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Language Ideologies and Orthographies: Developing a Writing System for Than Ówîngeh

Evan Ashworth

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This dissertation represents the culmination of nearly a decade’s work—in the classroom through graduate coursework and through fieldwork at Than Ówîngeh. Although I am the sole author of this work, its completion was only made possible with the help of a great many individuals, a few of whom I wish to recognize here.

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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND ORTHOGRAPHIES: 
DEVELOPING A WRITING SYSTEM FOR THAN ÒWÎNGEH

by

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ABSTRACT

The use of writing to represent the heritage language represents a contentious issue for many members of Puebloan societies in the American Southwest. Many community members resist the use of writing for this purpose on the grounds that it acts as a form of colonialism, while others accept the use of writing in the heritage language because it is seen as valorizing the heritage language itself. This study seeks to address three research questions: 1) What factors motivate either a resistance to or acceptance of the use of writing to represent a heritage language? 2) If the use of writing is accepted or even promoted, what factors motivate the decision to use one writing system (e.g., alphabet, syllabary) over another? and 3) What factors motivate the decision to employ certain sound-symbol correspondences within that system? Ultimately, the factors that motivate a general resistance to the use of writing will be shown to involve the view of writing as a centrifugal, or disunifying, force, whereas the factors that motivate a general acceptance of the use of writing will be shown to involve the view of writing as a centripetal, or unifying, force. Further, by using language ideologies (i.e., syncretism, variationism, utilitarianism) as a heuristic, the decisions made regarding the development
of the Than Ówíngeh orthography will be shown to support the principles of learnability, transparency, and acceptability.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION*

The use of writing for speakers of indigenous languages represents one of the most contentious issues in language revitalization programs. Many language activists, community members, and researchers have emphasized the importance of developing orthographies for endangered languages, not only for the purposes of documentation and preservation but as a means of valorizing the languages themselves. Others reject such orthographies because they are seen as opposing traditional social and cultural values and act as a form of colonialism. Still others view the introduction of orthographies as inhibiting the revitalization and language learning process. In addition, some may claim that writing down a language that has an oral tradition allows outsiders to appropriate that language for themselves, leaving the community with a perceived lack of authority over its heritage language.

Most scholarly works are read exclusively by those in academia. After all, most journal articles, anthologies, theses, and dissertations are written with academics in mind as the primary audience. However, academic writing often poses a problem for readers: almost as soon as one’s eyes meet the page, the reader begins trudging through highly abstract concepts clothed in technical jargon, which serve either to reaffirm the reader’s inclusion in this audience or to assert their exclusion from it. This is to say nothing of the often intimidating length of these works; those inside the discipline might revel in the tome, but those outside the discipline often consider reading such works an exercise in futility. Although the linguistic and anthropological communities represent the primary

*This study has IRB Determination of Exempt Status, Protocol # 10-569
audience for this study, I hope to take the ideas discussed here and expand upon them in a more widely accessible text to prompt a conversation among community members, language activists, and others who possess no formal linguistic or anthropological training but who nonetheless have a vested interest in the preservation of indigenous languages. That is, ultimately, I believe that the motivated community member engaged in grassroots language revitalization efforts stands to gain just as much, if not more, from this study as do academics. After all, languages are not the property of linguists and anthropologists; they belong to the people who speak them.

I want to begin by clarifying my use of important terms that will appear in this work. Because the concept of writing is so deeply engrained in Western culture, the terms applied to its practice often are used inconsistently or incorrectly. Among the most commonly misunderstood terms are writing system, script, and orthography, which often are used interchangeably in scholarly literature but which I will treat as distinct (each of these will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6).

First, I will use the term writing system “… to differentiate systems depicting linguistic units of different structural levels” (Coulmas 1989:37). That is, different writing systems make use of different linguistic units of analysis, whether they are words/morphemes¹, syllables, or phonemes. Therefore, by this definition, one cannot speak of differences between the “English writing system” and the “Arabic writing system”, because both make use of the same system—an alphabet. Also, note that this definition implies nothing about standardization. So, for example, Cherokee, Cree, and

¹ While words and morphemes indeed represent two different linguistic units of analysis, any systems making use of only these two will be referred to as morphographic systems, in that both make use of written symbols to represent meaning. This is in contrast to phonographic systems (e.g., alphabets and syllabaries), which make use of symbols to represent sounds.
Japanese employ syllabic writing systems, because any of the symbols used for these languages represent some combination of consonant and vowel. However, each language has developed its own prescriptive standards for how those symbols should be used.

Second, I will use the term *script* to mean “the actual visual shape of the graphemes that a writing system uses, e.g., the Latin or the Arabic letters …” (Seifart 2006:277). As Coulmas (1989:37) puts it, “scripts are… graphical instantiations of writing systems.” So while Latin and Arabic make use of alphabetic writing systems, the look of one alphabet is very different from the other because each uses a different script. It is therefore the script (and, as we shall see, the orthography), not the writing system, to which people most often assign aesthetic value.² Neither writing systems nor scripts are language specific.

Third, I will use the term *orthography* more narrowly to refer to the regulation of written forms. More specifically, I use the term to mean a … writing system that [has been] standardized with respect to[:]: a) a set of graphic symbols (graphemes), such as signs, characters, letters, as well as diacritics, punctuation marks, etc.; and b) a set of rules/conventions, such as orthographic rules and pronunciation rules, rules for writing word boundaries, punctuation rules, capitalization rules, etc. (Seifart 2006:276-7; cf. Coulmas 2003:35; see also Coulmas 1996:1380; and Rogers 2005:2ff).

Each orthography is by its very nature language-specific, as it operates within a script to represent the language in a standardized way (Coulmas 1989:39). This standardization includes both the “local” (the agreed upon shape of individual written symbols) and the “global” (the conventions for representing the combination of these

² This is to say nothing of typefaces, which operate within scripts. That is, one script could be realized by thousands of typefaces.
graphemes in words, sentences, and beyond). Orthographies, then, have as much to do with the aesthetic as with the functional. While I make a broad distinction between morphographic and phonographic (syllabic and alphabetic) writing systems, each system does not necessarily operate independently of the other. Indeed, Mayan glyphs have been shown to combine both morphographic and phonographic elements (see Coe 1992), as have the Egyptian hieroglyphic (see Andrews 1981 and Gelb 1963) and Chinese systems (see Seifart 2006).

Having defined these terms, I now want to briefly discuss the notion of language planning, which serves as much of the theoretical basis for the work done by the Than Ówingeh Language Program (TOLP). Not only does each area of language planning necessarily involve the others but those engaged in language revitalization efforts must serve multiple roles. Members of a language program not only must attend to matters of language preservation (e.g., documenting linguistic forms, developing classroom materials/curricula, training language teachers), very often they also must be involved in securing funding through granting agencies and in advocating for federal recognition more generally. As such, many community members quickly may become discouraged by the rigors of language preservation, as they find themselves serving as politicians and lobbyists in addition to working as educators and activists.

1.1 Language planning

Those engaged in revitalizing a language not only are concerned with generating increased numbers of speakers of that language but with increasing the contexts of the use for that language and fostering an environment in which intergenerational
transmission can take place. However, these efforts are not always successful; often it is more realistic to work to empower the speakers of a language, to elevate their status, to raise awareness of the plight of endangered languages, and to valorize the community in which endangered languages are spoken (Dorian 1989, Hinton 2001, Mufwene 2002). Revitalizing a language is a rather simple idea in theory, but in practice there are numerous obstacles to achieving this goal, regardless of the wealth of resources or the energy of community members. All of these efforts involve elements of language planning, which Cooper (1989) defines as “… deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes” (45). According to Cooper, there are three components of the language planning process: corpus planning, status planning, and acquisition planning.

Corpus planning involves “… the creation of new forms, the modification of old ones, or the selection of alternative forms in a spoken or written code” (ibid. 31) and was exemplified in the establishment of the Académie française. Just as the Académie serves as the authority over the French language, the TOLP serves as the central authority over the standardization of Than Ówîngeh Tewa. However, just as the Académie serves as a titular authority, so too does the TOLP, and because the Than Ówîngeh Tewa dialect is not taught in the local public school system, the TOLP’s authority is almost entirely restricted to the Than Ówîngeh community. Instances of corpus planning in the TOLP include establishing an orthography, developing teaching materials and curricula (oral as well as written), creating an online database, and, eventually, producing a Than Ówîngeh Tewa dictionary.

3 For evolution of the term and its concepts, see Gorman (1973), Hall (1951), Haugen (1959), Kloss (1969), Miller (1950), and Noss (1967).
Status planning is perhaps best understood through Thomas Gorman’s concept of “language allocation”, which he considers “authoritative decisions to maintain, extend, or restrict, the range of uses (functional range) of a language in particular settings” (1973:73). Status planning, then, ideally has nothing to do with the codification of a language and everything to do with the creation of contexts in which the use of the heritage language is accepted or promoted. However, as Fishman (1983) and others have observed, the distinction between these two concepts is much clearer in theory than in practice.

To get a sense of the close relationship between corpus planning and status planning, consider Cardinal Richelieu’s founding of the Académie française. In the course of attempting to regulate the use of forms in the French language (corpus planning), there arose an effort to promote the use of French in domains then occupied by Latin (status planning). So while a discussion on language planning may begin with prescriptive disputes about how a language should be used, such a discussion will necessarily dovetail with issues concerning the domains of usage for that language. If speakers of a language that previously had no writing system decide to adopt the use of writing, it is not merely an orthography that ends up being created but a whole set of possible functions to be occupied by that written language.

Just as instances of corpus planning and status planning are difficult to separate from one another, so too are status planning and acquisition planning. The fundamental distinction between these two is that whereas status planning is concerned with increasing the domains of use of a language, acquisition planning focuses on generating increased numbers of users of a language (speakers, writers, readers, listeners). However, these two
concepts inform one another, for as the number of domains of use of a language increase, so does its prestige, and the language becomes perceived as more useful, thus attracting more speakers (Cooper 1989:33-34). Too much emphasis often is placed on corpus planning and too little on status and acquisition planning—perhaps because, if nothing else, successfully engaging in status planning and acquisition planning is much harder to do.

The reason for this is that the most obvious products of language revitalization efforts result from corpus planning, as the focus here is on creating tangible objects (e.g., dictionaries, pedagogical grammars) that can be taken as so-called evidence of success. It comes as no surprise, then, that many grant agencies request just these kinds of “producible” for a project to receive funding. Of course, the production of “texts” by no means guarantees the preservation of the language, but the illusion is so strong that many language programs may simply come to a halt after the production of a dictionary. This is a problem for any language revitalization program and an issue that the TOLP will have to consider carefully.

Finally, to further illustrate the interconnectedness of these three foci of language planning, consider the production of classroom materials in Tewa. The production of such texts can be considered corpus planning. However, the establishment of weekly Tewa classes in which these materials are used more closely involves status planning and acquisition planning, as such classes represent an extension of domains of use in the language and the goal of such classes is to generate increased numbers of language users. Ultimately, those engaged in language revitalization efforts cannot attend to one kind of language planning without attending to the other two.
1.2 Overview of the study

Over the past few decades there has been an emerging body of work on language ideologies (e.g., Blommaert 1999; Kroskry 2000; Kroskry and Field 2009; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskity 1998; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Such works have emphasized the importance on the part of linguistic anthropologists of recognizing how discursive practices index salient aspects of the speech community. While this emerging literature gives long overdue attention to the social and cultural foundations of language use, comparably little has been done to investigate language ideologies with respect to the creation and implementation of writing systems for heritage languages. Three research questions will guide this study:

1) What historical and sociocultural factors motivate the acceptance of or resistance to using a writing system to represent the heritage language (i.e., Than Ówîngeh Tewa)?

2) If community members have agreed to create/adopt a written system, what factors motivate the use of one such system (e.g., alphabet, syllabary) over another (i.e., Than Ówîngeh Tewa)?

3) If a particular writing system has been agreed upon, what factors motivate the use of certain sound/concept-symbol correspondences (i.e., Than Ówîngeh Tewa)?
Ultimately, I will argue that a series of factors motivates a view of writing as either a unifying (centripetal) or disunifying (centrifugal) force (Bakhtin 1981:279). These factors have arisen through important historical events and community members’ interpretation of the significance of those events as well as through cultural norms.

Regarding the second and third research questions, I will argue that the decision to adopt one particular writing system—as well as the decision to employ particular sound-symbol correspondences within that system—arises as a result of practical considerations, such as learnability, transparency, and acceptability. However, it is my contention that these considerations, which appear to be self-evident, emerge as a result of specific ideologies about language, namely syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism, all of which will be defined and discussed later.

I have been fortunate to work with the TOLP since its inception in 2003, and during this time I have benefited greatly from fieldwork at Than Ówîngeh. For most linguists and cultural anthropologists, the term “fieldwork” implies that the researcher spends long periods of time in the community. In this sense, the site of the investigator’s research is considered to be the community itself. However, in my case, the research site is more narrowly focused. Because I am investigating attitudes and beliefs about the role of writing in the TOLP and the development of a Than Ówîngeh orthography, my primary research site is the TOLP meeting, which takes place once or twice per month.

While I am speaking here of a “site” as a place where research is carried out, another sense of “site” is relevant to this discussion. Silverstein (1998) developed the concept of sites as the “… institutional sites of social practice, as both object and modality of ideological expression” (136). While the term “site” (as in “research site”)
suggests a physical location or concrete structure, Silverstein explores “sites” as the loci of socially situated practices. Discussions at TOLP meetings often involve debates over how the Tewa language and its attendant writing system can be and should be used in the community. As TOLP members articulate these views about the language, these meetings thus constitute a site in the way Silverstein explores. Another example of a site is the weekly Tewa class that takes place at Than Ówîngeh, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.3.1.

One of the most important methodological issues of this study involves protecting the confidentiality of the Native consultants. The strategies for using pseudonyms to protect the identities of Tewa communities and their community members in this study follow those used by Debenport (2009) in her dissertation on dictionary creation in one Tiwa community, which she called “San Antonio Pueblo”. My research was conducted in a Tewa community I have call “Than Ówîngeh” (than ‘sun’ and ówîngeh ‘village’), which, readers may have noticed already, is a pseudonym. I have chosen to use pseudonyms not only for the Pueblo as a whole, but for the consultants with whom I work.

Ultimately, the use of pseudonyms has everything to do with the issue of protection. Over the past decade, I have worked closely with several community members there, and during this time the relationship with my principal consultants has grown into a strong friendship based on collaboration, mutual understanding, and trust. It is well known that Puebloan societies value secrecy, and so I must remain sensitive to the needs of these community members. Although I believe my fieldwork at Than Ówîngeh Pueblo has have given me a deeper understanding of the relationship between Than
Ówîngeh Tewa and the broader social matrix, I must be aware of my status as an outside researcher when discussing such personal topics as beliefs and attitudes about language use. I therefore have refrained from including any information that my consultants might deem culturally inappropriate or for which they may incur negative repercussions. All personal pseudonyms were chosen by the consultants themselves.

Further, if the purpose of using pseudonyms is to maintain the anonymity of community members and to protect them from possible negative consequences, it does no good to call the Pueblo by its recognized name, for these communities are small enough that interested readers could determine their identities. Therefore, the pseudonym Than Ówîngeh will be used in this work to minimize any negative effects on the consultants as well as on other members of the community who may not be associated with the ongoing language revitalization efforts there.

All but one Tewa Pueblo will be assigned a pseudonym. Given that Tewa is spoken at six Pueblos in New Mexico and one in Arizona, employing a pseudonym for one but not the others offers no anonymity at all, as the interested reader could easily deduce the identity of the “unnamed” Pueblo. However, one community, Ohkay Owingeh (formerly known as San Juan Pueblo), will not be given a pseudonym. I realize that readers may frown upon such a decision, but there is, I believe, good reason for this. Among the Tewa Pueblos, Ohkay Owingeh has received the most treatment in scholarly literature. The structure of the language program at Than Ówîngeh—specifically, the orthography—was modeled after the program led by Esther Martinez, a well-known community member and language activist from Ohkay Owingeh, whose works will be discussed in later chapters. Martinez is so well known, in fact, that anyone familiar with
Tewa language revitalization efforts likely has heard her name and is familiar with her work. Further, most of the sources cited in this work referring to Ohkay Owingeh/San Juan Pueblo have been made publically available, so the use of a pseudonym for this community would do little to disguise its identity when the reader could simply cross-check these references with their listing in this work’s bibliography. The pseudonyms used for the Tewa-speaking pueblos in New Mexico and for the members of the TOLP will be presented in Chapters 3.3 and 4.2, respectively.

1.3 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework guiding this dissertation. Given that the practice of writing serves as the primary focus of my study, I begin by problematizing traditional notions of literacy (see Goody and Watt 1963), in which reading and writing are treated as a monolithic technology and whose use is taken to represent the end goal in a path to civilization (see Ong 1982). Following Collins and Blot (2003) and Street (1984), I will argue that by treating literacies as an inherently pluralistic concept, we not only more accurately account for reading and writing as social practices but can better describe cultural norms of communication in traditionally “oral” societies.

Section 2.2 discusses the functions of writing in societies around the world, both historical and contemporary. While for many the greatest value of writing—and its most recognized use—emerges from its “transactional” qualities (see Britton et al. 1975), or the ability to communicate information, several other potential uses for writing bear on the issue of orthographic development, including the mnemonic, distancing, reifying, hegemonic, and aesthetic functions (see Coulmas 1989). Section 2.3 presents semiotic
concepts such as icons, indexes, and symbols, and the semiotic processes into which they develop are discussed. Among these semiotic processes, iconization and erasure will figure prominently in my study. Like language ideologies, these semiotic concepts and processes can be employed heuristically to help conceptualize the relationship between languages and their attendant orthographies.

Section 2.4 discusses how the concept of language ideologies can be brought to bear on addressing the research questions listed above. Language ideologies, the “ingrained, unquestioned beliefs about the way the world is, the way it should be, and the way it has to be with respect to language” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006:9), are a relatively new area of investigation in linguistic anthropology. This approach seeks to address how aspects of language use come to be viewed as emblematic of the users of the language or of the speech community more broadly. In his work with the Arizona Tewa, Kroskrity (2009) examines several specific language ideologies, including syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism, which, I will argue, can be applied to Than Ówîngeh as well. This chapter also will discuss the largely qualitative methods employed in this dissertation, with an emphasis on fieldwork conducted over the past decade.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the community of Than Ówîngeh, which serves as the broad research site for this study. Section 3.1 presents demographic information for the Pueblo, such as relative location and population. Also included here are descriptions of kinship systems, economy, tribal membership, and other aspects of Than Ówîngeh social organization and government. Section 3.2 discusses the impact of federal Housing and Urban Development projects at the Pueblo and their implications for the vitality of the heritage language. Section 3.3 presents a brief overview of the Tewa language; in the
interest of space, for a more complete description of the grammar, the interested reader is directed to Harrington (1910, 1912), Dozier (1949, 1953), Hoijer and Dozier (1949), Speirs (1966), and Sutton (forthcoming). Instead, this description focuses on aspects of Tewa structure that have implications for the development of a Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography.

Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of the assimilatory policies implemented by the Spanish and the United States government, followed by the evolution of Native American language legislation in this country. This history is used to ground the discussion in Section 4.2 of the development of the TOLP, from its humble beginnings in 2003 to the successes and challenges currently facing the program. Here the reader is introduced to the members of the TOLP, which include a team of linguists from the University of New Mexico, in addition to the native consultants who spearhead the program. Section 4.3 presents the components of the TOLP, which include the weekly Tewa class held at the Pueblo, the development of classroom materials and curricula, the creation of an online database, the production of interactive media, and the ongoing efforts to publish a Than Ówîngeh Tewa dictionary. All of these components are to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon the use of writing, and Section 4.4 introduces the reader to Than Ówîngeh orthography.

Chapter 5 is the core of this work, as it is here that the first of my research questions (the sociocultural and political factors motivating an acceptance of or resistance to the use of writing) driving this study is addressed. Section 5.1 discusses the factors motivating a general resistance to the use of writing for representing a heritage language. Although the focus here remains on the attitudes held toward writing at Than Ówîngeh,
the factors themselves are applicable to many heritage language programs that address the issue of standardization. Five factors are identified as contributing to a resistance to the use of writing: 1) a conception of writing as removing the spirit of spoken language, 2) writing as undermining traditional sociocultural norms of information acquisition and sharing, 3) writing as allowing for the appropriation of the heritage language by outsiders, 4) writing as a process that inhibits language learning, and 5) writing as a logistical problem (e.g., funding, staffing).

Conversely, Section 5.2 discusses the factors motivating a general acceptance of the use of writing to represent a heritage language. Again, while the focus here remains on Than Ówîngeh, I would argue that the factors are applicable to many heritage language programs. Four factors are identified as contributing to an acceptance of the use of writing: 1) the view that written documentation aids in the preservation of the heritage language, 2) the view that writing facilitates the language-learning process, 3) the view that writing increases domains of usage (entextualization), and 4) the view that writing lends authority and credibility to the heritage language itself.

Chapter 6 addresses the other two research questions driving this study: the sociocultural and political factors motivating the use of one particular writing system, such as an alphabet, and the factors motivating the sound-symbol correspondences within that writing system. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the typology of writing systems, which broadly includes the morphographic, the syllabic, and the alphabetic. Section 6.2 discusses the use of non-alphabetic scripts in North America, focusing on the Cherokee and Cree syllabaries. This information is used to demonstrate that, although literacy in these writing systems was widespread in the nineteenth and early twentieth
centuries, their use declined rapidly after World War II. Since then, contemporary indigenous language programs have overwhelmingly relied on the use of alphabets, the features of which are discussed in Section 6.3. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 tie together the content of the previous chapters by arguing that the sound-symbol correspondences contained in the Than Ówîngeh orthography emerged as a result of a confluence of ideologies about language held by community members.

Chapter 7 concludes this work by discussing the future vitality of the heritage language at Than Ówîngeh and the extent to which writing can be solicited in the service of revitalizing the language. Although those working to revitalize the Tewa language at Than Ówîngeh face an uphill struggle, I will argue that Kretzman and McKnight’s (1993) concept of “asset based community development” offers a model for how the challenges of language revitalization and works that all grassroots efforts related to community engagement more broadly can be met. After this, I offer directions for further research.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The methods employed to address the research questions introduced in the previous chapter are largely qualitative. Through a combination of ethnographic fieldwork and conversations with community members, language consultants, and anthropological linguistic investigators, I will explore how certain factors motivate either an acceptance of or resistance to the use of writing to represent the heritage language at Than Ówîngeh. Further, the concept of language ideologies will be used to shed light on these factors and how, ultimately, the acceptance of writing involves the belief that the practice serves as a unifying force in a community, whereas resistance to the use of writing arises from the view that it serves as a disunifying force in a community.

In this chapter, I first will discuss the concept of literacies as preferable to that of literacy in that the former more accurately accounts for the pluralistic nature of communicative norms within a given culture. Drawing principally from Coulmas (1989) and Bauman and Briggs (1990), I then will discuss the functions of writing as well as their relation to the concept of texts, followed by a discussion of semiotic concepts and processes. This chapter will end with a discussion of language ideology, from its development as a concept in the nineteenth century to its contemporary applications to the investigation of the relationship between language and culture. More specifically, the language ideologies of syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism, as developed by Paul Kroskrity (2009), will be introduced.
2.1 “Literacy” and “literacies”

That *letter* and *literate* share the same etymology speaks to the longstanding perception that literacy necessarily involves only the practices of reading and writing. For most people, the term “literacy” not only suggests a kind of intellectual advancement at an intrapersonal level but a movement toward civilization at the interpersonal level. This idea, referred to as “the Literacy Thesis”, has its origins in the early 1960s with Eric Havelock’s *Preface to Plato* (1963) and with Jack Goody and Ian Watt’s influential text, *The Consequences of Literacy* (1963). Later, Walter Ong, who was heavily influenced by these works, built on the arguments of his predecessors in his well-known text, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982), by claiming that the development of writing fundamentally changed the nature of human consciousness. Although these scholars did much to advance the study of the relationship between human culture and writing, they nonetheless treat intellectual advancement as a unidirectional path upwards toward civilization, with non-literate societies at the bottom and literate societies (particularly those of the Western world) at the top (see Collins and Blot 2003; Street 1984).

However, over the past few decades, the term *literacy* has undergone a shift in meaning in academia, as notions of literacy have come to be applied to societies with “oral” traditions as well.⁴ Further, what once was treated as an autonomous, separable activity has been reevaluated as involving numerous situated practices. As Collins and Blot (2003) observe, “… we must conceptualize literacy as *literacies*, that is, as

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⁴ As Collins and Blot (2003:52) argue, it is problematic—if not methodologically impossible—to maintain a clear distinction between “oral” and “literate” societies. While there is no easy answer to this question, I mean to use the term “oral” to refer to those societies that had no writing systems before they were introduced through colonialism.
embedded in a multiplicity of social practices, rather than as a monolithic technology or tradition” (60, original emphasis). Of course, all this is not to say that even in today’s age of heightened social and cultural sensitivity “illiterate” individuals and non-literate societies are still not often viewed as uneducated, unrefined, or downright unintelligent. Taken to its extreme, this view suggests that so-called “illiterate” peoples lack something essentially human. Although it is true that writing serves as a vehicle prominently featured in complex, large-scale societies, it is promising that scholars have started to challenge the long-established belief that the development of writing represents one of the driving forces behind civilization.

