can speak the language, this remains the most important thing to do. The community must actively support the school program. Short of having a radical school program where for hours on end, or even years on end, the use of any language but Native is discouraged, there are several things that a community can do if it is serious about keeping the language alive or reviving it in a sense that it will actually remain or become a first, natural, fluent language of the children. Ways must be found which will motivate and help parents to overcome the initial difficulties of speaking the Native language to their children where they have not recently been doing so. The community could establish day-care centers or nurseries staffed by Native-speaking instructors, who speak nothing but Native to the small children. Similarly, seasonal but completely Native-speaking situations can be established, such as summer camps. Satellite or new communities could be founded where one of the purposes would be to maintain the language. In those cases where the language is stronger in another area, for instance Inupiaq in Canada and Greenland, or Central Yupik in the Kuskokwim, children could visit those areas (but only if they go there to learn Native, and do not by their presence undermine the language in those areas).

With determination and commitment, still very much can be saved of the Native languages, even where children no longer speak it. To the extent that children still do know or understand some, the potential may be greater or the task easier. However, one must absolutely not expect the school itself to save the language, to bring about any true revival of it. It is up to the parents and the community.

3. Can bilingual education maintain a language?

We must now look carefully at bilingual education in those communities where the children do speak the Native language. Here the term "bilingual education" means--or is supposed truly to mean--education in two languages, Native and English. The communities involved are mainly certain Central Yupik villages, especially those in the Kuskokwim heartland and nearby, and the Siberian Yupik villages of Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island; to a lesser extent also Venetie and Arctic Village for Kutchin Athabaskan, the Upper Kobuk villages and Wainwright for Inupiaq, and Atka for Aleut; and perhaps to some extent English Bay for Alutiiq (Sugpiaq), Nikolai for Upper Kuskokwim, and Lime Village for Tanaina. How many of the schools of these communities, especially for Central and Siberian Yupik where Native is still truly the dominant language of the children, are there actually bilingual programs? Certainly not all. How many hours a day do the children in the lower grades

actually have instruction in the Native language? How many of these children past the third grade have any instruction in the Native language at all? These are hard questions, and I believe the answers to them would be shocking.

For one thing, still the majority of children who speak Alaska Native languages are in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. Of an estimated 4,000 children in Alaska who speak Native languages, an estimated 3,000 are in BIA schools. Therefore, by far the greatest number of Alaskan children who do speak a Native language are not protected by the Alaska State Bilingual Education law. Since 1972 there has been a State law that all Alaskan schools which have 15 or more (now 8 or more) students whose primary language is other than English shall have a teacher fluent in that language, and an instructional program and materials in that language. The BIA school system, however, is not subject to Alaska State laws. To whatever extent it complies with those laws, its compliance is essentially voluntary. The BIA, like any human institution, does not change quickly. There are still teachers, principals, and administrators in both BIA and regional schools, who are indifferent or hostile toward Alaska Native languages, who are still very much a part of the old assimilationist tradition which for generations has been punishing or discouraging Native children from speaking their ancestral language.

Where bilingual programs are lacking for children who

speak a Native language, the reason is sometimes given that the people themselves do not want the program, and "local" control" should decide such questions. There are many wrong things that can contribute to such a decision, however. Since use of their own language in school was denied them, the parents may not even be aware of the possibility, or they may not have a clear idea of bilingual education, having heard only that the Native language is an obstacle to their children's progress, and that this would be regression "back to the blanket," especially if the option is still presented to them in this light. Eighty years of brainwashing have taken their toll. Generations have already been brainwashed with the notion that Native languages are inferior, disadvantageous to the children in their lives and careers; and with the rubbish that (because educators themselves speak only one language, English) it is unhealthy to overload one's brain with more than one language, or that it is impossible to speak two languages well. Even if that is the sincere belief of the educators (because most are not bilingual themselves) it is absolute nonsense. Learning to speak more than one language is normal, healthy, and advantageous.

Even if the parents want bilingual education, however, they may have elected a school board consisting of the "better educated" members of the community, who therefore represent more the educators' own assimilationist views than those of the "less acculturated" parents; and/or many members of the Board may be under the influence of a local

administrator indifferent or hostile to bilingual education. Thus, under the name of "local control" children are denied the right the State Bilingual Education law was designed to protect, their right to a truly equal opportunity in education.

There are two crucially different ways of looking at bilingual education, one as a "transitional" program, the other as a "maintenance" program. Both programs begin by teaching in Native, including reading and writing, and introducing English as a second language, say one hour a day in the first year. This might grow to two hours of English the next year, and to three or four the next. The "maintenance" program is one in which English would never entirely replace the Native language in the curriculum, but where both would have a place side by side in the school, and in which the Native language would never occupy a smaller part of the day than, say, one hour up through all the upper grades. The Native language would thus be maintained in the school along with English, cultivated, developed, honored.

In a "transitional" program, bilingual education is transitional, going from the Native language over to English in such a way that English totally replaces the Native language. The Native language is only used as a means of acquiring sufficient school ability and knowledge of English, so that once enough English is learned, the Native language can be abandoned. The unfortunate fact is that almost everywhere the bilingual programs are transitional, not

maintenance, both in their intent and practice. ESEA Title VII, which funds bilingual education as a special program, is expressly for these transitional purposes. Thus practically no elementary schools have any Native language past about the third grade. A few high schools have Native language programs as a kind of cultural enrichment. But by and large, even in those schools where the children's primary language is Native, education goes on more in English, mostly in English, or even exclusively in English.