If literacy is viewed as a fundamentally pluralistic phenomenon (that is, as literacies), it becomes possible to view “oral” societies as imbued with many of the same characteristics that traditionally have been ascribed to “literate” societies. In their discussion of language preservation efforts at Cochiti Pueblo, Benjamin, Pecos, and Romero (1996) observe that “‘literacy’ in this oral society … means the ability to interpret the complex system of cultural symbols … such that an individual can participate actively and appropriately in his or her respective role” (116). Here, literacy is taken to represent the degree to which an individual conforms to social expectations, that in order to be an effective social actor in Cochiti society, he or she must be “fluent in his or her culture.”

When literacy is viewed in these terms, one can see that the TOLP is neither simply faced with the challenge of introducing a writing system nor with seeking acceptance of its orthographic conventions but with cultivating an appropriate role in which the practice of interacting with written texts in Tewa is acceptable within the
broader sphere of Tewa social life. Language planners then must oversee the creation of opportunities for written texts as well as the creation of the texts themselves. Again, as Cooper (1989) observes, corpus planning cannot take place without status planning.

I want to end this section by briefly addressing the concepts of reading and writing. Throughout this work, the focus will be on the practice of writing, as it relates specifically to Than Ówîngeh Tewa, and substantial time will be devoted to investigating the social, cultural, and political factors that surround the use of writing in the community. However, this emphasis on writing should not lead the reader to believe that the role of reading is not relevant here, for although the practices of reading and writing may be viewed as separate in theory, they are linked inextricably in practice.

2.2 Functions of writing

Writing is a relatively recent creation among our species, having been invented independently only in the past several thousand years. One may very well ask why writing was invented in the first place. This has not been an easy question to answer, as historically writing has assumed different functions in different societies in different time periods. While writing may have taken on a primarily economic function in one ancient state, it may have assumed a ceremonial function in another (see Harbsmeier 1988). In his study of the world’s writing systems, Coulmas (1989) discusses five functions that the use of writing can be seen to display.\(^5\)

First, and perhaps most notably, writing has been valued as a tool to support memory. The “mnemonic function” of writing has been engrained so deeply in Western

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\(^5\) Coulmas (1989:14) in fact proposes six functions. However, I have omitted his “interactional function”, which I consider more of a result of the other five functions than an actual function itself.
culture as to be taken for granted. One need only observe students’ behavior in a lecture-based classroom, as they fastidiously take notes in a race to write down everything before the information is seemingly lost forever. This view of writing in large part explains Westerners’ disbelief at the incredible feats of memory displayed by members of oral-based societies, such as the ability to perfectly recite the equivalent of hundreds of pages of elaborate stories.

Second, whereas oral communication is largely restricted to synchronous environments (audiovisual technologies notwithstanding), writing has historically been an asynchronous activity. Whether it is a note on the refrigerator that is a few hours old or The Iliad read millennia after having been written, the reader and the writer most often are separated by space and time. This “distancing function” has served as much of the basis for our understanding of history today, as ancient peoples have reached across the ages through writing. However, it has been only in the past few decades that writing has become a synchronous activity as well as an asynchronous one, as advances in technology have allowed people to communicate in real time using instant messaging programs, cell phone texting, and social networking sites. As I will discuss later, it is important that a writing system be used in synchronous as well as asynchronous environments in order to be considered “healthy”, particularly with respect to writing systems used in language revitalization programs.

Third, while spoken language is by its very nature evanescent, written language exhibits the qualities of an object or artifact. The relative permanence of the medium, be it a clay tablet or an e-book, means that writing takes on a “reifying function”. In contrast to spoken language, in which linguistic meaning to a great extent is determined by
context, written language must be self-sufficient for the reader to infer the writer’s intended meaning. As Coulmas (1989:12-13) puts it, “The meaning no longer resides in the speaker but in the text.” Written language, then, tends to take on a life of its own, and as we shall see shortly, the reifying function of language together with the next function of writing (as a means of social control) can motivate perceptions of writing as undermining traditional norms of gathering information in a community. The reifying function of writing also calls to mind the notion of a text, along with the processes of entextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization.

Although text, in lay terms, denotes a written product, Bauman and Briggs (1990) cast a broader net by treating the concept texts as “discourse rendered decontextualizable” (73; see also Hanks 1989). In this sense, stories and tales passed down through oral transmission from one generation to another can be viewed as texts. The process of creating a text, or entextualization, possesses an inherent reflexivity, in that every textual creation requires that the author engage in a kind of metapragmatics. That is, the author is forced to make a series of decisions regarding what functions the text will fulfill (consider the differences between speaking/writing to an audience of children versus an audience of academic conference attendees). In this sense, the creation of a text requires a process of reflection, or, in the often cited quote from Babcock (1980), entextualization holds the capacity “to turn or bend back upon itself, to become an object to itself, to refer to itself” (cited in Bauman and Briggs 1990:73). The processes of entextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization are not mutually exclusive and exist only in relation to one another. Texts can be removed from one context and inserted into another,

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6 As with the term “text”, the concept of authorship is not limited to the written medium and can be treated as akin to the idea of an “originator”, or source from which a text derives (see Urban 1996:22-24).
such that “… decontextualization from one social context involves recontextualization in another” (ibid. 74).

Fourth, as a result of the permanence of the written medium and its reifying nature, writing also may serve a “social control function”, and phrases such as “letter of the law” and “put it in writing” invoke just this view. In Western societies, if two parties wish to establish some sort of formal agreement, they are likely to draft a written contract, which then is revised, and eventually finalized, and signed by both parties. Copies of the contract then are distributed to each party to serve as a record of the agreed-upon terms. Notice here that there is nothing inherently binding about the written contract itself (after all, it is just words on a page!), yet the words are perceived as authoritative and final. Put another way, although writing is authoritative a priori, it comes to be viewed as such a posteriori. Speakers attesting to the authenticity of information in writing (“of course it’s true, I read it in the newspaper!”) are evidencing just this idea. The reifying and social control functions also underlie the common perception that the production of reference grammars and dictionaries confers an official status upon the language.

Fifth, writing can be said to possess certain undeniable “aesthetic functions”, which can be observed at two different levels. At one level, writing has allowed for the creation of literature, and the very term suggests a variety of genres in which the use of beautiful language is highly valued and promoted. While storytelling, poetry, and other verbal arts have been prized among societies long before their representation in writing, consider the relatively new genre of the novel, which exists only within the domain of the written word. At another level, writing exhibits beauty independent of the meaning it
conveys; that is, writing serves an aesthetic function with respect to the script itself. From ancient calligraphy and penmanship to the proliferation of modern-day typefaces, the practice of writing has always involved an element of artistic expression.

Some have taken these five functions too far by implying that the very use of writing as a technology illustrates the highly civilized nature of the culture that uses it. Even Coulmas himself comes dangerously close to equating the use of writing with high civilization when he writes, “… [writing] is one of the major signs of civilization. Everywhere in the ancient world, writing was the invariable accompaniment of certain sociocultural conditions that led to higher forms of civilization” (1989:15). However, Coulmas does not discuss these “higher forms of civilization”, and I believe this is an important point. Although one can only guess he is referring to traditional characteristics associated with “civilized” societies, such as established forms of government, economic systems—even a celebration of the arts, his failure to define what constitutes these “higher forms” suggests that however one defines civilization, writing must necessarily be a part of it. Such problematic statements aside, these five functions provide a useful starting point for understanding the complexities of the practice of writing and the attitudes that emerge from its use.

2.3 Semiotics

Semiotic concepts are centuries old and most recently have been elaborated upon by Barthes (1968), Eco (1976), and de Saussure (1986 [1916]). Some might highlight the weaknesses of semiotics—that the domain over which it presides and the phenomena it seeks to describe are too expansive. However, I would argue that semiotic processes
serve as the skeleton over which the richness of language structure (and ideologies about language) are fleshed out, and therefore provide a valuable tool for understanding connections between linguistic form and function as well as for sound-grapheme mappings. Before discussing two such semiotic processes that inform ideologies about language, I will review briefly three core semiotic concepts: *icon*, *index*, and *symbol*.

*Icons* are signs whose meanings are based on relationships of resemblance. Iconicity is a well-known feature of signed languages, but there are much simpler examples that are closer to the meaning I shall adopt for this study. Consider, for example, a simple drawing of a human face. In creating the drawing, the artist has isolated certain identifiable features—eyes, ears, nose—that a viewer immediately recognizes, even though the drawing is not real but is a representation of those essentialized features. This semiotic concept can be extended to apply to the use of language in the social sphere as *iconization*.

*Indexes* are signs whose meanings are based on relationships of contiguity. Rather than a drawing, consider here a photograph of a human face. Here, the viewer is not looking at a representation, as with a drawing, but at an actual face. Indexes, then, can be treated as “pointing” to the actual thing they signify. Other examples include footprints in snow (as indicating someone’s path and, essentially, pointing to their location), smoke (as indicating the presence of and direction to fire), and the sound of high heels (as indicating, usually, a woman walking). Indexes, too, provide a useful means of understanding how languages can be used to point to certain aspects of the social sphere.

*Symbols* are signs whose meanings are based on relationships of arbitrariness. Whereas a drawing of a human face essentializes specific human characteristics and a
photograph of a human face points to those features, consider the word “face”/[feɪs]. The word is of course entirely arbitrary, as it is only through convention that English speakers should use this particular sequence of sounds to represent the concept of a face in the real world. So while icons bear some resemblance to their signified, symbols do not. Icons and symbols are best imagined as poles on either end of a continuum, as there are plenty of instances in which language can be seen as both iconic and symbolic. For example, while English speakers may use the onomatopoeic form *cockadoodledoo* to represent the sound made by a rooster, French speakers may use the form *cocorico*. Here, one can see iconism as well as symbolism at work: although both *cockadoodledoo* and *cocorico* are meant to iconicize the sound of a rooster, there is nonetheless an arbitrary element to each of these forms, as to a great extent they are dependent upon the unique sound inventories available in each language. Graphemes, then, are written symbols in the strictest sense of the term.

Building from the basic semiotic concepts above, Irvine and Gal (2000) propose three semiotic processes through which speakers understand connections between linguistic forms and social phenomena: 1) *iconization*, a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features and the social signs to which they are linked, 2) erasure, the process through which ideology renders some sociolinguistic phenomena invisible, and 3) fractal recursivity, the projection of an opposition onto some other linguistic level.

An example of iconization can be seen in the region of Macedonia that became annexed by Yugoslavia between the first and second World Wars. While Macedonian and Serbo-Croatian share a high degree of mutual intelligibility, during this time many
Serbs began to consider Macedonian as a dialect of Serbo-Croatian, viewing the simpler nominal morphology of Macedonian as an indicator of the Macedonians’ simplicity of thought “… and so assumed [them] to be uncultivated country bumpkins” (Irvine and Gal 2000:69). Here we can see that iconization involves some linguistic feature that becomes highlighted and is taken to represent the character of the social group that uses it. Irvine and Gal observe that “Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a group’s inherent nature or essence” (ibid. 37). This process operates at multiple levels, as salient features at any level of linguistic analysis can be taken as representative of the broader social matrix.

An example of erasure can again be found in Macedonia in early twentieth-century accounts of its ethnocultural and linguistic makeup. This region of Europe, which had long received incomplete treatment in mapping and census projects in the writings of outside observers, suffered a kind of historical misrecognition in which the geographical range of Macedonian identity was drastically underestimated, and thus, a complete understanding of that identity was rendered invisible (Irvine and Gal 2000:60-72). Another example can be seen in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Native American boarding schools in the United States, which demonstrates the misrecognition by the government of the unique intra- and inter-social histories among Native American groups. Students from various tribes often were grouped together, regardless of their sociocultural and linguistic differences, and treated homogenously, thus rendering invisible the identities of each individual and tribal group.
An example of fractal recursivity presented by Irvine and Gal (2000) is the adoption of click consonants in Xhosa from neighboring Khoi languages. When the Nguni languages arrived in southern Africa, clicks were not a part of the consonantal system. Over time, however, as speakers of Nguni languages came in contact with speakers of Khoisan languages, the former came to notice the presence of these then foreign-sounding clicks in the latter. Irvine and Gal argue that these clicks first were acquired by Nguni speakers through an avoidance register, called *hlonipha*, as a means of indicating social distance. Thus, the introduction of a phonological change in Nguni came to serve as an emblem for more general social relationships between the Nguni and the Khoi (ibid. 45-46). Although fractal recursivity will not figure into my analysis, further investigation could prove fruitful in helping us understand the function of linguistic practices in the sociocultural sphere. I will concentrate on iconization and to a lesser extent erasure; further research is needed to investigate if and how fractal recursivity operates at Than Ówîngeh and is thus beyond the scope of this dissertation.

2.4 Language ideologies

*Idéologie*, as first conceived by Destutt de Tracy in the early nineteenth century, was a science of ideas whose theories and methodologies required the same systematic attentiveness as any other science. Born out of the spirit of the French Enlightenment, *idéologie*, according to de Tracy, considers the nature of ideas as structures through which internalized concepts are socially mediated—an externalization of concepts through systems of articulated signs (Silverstein 1998:123). By proposing its inclusion as a subfield of zoology, de Tracy sought to legitimize the ideational domain as a valid
object of scientific study. Though he could not have anticipated discussions in modern semiotic literature, de Tracy nonetheless explored many issues in the study of metadiscourse and indexicality in language being examined today. De Tracy’s vision of a “science of ideas” was essentially lost during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through negative connotations of the word “ideology”, but the term has since enjoyed a rebirth. Current interpretations explore ideology more neutrally as an organic, embodied system woven into the fabric of discursive practice rather than as an independent structure prescribed through hegemony.

Woolard (1998) dissects the term into four strands: 1) ideology as mental phenomena (as de Tracy first conceived the term)—the domain of the ideational and conceptual; 2) ideology as the foundation of metapragmatics; 3) ideology as linked to positions of power through discursive practices—the struggle to acquire or maintain power (in this strand one can speak of “your ideology” or “my ideology”); and 4) ideology as distortion, maintaining the relations of power by disguising or legitimating those relations. This fourth strand conforms most closely to a commonly (mis)understood meaning of ideology as a lens through which one views the world (e.g., Marx’s camera obscura).

Of course, all four strands contribute greatly to the overall understanding of ideologies about language. However, I would argue that the second strand—ideology as the foundation of metapragmatics—is particularly amenable to investigating the relationship between language and sociocultural practices. Language ideology, according
to Woolard, is best understood “… as derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular social position” (1998:6).

Silverstein’s now standard definition of language ideologies as “… any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (1979:193) offers a productive starting point. Language ideologies thus extend beyond the realm of referentiality to address language in its indexical nature—to understand language not merely in terms of its semantic denotata (de Saussure’s signifié and significant) but rather as indicators of ethnocultural and social relationships. Such ideological systems, understood as constitutive of a language’s metapragmatics, hold far-reaching implications for community discourse practices and the political context in which these languages exist.

Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2005) define language ideology as “ingrained, unquestioned beliefs about the way the world is, the way it should be, and the way it has to be with respect to language” (9). While these two definitions are similar, Silverstein highlights the explicit nature (how speakers use language to express views about language), whereas Wolfram and Schilling-Estes highlight the implicit (how speakers hold incontrovertible views about language without actually using language to rationalize those views). That is, the unarticulated beliefs about how a language should function in a community (or society) are treated matter-of-factly, as justifiable insofar as they are perceived as self-evident.

Many speakers’ views about the way a language is and the way it should be used (whether explicitly articulated or implicitly assumed) have to do with notions of a

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7 For further discussion of ideology, see Eagleton (1991), Williams (1977), and Woolard and Schieffelin (1994)
standard language. Lippi-Green (1997) argues that the notion of a standard language is a myth, given certain “linguistic facts of life”—namely among them that all languages naturally change over time, that variation pervades all levels of language, and that written language and spoken language are fundamentally different animals. As such, any attempt to standardize the writing or speaking of a language amounts to arbitrarily sanctioning some forms while prohibiting others. In the United States, the longstanding, deep-seated belief in the existence of an immutable, dominant language has resulted in the common perception that the path to success in academia and in the professional world beyond is paved in Standard English. Failure to adhere to this standard often is treated as an indicator of a lack of intelligence, or even a lack of humanity.

Although from a linguist’s perspective, the notion of a standard language is false given the “linguistic facts of life” described by Lippi-Green, there is nonetheless a very real feeling among many speakers that there must be a fixed standard to which speakers and writers should be held (see Greenfield 2011 for a more recent discussion of the myth of Standard English). A standard language ideology can be defined as “… a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (Lippi-Green 1997:64). This concept is particularly important to this study, as it involves a prescriptivist orientation to the written form of a language.

While each of the definitions above is relatively specific in the phenomena it seeks to describe, consider Judith Irvine’s view of language ideologies as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of
moral and political interests” (1989:255). Notice here the broad scope of Irvine’s definition, as it includes, essentially, the entire universe of a language. All of the definitions above recognize language ideologies as multiple and often conflicting. Language ideologies are rarely about language itself, as claims to linguistic affiliation also are claims to territory and sovereignty (Irvine and Gal 2000:72).

While the notion of ideologies about language is relatively new, it can already be seen as a potentially fruitful area in the investigation of the relationship between language and the broader social matrix. The concept of language ideology represents more than a theoretical construct; it provides a way to explore language as a socially situated practice. While the idea is so broad as to be all-inclusive (language use as indexing the panoply of sociocultural practices), recent work has revealed the beginnings of a typology of language ideology. That is, some speech communities may value certain language ideologies over others, and a substantial part of this dissertation will be devoted to exploring the particular constellation of ideologies operating at Than Ówîngeh.

2.4.1 Kinds of language ideologies

Kroskrity (2009) discusses three types of language ideologies that can be observed in many Native American communities: *syncretism, utilitarianism*, and *variationism*. Kroskrity has applied these concepts primarily to Arizona Tewa, but I will argue that each of these can be observed at Than Ówîngeh as well. More specifically, although these language ideologies can be observed to a greater or lesser extent in the domain of spoken Tewa at Than Ówîngeh, I will apply them to the development and use of the Than Ówîngeh orthography.
2.4.2 Syncretism

Over the past several centuries, Native American tribes have become syncretized at several levels. First, syncretism can be observed at Than Ówîngeh—and indeed all the Puebloan societies—in religious practices. Upon visiting any of the Pueblo feast days, the visitor is immediately struck by the intertwining of indigenous belief systems with those of Catholicism. At feast days, visitors also can observe syncretism with Western, and in particular Hispanic, culture. Many of the foods served at feast day originated in Latin America and from northern New Mexican culinary traditions more specifically. One also can observe syncretism in the political sphere, as contemporary Pueblo governmental structure has been modeled after that of U.S. state government (consider the existence of positions such as governor, lieutenant governor, secretary, and their attendant roles). While each of these levels—religious, cultural, and political—of syncretism can be observed at Than Ówîngeh and deserves further investigation, they are largely beyond the scope of this dissertation and will receive only minimal attention. Instead, I want to focus on syncretism that can be observed in the domain of language use, and any further reference to the term will be employed with this meaning in mind.

Kroskrity (2009) argues that syncretism involves “a value on linguistic borrowing from neighboring languages …” (192). He discusses the preponderance of loan words that have entered the Western Mono language as a result of community members’ interactions with neighboring speech communities. These intertribal relations gave rise to intermarriage and multilingualism. However, Kroskrity goes on to argue that “the cultural emphasis on hybridity and linguistic pluralism provided no foundation for an indigenous

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8 I will not discuss these religious practices in detail because they are among the most sensitive issues in Puebloan societies.
language ideological ‘iconization’ between a specific language and corresponding ethnic identity” (193). While I would say that the same can basically be said about the relationship between the spoken language and ethnicity in Tewa, I will argue that iconization can in fact be observed with respect to Tewa-ness and the written representation of the language.

Syncretism can be observed at three levels at Than Ówîngeh. First, at the most basic level, lexical borrowing in Than Ówîngeh Tewa (indeed, in all dialects of Tewa) is fairly common. While there are a few instances of borrowing from other Tanoan languages, the lion’s share of borrowing has been from Spanish. Examples include terms for utensils, days of the week, and animals introduced through colonialism, such as mules and horses. Given the longstanding contact between Spanish-speaking and Tewa-speaking populations, such borrowing is fairly unsurprising.

Second, and extending from lexical borrowing, syncretism can be observed in the use of code-switching by community members at Than Ówîngeh. Code-switching (CS) refers to the practice of using two or more languages in a conversation—“intersentential CS”—or even within a single utterance—“intrasentential CS” (see Myers-Scotton 1989). CS serves several functions in bilingual and multilingual speech communities. CS can be used as a means of facilitating communication, as, for example, when traveling to another country with incomplete knowledge of the language. I employed this strategy when I traveled to Ecuador in the summer of 2005 and visited communities in which little to no English was spoken, which required me to codeswitch between Spanish and Quichua—neither of which I speak fluently—to communicate. CS also can be used as a rhetorical
device (see Heller 1992), as, for example, when a politician delivering a speech wants to more effectively appeal to his or her bilingual and multilingual constituents.

Perhaps the strongest motivation for the use of CS comes in its power to indicate group membership. Consider the following example of CS among three Arizona Tewa speakers (they are trilingual in Arizona Tewa, Hopi, and English). These three speakers are discussing the selection of a piece of land for a high school to be built on the Hopi reservation. According to the Tewa speakers (who want the school to be built), the Hopi don’t want this school on their land. Keep in mind that the Arizona Tewa community exists within the Hopi speech community, which itself exists within the Navajo community, and the Navajo community exists within the broader community of American English speakers.

Speaker A (in Hopi): *tutuqayki-t qa-naanawakna*. ‘Schools were not wanted.’

Speaker B (in Tewa): *wé-di-t’ókán-k’ege-na’a-di im-bí akhon-i-di*. ‘They don’t want a school on their land.’

Speaker C (in Tewa): *naembí eeyae naelae-mo dibí-t’ó-’ám-mí kaayi’i wé-di-mu:-di*. ‘It’s better if our children go to school right here rather than far away.’ (Kroskrity 2000:340-341)

Even in this brief excerpt, a rather complex social interaction can be observed. Speaker A uses the Hopi language to represent the supposed sentiments of the Hopi as not wanting a school on Hopi land. Speaker B agrees with this view but uses the Tewa language to reorient the perspective from that of the Hopi to that of the Tewa, hence
emphasizing that “they” (the Hopi) don’t want a school on Hopi land. Speaker C then continues to use Tewa to frame the idea that the school should be built on Hopi land so that his children, who are Tewa, can go to school there rather than to another school farther away. This use of CS then provides speakers A, B, and C with more than a communicative device or rhetorical strategy; it allows them to index themselves as members of one speech community—the Arizona Tewa—as opposed to another—the Hopi (see also Myers-Scotton 1993, Poplack 1980, and Zentella 1997).

CS between Spanish and English is common at Than Ówîngeh, but it is also fairly common to hear Tewa speakers CS among Tewa, Spanish, and English as well. For example, after a project meeting several years ago, one TOLP member named Ogowée T’ún turned to me and remarked, “kú’daawó’háa por su ayuda on this project” (kú’daawó’háa means ‘thank you’ in Tewa and por su ayuda means ‘for your help’ in Spanish). It is unlikely that Ogowée T’ún code-switched here as a communication facilitation device, rhetorical strategy, or as a means of indicating in-group membership. Because this speaker knew that I am neither fluent in Tewa nor Spanish but that I have basic proficiency in both, it is probable that the use of CS here represents an instance of linguistic play—the speaker is simply having a bit of fun with language and expecting that I’ll be able to determine the intended meaning. Nonetheless, the very use of CS—regardless of the function it serves—can be taken as evidence of syncretism, for the inclusion of multiple languages in a conversation would suggest that speakers ascribe some value to that language.

Third, extending from the use of borrowing and CS is the syncretism that can be observed in the Than Ówîngeh orthography. I will argue that the syncretism present in
the Than Ówîngeh orthography can itself be observed at several levels: script, sound-symbol correspondences, and orthographic conventions. While this discussion will be taken up in earnest in Chapter 6, I want to briefly illustrate the complex, layered nature of the syncretism embedded in the writing system used at Than Ówîngeh.

The Than Ówîngeh orthography employs an alphabetic system, which represents the first level of syncretism. If community members have chosen to write their heritage language, they next must decide what kind of writing system to employ. While a number of non-alphabetic writing systems have been used in North America, the vast majority are based on the use of an alphabet. Again, this is unsurprising given the longstanding contact between Native Americans and English- and Spanish-speaking populations. For the past few centuries, Native Americans have had extensive exposure to the English and Spanish orthographies, through religious texts, for example, government edicts, and boarding school curricula.