Actually, it is not the exact clock-hours spent using one language or another which is the most important thing about a bilingual program, it is above all the attitude toward the languages which the program teaches. On the surface the maintenance and transitional types of program appear the same, at the beginning. However, the maintenance program honors and values the Native language and teaches that though of course the children should learn English as a second language because of its undeniable practical value, still the Native language is also of great value and should be maintained by the community, that the local language of the community, for the people to speak to each other, will continue to be Native. English they will learn as a second language, for communication with the rest of the world, but their own world continues to exist, and the potential of their own language for growth and development is also to be realized--the best of both worlds.

Transitional bilingual education programs, on the other hand, implicitly but constantly teach the attitude that English is basically better than Native, that the Native language is of no value, that it has no future, and should be replaced by English, as the people assimilate into the "mainstream" of society, and lose their own identity--the modern "final solution" to the "Indian problem."

Where the purpose of a first-language bilingual program is still basically assimilationist, and not sincerely in the interest of the survival and development of Native language and culture, it should be no surprise that all too often Native-speaking bilingual teachers are not given adequate administrative and moral support, or adequate opportunity for getting the training they need, and lack good bilingual materials often even where such materials exist. Administrators can cause a bilingual program, even with sincere and courageous teachers, to wither and fail by not supporting it properly, thus "proving" their own belief that Native languages do not belong in education, or belong only temporarily until they can be replaced with English, and then dispensed with.

Moreover, the persons in authority, the administrators and certified teachers, are generally not bilingual, and are unable to speak the language of the children. There is no requirement that they should be able to do so. On the other hand, bilingual teachers are often prevented from achieving

positions of authority by regulations prohibiting certified teachers from working as bilingual teachers. The bilingual teachers can only be subordinate aides, not the actual authority figure in the classroom. (The children certainly get the message.) If they become certified teachers, they are no longer qualified, or are "overqualified", for the position of bilingual teacher, and may then teach only in the conventional English-only way.

While the bilingual education that has developed in Alaska since 1970 is certainly a vast improvement over the unrelieved repression of Native languages before (1900-1970), we must not fool ourselves into thinking that in its present state bilingual education could yet effectively counteract the destructive influence on Native languages of the educational system as it still is. It is only a beginning. To the extent that teaching in Native languages is used in all schools where children speak the language, and at least to a significant extent, say one hour a day, in all grades where the children speak the language, including the upper grades; to the extent that the teachers are well trained, well supported, and have adequate materials; to the extent that the Native language is cultivated and truly honored in the school; only then will the school system strengthen instead of weaken the status of Native languages in Alaska. As things are now, although the destruction in the schools may be slowed down somewhat, I believe the

schools have by no means stopped undermining the future of Alaska Native languages even in those few areas where the children still speak the language. Thus, the danger is still very great that not just most but all the Alaska Native languages will die during the coming century.

4. Television and radio: Menace or opportunity?

So far I have discussed only the educational system and its effects on the future of Alaska Native languages. However, as threatening as the school situation still is, an even graver threat to the survival of Alaska Native languages is now upon us. This is the inevitable and rapid spread of English-language radio and especially television to every village and home. The cultural and linguistic battleground is now extending from the classroom into the living room. Within a few short years, practically every Native-speaking home will have a color television set receiving several channels of the usual commercial and educational programming in English to flood the home for several hours a day. The battle of the living room has begun with this invasion of what I call "cultural nerve gas"--insidious, painless, and fatal. The fate even of Siberian and Central Yupik could be sealed in a decade of this.

Yet there is great hope and opportunity here too, for television and radio can be much more quickly adapted to the service of Native languages than can an educational system. For one thing, educational systems depend heavily on the written word. Converting them to the service of Native

languages requires the development of an alphabet, development of a literature, training of teachers and writers, and requires the pupils and eventually the whole community to learn to read and write in the Native language. Compared to the time it takes to learn to read and write, for instance, it takes very little time and training to learn to speak one's own language into a microphone, and no time or training at all to learn to enjoy hearing a broadcast in it.

There is an important lesson in the way Citizens' Band radio has been adapted widely to the service of Native language and culture. People learn immediately to communicate with each other over CB radio in their own language, as they use it for their own purposes, for example in coordinating their movements in hunting and fishing. This shows how readily convertible electronic communications are to the service instead of the destruction of Native language and culture--but that has already been demonstrated for some time with the telephone and tape recorder. Even more important, the use of these and CB radio shows what happens when a communication system is truly controlled by its users.

So far, most radio and television in rural Alaska is not locally controlled at all. The systems right now being installed, especially television, are imposed from outside the Native language communities, as extensions of huge statewide and nationwide networks. The programs will be rained down from the heavens, for the people to accept as passively and unquestioningly as the weather, controlled by the gods in

Juneau or California. The systems are now being set up in this way with no real local input, control, or content. Instead of further losing control of their own cultural environment and fate, the people must immediately become actively involved in determining the kind of radio and television they will have. At the very least they must provide a supplement or alternative to the outside-controlled network programming, in the form of locally controlled systems that can serve the needs of the language communities.

The areas I am primarily concerned with here are those where Native languages are still spoken or at least understood by the children, so that they may survive if enough is done. The main instances are Central Yup'ik, Siberian Yupik on St. Lawrence Island, and certain Inupiaq locations. For Central Yup'ik there would have to be a network involving many villages, with broadcasting centers at Bethel, Dillingham, and perhaps also elsewhere. Local reporters or TV cameramen could tape local subjects and events to broadcast directly, or send the tapes to broadcast centers, and the centers could also produce a variety of programs. St. Lawrence Island would need mainly a system in which Gambell and Savoonga would broadcast to each other and themselves (and conceivably to what is left of their relatives in Siberia). Inupiaq would need a system something like that for Central Yup'ik but also extensive exchange of programs with Canada and Greenland. Other language areas with smaller numbers of speakers should have local

stations broadcasting in the language, perhaps especially 10-watt radio stations, which are relatively easy to set up. The importance of radio should not be underestimated: it is the sound and not the picture which carries the language; radio programming is cheaper and easier to produce; it is also easier to take in, since one can more easily do other things while listening to radio than while watching television. People speaking Native languages should learn to operate television cameras, local television and radio stations, and to produce programming in Native languages, for at least some significant part of the day, as an alternative to the nation-wide network programs.

The problem is not that the nationwide programs are bad. It does not even matter much whether they are The Incredible Hulk or Masterpiece Theatre, Hee Haw or Sesame Street. The problem is that they are not Native. However, by Native I do not mean Native-language soundtrack or voice-over channels added to network programs, producing for example an Eskimo-speaking Archie Bunker (though that might be interesting). I also do not mean Native-language programs which are essentially imitations of network programs. That would be too expensive and in the end self-defeating. What is needed is programming conceived by and about the people themselves. I can only list here a few things which I might offhand imagine: radio or television broadcasts reporting a potlatch, or featuring a storyteller, a dance, a basketball game, beaching or even hunting a whale, a new baby, local community news, school

news, weather reports, bush radio messages, talk shows, personalities, Native affairs and politics. None of these are too expensive or beyond the ability of community people to learn quickly to produce.

Innovative and imaginative programming of this kind, and also appropriate local systems serving the language area, are not prohibitively expensive; they might cost much less than what is routinely spent on highway construction, for example, or on runway extensions or sports facilities. Moreover, a Native organization with a good proposal writer should stand an excellent chance in competing for grant money from funding agencies for innovative systems and programming of this type, for and by the Native language community.

There is another important way in which radio and television are more readily convertible to the service of the languages (aside from using the electronic rather than the written word): these media are a system with far fewer cultural strings attached than education has. Educators traditionally come with training in the English language and beliefs in Outside American culture, which they have come to spread. Radio and television, however, are at least partly available as empty systems, and at least many of those who bring them to the villages would in fact wish to see the system used for the local language and culture. The ideological battle here will be far less difficult, but the stakes are just as great.

I believe it is essential to understand and act on this threat--or opportunity--soon, vigorously, and imaginatively. Otherwise, the potential these media have for strengthening Alaskan cultures and languages will be lost in their destruction. Good bilingual education alone will not be sufficient to counteract the effect of English-only radio and television. The final tragedy is unnecessary and can still be prevented, but only by understanding, determination, and courageous effort. Just as linguists, educational administrators, teachers, local school boards, and parents must work together to convert the schools from the destruction to the strengthening of Native languages, so also imaginative and determined media personnel and villagers must work together to take active control and convert radio and television to the service of the Native heritage.

Awareness of self and control of self are as important for a culture as for an individual. A small nation lacking perspective of its cultural position and what it stands to lose will lose its culture. In the same way, a larger nation has a similar responsibility. If it cannot control its own growth ("you can't stop progress"), if it cannot prevent itself from destroying everything in its path, then it is a cancer which will end up destroying itself by destroying the life upon which it feeds.

Cultural survival or cultural suicide: A community responsibility

Finally, we must understand and remember that the only way a living language is transmitted from one generation to the next is by parents speaking that language to their children. A school and even a television set which inundates the children with another language, say English, do not themselves alone prevent the children from becoming bilingual. Children will still be able to speak their parents' native language, provided the parents speak that language to them, fully realizing that that is the only way the children will learn it. The amount of time the children are involved with the English-speaking school or television will of course detract from that spent with the Native language, but the ability to speak more than one language well is in fact very common throughout the world; it is perfectly normal, healthy, and advantageous. The most destructive effects of the school and media are in the attitudes they impose on both parents and children. They cannot take the knowledge of the Native language away, but through generations of punishment and brainwashing in English-only schools, and now more swiftly through the stunning and stupefying power of television, they can destroy or paralyze the parents' will to transmit the Native language and the children's will to learn it, unless the language is also respected, used, cultivated, and celebrated in them. With adequate Native-language programs in the schools and on television and radio, the basic

responsibility for the surv.val of Native languages is more clearly recognized for what it is and has always been: that of parents to speak their language to their children. Not bilingual education, not even bilingual television can themselves keep Alaskan languages alive; only parents speaking the languages to their children can do that, as has always been the way.

If Alaska Native languages die I frankly do not know what future there is for Alaska Native cultures. Language is in my view the most essential part of a culture. I do not know to what extent a culture, an identity, a nation, can survive without its own language. Language suicide may be cultural suicide.