Also, the Than Ówîngeh alphabet makes use of the Roman script, which represents the second level of syncretism. This level emerges as a result of the first, as both the English and Spanish orthographies use the Roman script. Given Southwestern Native Americans’ longstanding exposure to the English and Spanish orthographies, it would make little sense for them to adopt, say, the Cyrillic script, to represent their respective heritage languages. Within the Latin script there arises a third level of syncretism, which involves the specific sound-symbol correspondences and stylistic conventions. It is at this level that syncretism can be observed most clearly, as many of the orthographic conventions for Than Ówîngeh Tewa have been borrowed from English.
In addition, most of the stylistic conventions (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing) used in Than Ówîngeh Tewa have been adopted from English and Spanish.

2.4.3 Utilitarianism

When one hears the term “utilitarianism”, he or she likely is reminded of its meaning in ethics, the concept of providing the greatest good for the most number of people. This idea, most notably developed by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, traditionally has been discussed as a social theory or even as a philosophical problem. However, its core principle can be applied effectively to the description of linguistic practices as well.

In a language ideological sense, utilitarianism involves the view that language represents a communicative tool, de-emphasizing its sociocultural and emotional import (Kroskrity 2009:192-194). Kroskrity presents an example of this language ideology operating among the Western Mono of central California, who experienced language shift from the heritage language to English at the beginning of the twentieth century. During this time, the parental generation was hesitant to pass down Mono to their children because of the heavy stigmatization attached to the heritage language and because of the perceived economic advantages of English. Here, utilitarianism represents a widely held belief that English must be learned (read: used as a commodity) to provide access to and help ensure success in the emerging cash economy. It is easy to mistake happiness and the “greater good”, which is present in the traditional concept of utilitarianism, as a kind of prescriptive idea in the domain of language (a mandate that one must learn English). But that is not what is meant here. Instead, utilitarianism in its language ideological meaning addresses the idea that language $x$, or some aspect of language $x$, is perceived as
being more useful than language $y$ or some aspect of language $y$. Thus, one can view utilitarianism as an operant language ideology that can motivate people to abandon their heritage language, often because of the perceived advantages offered by a language of wider use and higher prestige (e.g., English as providing access to the cash economy). This concept, however, does not have to operate at such a macro-level scale, as I would argue that this—and all language ideologies—operate every day, any time a person uses language. For example, consider the use of English in Tribal Council meetings in Puebloan societies.

While there are often opening and closing prayers recited in the heritage language as well as other bits of heritage language use, English is by far the language used most often. At Than Ówîngeh, English performs most of the functions once occupied by Tewa. While many of the tribal council members are native speakers of Tewa, tribal council meetings are conducted almost exclusively in English, as is the case at other New Mexico Pueblos and reservations. As Silverstein (1979) has observed, many Native American speech communities view their heritage languages as inherently “performative”, in which the spoken word has the potential to affect reality, rather than as “reflectionist”, in which language is viewed as merely reflecting but not affecting the outside world. Tribal council meetings proceed according to agendas; minutes are taken and reports are sent to superiors, so tribal council members may feel that the use of Tewa is less amenable to bureaucratic discussions about tribal administrative affairs. Perhaps most crucially, however, these meetings often require council members to peruse various documents, all of which are printed in English or, less often, in Spanish. Just as with the language ideology of syncretism, I would argue that utilitarianism has helped shape conceptions
about the role of writing in the heritage language and has informed technical considerations regarding the sound-symbol correspondences we find in the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography.

As I will argue later, community members’ valuation of both syncretism and utilitarianism point toward an underlying concern about ease of learnability. That is, if syncretism involves a value placed upon linguistic borrowing and if utilitarianism involves the view of language as a tool, then both language ideologies can be viewed as highlighting the need for maximizing accessibility to the Than Ówîngeh orthography. However, as is common among language ideologies, variationism seems to conflict with syncretism and utilitarianism.

2.4.4 Variationism

Variationism, following Kroskrity (2009), is a language ideology that views dialectal variation, usually based on individual or family differences, as the expected norm. To understand this language ideology, it first is necessary to discuss the works of Wilhelm Von Humboldt and Benedict Anderson, who, though separated by more than a century of scholarly literature, shared many of the same views that underpin the concept of variationism.

Wilhelm Von Humboldt, one of the foremost German Romanticist writers, explored the idea that one’s language carries its own unique weltanschauung or ‘worldview’ (see Losonsky 1999). His influential writings later served as motivation for Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf in developing the linguistic relativity hypothesis (the idea that one’s language shapes one’s thinking). However, Humboldt’s views on language were deeply conflicted. On the one hand, he emphasized that each language
deserves its own description, not one based on Latin or Greek; on the other hand, he viewed Indo-European languages as superior to others (Leavitt 2006:50-53; see also Bauman and Briggs 2003, Gumperz 1996, and Penn 1972). While Humboldt was correct that different languages (and their different worldviews) deserve different descriptive treatments, by suggesting that some languages are more intellectually advanced than others, his views on the relationship between language and thought are severely weakened by irreconcilable differences. Unfortunately, this very criticism has called into question the validity of many of Benedict Anderson’s ideas in *Imagined Communities*.

Researchers investigating language ideologies are often ambivalent about Anderson’s works. On the one hand, he correctly acknowledges the important role that language plays in the construction of communities at the micro-level and of nationalistic spirit at the macro-level. However, his claim that nations in development must necessarily be monolingual is oversimplistic at best and ignorant at worst. Kroskrity says as much in his discussion of language ideologies in Western Mono (2009:193, 305). Anderson’s model is best applied to the role of language in the consolidation of the European nation states, but he was incorrect in espousing a one-nation, one-language view across the board.

Just as with syncretism and utilitarianism, I will argue that variationism can be observed at several levels within Than Ówîngeh and throughout the six Rio Grande Tewa Pueblos: across Tewa-speaking communities, within Tewa-speaking communities, and within the Than Ówîngeh orthography itself. This discussion will be taken up in earnest in Chapter 6, but I will here explain the concept of variationism. Most broadly, one can observe macro-level variationism at work among the Rio Grande Tewa Pueblos. Even
though there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility among the various Tewa dialects, no known attempts have been made to develop a unified, standardized Tewa orthography. Whenever a heritage language program has been implemented, it has been bounded by community lines. The fact that several Rio Grande Tewa communities have developed their own heritage language programs and dictionaries (e.g., San Juan, Than Ówîngeh) seems to point to just this kind of variationism. Despite the mutual intelligibility among the Tewa dialects in New Mexico, further investigation is required to better understand why attempts to develop a pan-Puebloan Tewa language program have failed. However, I suspect that part of the answer involves the fact that each of these Pueblos represents a sovereign nation, each of which possesses its own unique history, bureaucracy, and administration—all these factors make unification incredibly difficult.

Further, one can observe variationism within Tewa communities. For example, during elicitation sessions at Than Ówîngeh, our consultants often exhibit variant pronunciations of the same form. Most often this variation exists at the phonological level, as can be seen, for example, in our consultants’ different pronunciations of the Tewa word <funyu> ‘fly’. One consultant consistently pronounces the alveolar nasal when it appears in coda position (as [funju]), while another consultant consistently pronounces this sound as a high, back nasalized rounded vowel (as [fũyu]).

Also, consultants often use different forms to refer to the same referent, and such lexical variation occurs within and across speakers. For example, there are two forms for ‘coffee’: <cafê> and <fênp’oe>. The former is of course a borrowing from Spanish, and the latter is the Tewa form meaning ‘black water.’ As with allophonic variation, Than Ówîngeh Tewa speakers consider both <cafê> and <fênp’oe> as acceptable forms
although they do acknowledge that <café> is not Tewa. At one level, these examples of variationism occur at a structural level (i.e., as allophonic variation). However, at another level, although speakers exhibit differences in their speech, they do not argue with one another as to which is the “correct” form. Thus, it is not merely phonological variation, but the unarticulated acceptance of such differences that can be taken as evidence of variationism in Than Ówîngeh Tewa.

Taken together, semiotic concepts and ideologies about language (and the specific kinds of language ideologies outlined above) serve as useful tools for examining community members’ attitudes toward the role of writing in heritage language programs. They further provide a framework for understanding decisions regarding technical aspects of an orthography and thereby can help provide a new perspective on findings gleaned from ethnographic fieldwork. These issues will be revisited in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 3
THAN ÓWÎNGEH AND THAN ÓWÎNGEH TEWA

Than Ówîngeh is located at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is one of nineteen federally recognized Pueblos in the state. That Than Ówîngeh, like all Puebloan communities, has largely maintained its cultural heritage in the face of ever-increasing assimilatory pressures is a testament to the strength and resilience of its people. Over the past several centuries, all Puebloan communities have undergone profound changes in terms of social organization and political structure. Given that Than Ówîngeh has been inhabited continuously since at least the fifteenth century, its people have demonstrated an incredibly high degree of adaptability, a quality that will become increasingly important for future generations at the Pueblo.

The first part of this chapter will be devoted to outlining some of the more important historical changes that have taken place with the Pueblo’s population, kinship, economy, and other aspects of social organization and government. This information then will be used to contextualize a discussion of the demographics of present-day Than Ówîngeh (as much as can be permitted to maintain anonymity). The second part of this chapter will present an overview of the Than Ówîngeh Tewa language, with particular attention paid to areas of linguistic structure that carry implications for the development of the orthography.
3.1 Than Ówîngeh

While it remains unclear how many people may have resided in the Pueblo before contact with European peoples, it is likely that Than Ówîngeh never had a population exceeding a few thousand. Given what is known about traditional farming practices, social organization, and overall living conditions at the time, sustaining a population of more than a few thousand would likely have exerted too great a pressure on local resources (Dozier 1983 [1970]:31-39).

While pre-contact populations cannot be reliably ascertained, the earliest post-contact estimates come from Hodge (1912:325), who reports approximately 600 people residing in Than Ówîngeh in 1680. Populations steadily decreased after this, no doubt as a result of casualties incurred from the Pueblo revolts, as well as from the continued abuse of the indigenous populations at the hands of the Spanish and later the Americans. Reflecting a general trend across Puebloan groups, the population at Than Ówîngeh reached a low point of approximately 100 near the middle of the nineteenth century (ibid.). Such low numbers persisted until the early twentieth century, when the treatment and living conditions of Native Americans improved and the U.S. government began to loosen its assimilationist policies.

According to the 1968 census, there were thought to be approximately 260 residents at Than Ówîngeh. However, it is unclear whether this figure represents the number of tribal members residing in the community itself or whether it includes those who are on the tribal rolls but live outside of the community. Recent estimates from Pueblo-internal records (as of March 2006) cite approximately 640 members on the tribal
rolls, with 400 reservation members residing in the Pueblo and 240 non-reservation members residing outside the Pueblo.

As is common among Puebloan societies, there is a great deal of religious syncretism in Than Ówîngeh, as the Tewa belief system has become so intertwined with Catholicism that the two are now nearly inseparable. More specifically, elements of Catholicism and the Tewa belief system can be identified individually, as observed by the fact that at Than Ówîngeh the church⁹ and the kiva sit very close to one another but exist as separate structures. However, after mass on feast day, parishioners exit the church and are led on a procession that takes them around the kiva and back to the church—as if the procession itself serves to index the binding of the indigenous religion with Catholic doctrine or vice versa. However, due to the sensitive nature of these religious practices, this study will not describe the rituals or the linguistic practices used in such rituals at Than Ówîngeh. However, the interested reader is directed to Dozier (1983 [1970]) and Ortiz (1969) for insight into Tewa ceremonial practices.

3.1.1 Kinship and social organization

The Tewa—and Tanoan groups more generally—have a bilateral kinship system, which aligns fairly closely with the model familiar to most Western societies. Age is emphasized in this system, as disciplinary cases traditionally have been handled by the oldest man in the household, and the oldest male relatives are tasked with training male children, while the oldest female relatives are responsible for training female children.

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⁹ In fact, there are several churches at Than Ówîngeh; however, the church I am speaking of here is situated right next to the kiva.
(Dozier 1983 [1970]:163-166). The importance of age within the Tewa kinship system also is reflected lexically in the Tewa language. Consider these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Tewa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oldest aunt</td>
<td>kä́ ’yây</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youngest aunt</td>
<td>kó́ ’öe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older uncle</td>
<td>màe’màeæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger uncle</td>
<td>tǘ ’núu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older brother or sister</td>
<td>pà’dåy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger brother or sister</td>
<td>ti ’üu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Martinez 1983:10-11)

These lexical distinctions illustrate a difference in the Tewa kinship system compared to that of the Western model. Note that in English, if one wants to distinguish among aunts of different ages in one’s family, he/she must add another word (e.g., oldest, youngest), whereas this age distinction already is lexicalized in the Tewa language.

The primary unit of traditional social and ceremonial organization of Than Ówîngeh—and all Tewa groups more generally—is the moiety. The moiety traditionally has been understood as a kinship system, which divides a community into two categories based on family affiliation. However, among the Tewa, this unit does not serve to unify members of a common descent group but rather acts as a dichotomous organizing structure, with each moiety responsible for overseeing different governmental and ceremonial tasks. Hence, among the Tewa exists a summer moiety and a winter moiety,

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10 Martinez (1983) also reports kë’ëe ‘young aunt.’

11 The fact that there is no corresponding entry for ‘oldest uncle’ would suggest that the term for ‘older uncle’ màe’màeæ could be used to apply more broadly to any uncle who is over a certain age, regardless of whether they are the oldest in the family. It is also possible, however, that there was in fact a specific term for ‘oldest uncle’ but was not included as an entry for whatever reason.
and much of the organizational tasks assigned to each group are determined by calendric season, such as preparations for and administration of traditional rituals and harvesting duties (see Dozier 1983 [1970]:162-176; Ortiz 1965:389-396; Parsons 1924:336, 1929:278). More recently, each moiety has been responsible for various duties relating to preparations for community feast days.

As with all New Mexico Pueblos, once a year, Than Ówîngeh holds a feast day, in which outsiders are encouraged to attend and enjoy a day of ceremonial dancing. A market is set up on the plaza where vendors sell jewelry, pottery, clothing, and fry bread, among other things. Perhaps the highlight of the day is where people are invited to move from house to house, eating traditional foods.

3.1.2 Indigenous crops

The indigenous crops of the Pueblos were corn, beans, and squash, but cotton and tobacco also were grown extensively. Since the arrival of the Spanish, wheat and alfalfa have been added, along with fruits such as peaches, apples, plums, cherries, and, of course, chile (Dozier 1983 [1970]:127-128). The last of these has become so firmly entrenched in Puebloan culinary tradition that there are few meals in which it does not appear. Foods served on feast days in particular are renowned for their liberal use of the delicious pepper. Until recently, the people of Than Ówîngeh subsisted on agriculture, raising cattle, hunting, and day labor. However, since the introduction of the cash economy, many community members have sought employment in nearby population centers such as Santa Fe, Española, Los Alamos, and Albuquerque, where they now perform wage labor.
Land use rights and other inheritance are passed down to daughters as well as to sons, which suggests that sex distinctions do not figure prominently into the kinship system. Because of the Tewas’ longstanding proximity to and intermarriage with Keresans, the former were exposed to the clan lineage of the latter. However, as Dozier reports, the clan concept remained an “undigested diffusion” and so never regulated Tewa kinship (ibid. 163-166).

3.1.3 Tribal membership

Among Native American groups, tribal membership most often is determined through blood quantum, although the minimum quantum required to qualify for membership can vary widely from tribe to tribe and even from community to community. This is apparent among the Tewa, in which tribal membership largely varies from one pueblo to the next, as each pueblo has its own tribal constitution and therefore its own criteria for determining membership. As stated in an article that appeared in a recent edition of The New Mexican, a publication largely distributed to communities in Northern New Mexico, “Historically, the Native American community has granted membership to the children of [Okhúwá Ówîngeh] men. But the offspring of [Okhúwá Ówîngeh] women with men from outside the tribe, Native American or not, are not automatically granted membership” (Sharp 2012). However, the criteria used at Than Ówîngeh differ from those at Okhúwá Ówîngeh.
3.2 Impact of Housing and Urban Development

Those who work closely with speakers of endangered languages recognize that myriad factors contribute to language loss. Among them, perhaps one of the least understood is the role that community housing plays in sustaining the vitality of heritage languages. While this issue certainly deserves more attention than can be given in this dissertation, I want to briefly discuss the impact of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to illustrate how decisions regarding civic planning have affected heritage language use at Than ówîngeh, and indeed at all New Mexican pueblos.

HUD has had a long and important role in Native American communities, and, while a complete history of the department cannot be provided here, two of its most notable pieces of legislation are the Housing and Urban Development Acts of 1965 and 1970. The former established the department at a cabinet level, and the latter approved substantial subsidy programs aimed at providing further financial support to lower- and moderate-income households. The basic goal of HUD is to provide affordable housing while maintaining or increasing standards of living, thereby decreasing levels of homelessness (see www.hud.gov). Here, I will concentrate on HUD with respect to its implementation in Native American communities.

The past several decades have witnessed an increase in the standards of living in Native American communities. Yet while HUD did much to provide community members with improved housing and modern amenities such as plumbing and electricity, unforeseen consequences have occurred that have negatively affected the vitality of heritage languages. The traditional layout of Than ówîngeh—indeed, of all New
Mexican Pueblos—was that of closely knit living arrangements localized around the kiva, which continues to serve as the spiritual nucleus of the Pueblo to this day. This long-established communal design promoted close interpersonal relationships, but with the introduction of HUD housing, the population has become more dispersed. This decentralization gave rise to geographically separated housing, and has, I believe, created two problems for the sustained vitality of the heritage language.

First, while HUD housing increased the standard of living at the Pueblo, the agency required different architectural techniques, building materials, plumbing, and electricity—all of which required increased allotments of land. As a result, the transition from higher population density to more diffuse housing decreases access to and ease of communication in the heritage language. After all, it is difficult to greet—let alone engage in conversation with—a neighbor who is out of earshot. Second, and perhaps more importantly, to maintain this higher standard of living, families are forced to work longer hours. This increase in time spent away from home detracts from familial and community interaction, such that parents will have fewer opportunities to interact with their children in the heritage language. While it is not my intention to criticize HUD practices, as their financial and health benefits are numerous, nonetheless unforeseen negative repercussions have been incurred by community members—specifically, that heritage language preservation is adversely affected by the areal dispersal of community housing. Longitudinal studies of the effects of HUD housing will be necessary to fully understand the relationship between civic planning and language shift at New Mexico Pueblos.
3.3 The Than Ówingeh Tewa language

Than Ówingeh is one of six Tewa-speaking Pueblos (not including Arizona Tewa, which will receive only limited attention here), and its language, Than Ówingeh Tewa, is among the most endangered indigenous languages in North America. Fewer than thirty native speakers remain at the Pueblo, and the heritage language no longer is passed down to children as a first language. Most fluent speakers are over the age of 65, which places Than Ówingeh Tewa in Category C in the model proposed by Krauss (1992).

Well into the 1980s, applied linguists and anthropologists tended to discuss language endangerment in more or less absolute terms; that is, a language is either endangered or it isn’t. Perhaps one of the most well-known ideas associated with the work of Joshua Fishman is his Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), which, much like the Richter Scale, categorizes endangered languages into certain stages, from Stage 8 languages, in which the endangerment is most severe, to Stage 1 languages, in which the future vitality of the language is most stable (see Fishman 1991:87-109). For many people, the term “endangered language” suggests that the notion of endangerment is a binary category—that a language either is or is not threatened. Fishman’s eight-stage GIDS model, instead, provides a lens through which the notion of language endangerment can be viewed as a spectrum, with the most critically threatened languages occupying Stage 8 and the least threatened languages occupying Stage 1 (see below). It should be mentioned that a language such as English does not occupy Stage 1, as it has “the additional safety provided by political independence” (ibid. 107).

Speech communities of languages at this stage have achieved a certain level of cultural autonomy, such that language revitalization efforts are largely organized, supported, and integrated into the local educational system. However, as Fishman is quick to point out, languages classified as Stage 1 are not without their problems, and their long-term vitality is not guaranteed.
Stage 8
Most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.

Stage 7
Most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child bearing age.

Stage 6
The attainment of intergenerational informal oralcy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement.

Stage 5
Xish literacy in home, school, and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.

Stage 4
Xish in lower education (Types A and B) that meets the requirements of compulsory educational laws

Stage 3
Use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside of the Xish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen.

Stage 2
Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either.

Stage 1
Some use of Xish in high level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence)

Fishman (1991:88-107)

Fishman further divides Stage 4 into two types: A and B. Because Stage 4 involves the extent to which a language meets mandatory educational requirements, the difference between Type A and Type B has to do with the schools themselves. According to Fishman (1991:100), Type A schools are those that “… meet compulsory education
requirements but… are largely maintained by the Xish community itself … ” whereas Type B schools are those that “… provide an Xish component in the definition of minimally adequate and desirable education, but that are entirely funded from general tax funds.”

Than Ówingeh Tewa would be considered a Stage 7 language in the GIDS model. Whereas languages in Stage 8 require a great deal of reconstruction, often performed by the last speaker(s) of a language, or even from audio recordings or written texts, Stage 7 languages are still used by speakers who are socially integrated, though beyond child-bearing age. Also, as Fishman notes, speakers of Stage 7 languages are “… often the major linguistically functional resource available to language activists” (ibid. 90).

However, Than Ówingeh Tewa has not yet become a Stage 6 language, in which the language is used as the primary means of intergenerational communication. Most if not all of the remaining speakers of Than Ówingeh Tewa are in the grandparental generation and speak to their children and grandchildren in English and/or Spanish. It is very likely that if language revitalization efforts are unsuccessful in the Pueblo, Than Ówingeh Tewa could fall into this Stage 8, a frightening prospect for Tewa language activists and TOLP members.

Tewa is a Kiowa-Tanoan language, most closely related to Tiwa and Towa (see Figure 1). Whorf and Trager (1937) proposed that the Tanoan family is genealogically related to the Uto-Aztecan family, yet there is little evidence to support this claim. Tewa is spoken in six pueblos in New Mexico: Ohkay Ówingeh (formerly San Juan Pueblo), Okhúwá Ówingeh, P’óe Ówingeh, Makówá Ówingeh, K’uu Ówingeh, and Than Ówingeh. Each of these Pueblos, save for K’uu Ówingeh—most of whose residents
historically came from Okúwá Ówîngeh—has its own dialect, all of which are mutually intelligible with each other (see Figure 2).\footnote{All of these Pueblos—save for Ohkay Owingeh—have been presented as pseudonyms for reasons mentioned in Chapter 1.}

In addition, there is a community of Arizona Tewa speakers (also known as Hopi Tewa\footnote{Although this group is often referred to as Hopi Tewa, there is in fact no linguistic or genetic relationship between them and the Hopi.}) that resides in a Hopi reservation near First Mesa. This group historically derives from Rio Grande Tewa but arrived at its present-day location sometime shortly after the Pueblo Indian Revolts in the late seventeenth century. Given this continued geographic separation and time depth, Arizona Tewa is no longer mutually intelligible with the dialects of Rio Grande Tewa (see Kroskrity 2000).

![Figure 1. The traditional structure of the Kiowa-Tanoan family (Adapted from Trager 1951, Davis 1959, Watkins 1977)](image)

\footnote{In 1951, the relationship between Piro and Kiowa-Tanoan was not yet well understood, as reflected by its isolation in this diagram. Although little is known about the Piros, it is likely that Piro existed as a dialect of Tiwa.}
This study will not focus on the structural properties of Tewa, but the interested reader is referred to the works of Harrington (1910, 1912), Dozier (1949, 1953), Hoijer and Dozier (1949), Speirs (1966), and Sutton (forthcoming) for detailed analyses of Tewa structure. However, it is necessary to briefly discuss the structural properties of Tewa that hold implications for the Than Öwîngeh orthography.

3.3.1 Phonetics and phonology

Than Öwingeh Tewa makes use of 29 consonants and 12 vowels. These sounds are organized in Table 1 below.
Table 1. The consonants of Than Ówingeh Tewa.

3.3.1.1 Consonants

Labial

[p] The voiceless bilabial stop typically is unaspirated in Than Ówingeh Tewa, and if it is aspirated, it is much less so than in English.

[p’] Voiceless ejective bilabial stop.

[b] The voiced bilabial stop is often slightly prevoiced and prenasalized.

[v ~ ß] The voiced labiodental fricative occurs only in intervocalic position and often alternates with the voiced bilabial fricative.

[f] The voiceless labiodental fricative appears occasionally as a bilabial fricative.

[m] The voiced bilabial nasal stop is common in the syllable onset position, but occurs in coda position only when preceding a labial consonant.
Dental

[θ ~ tʰ] The voiceless interdental fricative occasionally alternates with the voiceless aspirated dental stop

Alveolar

[t] The voiceless alveolar stop.