I realize that much of what I have written in this series is not pleasant or easy to face. However, I consider it my responsibility and the responsibility of the Alaska Native Language Center to do what we can to preserve and promote Alaska Native languages as a heritage of Alaskans for the future of Alaska. I have tried to be frank about what I see, even if some people are offended or displeased. I would not want it said that we sat and fiddled while we saw Rome burning, and would not want it said that we failed to warn people of the dangers and losses they must face in the future of Alaska Native languages. At the same time, I have tried to include positive suggestions for what I myself see might be done to save what can be saved for the future. I hope this is more the beginning than the end.

APPENDIX II:

THE ESKIMO LANGUAGES IN ALASKA, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

This will be a very general introduction to the history and the present-day status of these languages. Their present-day status is, as we shall see, very much a result of the effects of government policies.

Alaskan Languages

There are two major language families in Alaska, the Eskimo-Aleut and the Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, and two genetically isolated languages, Haida and Tsimshian, both recent immigrations to Alaska (18th and 19th century). Alaska may be called the "cradle of civilization" of two great modern language families, the close-knit Eskimo, and the somewhat more diverse Athabaskan. Eskimo may have originated somewhere in "Beringia," and Athabaskan more towards the Canadian border, in the interior. The contact between Athabaskan and Eskimo is probably fairly recent, since e.g. there are to my knowledge no Athabaskan words in Greenlandic, nor any Eskimo words in Navajo, and there are no important diffusions between the two groups even in the modern Alaskan border languages, except for obvious recent loanwords. We have no idea what languages were until recently in between the two families. They may of course very probably have included extinct languages related to

Athabaskan and/or to Eskimo. At any rate, the most important thing to keep in mind for the present day is that both Athabaskan and Eskimo are actually very successful language families, now more than ever, with excellent chances for indefinite survival. This remarkable fact, however, is mainly because they have both spread well beyond Alaska, through Canada, where they both continue to flourish, and far beyond Canada, where they have flourished in a rather spectacular way in the 20th century, a century which has proven fatal to many Native American languages. There are now many more Athabaskans (and Athabaskan speakers) than ever before, but 150,000 of the 180,000 speakers are Navajos. There are now also many more Eskimos (and Eskimo speakers) than ever before in history, over 90,000, but over half of the Eskimo speakers (42,000 of 78,000) are Greenlanders. Within the Inuit (non-Yupik) branch, of ca. 66,000 speakers, 42,000 (two-thirds) are Greenlanders, ca. 17,000 are Canadian, and at most 6,000 are Alaska, the largest number of non-Inuit-speaking Inuit being Alaskan. These are important figures and the reasons for them are certainly worth understanding.

By far the greatest linguistic diversity in Eskimo is to be found in Western Alaska. There is, for one thing, the well known sharp division between Yupik and what we in Alaska usually call Inupiaq. The famous border is at Unalakleet on Norton Sound, where there is certainly not any significant geographical barrier. The explanation seems to me doubtless that at one time there was something more like a continuum of Eskimo dialects along Alaska's western shores, and that two of these

dialects, Proto-Yupik and Proto-Inuit, began to spread, eliminated all the intermediate dialects, and met at Unalakleet (or rather on the Seward Peninsula, the southern shore of which was Yupik into the 19th century, and where earlier still some form of Yupik intermediate between Alaskan and Siberian might well have been spoken).

Yupik itself is rather more diverse than many people realize. The difference between Siberian and Alaskan Yupik is too great to permit ready mutual intelligibility, as is attested by many speakers who have tried it, and by a score of 65% for cognates on the basic 100-word list. Even within Alaskan Yupik we must recognize two different languages if we use the criterion of ready mutual intelligibility, Central Alaskan Yupik and Sugpiaq or Alutiiq. We thus have three Yupik languages in Alaska: Alutiiq, Central (Alaskan) Yupik, and, on St. Lawrence Island, Siberian Yupik. I shall deal with each of these languages individually, and with Alaskan Inuit or Inupiaq, after first giving a very brief history of government policies which have affected them.

Government Policies

By 'government' I refer, of course, to European powers in Alaska, not Native rule (at least not yet!). The first of these was Russian, which actively affected Alaska from the invasion of Attu in 1745 until 1867, when Alaska became a territory of the United States. The Eskimo peoples were spared intense contact with the Russians during the first and worst

forty years of their dominion over Alaska, a period of barbaric exploitation, pillage, and murder. (I must note here how sharp a distinction that bears with the Danish dominion over Greenland during the same period.) The Russians' victims were not Eskimos, but Aleuts, whose population was literally decimated. This was, however, not specifically by Russian government policy, but rather by commercial expansionism without government control. The Russian Alaskan venture became better organized in the 1780s with the establishment of the Russian America Company under Shelekov at Kodiak, where the first intense long-term Russian-Eskimo contact took place. The Russians' second forty years were more a period of enslavement than of massacre, as the Russians now used Aleuts (Aleutians and Alutiiqs) to do their fur-hunting for them, an activity which they expanded across the whole North Pacific as far as California and as far as the Kurile Islands.