[t’] The voiceless ejective alveolar stop.

[d] The voiced dental stop, like [b], is often slightly prevoiced and prenasalized. [d] very rarely occurs intervocically (often weakens to [ɾ]) after an oral vowel).

[r] The voiced alveolar tap occurs only in intervocalic position (weakened from [d]) or after a glottal stop. [d] and [ɾ] may be allophones. However, the primary environment of this alternation occurs in the pronominal verbal prefixes.

[s] The voiceless alveolar fricative.

[n] The voiced alveolar nasal stop occurs in syllable onset position or in coda position only when preceding another coronal.

[ts] The voiceless alveolar affricate is sometimes slightly aspirated.

[ts’] The voiceless ejective alveolar affricate.

(Alveo-) palatal

[tʸ] The voiceless palatalized coronal stop occurs extremely rarely.

[f] The voiceless palato-alveolar fricative.

16 All dental and alveolar consonants in Than Ówingeh Tewa are coronal.
The voiceless palato-alveolar affricate.

The voiceless ejective palato-alveolar affricate is fairly uncommon, appearing usually before [a] and [æ].

The voiced palatal glide.

The voiceless palatal nasal stop occurs very rarely in stem-initial position but is somewhat common word-internally. It alternates with [j], especially when following a nasal vowel. This sound is used by some speakers of Than Ówingeh Tewa but not others.

The voiced palato-alveolar affricate is not present in the Than Ówingeh dialect and is used only in the Okhúwá Ówîngeh dialect. Usually where Than Ówingeh uses [y], Okhúwá Ówîngeh employs [dʒ].

**Velar**

The voiceless velar stop is usually only slightly aspirated.

The voiceless ejective velar stop.

The voiced velar stop is somewhat uncommon and often weakens to [ɣ] intervocalically.

The voiceless velar fricative often exhibits only slight frication and therefore is sometimes difficult to distinguish from [h].

The voiced velar nasal occurs only in coda position. Coda [n] is realized as [ŋ]. However, it still is written as <n>. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 6.
Labiovelar

[kʷ] The voiceless labiovelar stop is sometimes slightly aspirated.

[kʷʰ] The voiceless ejective labiovelar stop occurs fairly rarely.

[xʷ ~ hʷ] The voiceless labiovelar fricative often exhibits only slight frication.

[w] The voiced labiovelar glide.

Glottal

[h] The voiceless glottal fricative.

[ʔ] The voiceless glottal stop occurs often, though never written when it occurs in word-initial position. Word-finally it may be realized as an unreleased glottal stop or a released glottal stop with an “echo vowel.”

3.3.1.2 Vowels

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<tr>
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<th>Back Long</th>
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<tr>
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Table 2. The vowels of Than Ówingeh Tewa.

[i] The high front unrounded short vowel.

[i:] The high front unrounded long vowel.

[i] The high front unrounded nasal short vowel.

17 An echo vowel can be considered a weak repetition of the vowel preceding the glottal stop.
[ɪː] The high front unrounded nasal long vowel. This vowel occurs rarely, if at all.

[e ~ ɛ] The lower mid-high to upper mid-low front unrounded short vowel.

[ɛ̃ ~ ɛ˜] The lower mid-high to upper mid-low front unrounded short nasal vowel. This vowel is uncommon and often difficult to distinguish from [æ].

[ɛː ~ ɛː:] The lower mid-high to upper mid-low front unrounded long nasal vowel is extremely rare and, like [ɛ̃], is often difficult to distinguish from [æː].

[æ] The low to mid-low front unrounded short vowel.

[æ] The low to mid-low front unrounded nasal short vowel.

[æː] The low to mid-low front unrounded long vowel occurs extremely rarely. This vowel is almost exclusively nasalized.

[æː] The low to mid-low front unrounded nasal long vowel.

[a ~ ɒ] The low back short vowel, usually slightly rounded.

[aː ~ ɒː] The low back long vowel, usually slightly rounded.

[ã ~ ɒ̃] The low back short nasal vowel, usually slightly rounded.

[ãː ~ ɒ̃ː] The low back long nasal vowel, usually slightly rounded.

[o] The mid-high back rounded short vowel.

[oː] The mid-high back rounded long vowel.

[ō] The mid-high back rounded short nasal vowel is uncommon.

[ōː] The mid-high back rounded long nasal vowel occurs extremely rarely.

[u] The high back rounded short vowel.

[uː] The high back rounded long vowel.

[ʊ] The high back rounded nasal long vowel.
The high back rounded nasal long vowel.

In addition to the monophthongs above, Than Ówîngeh Tewa has one diphthong: [ai]. This sound only occurs intervocalically where [g] or [y] elides.

3.3.1.3 Tone

Than Ówîngeh Tewa employs three lexically contrastive tones, and each syllable is assigned a tone.

**Low tone:** Unmarked in the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography.

**High tone:** Marked with an acute accent. This diacritic is placed over the first vowel in a digraph, such as long vowels or [æ] (→ [áe]).

**Falling tone:** Marked with a circumflex accent. Like high tone, this diacritic is placed over the first vowel in a digraph, such as long vowels or [æ] (→ [âe]). Falling tone occurs only with long vowels or in closed syllables. Also, when the coda following the vowel is a glottal stop, the main vowel carries the high part of the tone, while the echo vowel carries the low part of the tone.

3.3.2 Phonotactics

The only possible syllable structures in native Than Ówîngeh Tewa words are CV and CVC, although borrowings may exhibit other structures. Also, careful phonetic analysis reveals that vowels in word-initial position are likely preceded by a glottal stop,
although this is not reflected in the writing system. All consonants may occur in syllable-onset position, with the exception of [ŋ]. All consonants may occur in word-initial position, with the exception of [v] and [ɾ]. The only permissible coda consonants are [ŋ], [ʔ], and [h]. Of these, only [h] can occur in word-internal position and never word-finally. Word final [n] is realized as [ŋ], which seems to be a feature unique to this dialect of Tewa.

3.3.3 Morphology

As is common among Tanoan languages, Tewa exhibits a high degree of morphological complexity. Tewa is considered an agglutinative language, as there is typically one meaning per morpheme, and the boundaries between morphemes are fairly clear. Tewa, however, uses a great deal of noun incorporation, which could lead some to classify the language as polysynthetic. Although time cannot be devoted to a complete analysis of Tewa morphology, I will concentrate on several areas in Tewa morphology that pose problems for the written representation of Than Ówîngleh: aspect, proclitics, noun incorporation, and focus/topic markers.

Tewa is an aspect-based system rather than tense-based. The most common aspects encountered in the language are perfective, ongoing/continuous, imperative, and potential. However, given the goals of the TOLP, which will be discussed in the next chapter, these will likely be called “past”, “present”, “command”, and “future”, to cater to a broader readership of community members who likely have had little or no linguistic training. That is, even though these terms are themselves used in the field of linguistics, they also are used in primary and secondary education—the kind of schooling many Than
Ówîngeh community members have received. Therefore, Tewa language learners are much more likely to be familiar with these tense-related terms than their aspect-related counterparts.

Tewa uses a complex system of proclitics to indicate the number of subjects and objects used in relation to the verb. This system is undoubtedly one of the most complicated areas of the language, but because these proclitics convey important information about who is doing what to whom in a given utterance, mastering the use of these forms is necessary in order to achieve any kind of proficiency in the language. While these forms are considered proclitics because they are morphologically independent but phonologically dependent on the form that follows, I hereon will refer them as pronominal verbal prefixes (PVPs) for two reasons: 1) This term was used in San Juan Pueblo Tewa dictionary, which served as the model for the Than Ówîngeh Language Program’s forthcoming dictionary (to be discussed in the next chapter); and 2) I believe this term more accurately expresses their meaningfulness and importance in the language.

There are basically six sets of PVPs: intransitive, intransitive benefactive, reflexive, transitive, transitive benefactive, and reflexive benefactive. While there is some overlap in forms, the PVP set below illustrates their importance in speech and difficulty for the learner. The set below represents the benefactive PVPs, which are used in utterances such as *x buys bread (for y).*
Because PVPs carry independent meaning but are phonologically influenced by the forms they precede, there is a question of how they should be represented in writing. Some linguists might argue that because they are phonologically bound to another form, they should be treated as prefixes in writing. However, others might argue that because they carry meaning independent of the forms they precede, they should be treated as separate words in writing. The orthographic representation of PVPs also must take into account what is easiest for the language learner. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Tewa also employs a fair amount of noun incorporation. Just as there is an issue with whether to represent PVPs as separate words, the same issue arises for incorporated forms. Canonical noun incorporation involves taking the direct object of an utterance and moving it to the verb complex. While noun incorporation most commonly is associated with polysynthetic languages, one does not imply the other. For example, consider the forms *babysit* or *mountain climb* as verbs. Here, what originally was a direct object (e.g.,

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Table 3. The Benefactive Proniminal Verbal Prefixes Set

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18 Note that subjects are designated in columns while objects are designated in rows. “s” means singular, “d” means dual, “p” plural, “(O)” means object, and (S) means subject. For example, the PVP *dôn* is used to indicate a 1s subject acting on a 3s object.
baby) has been included in the verb itself. Although English does not make extensive use of this structure, noun incorporation figures prominently in Tewa morphosyntax. Further, in complex verb constructions in Tewa, the non-matrix verb changes to an incorporated form when combining with the matrix verb. Consider the example below.

(1) **tó-an nqege ívé na oede’ee pûnd-á’?**
   Who-FOC this room 3sINT bathroom go (INC)-want
   ‘Who in here wants to use the bathroom?’

Focus and topic markers also play an important role in Tewa, as they are used extensively in casual discourse. Just as with PVPs and incorporated forms, focus/topic markers present a possible problem for their written representation. These forms are best considered enclitics, as they are bound phonologically to the preceding stem but are treated as morphologically distinct because they encode a specific meaning (marking the topic or focus of an utterance). The question then becomes whether these forms should be treated as suffixes, as separate words, or as some balance between the two (e.g., inserting a hyphen between the stem and the enclitic).

(2) **náa oe konge-mú’ o thaa**
   I(TOP) dist. deictic arroyo-nearby 1sINT live (IMPF)
   ‘I live near the arroyo’

First, note that the independent pronoun *nāa* ‘I’ ends in a long, low back unrounded vowel, which is low tone. However, when followed by the topicalizer *á*,

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19 Whether the incorporated form is a noun or the non-matrix verb, it occupies the same position (immediately preceding the matrix verb).
which is high tone, in speech that tonality bleeds into the previous vowel, yielding náa. Just as with the focus marker an, the topicalizer presents a possible problem in terms of its written representation. This issue will be taken up again in Chapter 6.

3.3.4 Syntax

The unmarked word order for Than Ówingeh Tewa is SOV, as this is the order most often encountered in everyday discourse. The notion of what constitutes a “word” has long been a problem in linguistics. Very often, deciding what is or is not a word is determined by how it is written—that is, the problem is approached in a top-down manner. Imagine a conversation between two friends, both of whom speak English. If they are debating about whether a given form is, say, one word or two, at some point they are likely to consult a dictionary to “prove” who is right. This, it seems to me, is a rather top-down approach, in that some source (e.g., dictionary, reference grammar) is viewed as the authority to be consulted, which will offer an “answer” and maybe even an explanation as to why a given form is best considered one word. The reader then may use these rules and apply them to similar situations. Members of TOLP deal with issues rather differently.

In making decisions for what constitutes a word in Tewa, TOLP members take a more bottom-up approach because there either are no dictionaries or reference grammars of Tewa, or, if there are, they are outdated or inaccurate. So then, when TOLP members argue about whether a given Tewa form is one word or two, we must use our own instinct as native speakers or linguists. As will be discussed later, the Tewa lexicon presents challenges for the written representation of the language, and one of the biggest
challenges facing the creation of the Than Ówîngeh dictionary is the need for consistency. Further, although little discussion has taken place regarding the possible evolution of the writing system, the more it is used, the more it will certainly change. All of the TOLP members emphasize that while a standard orthography is useful insofar as it introduces systematicity to the writing of Tewa, the use of writing (and the sound-symbol correspondences with the orthography) is ultimately at the discretion of the writer.
CHAPTER 4
THE THAN ÓWÎNGEH LANGUAGE PROGRAM

In October 2003, the Than Ówingeh Language Program (TOLP) was formed. This represented the third attempt at establishing such a program, as previous attempts were abandoned for various political and logistic reasons. The impetus for this program was a need for community-level involvement in language education and cultural awareness. Before discussing the development of the program, however, I want to briefly outline some of the significant historical events that helped make such a program possible.

4.1 Legislation of Native American languages

As has been well documented, the early treatment of Native Americans was characterized by assimilationist policies, first by the Spanish in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, then by the United States government in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Well into the 1960s, Native Americans were punished for using their heritage languages, and stories abound of people taken from their communities and placed in boarding schools where they were taught English and forced to adopt Western cultural practices.

Even among those who were ostensibly working on behalf of Native Americans, namely academic researchers, exploitation of Native peoples was common. Visits in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by linguists and anthropologists are engrained in the collective memory of the community. Many recall experiences their
parents or grandparents have had with these investigators, whose concerns for the community often were secondary to their research agendas. Many of these visitors professed to be interested parties, working to educate the American public on Native American cultures.

However, for all the articles and books that have been produced on Native American cultures and languages, the primary goals of many of these early investigators was often simply to get published to further their careers, with little regard for the people they studied, or in some cases, with whom they closely collaborated. Very few worked as advocates for the people themselves. This type of “salvage” research (Collins 1998) has had consequences for contemporary investigators, who often are distrusted, no matter how well-intentioned they may be. To this day, this issue continues to be a concern among researchers and community members.

Indeed, such salvage research bears on this study as well. Although I have reflected carefully on my role as an outside researcher and envision a broad readership of linguists and anthropologists (as well as community members in subsequent texts), I nonetheless recognize that most, if not all, readers will have an academic background. I therefore realize that the very content of this study (or, more specifically, the language used to characterize such content) may alienate community members from nonacademic backgrounds. It therefore will be important in the coming years to reinforce the findings of this study by presenting at regional conferences, tribal council meetings, local language fairs, and other community forums. More importantly, however, it will be necessary to meet with community members individually or in groups to find common understandings and perspectives that bear on this study.
The late 1960s signaled the beginning of a new era in U.S.-Native American relations, and in 1968 the Bilingual Education Act was passed. This was the first piece of federal legislation that provided funding to public school districts for developing native-language instruction. This bill fell short of mandating bilingual programs across the country, but essentially decriminalized the use of languages other than English in the classroom during a time when being bilingual was considered a handicap (Cohen 1975: 33).

The year 1974 saw an expansion of the guidelines for bilingual education after the Lau v. Nichols case. The case was brought by a group of Chinese-American students who argued that they did not receive equal educational opportunities because of a lack of proficiency in the English language. In a landmark ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court found that public schools must provide support for students with limited proficiency in English, eventually giving rise to the “Lau guidelines” (Kibbee 1998:4-5). This case set an important precedent, and the ruling often is invoked by advocates of bilingual education as an important step forward in securing rights for bilinguals as well as for non-native English speakers. At this time, however, Spanish received most of the attention because of the increasing number of speakers in the United States, and any discussion of enacting legislation to protect Native American languages was still absent. It was only decades later that the U.S. government recognized the rights of indigenous people over their heritage languages.

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 rejected past policies that called for the eradication of Native American languages, stating, “[i]t is the policy of the United States to … preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to
use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (cited in Hinton 2001:45).

President George H.W. Bush signed the Native American Languages Act of 1992, titled “To Help Assure the Survival and Continuing Vitality of Native American Languages” (ibid. 46). In late 2006, H.R. 4766, also known as the “Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act”, was passed. This act expands the program established under the Native American Languages Act of 1990 and 1992 by providing additional funding to tribes for the preservation of their heritage languages. Tragically, the year before the act was passed, Esther Martinez, one of the act’s most vociferous supporters, was killed by a drunken driver.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007, states that indigenous peoples have the rights to “… maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over … cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions” (Article 31). Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States initially voted against adopting the declaration but have reversed their positions. This declaration is encouraging because it re-emphasizes the rights of all Native peoples over their language. However, there is still no protection against the appropriation of heritage languages by outsiders, and there may well never be.

The pieces of legislation discussed above bear on issues concerning the rights of indigenous peoples to their heritage languages at both the national and international levels. Although not a legislative document, strictly speaking, there is one more piece of history involving indigenous languages that I wish to discuss: the resolution on Students’
Right to their Own Language, adopted in 1974 by the executive committee of the
Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). This resolution reads:

We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the
dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity
and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of standard American
dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to
an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim
leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A
nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve
its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the
experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the
right of students to their own language.

“Students’ Right to Their Own Language”, CCCC (1974)

This resolution emerged at a time of increasing open admissions in public universities,
and these policies served to diversify—ethnically, culturally, linguistically—the
university classroom. At the same time, educators were faced with a literacy crisis in the
United States and expressed concern about the perceived decline in students’ abilities to
read and write. There was, in effect, a real paradigm shift in the United States educational
system, and writing instructors, in particular, challenged decades-old practices by moving
toward a pedagogy founded on social constructivism and expressivism (see Smitherman
1995 for a history of the drafting of the resolution). While I wholeheartedly agree with
the resolution, as it laudably recognizes the importance of minority languages and their
deserving place in the academy, I nonetheless believe that university administrators and
faculty must do more to foster an environment in which the use of these languages is not
merely permitted but is promoted for the purposes of spoken and written communication.
Although this might seem like an unrealistic goal, it is possible to change people’s perceptions about a language, and the classroom is perhaps the best place to start.

Consider how many first-year composition courses—and many writing-intensive courses more generally—are taught. Despite several decades of scholarly literature attesting to the fact that students do not become better writers by being constantly corrected in their grammar, there remains the perception among many instructors that it is precisely their job to do so (after all, they may claim, who else’s job is it if not theirs?). At one level, this is understandable, as surface-level features in writing (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling) are easier to notice than the deeper-level features (e.g., clarity of ideas, argumentation, organization), so it is very easy to (want to) point out any and every grammatical problem, even if the error is not fixed. Combine this exaggerated view on the perceived importance of surface-level features with the large number of non-native English speakers enrolled in first-year composition courses at the University of New Mexico, and there emerges an institutionalized, misplaced emphasis on aspects of writing that, in the end, don’t matter as much as the deeper-level issues. In fact, the student does not have to be a non-native English speaker to receive this treatment—he or she may speak a stigmatized dialect of English, such as African-American Vernacular English or Appalachian English. Not only does this constitute ineffective teaching, as Greenfield (2011) argues, such pedagogies are inherently racist in their adherence to and promotion of a (myth of) Standard English.

The CCCC resolution did much to advance a view of linguistic equality, yet there nonetheless remains to this day a profound tension between this descriptivism and the deep-rooted prescriptivism that has traditionally held sway in writing-intensive
classrooms. So while English writing instructors may do everything to empower their students and encourage them to use their heritage languages and dialects through personal narratives and life histories, students still are expected to conform to the prescribed rules of Standard American English—and this is precisely Greenfield’s argument: that even the most well-meaning instructor often will argue that if students want to play the academic game, they must follow the rules, and, as a result, instructors may feel the need to strictly enforce them. This study is itself ironic in that, on the one hand, it advocates for a more descriptive approach to the teaching of writing (whether in the English or Tewa classroom), but on the other hand, the final published text is expected to conform to the prescriptive conventions of the field. In other words, we still have a long way to go in realizing the CCCC resolution.

The past two decades have witnessed a sharp increase in the number of communities applying for and receiving funding for language preservation programs from grant agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation. Still, far too many communities remain without access to federal funding. While continued work is required to ensure that heritage language programs flourish, the development of the language program at Than Ówîngeh surely could not have been possible without these important pieces of legislation.

4.2 The Than Ówîngeh Language Program

In 2002, Múusa Kwee, a Than Ówîngeh community member, contacted Melissa Axelrod, a professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of New Mexico, inquiring about the possibility of developing a Tewa language-specific font. This
prompted a series of discussions between Than Ówîngeh and the Department of Linguistics at the University of New Mexico, eventually leading in early 2003 to the formation of the Than Ówîngeh Language Program (TOLP).

In late 2003, TOLP drafted a survey designed to solicit opinions from community members about developing a language program at Than Ówîngeh. Specifically, the survey sought community members’ opinions on two issues: first, whether they wanted to have a program dedicated to revitalizing the heritage language, and second, whether they supported the use of a writing system to help achieve that goal. Data from the survey revealed that most community members were in favor of using a writing system for Than Ówîngeh Tewa, but there was by no means unanimous community support, and many people were unavailable or chose not to complete the survey. However, TOLP sought and received approval from the tribal administration in 2004 and was given permission to start work on the project.

In administering this language survey, the TOLP sought to achieve what Fishman (1991) calls “prior ideological clarification”, a discussion of the terms of agreement by which a language program will operate. As Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) argue in their discussion of language preservation efforts in southeast Alaska, “[prior ideological clarification] calls for an open, honest assessment of the state of the language and how people really feel about using and preserving it” (63). These evaluations must take place before any language revitalization work is possible, and once the TOLP received permission, the language planning process began in earnest. The TOLP is open to all Than Ówîngeh tribal members and has been fortunate to receive support from several people in the community. The language program is led by Ogowée T’ún, Póví Kweeyo,
Múusa Kwee, Tséewee’ây Kwee, and Kó’ôe Chaenu, who serve as the principal agents of language revitalization efforts at the Pueblo. Their actual Tewa names have not been used here; instead, as mentioned earlier, the names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

Ogowée T’ún (‘Roadrunner Basket’) is a lifelong resident of Than Ówingeh, in her 70s. While Tewa is her first language, she also speaks Spanish and English fluently. She is the mother of another TOLP member, Múusa Kwee. In many respects Ogowée T’ún can be considered the founding member of the group, as she was initially approached by a former governor of Than Ówîngeh, who asked if she would be willing to teach Tewa in the community. After accepting this position, she quickly realized that she needed further community support. This commitment served as the impetus for the TOLP.

Póvi Kweeyó (‘Old Flower’) is also a lifelong resident of Than Ówingeh and is in her early 80s. She is a cousin of Ogowée T’ún and is a native speaker of Tewa. Like Ogowée T’ún, she also speaks Spanish and English fluently. Póvi Kweeyó, Ogowée T’ún, and Kó’ôe Chaenu have been lifelong friends, and the collaborative spirit they display in the program no doubt is due to this longstanding relationship of mutual trust and respect.

Múusa Kwee (‘Cat Woman’) is a tribal member in her 40s at Than Ówingeh and is the daughter of Ogowée T’ún. Although she maintains a residence at the Pueblo, she most often resides in Albuquerque. While her mother is a native speaker, Múusa Kwee is not, and the fact that English is her first language illustrates that her generation was the first not to speak Tewa as a first language. She regularly attends weekly Tewa classes at the Pueblo and has worked hard to increase her proficiency in Tewa to semi-fluent status.
Tséewee’áy Kwee (‗Little Animal Woman’) is a tribal member in her 50s at Than Ówîngeh. She lives at the Pueblo and is a semi-fluent speaker of Tewa. As with Múusa Kwee, English is her first language.

Kó’ôe Cha enu (‗Jumping Aunt’) is a life-long resident of Than Ówîngeh and is in her 70s. Tewa is her first language, and she is also fluent in English. Thanpee Tay is a former Tewa teacher in the Public School system near Than Ówîngeh and joined the program in 2009. She is the most recent addition to the TOLP and has since become one of its most active members.

In addition to these core tribal members, there are several program members from the UNM Linguistics and Anthropology departments: Melissa Axelrod, Erin Debenport, Shelece Easterday, Iphigenia Kerfoot, Brittany Kubacki, Andres Sabogal, Logan Sutton, and me. Together, the TOLP has presented at numerous conferences, including the Workshop on American Indigenous Languages, the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium, the Linguistic Society of America, and the Foundation for Endangered Languages. These conferences have served as platforms for raising awareness of the status of the heritage language at Than Ówîngeh, for learning useful tools and strategies that can be applied to the TOLP, and for networking with other community members working on similar programs with their own languages. The program has received generous grants from the NSF-NEH Documenting Endangered Languages Program and the New Mexico Department of Education. These funds have been critical for the production of program materials and compensation of our consultants’ time and efforts.
4.3 Components of the TOLP

There are several components of the program, including but not limited to the following: holding weekly Tewa classes, developing classroom materials and curricula, constructing an online database, producing interactive media, creating a dictionary of Than Ówîngeh Tewa, raising awareness of the plight of the heritage language, and raising the status of the heritage language more generally.

4.3.1 Tewa class

Every week, two members, usually led by Ogowée Tun, hold Tewa class for a few hours at the Pueblo. These classes are informal, and attendance is not mandatory; students range in age from young children to tribal elders. The only restriction is that attendees must be Than Ówîngeh Tribal members, so these classes are not open to outsiders. Regrettably, the number of attendees at Tewa class is often very low, with one or two students, and sometimes none. There are many reasons for the sparse attendance.