The first Russian priests or missionaries arrived in Alaska, on Kodiak, in 1794. Thus began the first Russian efforts to educate and convert Alaskans to Russian culture and religion. By far the greatest work was that of the priest Ivan Veniaminov (later Metropolit of the entire Russian Church, and now St. Innokenty), a man of great energy, talent, and humanity. He spent ten years, 1824-1834, in the Aleutians. Working with the Aleut Ivan Pan'kov, he had already by 1826 produced a manuscript catechism in Aleut, and had printed the first book in Aleut in 1834. This was in a remarkably good orthography, distinguishing nicely k from q, g from r, gg from rr, for example.

The third forty years of Russian rule in Alaska, 1824-1867, began with the arrival of Veniaminov. For the Native peoples of Alaska, and especially for their languages, this period was clearly a rather good one. The first books were printed in the other "Aleut" language (Kodiak) in 1847-48, about which more later. The point here is that the Russian policy toward indigenous languages was basically then as it is today, benign or favorable, or at least utilitarian, favoring the creation of an alphabet and the establishment of literacy in an effort to educate, whether for Christianity or for Communism. As we shall see, this policy is in sharp contrast with the American. The Russians were worse for the people than for their languages, it might be said, whereas the Americans were worse for the languages than for the people, if that is possible. Whatever the negative effect the Russians had on the Alaskans, they did not attempt to exterminate their languages, but rather even strengthened their status by providing the beginnings of a literary tradition, especially in the case of the two "Aleut" languages (Aleutian and Alutiiq), and to a lesser extent Central Yupik and Tlingit Indian.

During the first twenty years of the American period, 1867-1887, there was very little cultural change for Native Alaskans. The Russian Church remained the only cultural or educational institution in Alaska until about 1890, when the Jesuits arrived in the Yukon Delta area, Moravians in the Kuskokwim Delta, and various other Protestant churches began their work on St. Lawrence Island, the Inupiaq area (Seward

Peninsula and the North) and in the interior. The Jesuits and Moravians soon began printing materials in Central Yupik. This competition even stimulated the hitherto complacent Russian Church to do likewise (and also to print more Aleut materials). In many parts of Alaska the period 1880-1910 was an especially favorable one for the languages themselves, with these reprintings and new books in Aleut, Central Yupik, and also several Indian languages. During the same period, however, the Commissioner of Education for the territory was the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson, who shaped the first American educational system in the territory. He also succeeded, until 1908, in getting federal support for the mission schools, in spite of the division between church and state, on the grounds that the only teachers who could be recruited were missionaries. Jackson was an energetic and talented man. However, his anti-Native language policy was quite clear.

> The Board of Home Missions has informed us that government contracts for educating Indian pupils provide for the ordinary branches of an English education to be taught, and that no books in any Indian language shall be used, or instruction given in that language to Indian pupils. The letter states that this rule will be strictly enforced in all government Indian schools. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs urges, and very forcibly too, that instruction in their vernacular is not only of no use to them but is detrimental to their speedy education and civilization. It is now two years and more since the use of the Indian dialects were first prohibited in the training school here. All instruction is given in English. Pupils are required to speak and write English exclusively; and the results are tenfold more satisfactory than when they were permitted to converse in unknown tongues.*

*Jackson in North Star, Sitka, 1888. Note also the earlier statement by S. Hall Young, quoted here, p.23.

It took until about 1910 for this policy to become generally enforced, since strong starts had been made with Native language in Church education in several places, especially the Russian Church schools in Aleut and Central Yupik, and the Catholic and Moravian church schools in Central Yupik. Much less, or no Native language writing was done in the Protestant church schools, more under Jackson's influence (this included the whole Inupiaq area). By 1910, virtually all Native language education and literacy development in Alaska had ceased. The last Aleut church school teaching Aleut literacy closed in 1912. In the next fifty years there was a nearly complete ban on Native language education, and Jackson's policy of extreme suppression remained in full force. This was not simply Jackson's policy, of course, but rather this was the national American social philosophy of the time, the ideal of the "melting pot", of assimilationism, assimilation of immigrant peoples and "inferior races" (including indigenous races) to the vigorous and dominant white Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, which Sheldon Jackson and his kind so perfectly represented in Alaska. This period was to last until the effects of the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, the resurgence of ethnicity, and the decline of the "melting pot" philosophy which finally reached Alaska by about 1970.

During the 1960s missionaries, now the Summer Institute of Linguistics or Wycliffe Bible Translators, began creating new orthographies for several Alaskan languages, and also

sustained scientific work began at the University of Alaska. It must be remembered that at no time were there ever any official government policies or legislative acts concerning Native languages, or concerning any languages in America, including even English. It was simply assumed, unofficially but firmly, that this nation was to be English-speaking, and the more exclusively so, the better. However, our own personal attempts from the University of Alaska during the 1960s to influence the educational systems in Alaska which controlled most Native education (State-Operated Schools and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs schools) to permit the use of Native language in school programs, including literacy, were met with firm refusal. "It would undermine the authority of the teacher," said the Alaska Commissioner of Education in 1968. The effects of the social changes taking place elsewhere in the United States during the 1960s were soon to be felt in Alaska, however. One of these was the passage of the national Bilingual Education Act of 1967, which for the first time explicitly permitted (but did not require) education in the children's language where not English. In the fall of 1970, my colleague Irene Reed persuaded the Bureau of Indian Affairs and State-Operated Schools to "experiment" with use of Central Yupik in four schools. We began to print materials in the new orthography and to train Yupik-speaking teachers. This "bilingual" program, the first in Alaska in sixty years, was such an immediate and spectacular success that we were soon able to persuade the Alaska State Legislature to enact a law requiring the schools to provide a

teacher who could speak the children's language and written materials and a literacy program in their language. This law was passed on June 9, 1972; at the same time the legislature established the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska to study and document all Alaskan Native languages, to develop literatures in these, and to train Native teachers for them. The 1970s have thus been a period of dramatic renaissance, in a sense, for many Alaskan languages, of an enormous increase in the new literatures begun in the 1960s, and of great expansion in scientific work and documentation of all Alaskan languages.

However, the long dark age, 1910 to 1970, of linguistic suppression in the schools had meanwhile done irreparable harm to the life of most of Alaska's twenty Native languages. Children were slapped, beaten, ridiculed, punished for speaking their own languages in school. This treatment continued through even the 1960s, wherever there were children who still spoke an Alaskan language, and their parents were advised to speak English to them, not to speak their traditional language which they were told (and began to believe) only held them and their children back from "progress." The effect of this policy has been devastating. Not one child now knows how to speak any Native language in Southeastern Alaska. The youngest Haida and Tsimshian speakers are in their forties, the youngest Tlingit speakers are in their twenties or thirties; Eyak is nearly extinct today (only three speakers alive); and at least nine of Alaska's eleven Athabaskan languages are almost certainly

doomed to extinction (six with no speakers under twenty years of age, two with none under ten, two with a very few bilingual children, and only one, Kutchin, with communities in which the children still nowadays converse mainly in Athabaskan: Venetie and Arctic Village).

The Aleut language is now spoken by young children only at Atka. Alutiiq is spoken by some young children only at English Bay. Both these languages are thus reduced to one single spark of life for a future as a spoken language--perhaps. The rest of the Eskimo languages have survived this tragedy in somewhat better condition. I shall now consider each of the Eskimo languages in Alaska individually. (As for Aleut, I have included that in these general considerations, but shall restrict the rest of this presentation to Eskimo, especially as the situation of Aleut has just been presented excellently by Professor Bergsland.)

Alutiiq

I shall deal first with the Alaskan branch of Yupik, and with the Sugpiaq or Alutiiq branch of that. Alutiiq is the people's own name for themselves, and the most acceptable modern term to them. (They have also been called Suk, Pacific Gulf Yupik, etc.) The term Sugpiaq, probably the best academically, is obsolete in their own usage for themselves. The people identify themselves as Aleuts, along with the Aleutian Aleuts, and not as Eskimos. Although the language shades toward Central Yupik on the Alaska Peninsula, it is also a

fairly well defined unit, with fair mutual intelligibility between the extremes of Prince William Sound and the Alaska Peninsula, with several important unifying traits distinguishing it from Central Yupik. There is a fairly strong dialectal division between the East (Chugach; Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula) and the West (Koniag; Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula).

Their population, about 10,000 before European contact, suffered a drastic decline (though not so drastic as Aleutian Aleut) to about 3,000, mostly during the period of enslavement, ca. 1785-1825. Soon after the beginning of Aleutian Aleut literature, and of course also under the influence of Veniaminov (who himself published a brief grammatical sketch of Alutiiq in 1846), the priest Elias Tyzhnov working with the Kodiak Islanders Gerasim Zyrianov and Kosma Uchilishchev, finished in 1845 and printed in 1847-48 a primer, catechism, and Gospel of Matthew, the first books in an Alaskan Eskimo language. These were again in a remarkably good orthography for their time, basically adequate, except for the prosody (word lengths), an especially complex matter in Alutiiq. (The name Alutiiq [aluˈtíq] is itself a good illustration of this point. Phonetically the *u* is longer than the *ii*, but the non-gemination of the *l* indicates that the *u* is underlyingly short and the higher pitch of the *ii* that that is long; the *u* is lengthened from being in an automatically accented open syllable and the *ii* is shortened from being in a closed syllable.)

For reasons that are not very clear, perhaps the more

intense American contact, Russian Church literature did not continue to develop here as it did in Aleutian Aleut and Central Yupik, for which new books were printed during the period 1890-1910. Thus there was absolutely nothing printed in Alutiiq for the 124 years between 1848 and 1972! This was in fact a period of complete silence with virtually no documentation even, the first exceptions being the work of the two late Danish scholars Kaj Birket-Smith (on Chugach in 1933) and L. L. Hammerich (on Kodiak in 1953). Finally in 1972 the Alaska Native Language Center printed the first new materials in Alutiiq. These were the work of Derenty Tabios and the linguist Jeff Leer, who made the first adequate analysis of the prosody.

In spite of neglect and repression, children continued to learn this language through the period of the establishment of American canneries and Gold Rush towns (Seward, Valdez, Cordova, Anchorage), 1890 to 1913, through the decline of the literary tradition and the establishment of English-only American schools. The U. S. Naval Base on Kodiak, built in 1939, was probably the final blow. Most Alutiiqs over forty can speak the language, but the only place where young children can still do so is tiny English Bay, population 60. Even here English is now beginning to predominate. Bilingual education efforts since 1972 have concentrated at English Bay, but the future of Alutiiq as a spoken language is at best extremely precarious.