First, because Tewa class is held on weeknights, many community members may not be able to attend because they work or must attend to their families during this time. Second, TOLP members report that many people may attend class only once and never return. Learning a language requires substantial time commitments, and many first-time attendees do not return to the class, after quickly becoming discouraged at how difficult it is to learn Tewa, a language radically different from English or Spanish. The third reason so few people attend Tewa class has to do with apathy toward the preservation of the heritage language.
Because English and Spanish are the languages of wider use and provide access to the cash economy, many parents do not view Tewa as valuable for themselves or for their children. Therefore, if the heritage language is not perceived as useful to community members, they may see little reason to devote time to learning it. Even if they are concerned about the decreasing number of speakers of Than Ówîngeh Tewa, they may believe that they can be of little help and that other people will solve the problem. This is an unfortunate but common problem in language revitalization programs. Indeed, a colleague of mine who works with endangered languages in Alaska once remarked that community members often don’t fret about the status of their endangered language “until the number of speakers can be counted on one hand” (personal communication, 2010).

TOLP members have discussed strategies to increase attendance at Tewa class, and it is widely agreed that students must be provided incentives. While food and beverages go a long way in attracting prospective students, others have suggested more proactive strategies. For example, it has been suggested that the group should seek a grant to pay students to attend Tewa class. While this undoubtedly would lead to increased attendance, this idea is not without problems.

The tribal administration has only very limited funds to allocate to community programs, so external funding sources would be required. However, perhaps the bigger problem with the “get paid to learn” approach is that, as several members have expressed, this would amount to paying students to participate in an activity that many claim they already should be doing. It thus could send the wrong message—treating language as a commodity. Moreover, if payment is the sole reason for students attending, many students may not be motivated to learn the language at all.
Another challenge with the Tewa class is that none of the Tewa-speaking TOLP members has been trained formally as a teacher. They often become frustrated by the lack of interest in learning Tewa among community members and sometimes doubt their abilities as instructors in the classroom. In contrast to most teachers, TOLP members have scant materials from which to draw, which thus requires them to create their own curricula. However, even though the Tewa class at Than Ówìngeh now has a reserved space in the tribal administration building, the TOLP still lacks many of the resources necessary for a language program to flourish.

The weekly Tewa class is structured in much the same way as a traditional classroom with which most students are familiar. Although the teacher—most often Ogowée T’ún—does not stand at a lectern at the front of the classroom, opting instead to sit with the students at a large table that occupies most of the classroom space, the teacher and students still adhere to their well-defined roles. More specifically, the students understand that their role is principally that of learners and they behave in a manner consistent with these roles by, for example, actively asking questions, engaging in activities (as requested by the instructor), and even referring to their instructor as “teacher” or “kó’óe” (literally ‘aunt’ but generally used with female elders as a term of respect).

In her discussion of obstacles of language instruction, Meyer (2000) presents four areas of language learning that can present barriers to students: cognitive load, cultural load, language load, and learning load. Although Meyer developed these concepts with respect to the teaching (and learning) of English, these “loads” are applicable to any kind of language learning based in traditional classroom instruction.
First, **cognitive load** refers to the number of new concepts presented to the student, whether in a lesson or through a text. Essentially, the more new concepts to which the student is exposed, the more difficult it will be to successfully internalize those concepts. However, this potential barrier has less to do with the relative difficulty of the content itself and more to do with the extent to which the student is familiar with the material. Given that children in Than Ówîngeth now acquire English or Spanish as their first language—often receiving little or no exposure to Tewa—they will experience an increased cognitive load when attempting to negotiate a grammatical system very different from the one they know. In fact, depending upon the source language and target language, one may experience lesser or greater cognitive load. For example, if one’s first language is Spanish and they are attempting to learn Italian, they will experience less cognitive load (given the high degree of similarity between these languages) than one whose first language is Spanish and who is attempting to learn German. This barrier also involves the repertoire of culture-specific knowledge the learner carries into the classroom. The kind of knowledge valued, tested, and rewarded in Western education often does not align with indigenous epistemologies, so expectations on the part of students and instructors can be very different. Instructors therefore must recognize the disparate “funds of knowledge” (Moll 1994) these students bring to bear on the language-learning process—even students from the same community—and their pedagogical practices must adapt to meet their students’ needs.

Second, **cultural load** refers to the amount of cultural knowledge needed for the learner to accurately comprehend or participate in a language. In her groundbreaking research on literacy practices in the American Southeast, Heath (1983) describes the
practice of reading as a social activity in one community and as a solitary activity in another and how these sociocultural differences problematize notions of literacy. It is common for instructors in the Western educational model to ask their students questions, and students often understand implicitly that they are expected to answer. However, if students come from a cultural background in which it is not considered polite or socially acceptable to answer questions from authority figures or from those whom the student barely knows, the expectations on the part of students and teachers will not align, possibly giving the instructor the impression that the student is lazy, uninterested, or even incapable.

Third, \textit{language load} involves the relative difficulty of a text or verbal instruction because of its linguistic complexity. This concept is not concerned with the relative difficulty of the structure of the target language but rather with the extent to which the instructor or the text makes use of obscure language, which often is highly technical. If a student is not familiar with the metalanguage being used to describe the fine points of Tewa grammar, for example, then the language load will be high. This barrier is the primary factor motivating the TOLP’s decision to use learner-friendly metalanguage. For example, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Tewa is an aspect-driven language rather than a tense-driven one, so linguists likely would refer to a certain utterance as ongoing or imperfective. However, because most if not all Tewa language learners have received no formal training in linguistics, it might be preferable to refer to the utterance in question as “in the past tense”, as tense is a category with which they almost certainly will be familiar. Similarly, what linguists might prefer to call “proclitics”, the layperson might call “prefixes”, so it is important that the instructor assess the language abilities
(and the metalanguage used to describe that language), and work to ensure that any language learning materials refer to this aspect of Tewa grammar in that way, regardless of how technically (in)accurate the term may be.

More broadly, the language of academia is very different from that of the nonacademic world. The academic register, often unassumingly employed by instructors despite efforts to the contrary, very often intimidates those with little or no exposure to that register, regardless of the subject being studied. Instructors, then, may unwittingly undermine their own efforts in teaching a certain concept simply through the use of certain registers of language.

Fourth, learning load concerns the relative difficulty of the activity and tasks of a lesson, given the proficiency of the learner. Seemingly simple classroom exercises such as brainstorming, Meyer (2000) points out, often are fast-paced and loosely structured, which places huge demands on the language learner’s ability to retain information and to participate effectively in class discussions. In such cases, the learning load is increased. This can present challenges to language learners unfamiliar with Western classroom practices.

All of these barriers bring into high relief the immense challenges placed on the language learning process, as it never entails language learning alone. Whether in a primary or secondary school or in an informal Pueblo classroom setting, instructors and language program members must cultivate an awareness of the unique life experiences students bring to the classroom, and how those experiences bear on their ability to learn the heritage language.
4.3.2 Classroom materials and curricula

While some teaching materials have been drawn from earlier work on the language, most notably in the form of workbooks created by Randall Speirs and the San Juan Tewa Pueblo Dictionary (these will be discussed in Section 4.4), much of the material has been created from scratch. Some of those produced by the TOLP include teacher’s guides, pocket dictionaries, sample dialogues, and personal narratives. Arts and crafts can be used as a way to teach students about Than Ówîngeh culture and history, in addition to language. For example, the program has created cardboard cutouts of a Than Ówingeh man and woman dressed in traditional clothing, which serve to help students learn names of pieces of clothing as well as parts of the body.

4.3.3 Online database

In 2004, the TOLP, with the assistance of Sean Burke, a computational lexicographer, and Jordan Lachler, a linguist at the time employed with the Sealaska Corporation, created a password-protected electronic archive of Than Ówîngeh Tewa. Ultimately, the purpose of this archive is to provide community members with an alternative means of accessing information about the Than Ówîngeh language. Currently, this database includes primarily lexical entries, which are searchable by English or Tewa, and are organized both alphabetically and by semantic field. Figure 3 below provides a view of the layout of the database with Tewa forms organized by headword.
As can be seen below in Figures 4 and 5, each entry includes information such as English translation, lexical category, singular and plural forms (for nouns), conjugations (for verbs), etymological notes (if available), notes to the reader, and example utterances in which the form is used.
In the future, TOLP plans to expand the database by linking each Tewa headword to an audio file, which will allow users to hear what that form sounds like, as pronounced by a native speaker. In addition, digital recordings of narratives and discourse will be added to
the site, allowing users to hear extended examples of Than Ówîngeh Tewa speech. This online database offers several advantages over hard-copy materials.

First, technology increasingly is becoming an important part of everyone’s lives—and this is particularly true among younger people, who are more likely to be using the database in greater numbers. It is therefore important that advances in technology are utilized for the purposes of preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages. More and more information is becoming accessible over the Internet, and such information stored on “the cloud” is seemingly “everywhere and nowhere”, which offers redundancy of information storage—a tool that can only help language documentation and preservation efforts. Also, given that young people are the driving force of internet expansion (consider social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter), offering an online database of Than Ówîngeh Tewa offers younger community members, upon whom language revitalization efforts rely so heavily, a resource for accessing language materials in a user-friendly interface. In the next chapter, I will argue that if a community (member) accepts or promotes the use of writing for the heritage language, one of the reasons likely involves the perception that the medium of writing itself helps to legitimize that language. I will argue, albeit to a lesser extent, that the use of technology, especially social media, which also requires the use of writing, is perceived to legitimize the heritage language.

Second, this password-protected online database keeps information secure in a way that offline materials are not. Because hard-copy materials can be reproduced easily and disseminated outside of the Pueblo, it is important to give Than Ówîngeh as much sovereignty and ownership as possible over their language materials. This ensures that
community members can serve effectively as gatekeepers of their heritage language, minimizing the risk of outside appropriation.

Third, a secure online database can store much more information than a hard-copy dictionary or collection of CDs. This logistical concern is a crucial one, especially given the shortcomings of hard-copy texts and CDs, which can be damaged or destroyed easily. Currently, the archive serves as a staging area for part of the dictionary, which will be discussed in the next section. However, because technology is becoming increasingly important in the preservation of heritage languages, the online database eventually will serve as an online version of the Than Ówîngeh Tewa Dictionary. By providing the dictionary in multiple formats (hard copy, CD, online), users can access the dictionary according to their preference. The interface of the online database likely will change as newer and more effective technologies are made available, but regardless of the database design, redundancy in information storage ensures that if one format is somehow lost, the others will remain.

4.3.4 Interactive media

The password-protected online database described above represents one type of interactive media. In addition, TOLP is actively producing videos and CDs about Than Ówîngeh language and culture. In 2006, TOLP produced a video about traditional breadmaking practices at Than Ówîngeh. This video documents the process of making bread in the traditional way, from preparing the ingredients and kneading the dough to baking the bread in the panteh (adobe oven) and serving. As Ogowée T’ún walks the viewer through each step of the process, she provides a narration in Tewa. Operating
under the theory that learning a language is accomplished most effectively through exposure to the culture in which the language is seated, this video serves as a language-learning tool as well as a resource of Tewa cultural practices at Than Ówîngeh. Future videos will include descriptions of traditional kilt-making practices in the Pueblo, which will be narrated in Tewa.

Another important example of interactive media is language CDs. Many community members simply do not have enough time to devote to learning the heritage language, as they work and have families. As a response to this, TOLP has created a series of language learning CDs designed to expose learners to Than Ówîngeh Tewa. These CDs are meant to be functional for the novice listener in that they include mini-dialogues relevant to common social situations, phrases at the dinner table (“please pass the salt”), getting one’s child ready for school (“don’t forget your coat!”).

Perhaps one of the most important uses of interactive media is to capture Than Ówîngeh Tewa discourse and narratives. These will be available in multiple formats, as interested learners can listen to conversations, stories, and tales in Tewa, whether online or on CD. These also will be transcribed and recorded in written form.

4.3.5 The Than Ówîngeh dictionary

The most ambitious goal of the TOLP is the production of a Than Ówîngeh Tewa dictionary. Although all dialects of Tewa are mutually intelligible, the scope of this dictionary is limited to the Than Ówîngeh dialect. In contrast to most lexica, this dictionary will be made available only to Than Ówîngeh community members. In addition to hard copies of the dictionary, CD copies will be distributed, and as an
increasing number of community members own a personal computer and have access to
the Internet, the dictionary will also be made available through the online database. The
dictionary will include forms organized lexically and by semantic field, a pedagogical
grammar, and a brief Tewa cultural primer. It must be mentioned, however, that although
the dictionary (in both hard copy and digital forms) will be distributed only to Than
Ówîngeh community members, there is always the possibility that these language
materials still may spread outside the Pueblo. Ultimately, this is something the TOLP
cannot completely prevent; distribution within the Pueblo can only lessen the chance that
they will make their way out of Than Ówîngeh.

One of the biggest challenges of producing any dictionary involves capturing all
the forms that can be used in the language. As will be discussed in Chapter 6,
variationism is a common language ideology held among community members at Than
Ówîngeh. This language ideology views dialectal variation—usually based on individual
or family differences—as the expected norm. As such, the Tewa used by close friends or
even family members may vary widely, such that any dictionary seeking to capture Tewa
as completely as possible must take such variation into account.

In contrast to most dictionaries, the Than Ówîngeh Tewa dictionary will not
necessarily have merely one citation form for a given concept in the language. Instead
any given entry may list several different—though equivalent—forms. Although listing
all variations of a given entry avoids the problem of having to choose one form over the
others, it also makes the dictionary a much larger and more cumbersome text. While no
decision has been reached as to how variant entries will be presented, it is likely they will
be coded according to speaker, dialect, region, or some other factor.
One of the fundamental tensions that arises from entering multiple forms for a given entry in the Than Ówîngeh Tewa Dictionary is the need to account for all attested forms on the one hand and the need for the dictionary to serve as a definitive, authoritative source on the other. Although these two ideas are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they often are perceived as contradictory among many community members working to develop dictionaries for heritage languages. For example, two forms are used for ‘coffee’ in Than Ówîngeh Tewa: <féñ p’oe> and <café>; the former is the Tewa gloss (féñ ‘black’ + p’oe ‘water’), while the latter is borrowed from Spanish. The fact that Than Ówîngeh Tewa speakers often use these two forms interchangeably not only illustrates language ideologies of syncretism and variationism, but presents dictionary readers with a choice between seemingly competing forms. Also, depending on the visual organization of such an entry, readers may consider the entry listed first or on top as the more accepted or even preferred form. Such an issue illustrates the importance of clarifying for readers the editorial decisions made by the lexicographers.

In any of the language resources used in the TOLP, one of the most central concerns is the issue of metalanguage—that is, the language used to talk about the language. Whether in a pedagogical grammar or the final dictionary itself, it is important that the language used to talk about Than Ówîngeh Tewa grammatical structures remain as transparent as possible. The terminology used by linguists to describe lexical and grammatical categories would seem esoteric to readers who come from a nonacademic background; therefore, great care will be taken to use reader-friendly language. For example, as mentioned earlier, Tewa uses a complex PVP system to assert who is doing what to whom in a given utterance. However, using the term “pronominal verbal prefix”,

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or worse, “proclitic”, could render this aspect of Tewa grammar inaccessible to those who have not received formal training in linguistics. While such technical terminology is useful to linguists, esoteric metalanguage not only restricts the learner’s access to language study, but may dissuade them entirely from attempting to learn the language. In using linguistic metalanguage, a balance must be found between retaining technical accuracy on the one hand and remaining accessible to Than Ówîngeh community members on the other. Such differences reflect what England (1996) refers to as “a tension between … popularist approach[es] … and technical approach[es] to decision making…” (185).

4.4 Development of a Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography

In 1963, Randall Speirs, working under the employ of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), created a three-part primer titled Tewa T’owa Tuuri Ta’nin Tuukangi’in. This text served to introduce readers to the sounds of Tewa and the writing system used to represent it. This primer was likely the first time a Tewa writing system was codified, and the orthography, devised by Speirs, later served as the basis for Esther Martinez’s San Juan Pueblo Tewa Dictionary.

Tewa T’owa Tuuri Ta’nin Tuukangi’in then was revised, and in 1968 SIL released the Tewa Reading Book. This text assumes that its readers already can read English, and this is explicitly mentioned in the introduction. This text introduces the reader to the sounds of the Tewa language and to simple words and phrases in which these sounds appear, accompanied by drawings. The last few pages of the text culminate in the story
“Wí Puu-ádvÍ Wí Oekuú-ádvÍ” (‘The Tortoise and the Hare’). In 1979, a revised and expanded Tewa Workbook was released.

In 1983, Esther Martinez and her colleagues at Ohkay Owingeh released the San Juan Pueblo Tewa Dictionary. This text, more than any other, has heavily influenced the development of the Than Ówîngeh Tewa dictionary and the Than Ówîngeh orthography upon which the dictionary is built. Martinez’s dictionary represents the first known full-fledged Tewa dictionary, as previous to this only word lists and informal lexical texts existed. The San Juan dictionary continues to serve as a reference guide for members of the TOLP and is ever-present during program meetings. Below is a sample sentence using the Bookman Tewa font, which was designed for use in the TOLP. As the name suggests, this font is based on the Bookman font.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

When used with U.S.-International keyboard settings, this font enables the user to easily place diacritics over letters, avoiding some of the problems inherent in other typefaces. Differences between the Ohkay Owingeh and Than Ówîngeh orthographies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.4.
CHAPTER 5

ON THE RESISTANCE TO AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE USE OF WRITING

Most revitalization efforts seek to generate new speakers of the heritage language, but the means employed to achieve this end vary greatly. One of the most contentious issues in establishing a language revitalization program in the American Southwest is whether to write the heritage language. In this chapter, I will discuss some of the most salient factors motivating community members’ attitudes toward the writing of their languages. The first part of this section will be devoted to discussing factors motivating a general resistance to the use of writing, while the second part will address factors motivating a general acceptance of the use of writing.

5.1 On resistance to the use of writing

As mentioned in Chapter 2, writing is best conceived of as but one of the panoply of cultural practices termed “literacy.” Having outlined the demographics of Than Ówîngeh, the prominent linguistic features of Than Ówîngeh Tewa that hold implications for its writing system, and the components of the Than Ówîngeh Language Program (TOLP), we are now in a position to address the first of my research questions: Why do some communities resist the use of writing while others accept or even promote its practice?

This section will address the first part of that question, and here I will argue that five factors in particular give rise to a general resistance on the part of community members to the use of writing in heritage language programs: 1) a conception of writing as removing the spirit of spoken language; 2) writing as undermining traditional
sociocultural norms of information acquisition; 3) writing as allowing for the appropriation of the heritage language by outsiders; 4) writing as a process that inhibits language learning; and 5) writing as a logistical problem (e.g., funding, staffing).

5.1.1 Writing as removing the spirit of spoken language

Many Native American groups, especially in Puebloan societies, have an aversion to writing down their respective heritage languages because of the static nature of writing itself. In her landmark investigation of Native American attitudes toward literacy, Elizabeth Brandt (1981) describes a belief among many contemporary Native American peoples in the close alignment between thought and speech. Brandt discusses the view that speech is highly valued for its dynamic nature, that there is a “polarity … between speech and breath as alive and moist and writing as dead and dry” (186). She then goes on to point out how this view of language holds import for the conception of religion in Native American cultures as situated in the “here-and-now”. As Brandt puts it, “The Creation is not a matter of historical interest or tradition or something to be read about in a Bible or holy book; it is in the present” (186). Such a view touches on the inherently performative nature of religion in Native American communities.

Along these lines, many Native American groups view their heritage languages as imbued with a performative force that is lacking in Western, “reflectionist” languages, in which language is seen as reflecting—not affecting—the external world (Silverstein 1979). That is, many indigenous communities are opposed to the use of a written system because it objectifies and renders the language less sacred, thus representing a further exploitation of the heritage language itself (see Pecos and Blum-Martinez 2001).
Hinton (2001) discusses the view that writing down a heritage language “freezes and decontextualizes language [use] and language arts” (241). Languages change from one generation of speakers to the next—to such an extent, in fact, that the language may become unrecognizable to earlier generations (consider the development of English and the radical changes that took places in just a matter of a few centuries). Writing, by its very nature, provides only a very small window on how the language is used at the time. What can be viewed as the greatest strength of writing—its permanence—also can be considered its greatest weakness. Because a written text often cannot easily be revised, it has the effect of fossilizing the language it is representing.

Dictionaries, then, should not be viewed as the be-all, end-all authoritative sources of a language but rather as products of an era that must be updated continuously to faithfully represent the language as it is spoken at the present time. After all, if one wants to capture the physical movement of an animal in its natural habitat, taking one photograph of that animal will not suffice, as it captures but a moment in time. It is necessary to take multiple photographs and sort them sequentially. In this way, the movement of the animal can be observed. The same thing, it can be said, applies to the production of texts, especially dictionaries. In fact, one of the advantages of making the Than Ówîngeh dictionary available in an online format is that it is possible to make minor revisions or even new editions with much less time and effort than otherwise would be required with hard copies.

Related to the view of writing as removing the spirit of spoken language is the idea that writing decontextualizes the language it represents. Because so much of using language involves paralinguistic and nonlinguistic information, paring down
communication to its minimal segmental elements (as symbols on a page) omits much of what speakers presuppose and infer when they use language. While the medium of writing allows for great imaginative freedom on the part of the reader, it also allows for much more potential ambiguity, as opposed to speech. Over the past couple of decades, there has been a sharp increase in the use of writing for the purposes of communication, especially in the digital domain. As a result, no longer is face-to-face communication considered the canonical modality in which speakers share information. As mentioned in earlier, writing possesses a reifying function, the idea that “the meaning no longer resides in the speaker but in the text” (Coulmas 1989:12-13). As writing is by its very nature divested from the real-world context in which it is created, it must be self-sufficient in terms of carrying its intended meaning; otherwise the reader would be unable to assign any pragmatic meaning whatsoever (e.g., consider the possible meanings of “garden path” sentences, such as the old man boats, which could be read as “the man, who is old, boats” or “the old, as a group of people, man [perform work on] boats”). Writing, then, can have the effect of decontextualizing language to such an extent that communities may view the practice of writing as antithetical to the purposes of communication.

5.1.2 Writing as undermining access to information

In addition to the view that writing removes the vibrancy of spoken language is the view that writing undermines traditional sociocultural norms of acquiring information. Participating as a community member in a Pueblo society requires mastery of a complex suite of linguistic, sociocultural, and politico-religious knowledge—all of which traditionally have been transmitted orally. However, with the introduction of
writing into Puebloan communities came exposure to information that had not existed there before, and, in many cases, ran counter to the cultural practices of that community. As Brandt remarks, “When information access is purely oral, it can be more easily controlled and requires a social relationship for transmission of information” (1981:190; see also Hinton 2001:241).

Therefore, a chain of causality can be traced here whereby, if writing is viewed as inherently permanent (in contrast to the evanescent quality of spoken language), such permanence can be perceived as authoritative (this view, as we shall see in the next section, also can be cast in a positive light). Thus, if community members—especially those in the upper echelons of the tribal power structure—view writing as authoritative (in a negative sense), it then will be perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of leadership.

Permanence → Perceived authority → Undermining access to information

This view may have arisen, in part, as a result of the longstanding contact between Westerners and indigenous peoples, specifically in terms of the introduction of literacy. Consider the impact of Native American boarding schools on indigenous peoples. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the (white) American public largely agreed that Native American children should receive formal education. However, there were ongoing debates about how such education would be carried out. Essentially, the debate centered around the idea of whether “civilization” should be brought to the Indian, or if the Indian should be brought to civilization. Ultimately, the latter strategy won out for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the idea that by “educating” these children in boarding
schools outside of the community, teachers and caretakers had absolute control, far from the prying eyes of the children’s parents. By removing children from their home communities, boarding schools could control more effectively the concepts and practices to which their students were exposed.

A popular keyword in the rhetoric of that time was that by removing these children from their communities, the Indian child would be “quarantined”—although not merely in terms of physical quarantine from the perceived filth and barbarism of the Native American communities, but as a kind of intellectual quarantine, in which children were kept separated from their Native education. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the “Friends of the Indians” movement, which sought to “civilize” Native Americans and called on the federal government to help Native Americans become so-called productive members of society through conversion to Christianity, forced learning of English (spoken and written), and other assimilatory practices. This sentiment was captured by Richard Henry Pratt, leader of this movement and founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who famously remarked, “Kill the Indian, save the man” (see Garrett 1892).