New language materials, including preliminary dictionaries, have been printed for the Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula dialects

as well as the Kenai Peninsula. Leer is now compiling a major combined dictionary for all dialects.

Central Alaskan Yupik

The other branch of Alaskan Yupik, Central Alaskan Yupik, has now by far the largest number of speakers of all Alaskan languages. Unlike the Aleutian population, most cruelly affected during the first forty years of Russian domination, the Central Yupiks were little affected by the Russians until the third and most benign forty years of their domination. The Central Yupik population has in fact risen from a pre-contact estimated 10,000 to perhaps 16,000 today.

The Central Yupik language is a rather cohesive and well defined unit. Internal dialect differences are not sharp, the main aberrances being Nunivak and Hooper Bay-Chevak. Even with these, mutual intelligibility throughout the Central Yupik area is easy. Nunivak dialect, called Čux by Hammerich (along with Suk for Alutiiq) thus by no means deserved the status of a separate language as does Alutiiq.

For our purposes Central Yupik can be divided into basically three areas: Bristol Bay, the Kuskokwim, and the Yukon. In the 1890s the Jesuits moved into the Yukon, the Moravians moved into the Kuskokwim, and the Russian Orthodox Church renewed its efforts in Bristol Bay, all three churches beginning to print religious materials in the language. Each church has more or less retained its domination, but the Russian Church in Bristol Bay the most weakly, where also

American settlement and contact was the most intense. The Moravian Kuskokwim and Catholic Yukon remained under less anglicizing pressure for a while. These two churches had an invonsistent or ambivalent policy toward Yupik and continued sporadic religious publication in them even during the period of repression 1910-1960, mainly because with a dense and increasing population, almost entirely Yupik, the Yupik language remained so strong that the missionaries at least admitted it was necessary to use the language. Some of the missionaries even liked the language. After World War II, however, with the growth of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in the Yupik area and reassertion of assimilationist policy under the Eisenhower regime, the church, especially the Catholic in the Yukon, gratefully began to abandon Yupik as the schools forced an English-only policy upon the children. As a result, many young children in many Yukon villages no longer speak Central Yupik, and in most Bristol Bay villages no children speak it. But in most Kuskokwim villages most or all children still speak Yupik. Yupik is thus gravely weakened except in the major Kuskokwim heartland. Since the beginning of the bilingual education programs in four schools in 1970, now expanded to most schools where the children speak Yupik, the chances for survival of the language, at least in this Kuskokwim heartland, have been greatly improved. Still, there is very little Yupik language in education beyond the third grade, and bringing the schools into compliance with state and federal bilingual education regulations is a slow process. The Bureau of

Indian Affairs' cooperation is basically voluntary, since it is apparently technically exempt from both state and federal educational regulations.

Over 200 elementary school books have by now been published in Central Yupik, and perhaps 100 Yupik teachers trained. A major scientific and pedagogical grammar of the language was recently published by the Alaska Native Language Center and a major comprehensive dictionary of it by Steven Jacobson will soon be published.

Siberian Yupik

The Siberian branch of Yupik is spoken by perhaps 2,000 people, about half of whom are in Soviet Siberia and half in Alaska, on St. Lawrence Island. Here, ironically, Czarist Russian domination was too late and weak to be of significance. In fact, the trade vocabulary on both sides is English, from American whalers and traders, not Russian. (E.g. while in Alaskan Yupik the word for 'butter' is maasslaq from Russian máslo, in Siberian Yupik, both on St. Lawrence Island and in Soviet Siberia, the word is bara.) I shall not here take any time to describe the Eskimo language situation in the USSR. I have studied it with interest; it is such an interesting subject that in fact a whole lecture should be devoted to it. Here I shall confine my remarks to St. Lawrence Island.

That island is an old and important center of Eskimo culture. Until 1878 it sustained a population of perhaps 3,000 Eskimos in several villages, but that winter a plague

and famine killed most of the population, and only one village, Sivuqaq or Gambell, remained. A Presbyterian mission school was built there in 1894 by V. C. Gambell. Since then there has been a slow but steady growth in population, to over 800, now in two villages. The Presbyterian school here evidently for some reason did not follow Jackson's policy very closely. In 1910 there was even one small religious booklet printed in the language, but none after that, in keeping with the general silence. St. Lawrence Islanders and their Siberian relatives continued visiting each other rather freely even after the consolidation of Soviet power in Chukotka in the 1920s. The Islanders doubtless noted that by 1932 already their Soviet relatives were using and reading and writing their language in the schools, while they themselves were not. The visits were completely stopped in 1948. In the 1960s a new missionary alphabet was devised by a Wycliffe Bible translator, and in 1971 this was revised to its present form at the University of Alaska. In 1972 the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, which runs both Island elementary schools, was persuaded to permit the use of the language in them, but still remains somewhat unsupportive of the Yupik language program beyond the first two or three grades. Nevertheless, perhaps because of the geographical isolation of the Island and the strength of its culture, St. Lawrence Island children still all speak Siberian Yupik. Though its population is not large, Siberian Yupik thus has an excellent chance of survival, the only Alaskan language which is still being learned by all the children.