At this time, religious conversion and linguistic conversion were treated as one and the same, such that Christianizing Native peoples and the forced learning of English centered around forced exposure to literacy. As Greg Sarris notes in his landmark essay, *Keeping Slug Woman Alive*, “The teaching of reading … can be an effective colonizing device” (1993:257). Ultimately, then, by removing children from their Native communities to off-reservation boarding schools, the U.S. government had effectively appropriated these children’s educations and thereby forcibly reshaped their conceptions.
of how information can and should be accessed in their traditional (oral) cultures. It is no surprise that upon their children’s return from these boarding schools, many Indian parents claimed not to recognize their sons and daughters. After experiences such as these, it was likely that community members, especially parents—who may have had neutral attitudes toward literacy before their children were taken to boarding schools—become entirely resistant to the use of writing after they returned.

Whereas before the introduction of literacy in the Pueblos information was conveyed and accessed entirely through oral transmission, after the introduction of literacy many community members began to view written documents as political capital. Through such written genres as liturgical texts, legal documents, and personal letters, many Native Americans began to re-conceptualize the power of writing. Moreover, such changing views toward literacy inevitably reshaped views toward speech. In her study of language ideologies at the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana, Mindy Morgan describes changing attitudes towards literacy practices in two communities, Gros Ventre and Assiniboine. Morgan observes that among members of these communities, the written petition emerged as the primary means through which they were able to formalize requests and lodge complaints regarding issues pertaining to tribal management (2009:79).

Perhaps one genre of writing—the treaty—did more than any other to shape Native peoples’ perceptions of writing. DeMallie (1980) observes that in the nineteenth century government officials considered the act of signing the treaty as vital, as without a signature the agreement would be rendered null and void. Providing a signature was viewed by many Native Americans as something of a performative act (see Austin 1962),
in which the terms agreed upon in the treaty are codified only after the signature has been provided. However, putting pen to paper was for many Indian participants done for the benefit of the government officials, not their own. Initially, Morgan notes, signed treaties signified the “good faith promises” made by each party, which served to reinforce mutual understandings.

Within the span of a few decades, however, Indian participants became increasingly aware that treaties—and by extension, all written documents—were often infelicitous. One of the leaders of the Gros Ventre community in a public address was reported as saying, “According to the treaty of 1855, the white man put on a piece of paper certain things that he was to do along with what the Indian had to do. It wasn’t long before the white man came down and ignored and tramped on his side of that agreement” (cited in Morgan 2009:49). Such examples illustrate that written documents did not merely serve as symbolic elements of colonization but functioned as instruments of it. As Gaurav Desai observes, we should not consider documents as “reflections of particular colonial relations but rather as constitutive of them” (2001:5; cited in Morgan 2009:7).

As Spolsky and Irvine argue, “rejection … of literacy in the vernacular … can in fact be perceived as a method of attempting to maintain the integrity of a traditional culture” (1982:74). So while the concept of resistance often is framed as negative in scope—as something restrictive or even repellent—it can be taken more positively, as providing a kind of sociocultural insulation. Similarly, Brandt observes that systems of orally based access to information have been an effective means of preserving cultural identity and very well may have contributed to the cultural survival of Pueblo
communities over the past few centuries (1981:191). Whereas in Western societies the phrase “my word is my bond” (or “word is bond”) involves an assertion of honesty or even implies a promise, in oral societies such a claim is so basic that it need not be articulated (“of course your word is your bond, for what else will suffice?”).

5.1.3 Writing as allowing for appropriation by outsiders

Extending from the sociocultural fact of orally based access to information is the concern that writing allows for the appropriation of heritage languages by outsiders. Bahr (1975:332) reports that the Papago have a “fear that written texts will automatically be ‘scattered out among the whites and other tribes’” (cited in Biava 1990:49). This concern is not uncommon among Native American groups and raises questions not only about the role of writing in these communities but the role of outside researchers as well. Visits in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by linguists and anthropologists are engrained in the collective memory of the community. Many community members recall experiences their parents or grandparents had with these investigators, whose concerns for the community were often secondary to their research agendas. As mentioned earlier, this type of “salvage” research (see Collins 1998) has had consequences for contemporary investigators, who often are distrusted, no matter how well intentioned their aims may be. In fact, the TOLP’s decision to develop a Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography comes with the proviso that any language materials are reserved for use within the Pueblo.

The view of writing as allowing for the appropriation and unsanctioned dissemination of language also touches on the issue of intellectual property rights. For
our purposes here, I briefly examine such rights as a means of controlling access to one’s language. Intellectual property rights are meant to serve as legal instruments to protect an individual’s or group’s intangible assets; they protect confidentiality and allow the author to retain control of granting access to those assets. There are, however, several problems with the current definition of intellectual property rights, which bear on our discussion here.

First, copyright law is in effect for a limited time (author’s life, plus 70 years; for a corporation, 90 years after publication). While these are rather arbitrary figures, the deeper problem lies in what they imply—that after an author has passed away, his or her assets become public domain. After all, the thinking goes, why should the author care what happens to their ideas if they are long passed away? Of course, this is to say nothing of the benefactors of that author, and how releasing such assets into the public domain might affect their standing whether in terms of financial stability or credibility.

Second, to be covered under the umbrella of intellectual property, assets must be tangible and codified as a written document. Obviously, this means that property rights would not apply to oral language, least of all for communities in which writing is not used. The current definition thus places a value upon concrete objects that can be manufactured and duplicated. Here again we encounter the view that a language with a writing system is somehow more of a legitimate language than one without a writing system.

Broadening the scope further, one can see conflicts between intellectual copyrights and pieces of legislation that have been enacted to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which
was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007, states that indigenous peoples have the right to “… maintain, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property over … cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions” (Article 31).²⁰

As discussed in Chapter 4.1, significant pieces of legislation have been passed recently that advocate on behalf of the rights of indigenous peoples over their cultural practices (such as the Native American languages acts of 1990 and 1992, the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation act of 2006, and the United Nations Declaration just mentioned). However, we immediately see that such legislation conflicts with intellectual property-rights issues. While the U.S. government now legally recognizes the rights of Native Americans over their languages, no provisions are in place to protect against the appropriation of these heritage languages from outsiders. Therefore, these practices will continue as long as outsiders will suffer no penalty for disseminating such information outside of the communities from which they come. From the perspective of indigenous community members, there are obvious benefits to controlling access to one’s heritage language. If community members know they control access, they may feel more secure in sharing information among themselves as well as with others. This enhances notions of self-determination and sovereignty and thus the maintenance of identity and personal dignity. If the current definition of intellectual property rights is revised to treat language as an asset, a number of questions then can be raised. Does this advance language revitalization efforts or does it present obstacles to progress? Does it privilege fluent speakers and disadvantage members of the

²⁰Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States initially voted against adopting the declaration but have since reversed their positions.
community who are not fluent speakers? Which group makes the decisions? If members of the tribe have differing opinions on how to access language materials, how are these differences resolved?

5.1.4 Writing as inhibiting language learning

Many Native American communities believe that writing inhibits the learning process, a concept with which many Westerners are not accustomed. In this view, the writing process is seen as interfering with attention; it forces the writer to attend more to the page or computer screen than to aspects of the reality being described on that page or screen. “[There is] the tendency to reduce the complexity of sensory input only to those minimal features easily jotted down” (Brandt 1981:187; see also Hinton 2001:241). Here the emphasis on memory in learning takes us full circle to the view of speech as alive in Native American discourse. If writing provides “an excuse for forgetting”, as Brandt puts it, then community members in Pueblo societies must internalize their languages in such a way that the act of speaking becomes inherently performative. Put another way, if something is written down, it does not have to be remembered.

Children raised in Western societies have been trained from a young age to view writing as a valuable tool whose mnemonic function (see Coulmas 1989:11-15) is utilized every time a student takes notes during a lecture, writes verb paradigms in a foreign-language class, or otherwise engages in an activity in which writing is used to assist in the learning process. To get a sense of the importance often ascribed to writing, consider the evolution of the fields of rhetoric and composition and writing center theory.
Starting in the 1960s, open admissions policies at universities meant that college education became available to more people, not just to American students who spoke English as a first language but to international students who were non-native English speakers. With increased numbers of students attending four-year institutions in the United States, composition instructors and writing center directors were forced to rethink longstanding pedagogical practices. Two theoretical frameworks in particular offered a fresh perspective on the goal of writing instruction.

First, expressivism, which was perhaps most famously discussed in Stephen North’s “The Idea of a Writing Center”, sought to shift the role of the tutor (and, I would argue, the instructor) away from writing and toward the writer. This framework addressed the need for students to develop the cognitive processes necessary to engage the writing process, or in North’s words, which have become cliché in writing-center theory, “… our job is to produce better writers, not better writing” (1984:438). Second, social constructionism, or the idea that learning best takes place through the practice of collaboration, was perhaps first advanced by Kenneth Bruffee’s “Brooklyn Plan” (see Bruffee 1978). Bruffee called for a peer-oriented tutoring model, in which writers at similar stages of their education work with each other to develop ideas and writing.

In the 1980s, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID)—two movements that developed in tandem and are therefore often mentioned together as WAC/WID—combined learning-to-write approaches with those of writing-to-learn. That is, writing pedagogy shifted to include not only approaches meant to familiarize students with the rhetorical conventions of a genre or discipline, but getting students to envision writing as a means of exploring ideas and demonstrating mastery of
course content. Taken together, the treatment of writing in the academy moved from text focused to writer focused (for a history of the WAC/WID movement, see Russell 2002).

The point I wish to make here is that although writing pedagogy has evolved considerably over the past several decades, one thing has not changed—and, indeed, has remained largely unmentioned in scholarly literature in the fields of rhetoric and composition and writing center theory—which is that the practice of writing is inherently taken to be a valuable, if not necessary, skill. Given this longstanding unstated assumption, it is no wonder that the use of writing in education is treated as a matter of course. That students should be expected to take notes, write essays, email professors, and generally use writing as a means of entering into the discourse community of academia is unsurprising. However, acquiring a language is never based solely on reading and writing. Disabilities notwithstanding, all children acquire oral language in the same way—by hearing the language spoken around them. In this way, writing can be viewed as a wholly unnatural act; all humans are genetically predisposed to acquire language, but we must be explicitly taught to read and write. From this perspective, then, it is understandable that many view writing as inhibiting, rather than facilitating, the language learning process.

5.1.5 Writing as a logistic problem

In addition to the strands of resistance discussed above, the adoption of a writing system also presents a series of logistical challenges with which a community may not be prepared to contend. While many indigenous language program members receive no financial compensation for their time and efforts (and are often content not to receive
financial compensation), the program components they seek to implement do require external funding. From creating bi-/multilingual voting ballots to copying expenses to travel expenditures, achieving the goals established by a language program may become impossible without some means of defraying costs. This understandably frustrates language program members, who—even if they are in favor of using a writing system—then may decide to sizably scale back program goals, to such an extent that the production of most language materials is abandoned. Central to this idea is the fact that writing, simply put, costs money.

5.2 On acceptance of the use of writing

In this section, I will outline some factors motivating community members’ acceptance of writing systems for heritage languages. Here I will concentrate on four views about language and the role of writing as underpinning the decision to develop an orthography for use in heritage language programs: 1) the view that written documentation aids in the preservation of the heritage language, 2) the view that writing facilitates the language-learning process, 3) the view that writing increases domains of usage (entextualization), and 4) the view that writing lends authority and credibility to the heritage language itself.

5.2.1 Writing as facilitating language preservation

As discussed in the previous section, there has long been a resistance on the part of many Native American communities to adopt a written system to represent heritage languages. However, over the last 30 years there have been an increasing number of
language revitalization programs in North America that have developed orthographies. There are many reasons for this shift in attitudes, such as the rapid advances in computer technologies (i.e., word processing programs and the proliferation of fonts) and the increase in funding available for language revitalization programs through federal and private grants. Perhaps the biggest reason for the change in attitudes toward writing, however, is the growing concern among community members that their heritage languages are quickly disappearing and that something must be done to preserve them.

While TOLP members recognize that “writing is at best a crude imitation” (Hinton 1994:219) of speech and cannot be taken as the *sine qua non* of language revitalization efforts, they nonetheless view writing as instrumental in the preservation of Than Ówîngeh Tewa. TOLP members have stressed on many occasions that writing the language helps to ensure that, if nothing else, a written record will exist as reference material for future generations.

The acceptance of or endorsement by community members of the use of writing for Native American languages is a relatively recent idea. While many indigenous languages have been written down for some time (e.g., Navajo), most of these systems were conceived by and applied by outsiders, such as linguists and missionaries. The development of the Navajo orthographies represents a unique case in the history of writing systems of indigenous peoples in North America. The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries witnessed an influx of Franciscan and Protestant missionaries in Navajo country. These groups devoted much time to the study of the Navajo language “because without a knowledge of the language they could not communicate with the people they sought to convert” (Young 1977:460), and much of
these efforts involved developing orthographies for Navajo. Drawing from the alphabetic scripts devised by Franciscan and Protestant missionaries, Robert Young, William Morgan, and others developed the orthography adopted by educators in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, an orthography still in use today.

While the original motivation for creating the orthography likely was driven by a desire to translate the Bible into Navajo, the writing system no longer merely serves as a means to access liturgical texts. A few decades after the introduction of the orthography championed by Young and Morgan, reading and writing in Navajo still was not widespread. Spolsky and Irvine (1982) observe a kind of diglossia, in which Navajo is preferred for oral use, while English is preferred for writing. While this still may be true to a large extent today, there is evidence that these attitudes are shifting.

In his study of literacy practices at Rock Point Community School, McLaughlin (1989) administered a survey to community members that elicited beliefs about the function and utility of literacy in Navajo. Results from the survey suggested that writing is becoming increasingly viewed as a means of valorizing the Navajo language.

The older the student and the higher the grade level of the teacher, the less that person was likely to see Navajo literacy merely as a way to teach youngsters initial literacy or as a means of cultural preservation, and the more he or she was likely to view Navajo literacy as a vehicle for self-understanding (282).

The reasons for the spread of Navajo literacy, McLaughlin argues, are threefold. First, the written Navajo language was incorporated into all aspects of daily life in the community, especially with respect to the school and church. Second, there was a high level of community involvement in those two institutions. And third, church and school activities
served to celebrate Navajo language and culture. In so doing, McLaughlin argues, these activities “… fundamentally altered how the church and the school served the community and how community people perceived uses for Navajo print” (282).

The notion of “endangerment”, borrowed from biology, is an often-heard metaphor in the rhetoric of language loss. In her discussion of how advocates of endangered languages can unwittingly undermine their own efforts, Jane Hill argues that enumeration is a common theme. Enumeration is the idea of “… present[ing] frightening statistics about the large number of languages spoken in the world today and the small number likely to survive at some point in the near future” (2002:127). This theme, which invokes the need to document “before it’s too late”, can lead to the view of documentation as preservation or revitalization.

Many community members, language activists, and even linguists often implicitly assume that if a language is sufficiently recorded (whether through audio recording or writing), it will never really “disappear”. As Luisa Maffi observes

There is a very close parallel between [ex situ] language presentation and ex situ conservation in biology: while both serve an important function, in both cases the ecological context is ignored. Just as seed banks cannot preserve a plant’s biological ecology, ex situ linguistic documentation cannot preserve a language’s linguistic ecology (1999: 40; cited in Errington 2003:725).

This idea once again emphasizes that linguists and anthropologists often incorrectly prioritize corpus planning over status planning, because engaging in the former allows for more easily perceivable results of the language planning process. This has led Salikoko Mufwene to ask, “… isn’t language maintenance for the sake of ‘biolinguistic diversity’
tantamount to declaring languages as more important to linguists than the speakers themselves?” (Mufwene 2002: 383-384). There is therefore an overwhelming concern among linguists and anthropologists for the languages, rather than for the speakers who use the language. As Mufwene further observes, “What is perhaps missing from the whole rhetoric [on language endangerment] are arguments explaining to what extent the speakers themselves are endangered by their adaptations through language shift” (ibid. 387).

Another important point Bloomaert observes here is that what originally was used as means of documentation later is used as a pedagogical tool. He notes that the study of African languages began as a philological enterprise—that is, “… a textually oriented study that yielded descriptive accounts of the grammar of languages, quickly to be turned into prescriptive instruments for language teaching and control …” (293-294; see also Fabian 1986). While Bloomaert looked at African languages, this observation can easily be applied to Tewa, and North American indigenous languages more broadly.

Consider the work of J.P. Harrington, a linguist who vigorously documented numerous indigenous languages in the American West in the early twentieth century (see Harrington 1910, 1912). His reputation is legendary, because he produced some of the first descriptions of numerous American indigenous languages, many of which have since disappeared. Harrington was well known for his unconventional documentation methods, which often involved extensive word lists on scraps of paper. Often, these scraps are the only remaining record of many now extinct languages, and there are several ongoing projects developed by language programs in communities once visited by Harrington devoted to systematically categorizing his estimated 500,000 pages of notes, so that they
can be used as teaching materials. Harrington also worked with Tewa speakers—most likely from Ohkay Owingeh—and compiled word lists of ethnobotanical and ethnogeographical terms in Tewa. All available wordlists Harrington compiled have been entered in the Than Ówîngeh Online Database and have been checked against the forms used by native speakers.

I therefore want to distinguish between two related, though separate, ideas: those of language documentation and of language preservation. I would argue that Harrington’s work was done in the service of the former, as his overwhelming concern was with recording linguistic forms of various North American indigenous languages, rather than with helping to generate community involvement in using the languages spoken in the communities. Although Harrington visited numerous tribal communities throughout his career, no evidence suggests he was interested in—let alone, engaged in—grassroots community efforts to sustain the use of indigenous languages spoken in those communities. However, the descendants of the consultants with whom he worked, along with many current researchers, have taken the notes he collected and are using them for the purposes of language preservation by creating class curricula, teaching materials, games, and other language resources.21

Language documentation and preservation often are envisioned as one and the same, and although documentation often is employed in the service of preservation, the latter is not a necessary entailment of the former. I want to further discuss these two concepts by focusing on the use of writing, which can serve both as a means of documentation and of preservation. In his discussion of the tensions between language

21 See, for example, the J.P. Harrington Database Project, led by Martha Macri.
documentation and language preservation, Moore (2006) contrasts two orientations to written texts: memorialization and (re)generativity.

Memorialization involves “the creation of a permanent record of the language for posterity” (298), and dictionaries and grammars, as language artifacts, exemplify this orientation. The very existence of such texts celebrates the beauty and uniqueness of the grammatical structure of a language, thereby invoking a sense of Saussurean langue. Moore observes that such an orientation shares much with Stephen Greenblatt’s notion of wonder, or “the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention” (Greenblatt 1991:43; cited in Moore 2006:298).

(Re)generativity, by contrast, involves the ability of written texts to index the spoken language, whether by pointing back to the original spoken utterances or by pointing forward to the next utterance (Moore 2006:298). Therefore, such a conception of writing as representing actual language use invokes a sense of Saussurean parole. (Re)generativity shares much with Greenblatt’s resonance, or “the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand” (Greenblatt 1991:43; cited in Moore 2006:298).

Based on my experience at Than Ówîngeh and conversations with TOLP members, the desire for written texts, especially a dictionary, is motivated by both memorialization and (re)generativity. Not only do TOLP members view the use of writing as useful for creating a permanent record of the language, which thereby
enhances the prestige of the language (to be discussed in Chapter 5.2.4), but as a means of giving voice to the language for future generations.

5.2.2 Writing as facilitating language learning

In Section 5.1.4, I argued that if a community is resistant to the use of writing, one of the reasons cited is likely to be the view that writing slows the language learning process. This view draws from the idea that if something is written down, it does not have to be remembered. An extension of this is the idea that because it takes time for one to learn to write in an unfamiliar language, which might be written in an unfamiliar script, the learner simply might prefer to attempt to commit that information to memory. However, if a tribe accepts—or even promotes—the use of writing, community members are likely to claim that writing facilitates, rather than hinders, the language learning process. Of course, reading and writing practices have long been an important component of education in the Western world, and schoolchildren are exposed to these practices at a very young age. The heavy emphasis placed upon reading and writing is so strong that incorporating writing into heritage language programs often is treated as a matter of course.

Among those communities that have adopted written systems for use in their heritage language programs, writing is viewed as a tool that facilitates, rather than inhibits, the language learning process. As discussed earlier, Tewa exhibits great phonological and morphosyntactic complexity, facts that become immediately apparent for those attempting to learn the language. As a result, these students (for whom English is usually their first language) may believe that a written system offers a guide for how
certain forms are pronounced. Recall from Section 3.3.3 that Tewa makes use of a rich pronominal verbal prefix (PVP) system, which is crucial for expressing who does what to whom in a given utterance and which must be mastered by language learners if they wish to be considered fluent speakers. Organizing these PVPs into written tables thus is perceived as providing the prospective language learner with a reference guide to negotiating the verbal system in Than Ówîngeh Tewa. Although it is of course possible to learn these PVPs without relying on a written system, the perceived difficulty is so great that learners may believe that the use of writing is necessary to help in the learning process.

Writing allows students to learn by adapting a model with which they already are familiar from their classroom experience in the public school system (the Western educational model). The ways in which one’s culture shapes one’s cognition, a research program first broached by Lev Vygotsky and other cultural-historical psychologists and continuing today in cultural psychology, has much to do with peoples’ attitudes toward the use of writing (see Cole 1996, Kozulin 1990, Vygotsky 1962, and Vygotsky and Cole 1978). If $x$ has acquired the reading and writing skills necessary to deal with $y$ orthography to represent $z$ language, it is likely that he or she will view reading and writing in $z$ language in a positive light. However, if no writing system exists for $z$ language—or if the learner did not acquire strong reading or writing skills in that language—he or she likely will view writing in $z$ language in a negative light.
5.2.3 Writing and entextualization

One of the perceived advantages of writing is that it allows the heritage language to expand into other contexts of use. Increasing these domains of usage is an often-discussed issue for TOLP members and represents an important aspect of status planning. Central to this view are the concepts of “text” and “entextualization”. While the term “text” suggests a written product, I mean to use this term in a broader sense, following Bauman (2004), as

… discourse rendered decontextualizable: entextualization potentiates decontextualization. But decontextualization from one context must involve recontextualization in another, which is to recognize the potential for texts to circulate, to be spoken again in another context (4; see also Bauman and Briggs 1990; Silverstein and Urban 1996).

So while school essays, newspaper journalism, and creative writing are examples of “texts”, so too are orally transmitted stories, tales, and dialogues. In addition, texts are inherently intertextual, as no text ever exists independent of others.

The text lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context). Only at this point of contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both posterior and anterior, joining a given text to a dialogue. We emphasize that this contact is a dialogic contact between texts … behind this contact is a contact of personalities and not of things (Bakhtin 1986:162; cited in Bauman 2004:4).

By understanding texts in this way, we can approach the idea of narrative differently. As Bauman puts it, “… events are not the external raw materials out of which narratives are constructed, but rather the reverse: events are abstractions from narrative” (1986:5).
Further, the view that indigenous literacies serve as modes of empowerment for heritage languages promotes the expansion of new genres of language use. This is one of the major goals actively pursued by the TOLP, as project members have developed calendars, labels for flora, refrigerator magnets, T-shirts, and road signs at Than Òwîngeh—all in an attempt to increase the domains of use of Tewa.

Particularly relevant to this discussion are the concepts of *abstand* languages and *ausbau* languages, as developed by Kloss (1967). An *abstand* (cf. *abstandsprache* ‘language by distance’) language refers to “… a linguistic unit which a linguist would have to call a language even if not a single word had ever been written in it” (29). Essentially, an *abstand* language is so called because it exhibits “intrinsic distance” (ibid.) from other languages (e.g., German vs. Dutch). An *ausbau* (cf. *ausbausprache* ‘language by development’) language, on the other hand, is “… recognized as such because of having been reshaped, molded or remolded… in order to become a standardized tool of literary expression” (ibid.). For example, the Czech and Slovak languages form a dialect continuum, and though the two are mutually intelligible, their perceived differences arise due in large part to their orthographic conventions.

However, Kloss also points out that *abstand* and *ausbau* languages are not mutually exclusive concepts. She observes that English and German, among others, are both *abstand* and *ausbau* languages.

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22 Kloss’s use of the term “linguistic unit” here does not refer to segmental units of analysis (e.g., phonemes), but rather to a language’s cluster of dialects.
… both because of having been made over [in terms of written conventions] and because of their intrinsic distance from all other languages. But a great many other tongues fall into that category (‘languages’) merely by virtue of their being ausbau languages. If one asked whether a given language would be accorded that designation if its speakers had adopted a closely related standard language as their chief medium of literary expression, one would probably be surprised at how many would have to be classified as mere dialects (or clusters of dialects) (ibid. 30).

Mark Sebba (1998) applies Kloss’s terms to his study of orthographical practices in an English-lexicon Creole used in Britain by people of Caribbean heritage. He claims that creoles only can assert their independence “by becoming less like Standard English (abstand)” in terms of sound-symbol correspondences, status, and functions, yet such creoles “… can only elaborate themselves as Standard languages by becoming more like Standard English (ausbau)” in terms of using an orthography based on the Roman alphabet.

I contend that this same observation can be applied to Than Ówîngeh Tewa. On the one hand, Tewa can be considered an abstand language when viewed in contrast to English (as well as to neighboring Tanoan languages), while on the other hand Tewa can be viewed as ausbau language when orthographic practices are viewed in contrast to those of other Tewa dialects (i.e., Ohkay Owingeh). More specifically, TOLP members are actively generating materials to increase the domains of use within the community, which increases the distance between Tewa and English. However, in doing so, many orthographic practices from Standard English have been borrowed in the Than Ówîngeh orthography.

Bakhtin (1981) argued along similar lines several decades before Kloss, in his discussion of centripetal and centrifugal forces in language. Centripetal forces in
language are those forces that serve to unify and regulate language use, such as language academies (e.g., Académie française), orthographies, or prescriptive practices more generally, while centrifugal forces in language are those forces that serve to decentralize, destabilize, stratify, or disperse language use, such as slang, registers, jargon, and gendered or generational differences in language use. “Every utterance participates in the ‘unitary language’ (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)” (Bakhtin 1981:272). Bakhtin’s crucial idea here is that these two forces exist in constant tension with one another.

Despite this tension, centripetal and centrifugal forces can be viewed as separate and discrete. For example, Native American parents whose children were taken away to boarding schools may view literacy as an instrument that serves to divide people from their home communities and cultures (as centrifugal), while instructors at the boarding schools might view literacy as a means of regulating linguistic and cultural behavior (as centripetal) with the target language as the point of orientation (toward English, away from the native language). In reality, however, the introduction of literacy acts as both centrifugal and centripetal forces and through two factors that motivate the perspective on literacy as either a unifying or disunifying force: 1) the individual’s position as, say, community member, parent, schoolteacher, or administrator; and 2) the target language in question.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the most prominent features of writing is its “distancing function”, that is, its ability to allow for communication across time and space. One of the results of this distancing function is that the reader and the writer can
connect with each other in meaningful ways, although they may never have the opportunity to meet. Internet users, particularly those who post messages on discussion boards, regularly cultivate such relationships despite their asynchronous interactions and likely would characterize their relations as part of a community. Literacy, more generally, it can be argued, has the potential to create a community over space and time. As Joshua Fishman remarks, “We can talk to people who are no longer alive through literacy. We can talk to people not yet alive and far, far away through literacy” (1996:88).

5.2.4 Writing as enhancing authority

Finally, there is the view that the development of a written system for use in the heritage language lends authority to the heritage language itself. While linguists consider all languages as equal, it is a common belief that languages with written traditions are somehow inherently superior to those without them (see Hinton 2001:239). Community members working to sustain their heritage language recognize the power associated with writing in the modern world, and thus, many view literacy as a mode of empowerment. Nancy Hornberger remarks, “… indigenous literacies [are seen] as provid[ing] a door of opportunity for those who have been marginalized” (1997:360). While the ultimate goal of the TOLP is to generate new speakers of Than Ówîngeh Tewa, and the production of a dictionary and classroom materials serve as a means to this end, these genres are founded on the development of an orthography, which is fundamentally viewed as promoting empowerment in the heritage language.

The very nature of the medium of writing contributes to the perception that writing confers a level of authority upon the heritage language that speech does not. In
contrast to spoken language, which is evanescent and irreversible (once spoken, words cannot be put back into one’s mouth), written language offers a level of perceived permanence—whether as clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform or e-books accessed over the Internet, it is unmatched in this respect by its spoken counterpart. Recall that if the use of writing is viewed negatively, one of the reasons could be that writing is seen as rendering the spoken language as dry, dead, or less sacred. However, if the use of writing is viewed positively, one reason supporting that view is the idea that the medium of writing, which offers some level of permanence, represents increased authority.

Recall from Chapter 2 that one of the uses of writing is to serve a “social control function” (Coulmas 1989:13; see also Lévi Strauss 1955:354ff). Coulmas reminds readers of the fact that author and authority share the same etymology, which speaks to the longstanding belief among people in Western societies that the written word, which is considered more formal and permanent, is more trustworthy than the spoken word, which is viewed as informal and fleeting. Thus, when two parties enter into a contract with each other, they are likely to draft something in writing in order to finalize any agreement.

In his discussion of the textual products of African languages, Bloomaert (2008) points out that pedagogical and reference grammars often are viewed as the “birth certificates” of the languages they describe (293). While for linguists, languages garner the same status regardless of whether they have been studied (written about), and it cannot be denied that among speakers of those languages such texts are seen as providing a tangible form to the language and thereby receive heightened importance. Similarly, TOLP members have chosen to include a brief grammatical sketch of Than Ówîngeh
Tewa in the dictionary, not only to provide readers with some basic information about the structure of the language but, I would argue, as an attempt to valorize the language itself.

I now want to spend some time discussing an idea that goes largely unmentioned in the scholarly literature relating to language ideologies about writing. If writing is viewed as a means of conferring increased authority upon a heritage language, it often is implied that such texts will be singular in their purpose. That is, it is very common for community members to talk about a dictionary or a pedagogical grammar, rather than dictionaries or pedagogical grammars for a language. However, it is becoming increasingly recognized that it may be more effective for a community to adopt the use of multiple dictionaries—whether organized by semantic domain (e.g., animals, rocks), scripts (e.g., dinner table dialogue, getting ready for school), lexical category (e.g., nouns, verbs), or any other means of linguistic categorization—rather than one unified dictionary that may or may not have multiple editions. I will argue that even though the use of multiple dictionaries may offer many more advantages than one dictionary, the latter, which I shall term the single-text approach, is perceived as more authoritative and prestigious than the former, which I shall term the multi-text approach.

Lexicography has undergone many important changes in the few thousand years that dictionaries have been around, in terms of organization (e.g., alphabetic vs. semantic domain) and visual presentation (e.g., absence or inclusion of illustrations). Over the past few decades in particular, there has been a rapid increase in publications of specialized lexica, such as slang dictionaries and discipline-specific dictionaries. But the purpose has largely remained the same: to provide a prescriptive, authoritative source that serves to regulate language use, especially pertaining to writing. It could be argued that the most
useful dictionaries are those used for living languages and consulted often by those who speak the language. However, there are many dictionaries used for dormant languages that were/are written by linguists or lexicographers and are used only by these groups of people. In these cases, the dictionary acts as a kind of artifact that provides a written record of the language, rather than as a source to which speakers of the language refer. Perhaps central to the purpose of the traditional dictionary is the idea that it should be one unified book, regardless of how many pages or chapters that text may be. This single-text preference, at its core, takes the perceived self-sufficiency of a dictionary as inherently more authoritative than a collection of dictionaries, even if the use of multiple dictionaries is more practical and effective. When asked what end product community members would like to see come out of a language revitalization project (aside from increased numbers of language speakers), they are most likely to express the desire for a dictionary of the heritage language, assuming, of course, they view writing in a positive light.

Most of the discussion in this section has involved the extent to which the use of writing in hard-copy form enhances the authority of the heritage language, but the use of writing in digital domains enhances the status of the language as well. However, digital writing does not confer the same level of authority upon the language as does traditional, hard-copy writing. Digital databases, online dictionaries, and webpages all require the use of writing, and here writing serves the same functions as writing in the real world. However, because the digital world only can be accessed electronically, it is more abstract and less easily accessible (in the sense that a computer, phone, or some other device is required). Further, writing in the real world has more identifiable boundaries.
From reminder notes scrawled on slips of paper to lengthy tomes and encyclopedias, hard-copy texts are either ostensibly bound between two covers or are contained on an easily delineated material. Whereas writing in the digital universe can be conceived of as being everywhere and nowhere, hard-copy universes of writing are tangible and have visually identifiable edges, and it is these boundaries, I would argue, that are responsible for conferring greater authority upon the language in which it is written and, by extension, upon the speech community that is indexed by that written language.

Closely related to the idea of writing as enhancing the authority of the heritage language is the sense of pride that people often experience in speaking that language. Comments such as “my language is my culture” and “my language carries the knowledge of my ancestors” attest to such pride. Such statements illustrate that speakers of endangered languages are not merely situating themselves as members of a speech community but are defiantly positioning themselves as flag bearers of an entire culture—even if, as outlined earlier, the rhetoric of language endangerment often is characterized by an overwhelming concern for languages rather than for their speakers.

While this view more often captures the perspectives of outside researchers, whose goals in working to preserve or revitalize a language may be academic, political, or personal, those in the community who actually use the heritage language often may prioritize the preservation of their heritage language over their own self-preservation. This led Amber Neely and Gus Palmer Jr., in their discussion of language ideologies among the Kiowa, to ask, “Will writing their language make Indians feel better about their lives? Or will writing their language make us feel better about our lives?” (2009:296). It is questions like these that TOLP members, not just outside researchers
such as myself but community members on the project as well, have had to consider carefully.

As mentioned in the previous section, if a community resists the use of writing for the heritage language, it likely involves the perception of writing as a centrifugal force. That is, writing is perceived as a divisive practice that serves to weaken interpersonal relationships by putting social distance between community members. This is especially apparent with views of writing as undermining traditional norms of information acquisition and as allowing for the appropriation of the heritage language by outsiders. However, if a community accepts or even promotes the use of writing for the heritage language, it is because writing likely is viewed as a centripetal force that strengthens interpersonal relationships by reducing social distance between community members. I would argue that the underlying conception of writing as either an inherently unifying or disunifying force is the base from which the more specific views about the roles of writing derive.

Whether a community resists the use of writing on the grounds that it undermines traditional ways of accessing information or as allowing for the appropriation of language by outsiders, both views perceive writing as a centrifugal force. That is, in the two views discussed in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, the use of writing is perceived as dividing people from one another and distancing interpersonal relationships.
CHAPTER 6
SCRIPTS AND SOUND-SYMBOL CORRESPONDENCES

If members of a language program have decided to use a writing system to represent the heritage language, they are likely to do so based on one or more of the four attitudes presented in the previous chapter. Recall these views of writing as: 1) aiding in the preservation of the heritage language; 2) facilitating the language-learning process; 3) increasing domains of usage; and 4) conferring authority and credibility on the heritage language itself. At this point, members of a language program must decide what kind of writing system will be used for their heritage language.

This leads to my second research question: If community members have agreed to create/adopt a written system, what factors motivate the use of one such system over another? Why, in New Mexico and more broadly in North America, do we find a preponderance of alphabetic systems rather than, say, syllabic systems? First, I will present an overview of the three commonly used modern writing systems, followed by examples of languages and their speech communities, as well as of the historical context for their use. This information will be used to ground a discussion of the decisions motivating the development of the Than Ówáinge Thaw writing system.

6.1. Kinds of Writing Systems

In order to discuss the different types of writing systems used in the world today, we first must delimit the term writing system itself. Sampson (1985), taking after Haas (1976), observes a distinction between semasiographic and glottographic systems. The
former refers to systems “which indicate ideas directly” (Sampson 1985:29), as in the case of pictographs (e.g., cave paintings, glyphs) or ideograms (e.g., traffic signs).

Semasiographic systems, by their very nature, rely on the use of iconic imagery, such that the written forms to a large degree resemble their real-life referents. As a result of such iconism, these systems are to a great extent cross-culturally recognizable. For example, consider Figure 6 below:

![Figure 6. An ideogram for ‘airport’.](image)

When one sees the image above on a road sign, they can be reasonably sure that an airport is nearby. Of course, the advantage of using such ideograms for traffic signs lies in their language-independence; images such as the one above are largely successful in conveying meaning regardless of the language used by the viewer. However, semasiographic systems are limited mostly to conveying meaning about concrete objects, such as airports, roads, bicycles, and the like, rather than about abstract concepts related to human expression such as emotions and ideas. Although creating such ideography no doubt requires the act of “writing” insofar as certain physical motor routines are concerned, it is generally understood that such systems do not constitute writing *de jour*.

What we likely term modern-day writing, Sampson notes, is referred to as *glottographic* systems, “which provide visible representations of spoken-language
utterances” (ibid.). Whereas semasiographic systems take raw ideas grounded in experience as their starting point (and therefore can bypass language), glottographic systems rely on the modality of spoken language. Sampson further divides glottographic systems into *logographic* and *phonographic* systems, in which the former refers to the use of symbols (whether at the level of the “word” or the morpheme) to represent meaning, while the latter refers to the use of symbols (whether at the level of the syllable/mora or the phoneme) to represent sounds.

As Sampson and others have observed, the term “word” is notoriously difficult to define, and many writing systems that often are termed “logographic”, such as the Chinese system, are technically morphographic in that a given symbol represents a morpheme, rather than an entire “word”, because a word may contain multiple morphemes. Given the problems associated with the term *logographic*, I will use the term *morphographic* when discussing writing systems such as Chinese. Further, as Sampson observes, morphographic systems can quickly become unwieldy. There are no known writing systems that are polymorphemic, whether at the level of the phrase or of the sentence. That is, no known languages employ a writing system in which a single symbol is used to represent a phrase or sentence. As a matter of economy, this is necessary, as an infinite number of symbols would be required to account for the infinite number of phrases and sentences that may exist in a language.

While I am making a broad distinction between morphographic and phonographic (syllabic and alphabetic) writing systems, each system does not necessarily operate independently. Indeed, Mayan glyphs have been shown to combine both morphographic

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23 In a similar classification system, Hass (1983) considers logographic/morphographic systems to be *pleremic*, or “sense-determinative”, while phonographic systems are *cenemic*, or “sense-discriminative” (see also Coulmas 1989:49).
and phonographic elements (see Coe 1992), as has the Egyptian hieroglyphic system (see Andrews 1981 and Gelb 1963) and Chinese (see Seifart 2006). Nor are there purely alphabetic writing systems, for even in a language such as English, there are many instances of symbols that are more morphographic in nature. For example, consider the use of the ampersand, which behaves much like a Chinese character, as it conveys the meaning of “and” but makes no reference to its acoustic properties. Similarly, numbers (e.g., <9>, not <nine>) are morphographic as well in that they express meaning without reference to sound.

Sampson divides phonographic systems into syllabic, segmental, and featural. Syllabic writing systems make use of symbols to represent syllables/morae (e.g., Japanese kana), whereas segmental writing systems (also termed phonemic writing systems) use symbols to represent individual consonant and vowel sounds. These systems are more popularly known as alphabets, the term I will use from hereon. Like alphabetic systems, featural writing systems (sometimes termed phonetic writing systems) rely on symbols to represent individual consonant and vowel sounds, but do so at a narrower articulatory level. Examples of featural systems include the notation used by generative phonologists (e.g., Chomsky and Halle 1968) to describe sounds in terms of binary articulatory phonetic features, such as “+/voice”, “+/sonorant”, or “+/round”. Additionally, hangul, the writing system used for the Korean language, can basically be considered a featural system in that it does not merely take consonants and vowels as the units of analysis, but the written symbols for those consonant and vowel sounds are organized according to phonetic properties such as place and manner of articulation (Daniels 1990). However, regardless of this technical distinction between alphabetic and
featural systems, in this study I consider both systems as alphabets, in that both rely on the representation of consonant and vowel sounds.

I want to mention briefly two other types of segmental writing systems: *abugidas* and *abjads* (ibid.). Abugidas are similar to alphabets in that they represent consonant sounds, although the vowel sounds do not receive equal treatment and are represented either through the use of diacritics (e.g., accent marks, underlines, hooks) or by changing the shape or orientation of the symbol for the consonant to which it is attached. As we will see shortly, the Cree syllabary—although termed a syllabic system—would be more accurately considered an abugida. Other examples of abugidas include Devanagari and other Brahmic scripts. Whereas abugidas do represent vowels (whether by adding a diacritic to the consonant symbol or by modifying the consonant symbol itself), abjad systems mark only the consonants, so readers are left to supply the appropriate intervening vowels. Notable examples of languages that use abjads include Arabic and Hebrew. Some educators might argue that abjads are inherently more difficult to learn, rather than alphabets or even abugidas, but given enough exposure to the spoken language, having to supply the vowels is not as difficult a task as it might seem. For example, “ths sntnc s wrttn wtht ny vwls” is easily understandable to a reader with sufficient knowledge of English. However, it must be said that such a task is made much easier if the reader is a native speaker of the language and that second-language English speakers, depending on their level of proficiency, might struggle with such a task.

To summarize, a writing system “… differentiate[s] systems depicting linguistic units of different structural levels” (Coulmas 1989:37), whether they are words/morphemes, syllables, or phonemes. Writing systems whose unit of analysis
operates at the level of words/morphemes are called morphographic; systems operating at the level of syllables/morae are called syllabic; and systems operating at the level of phonemes are called alphabets. Using this definition, one cannot speak of differences between the “English writing system” and the “Arabic writing system”, because both make use of the same system—an alphabet. Also, note that this definition implies nothing about standardization. So, for example, Cherokee and Japanese kana employ syllabic writing systems, because any of the symbols used for these languages represent some combination of consonant and vowel; however, each language has developed its own prescriptive standards for how those symbols should be used.

The concept of a writing system is broader than that of a script, yet these two terms often are used interchangeably. However, I will be using the term script to mean “the actual visual shape of the graphemes that a writing system uses, e.g., the Latin or the Arabic letters …” (Seifart 2006:277). As Coulmas (1989) puts it, “scripts are … graphical instantiations of writing systems” (37). So while Latin and Arabic make use of alphabetic writing systems, the look of one alphabet is very different from the other because each uses a different script. It is therefore the script (and, as we shall see, the orthography), not the writing system, to which people most often assign aesthetic value. Neither writing systems nor scripts are language-specific.

Another term often confused with writing system and script is orthography. I am using the term orthography much more narrowly to refer to the regulation of written forms. More specifically, I use the term to mean a
...writing system that [has been] standardized with respect to[:]

a) a set of graphic symbols (graphemes), such as signs, characters, letters, as well as diacritics, punctuation marks, etc.; and

b) a set of rules/conventions, such as orthographic rules and pronunciation rules, rules for writing word boundaries, punctuation rules, capitalization rules, etc. (Seifart 2006:276-7; cf. Coulmas 2003:35; see also Coulmas 1996:1380; and Rogers 2005:2ff).

As mentioned earlier, each orthography by its very nature is language-specific, as it selects a script to represent the language in a standardized way (Coulmas 1989:39). This standardization includes both the “local” (the agreed upon shape of individual written symbols) and the “global” (the conventions for representing the combination of these graphemes in words, sentences, and beyond). Orthographies, then, have as much to do with the aesthetic as with the functional, and community members’ conversations about how an orthography looks in addition to how well that orthography functions make such discussions replete with language-ideological issues.

Having clarified the use of these terms, I now want to discuss two of the well-known contemporary writing systems used for indigenous languages in the Americas. This discussion will be used to contextualize my second research question: What factors motivate the use of one writing system over another?

6.2 Non-alphabetic scripts in the Americas

Of the indigenous languages spoken in present-day New Mexico that have employed a written system for use in the heritage language program, all use an orthography based on the Roman alphabet. In fact, there are few examples of non-alphabetic scripts used for North American indigenous languages. Perhaps the most famous of these are the Cherokee syllabary, developed by Sequoyah in the early

6.2.1 Cherokee

Cherokee is an Iroquoian language spoken by some 16,000 people in North Carolina and Oklahoma (Lewis 2009) and is the only Southern Iroquoian language still spoken today. Cherokee exhibits a complex morphological system best characterized as polysynthetic, as many morphemes can be linked together in forming a single word. Like many Native American languages, Cherokee grammar is highly dependent on the verb, which minimally consists of a pronominal prefix (which indicates who is performing an action, and, optionally, whom is affected by that action), verb root (which carries the semantic core of the form), and an aspect and modal suffix (which together describe how the action is carried out) (Feeling et al. 2003).

In the early nineteenth century, a Cherokee man named Sequoyah is said to have encountered a copy of the Bible, and, although he was illiterate, he intuitively understood the potential power of writing. He adopted the use of symbols on the page, such that each letter corresponded to a syllable in the Cherokee language. Sequoyah, therefore, is credited with devising the Cherokee syllabary. The syllabary comprises roughly 85 characters, the sound-symbol correspondences of which are presented in Figure 7 below. It should be noted, however, that Cherokee is a moraic system, “in which [each] grapheme represents a mora, or a ‘phonological unit intermediate between a phoneme and a syllable’ (Rogers 2005:14) comprising not an entire syllable … but an onset-nucleus combination or the coda” (Peter and Hirata-Edds 2009:215).
It was not long after Sequoyah devised the system that he made public presentations of the syllabary to community members and visitors, and use of the writing system quickly spread. McLoughlin (1986) estimates that up to two thirds of Cherokees were literate in the syllabary in the 1820s. In 1828, Samuel Worcester, an American missionary, had Sequoia’s syllabary typecast for printing, which allowed for the production of the *New Testament* in Cherokee as well as the publication of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Cherokee-language newspaper (Peter and Hirata-Edds 2009:220; see also Bender 2002 and Rogers 2005). The production of these texts and others increased not only exposure to the syllabary but helped to enhance the prestige of the Cherokee language itself. As
Scancarelli (1996: 646) notes, literacy in the syllabary contributed to a widespread perception that the Cherokees were the most “civilized” of Native American tribes.

High rates of literacy continued well into the twentieth century, and a survey conducted in 1964-65 revealed that an estimated 36% to 65% of Cherokee adults were literate in the syllabary (Wahrhaftig 1970:20-21; cited in Scarcarelli 1994:646). However, these numbers dropped precipitously over the next few decades, as oral fluency in the language declined. The Cherokee Heritage Language Center (1986) reports at that time that only an estimated 15% to 20% of first-language Cherokee speakers could read the syllabary, and an estimated 5% could write. During this time, literacy in the syllabary largely was restricted to religious and ceremonial contexts.

In their discussion of the role of literacy in Cherokee language revitalization efforts, Peter and Hirata-Edds (2009) mention the increased development of teaching materials, children’s books, and other educational texts, which helped to (re)introduce the syllabary to more widespread domains of use. Just as with Than Ówîngeh Tewa, the increases and decreases in the number of Cherokee speakers, as well as the changing role of the syllabary, are perhaps best understood through Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) model. While the rise in the production of texts in Cherokee no doubt increased the visibility of the language, helping to move revitalization priorities from Stage 5 (efforts separate from mandatory schooling) to Stage 4a (efforts in lieu of mandatory schooling), several challenges to Cherokee immersion programs emerged as a result.

Many language materials were translated from English, which resulted in unnatural utterances in Cherokee that often were delivered in culturally inappropriate
ways (e.g., the telling of stories in Cherokee that had no basis in that culture, as they were translated from English). The increased production of texts came during a significant decline in oral fluency in Cherokee, such that while children gained literacy in the syllabary, their parents did not. This often meant that parents and their children were unable to participate with each other in the reading process, which likely contributed to a growing separation between the generations’ perceptions of the value of reading and writing. This also meant that the school, rather than the home, became the primary locus of language dissemination. As Fishman observes, “The school itself becomes one link in an established intergenerational sequence of teaching the threatened language as the second language… keeping it as a second language at least for another generation” (2001:14; cited in Peter and Hirata-Edds 2009:222).

The history of the Cherokee syllabary is one of conflict. The syllabary enjoyed a meteoric rise to stardom, characterized by high rates of literacy and prestige, serving to unite community members. Yet, although much of that prestige that so often accompanies heritage language orthographies remains, literacy rates have declined dramatically in the past century, and the syllabary itself may not have improved language preservation efforts among the Cherokee. Such conflict pervades all language programs that introduce writing to their communities.

6.2.2 The Cree Syllabary

Cree is an Algonquian language—and the most widely spoken indigenous language in Canada—spoken by an estimated 117,000 people, according to a 2006 census. The Cree language and its many dialects stretch from Saskatchewan to the
Hudson Bay. Around 1840, a Protestant missionary named Rev. James Evans, using his knowledge of the Devanagari abugida, developed an alphabetic system for the Ojibwe language. However, some 20 years later upon learning of the success of the Cherokee syllabary, Evans experimented with a syllabary for Cree (at Norway House, Manitoba), and, like Cherokee, its use spread quickly (see Murdoch 1981:20-33). This earned Evans a reputation as “the man who made birchbark talk”, as he reportedly used the material extensively in writing the language (Nicholls 1996).

As Berry and Bennett (1995) observe, the rapid increase in the acceptance of and number of speakers proficient in the Cree syllabary is especially impressive given the almost total lack of institutional support for literacy. That is, there were no schools or teachers in the strictest sense; in addition, tools needed for writing, such as paper and pencils, were in short supply. Further, there were very few texts in Cree, so learners had little written material with which to interact, save for hymnals and other liturgical texts. Despite these obstacles and the reliance on the method of person-to-person instruction, by the 1850s it was reported that nearly all adults in James Bay Coast—nearly 1,500 miles from the origin of the orthography—were able to read and write in the syllabary (see Laverloche 1851 and Garin 1855; cited in Berry and Bennett 1995:341).