Very important, however, for the future of Siberian Yupik on both the Alaskan and Soviet sides, will be the reopening of communication between the two halves of this single small linguistic community, completely cut off since 1948. It would be enormously enriching to both sides if they could renew their ties, as a natural cultural bridge between the two political hemispheres. International communication may in the end play a decisive role in the future of Siberian Yupik. In considering also the future of the Inuit language in Alaska, I shall return to this same point, one I feel to be of great and especially obvious importance at a meeting such as this one.

Inupiaq

The Alaskan Inuit, or Inupiaqs, were little affected by the Russian presence in Alaska. Their population, perhaps 6,000 at contact, has since about doubled. The language within Alaska is mutually intelligible even at the extremes, though with some difficulty, as Alaska is the western end of the Inuit dialect continuum, and is itself rather deeply differentiated dialectally. We recognize four main dialect areas, the North Slope, the Malemiut, the Qawiaraq, and the Wales. Wales dialect is the most distinctive of all, with consonant weakening, e.g. apun > avun, siku > sigu, iqaluk > iğaluk. The present populations of these dialect areas are Qawiaraq 1,600, Wales 1,100, Malemiut 4,000, North Slope 3,800. Qawiaraq and Wales have increased somewhat since contact, Malemiut increased greatly, and North Slope declined somewhat. The number of

speakers is a different matter, however: about 2,500 for the North Slope (of 3,800, including some children), but at most 500 for Wales (of 1,100, including at best very few children), and at most 500 for Qawiaraq (of 1,600, including no children). The two Seward Peninsula dialects have suffered the worst, obviously. The youngest speakers in the area are in their teens and are from the outlying islands, King Island and Diomede, both Wales dialect. The youngest speakers of Qawiaraq must be in their thirties or forties. Qawiaraq will probably be extinct in fifty years, and Wales perhaps a generation later. In the Malemiut area small children can speak the language only in the Upper Kobuk villages of Shungnak, Ambler, and Kobuk. In the North Slope, many children still speak the language especially at Wainwright, Nuiqsut, and perhaps Anaktuvuk Pass (Helge Ingstad's "stone-age" people of the 1950s may already have been speaking English to their children!); and a minority of the children at the important center of Barrow; but in the other North Slope villages, few or no children can speak Inupiaq. The future of the Alaskan Inuit language is thus gravely threatened. The causes of this situation are clear enough. The first schools in the area were Protestant missions of various denominations, which enforced as best they could Sheldon Jackson's English-only language policy. This policy was enforced even more effectively by the government schools which replaced the missions. The Nome Gold Rush and American settlement about 1900 particularly devastated the Seward Peninsula dialects, above all the

Qawiaraq. The long siege against the language in the schools finally began to take its toll even in the Malemiut and North Slope areas, as in the 1950s and 1960s many parents there too began speaking English and not Inupiaq to their children.

During the period 1890 to 1940 there were no attempts of lasting significance to establish an orthography and a literature for the Alaskan Inuit. The originator of Inupiaq literature was Roy Ahmaogak of Wainwright (1898-1967). A church translator in the 1920s and already thinking about writing Inupiaq, Ahmaogak experimented with written Bible translation in the 1930s. In 1946 he was finally able to realize his goal satisfactorily, working with the Wycliffe Bible Translators linguist Eugene Nida in Oklahoma. The Ahmaogak-Nida orthography is of high scientific quality. (Certain practical problems with it are probably well known to many of you, and will figure in the paper about to be presented by my colleague Edna MacLean.) Ahmaogak's great achievement of 1946 came in a cold, dark season indeed for Alaskan languages. Nevertheless, through the church literacy began slowly to spread in Barrow, and by the end of the 1950s it was beginning to take root at Noorvik in the Malemiut area as well, all this in spite of, not with the help of, the schools. The movement gained power and support with the arrival of Wycliffe Bible Translators in the 1960s, and Bible translations, hymnals, and even some secular materials were published. Inupiaq literature and literacy were thus very well prepared to expand as soon as state support came in 1972 with bilingual education. However,

during this same preparatory period, 1946-1972, the ban against the language in the schools had continued in full force, so that by the time the language was finally permitted in the schools, in very many villages it was too late; the children no longer spoke the language.

Since 1972 several hundred elementary texts have been produced for the schools, a considerable amount of traditional text has been published, and very significant scientific work has been done on the grammar, especially the lexicon. A major new dictionary will shortly be published by the Alaska Native Language Center, under the editorship of Edna MacLean.

The great question facing Alaskan Inuit now is the very survival of the spoken language. Although it is dying fast, there are several communities where the language is still viable, spoken by many of the children, including even Barrow. I personally believe that as an Inuit community isolated from the much larger and more powerful Inuit world of Canada and Greenland, the Alaskan Inuit language probably cannot survive. At this time the average young person in Barrow probably still learns in school more about Greece than about Greenland; he may not even know that Greenland exists. If his knowledge about the Inuit world is broadened, if natural communication and cultural exchange do not remain blocked for him, if he is able to experience the potential cultural strength of an international Inuit world, Alaskan Inuit may find the support it needs to survive, to stop withering in its isolation before the onslaught of acculturative forces such as the school, radio,

television, cinema, and White population pressure. Differences between the United States, Canada, and Denmark are not of an ideological or political nature to prevent this international communication. Let us hope that these problems are of a technical nature that can be overcome soon. There is much at stake in this for the Inuit of Alaska and for the whole Eskimo world.

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