The syllabary consists of about nine consonant symbols (depending on dialect), whose orientation is modified with or without the use of diacritics in order to indicate the vowel quality. As such, this writing system is more accurately considered an abugida, as different syllables are signified not by creating different symbols but by using a small number of symbols for consonants, whose orientation is modified (along with the use of diacritics) to indicate the following vowel sound (see Figure 8 below).
Campbell (1991) reports that an estimated 70,000 Algonquin-speaking people use the syllabary, although more recent estimates indicate that literacy in the syllabary is restricted to a few thousand people (Lewis 2009).

6.2.3 Acceptance of Cherokee and Cree

Although the Cherokee syllabary was developed by a Cherokee speaker and the Cree syllabary initially was created by a non-Cree speaker (who later taught himself the language), the two writing systems share something in common: an early acceptance of and widespread literacy in the writing system. Also, in each case, literacy in the orthography spread with little to no institutional support, a fact that renders the spread of literacy in Cherokee and Cree all the more remarkable. I would argue that two factors in

\[\text{Diacritics in the column labeled “West” are used only in the Western Cree dialect.}\]
particular contributed to the spread of literacy in these languages: 1) writing as providing
access to liturgical texts and 2) writing in the Cherokee/Cree orthography as a means of
performing indigeneity.

First, it is well known that the assimilationist policies of the Spanish as well as of
the Americans emphasized the conversion of Native peoples to Christianity. However,
whereas the Spanish indoctrinated the Indians in the Catholic faith, the Americans did so
through Protestantism. Further, all liturgical texts used by the Spanish were printed in
Spanish, and while the Franciscans emphasized the need to bring the word of God to
Native peoples in their respective heritage languages, if and when such texts were written
down, it was always either in Spanish or by using an orthography based on the Latin
script (for example, see Hanks 2010 for a detailed analysis of the conversion to
Catholicism among Yucatec Mayas). Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that any
systematic attempts were made by the Spanish to translate liturgical texts into writing
systems using anything other than alphabetic systems. Any attempts to do so may have
even been viewed as sacrilegious.

However, in contrast, the U.S. government, spearheaded by Protestant
missionaries, created an environment in which, despite an emphasis on religious
conversion to Christianity and linguistic conversion to English, access to the Bible in
heritage languages was not only accepted but was promoted. Not only were Protestant
principles taught to Native Americans through their heritage languages in spoken form
but they also were taught in written form. The translation of the New Testament into the
Cherokee and Cree syllabaries largely contributed to the rapid increase in popularity of
these orthographies. Thus, writing in Cherokee and Cree was viewed as utilitarian in its
purpose—that from the perspective of the Protestant missionaries, being able to access Christian texts in the heritage language resulted in a less intrusive, more effective means of “bringing the Indian to civilization and to God”.

Second, high rates of literacy in both orthographies was sustained in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the practice of reading and writing in Cherokee and Cree took on political, cultural, and emotional significance. Increasingly, the orthographies came to be used outside of religious contexts, as their use emerged in political and legal transactions, personal letters and diaries, as well as in medicinal prayers and formulae (Scancarelli 1996:646; see also Wahrhaftig 1970:210-21 and Walker 1981:147). Much of this owed to the aesthetics of the orthography itself. As James Mooney remarked more than a century ago, the syllabary is something the Cherokees “love because it is Indian” (1892:64; cited in Scancarelli 1996:646). The same could be argued for Cree, perhaps even more so, given that graphemes in the Cree syllabary bear much less of a resemblance to English than do those in the Cherokee syllabary (compare the inventories contained in Figures 7 and 8).

Although the origins of the system lay in the Latin script, by taking the syllable as its unit of analysis, the Cherokee and Cree orthographies represent a dramatic departure from the English orthography. As literacy in the syllabaries expanded outside of the institution of religion and into people’s homes, reading and writing in Cherokee and Cree emerged as a performative practice, serving to strengthen a community’s bonds to its heritage language and culture. Further, the use of the syllabary can be seen as indicating social distance from English. While it is entirely possible for bilinguals to achieve proficiency in two markedly different writing systems, as can be seen among the
Cherokees and Crees, it is much more common for Native communities without a writing system in modern times to develop an orthography based on that of the language of wider use, rather than having to develop another system anew. As Leanne Hinton points out, a “familiar-looking writing system gains more friends than one which even a native speaker could not make any sense of at first glance. It is hard enough as it is for native speakers to learn to read the language they have only spoken all their lives” (2001:244; see also Gudschinsky 1967, 1973). That said, it must be acknowledged that this idea of a “preference for the similar” ignores the political and social statement made by community members who select a non-alphabetic script; this serves to put distance between the heritage language and the language of broader use.

Nonetheless, given the history of longstanding contact with English- and Spanish-speaking populations, it is not surprising that we find such a heavy reliance on the Roman script among the heritage languages in New Mexico. As Sebba (1998) notes, indigenous language programs that use writing to represent the heritage language are often conflicted. On the one hand, community members working to revitalize their heritage language are trying to put distance between themselves and the broader English-speaking world around them, but on the other hand such distance can be achieved only by borrowing the Roman script as well as numerous orthographic conventions from English. As Jaffe (200) recognizes, “… There is perhaps a fundamental—perhaps unresolvable—tension between an emphasis on difference vs. an emphasis on sameness” (506-507).

The histories of the Cherokee and Cree orthographies illustrate that widespread literacy in a non-alphabetic script can be achieved. However, the environment in which these orthographies were developed and in which literacy flourished was very different—
times have changed. The power of English has only continued to grow in the United States, and in recent decades the language has spread into other domains—most notably, the Internet. Although Than Ówîngeh Language Program (TOLP) members considered the possibility of adopting a non-alphabetic writing system to represent the heritage language, the discussion was brief and the idea was quickly abandoned in favor of using an alphabetic system.

6.3 The Alphabetic writing system

Of the indigenous languages in the Americas for which orthographies exist, the overwhelming majority employ an alphabetic system. At one level, this is unsurprising, given the close geographic proximity of North American indigenous languages to English and Spanish, but at a deeper level, the sound-symbol correspondences within these orthographies may appear as unexpected. In this section, I will first question traditional beliefs about the superiority of alphabetic systems over their non-alphabetic counterparts, but I will ultimately argue that the decision to employ an alphabetic system makes the most sense not only for Than Ówîngeh Tewa, but for most indigenous languages of North America.

6.3.1 Characteristics of alphabets

In their discussion of the factors involved in designing orthographies for previously unwritten languages, Cahill and Karan (2000) argue that for an orthography to be effective, it must be “… (a) linguistically sound, (b) acceptable to all stakeholders, (c) teachable, and (d) easy to reproduce. These can be thought of as roughly scientific,
political, educational, and technical aspects” (3). While these authors do well to recognize the multiplicity of components involved in the creation and use of an orthography, I take issue with several of their claims and the unstated assumptions behind them.

First, I disagree with Cahill and Karan’s claim that effective orthographies must necessarily be “linguistically sound”. One need look no further than the English orthography, which, though used by hundreds of millions of people around the world, is fraught with inconsistencies. Although English orthography may be viewed as chaotic and ineffective a priori, it nonetheless is viewed as perfectly adequate—even effective—a posteriori. If one grows up with a writing system, no matter how messy it may seem to outsiders, it makes perfect sense to those who use it every day. As such, the English orthography is often viewed by its users as self-legitimizing. As evidence of this, consider conversations you may have overheard (or even had yourself!) in which speakers bemoan the misuse of your and you’re, for example. These two forms are often homophonous (and therefore it is quite understandable that they are confused with one another), but many speakers go so far as to argue that one’s inability to spell represents a general lack of intelligence. While, of course, this couldn’t be further from the truth, such arguments illustrate that speakers have well-established, deeply entrenched views about their writing system and that when the prescriptive rules governing that system are violated, it is as if the language itself has been desecrated. Despite the irregularities present in English orthographies, any proposals to improve upon these irregularities would be met with swift resistance, as hundreds of millions of people are too familiar with the orthography to want to change it. Consider the Shavian alphabet (see Figure 9
below), created by Ronald Kingsley Read but named after George Bernard Shaw, which contains 48 consonant and vowel symbols. This alphabet is much more technically accurate than its Latin counterpart, as it adheres much more closely to a one-to-one correspondence between sound and symbol. The Shavian system never gained traction and was overwhelmingly rejected because of readers’ familiarity with the existing orthography. For better or worse, the battle for Shavian was over before it even began.

![Figure 9. The Shavian alphabet](http://www.omniglot.com/writing/shavian.htm)

With respect to English orthographies, the allure of the familiar is incredibly strong—it can be overcome only through vast amounts of funding as well as with mental and physical discipline. Those who have taught introductory linguistics courses can attest to this fact, as their students often struggle with the IPA system at first, preferring instead
to “transcribe” using their knowledge of English orthography. The paragon of linguistic soundness, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with its emphasis on one-to-one correspondence between sound and symbol, might be preferred among linguists, but this sentiment is not likely to be shared among community members who have received no formal training in linguistics. More specifically, the IPA possesses three of the four criteria laid out by Cahill and Karan (2000): It is linguistically sound, teachable, and (relatively) easy to reproduce. However, the IPA system is very unlikely to be accepted by all stakeholders in a language program seeking to use writing to represent the heritage language, much less by the community at large.

Second, Cahill and Karan investigate best practices in orthography development only insofar as alphabetic scripts are concerned. While it is true that almost all Native American groups that have developed or adopted a writing system have employed alphabetic systems, this is not the only kind of writing system, and there is no evidence to suggest that one writing system possesses inherent advantages over another—cognitive, practical, or otherwise. The only advantages of using an alphabetic writing system rather than, say, a syllabary, involve the extent to which the alphabet that emerges meets the demands of those who would engage in writing practices.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, these authors imply that writing is a universally desirable skill—that all else being equal, everyone would want to acquire reading and writing skills for use in their language. The vast majority of the languages of the world have no writing system, and the transmission of knowledge in these cultures is based on an oral tradition. Just as literacy in the Western world is perceived as natural and necessary, so too is reliance on the oral tradition in cultures without writing. Decades
ago, structural linguists argued for the need to develop the “ideal” orthography, and such
debates invariably centered around the ideal alphabet. Kenneth Pike, one of the most
renowned structuralists of his time, claimed, “The ideal alphabet should have one letter,
and one letter only for each phoneme, or the learning process will be retarded” (1938:87;
alphabetic system should have a one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and
graphemes.” Each of these statements invokes the notion of an ideal alphabet—that each
phoneme in a language should be represented by one symbol, and that symbol should
represent only that specific phoneme.

Even an orthography such as the one used in Spanish—where there are many
more one-to-one sound-symbol correspondences than, say, in English—violates the one-
to-one principle espoused by Pike, Gleason, and others. Consider the differences in
pronunciation between México and éxito ‘success’. While both words contain the
grapheme <x> and the words in which <x> appears share the same preceding and
following vowels—[e] and [i], respectively, in México the <x> is realized as a [h],
whereas in éxito it is realized as the consonant cluster [ks]. As Rehg (2004) correctly
observes, the problem with Pike’s and Gleason’s claims involves the notion of an ideal.
Rehg recognizes the loaded nature of this term, as an ideal alphabet could be only created
by an ideal person using an ideal theory in analyzing an ideal language spoken by an
ideal speaker living in an ideal society (503). The concept of an ideal also implies a static
nature, and, in the case of living languages, change is ever-present—even if it happens
slowly. There is, then, no such thing as an ideal alphabet.
Setting aside notions of ideals, consider two concepts that render impossible an ideal speaker and an ideal orthography—those of linguistic awareness and orthographic depth. Linguistic awareness involves the extent to which a reader recognizes that speech is divisible into the phonological segments that letters represent (Liberman et al. 1980:68). The extent to which one possesses linguistic awareness varies, such that one may experience incredible difficulty in negotiating a writing system (be it the IPA, Than Ówîngeh Tewa, or any other orthography), while another may navigate the system with relative ease. As such, it is important that those who create orthographies keep in mind the different levels of linguistic awareness possessed by users, such that great care is taken to make the reading and writing process (or, perhaps more accurately, the decoding and encoding process) as smooth as possible.

Orthographic depth involves the extent to which there exists a one-to-one correspondence between sound and symbol. Orthographies with high degrees of sound-symbol correspondence are considered “shallow” (e.g., Spanish, Italian), while those with lower degrees of sound-symbol correspondence are considered “deep” (e.g., English, French) (see Katz and Frost 1992, Besner and Smith 1992).\(^{25}\) Linguistic awareness and orthographic depth are interrelated, such that one’s ability to successfully engage with orthographies is largely determined by his or her linguistic awareness. Put another way, “an orthography makes the assumption that readers know, tacitly, the phonology of the language, so the representation of words in their personal lexicon matches the transcriptions of the orthography” (Liberman et al. 1980:69). Many educators have

\(^{25}\) I use the term “orthographic depth” merely to refer to the extent to which orthographies are considered “shallow” or “deep”. I do not wish to invoke the Orthographic Depth Hypothesis, which argues that readers of shallow orthographies recognize words through their phonology, in contrast to readers of deep orthographies who recognize words based on their morphology and visual appearance.
extolled the virtues of the alphabetic system, as it allows readers to sound out words they have never spoken. Yet,

It is obvious… that one can [read words one has never before seen] only insofar as he is able to map the internal structure of the written word onto the segmental structure of the morphophonological representation of the spoken word he holds in his personal lexicon (Liberman et al. 1980:78).

The matter becomes further complicated in the case of Than Ówîngeh Tewa and other communities in which L2 learners are tasked with negotiating not just a different language but a written representation of that language. As Goody and Watt (1963) observe, an alphabetic system may be perceived as the easiest to learn but only insofar as the L2 learner has previous literary exposure to an alphabet in the L1. Taken further, this also presupposes that the learner has received exposure to the sounds of the L1.

Many of the decisions made regarding the Than Ówîngeh orthography involve the desire on the part of program members to distinguish written Than Ówîngeh Tewa from other Tewa dialects that have orthographies (e.g., Ohkay Owingeh). As Alexandra Jaffe (2000) points out, “Orthography selects, displays, and naturalizes linguistic difference, which is in turn used to legitimize and naturalize cultural and political boundaries” (502). While debates over sound-symbol correspondences often explicitly take place for technical reasons (“x symbol—as opposed to y symbol—should represent z sound because it is most linguistically appropriate”), there are often implicit arguments for using such symbols, as they are viewed as a means of differentiating one dialect from another. As Mark Sebba claims, “Ideology, not phonology, turns out to be the key factor in adoption of an orthography” (1998:4).
My intention here is not to claim that alphabets are not useful; indeed, I ultimately believe that an alphabetic system is the best option for language programs attempting to develop a writing system for their heritage language in North America, particularly when the language has never had a writing system. However, it is important to recognize that much of the scholarly literature exalts the use of alphabets in an overly idealistic way. It is important here to remember the Dauenhauers’ call for the need to establish “prior ideological clarification”. It is only after extensive dialogue with the principal stakeholders of an orthography—the community members themselves—that any decisions regarding the use of a writing system (alphabet or otherwise) can be made.

At this point we are prepared to discuss the second and third research questions driving this study: What factors motivate the decision to use one writing system over another, and what factors motivate the sound-symbol correspondences within that system? Three important principles are relevant to this discussion, as they guide the development of any orthography, not just that of Than Ówingeh Tewa (although that is where the focus will lie in this discussion): learnability, transparency, and acceptability. Later, in Section 6.5, I will argue that these three principles are informed by the language ideologies of syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism.

Grenoble and Whaley (2006) offer several recommendations for developing an orthography in a language revitalization program. Ultimately, they recommend the use of an alphabet rather than a syllabary or morphographic system, despite the important symbolic value and cultural attachment that speakers might develop to such systems over many years. Although I would agree with this claim, it is with the provisos mentioned above, namely that community members be consulted and agree on the decision to use an
alphabet. However, I share their recommendation that an orthography must maximize learnability, that any and every strategy must be employed to facilitate the process of learning to read and write in that orthography. As these authors observe, “Maximizing the learnability of … orthographies greatly enhances the likelihood they will be learned and used” (ibid. 158). However, I disagree with one of the subprinciples of learnability mentioned by Grenoble and Whaley, that the alphabet should be constructed on the basis of one-to-one sound-symbol correspondence. Again, as mentioned above, although as a linguist I agree that such a principle illustrates the value of the IPA, as a TOLP member I recognize that community members do not necessarily share this view, and it is their views that matter more than anyone else’s. Further, one-to-one sound-symbol correspondence cannot always be achieved. As Andre Sjoberg observes, “The fact that the Roman alphabet includes relatively few symbols … means that digraphs and trigraphs often must represent unit phonemes” (1966:266).

Fishman (1988) proposes three stages of ethnocultural involvement in the development of writing for use in the heritage language: 1) creation, when an orthography is developed anew; 2) substitution, when a new orthography replaces an older written system; and 3) revision, when modifications of a current written system are discussed. While it is true that in creating an orthography (Stage 1), language planners should strive to avoid the use of digraphs and trigraphs as much as possible, this may not necessarily hold true for orthographies based on substitution or revision (Stages 2 and 3). As mentioned above, although digraphs abound in English orthographies (e.g., <sh>, <ch>, <oe>) and represent irregularities in the system, the numbers of readers accustomed to such idiosyncrasies far outnumber those who might propose alternative
solutions, both in the Than Ówîngeh community and in American society at large. Therefore, such diagraphs actually can serve in the interest of the principle of learnability, rather than against it, as so many readers are already familiar with these digraphs. The one-to-one correspondence between grapheme and sound often stands at odds with the other subprinciple of learnability, transparency, which emphasizes that orthographic conventions should, wherever possible, coincide with those of the language of wider use.

As we will see shortly, many of the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthographic conventions have been borrowed from English, which often requires the use of digraphs such as <ch> and <oe>. Therefore, even though the use of the Roman alphabet allows for greater ease of access to, or learnability of, the Than Ówîngeh orthography, it also means borrowing some of the more cumbersome and problematic pieces of that system. The third principle is arguably the most important of all—that of acceptability. Regardless of how well an orthography is constructed in terms of learnability and transparency, if the system is not accepted by community members it is unlikely to be used.

6.4 Sound-symbol correspondences in the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography

Members of the TOLP used the principles above to guide discussions regarding the development of the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography. How could the orthography be streamlined to maximize ease of learnability? Could the orthography draw upon strategies used in other orthographies to this end? What decisions must be made to ensure that the orthography is accessible as well as acceptable to community members? The primary goal of the TOLP is to generate new speakers of the heritage language, and if
writing is used to achieve this end, language planners must recognize the importance of making the written code as accessible to community members as possible. As such, they unanimously agreed that the system should be based on the Roman alphabet—and more specifically, that many of the spelling conventions used in English also would be used in the Than Ówîngeh system.

In 1983, the San Juan Pueblo\textsuperscript{26} Bilingual Program, led by Esther Martinez, produced what was at the time the most comprehensive Tewa dictionary yet created. This dictionary represents a collaborative achievement on the part of community members and provides an extensive lexicon of Tewa linguistic forms; it was the first Tewa dictionary of its kind and has served as the template for the forthcoming dictionary on Than Ówîneh Tewa, to be produced by the TOLP. Although no attempts were made to work out a written system for the use of Tewa within Than Ówîngeh prior to the establishment of the TOLP (and as such, one might consider the development of a Than Ówîngeh orthography as falling under Stage 1, creation), I would argue that the TOLP’s orthography constitutes a “revision”, in Fishman’s terms, of the San Juan Pueblo Tewa Dictionary, thereby occupying stage three. Below are the consonant and vowel graphemes (with diacritics indicating tone) of the Than Ówîngeh orthography, along with the equivalent graphemes used in the Ohkay Owingeh orthography and IPA symbol.

\textsuperscript{26} Now known as Ohkay Owingeh
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>IPA symbol</th>
<th>Ohkay Owingeh</th>
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### Tones

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A number of revisions have been made by the TOLP in developing the Than Ówîngeh orthography. Examples of such revisions based on transparency include using `<f>` instead of `<ph>`, `<æ>/<æ>` instead of `<ä>`, `<` instead of `<?>`, and `<.` instead of `<,>`. These changes were motivated by ease of learnability and transparency, as our consultants viewed the San Juan Dictionary’s use of `<ph>`, `<ä>`, and `<?>` as opaque.

Further, because Tewa is a tonal language with a phonemic distinction between short and long as well as between nasalized and non-nasalized vowels, some graphemes are cumbersome. For example, when the nasalized low, front, unrounded vowel has a high tone, it would be represented as `<a>` with an umlaut under a circumflex and a nasal hook.

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27 Low tone is unmarked, both in the Ohkay Owingeh and Than Ówîngeh orthographies.
28 Oral vowels are unmarked, both in the Ohkay Owingeh and Than Ówîngeh orthographies.
As our consultants observed, such a grapheme could present problems for second-language Tewa learners because it has several components that are potentially confusing (the acute accent mark indicates high tone, umlaut over “a” indicates [ae], and the hook under the “a” indicates nasality). Among other things, it is possible that the umlaut is not preferred here because it occupies roughly the same position as tone (on top of the grapheme).

Another example of revision involves the representation of glottal stops in Tewa. Whereas the San Juan Dictionary uses the IPA symbol for the glottal stop <ʔ>, members of the TOLP felt that this symbol too closely resembles a question mark, and therefore could confuse readers. This sentiment is not isolated to the TOLP, as many Native American languages that have a writing system also contain the glottal stop in their sound inventories, and the use of <ʔ> is often avoided in those systems. While the appearance of this symbol in certain environments (e.g., in between vowels) in Tewa would help to distinguish it from <ʔ>, thereby helping to move readers away from the “question mark” interpretation, this is not always helpful. The TOLP’s opinion that the <ʔ> too closely resembles <ʔ> is especially understandable, as the glottal stop very often occurs in word-final position in Tewa. As a result, the TOLP elected to use the apostrophe <’> to represent this sound, as well as for ejective consonants (e.g., <k’>, <p’>, <t’>).

Lastly, whereas nasal vowel quality is represented with <,> in the Ohkay Owingeh orthography, nasality is represented with <_,> in the Than Ówîngeh orthography. This distinction, as far as I have observed, was entirely accidental, as no discussions took place regarding if and how to represent nasality differently from the Ohkay Owingeh orthography. That said, although the two different orientations of the
nasal hooks in each system represent a minor difference, it can nonetheless be taken as an important revision in the Than Ówîngeh, as the use of one of one diacritic rather than the other not only indexes one orthography rather than the other but one speech community rather than the other.

6.5 Syncretism, variationism, and utilitarianism in the Than Ówîngeh Tewa orthography

In Chapter 2, the language ideologies of syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism, as developed by Kroskrity (2009), were introduced. Recall that syncretism places value on linguistic borrowing from neighboring languages; utilitarianism views language as a communicative tool, de-emphasizing its sociocultural and emotional import; and variationism views dialectal variation, whether based on individual or family differences, as the expected norm. As mentioned earlier, Kroskrity introduced these concepts for the description of oral linguistic practices, but I would argue that these language ideologies can be applied to written language as well, with little modification of the meanings of these terms. So whereas Kroskrity envisioned syncretism in terms of “linguistic borrowing”, I would argue that such borrowing includes the appropriation of the very practice of writing as well. Similarly, although utilitarianism for Kroskrity involves the value placed upon the use of spoken language as a communicative tool, in this study I would argue that this ideology also includes the use of writing as a communicative tool. Also, while Kroskrity views variationism as pertaining to the domain of spoken language, I believe this concept can be applied just as easily to the domain of writing. It also should be understood that these language ideologies are not
mutually exclusive of one another; indeed, it is rare that one of these ideologies can be invoked without reference to at least one of the others.

6.5.1 Syncretism in the Than Ówîngeh orthography

Syncretism can be observed at various levels within the orthography as well as in its use. First, and most broadly, the very acceptance or even promotion of the practice of writing in Tewa can be taken as a kind of syncretism, as it illustrates the perception of writing as a valuable practice—one that was not native to the Tewa, having been appropriated from Western society. Therefore, all the reasons presented in the previous chapter supporting the use of writing can be viewed as illustrating such syncretism.

Second, the fact that the Than Ówîngeh orthography employs an alphabetic system further illustrates a syncretistic ideology. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the alphabet is but one kind of writing system (along with syllabaries and morphographic systems), and although using such a system offers numerous advantages—especially in North America, where there exists a preponderance of alphabets for languages—TOLP members were not, strictly speaking, forced to use such a system. However, because languages such as English and Spanish employ alphabets and because many community members at Than Ówîngeh are literate in these languages, the advantages of using the same writing system as English and Spanish were too great to ignore. As such, TOLP members intuitively understood the need to organize the Than Ówîngeh orthography based on an alphabetic system. Admittedly, what I view as “intuition” on the part of TOLP members actually may be a projection of my own academic bias as a linguist. I would argue, however, that the absence of any substantial discussion about what kind of
writing system should be used for Than Ówîngeh can be taken as evidence that all of the TOLP members viewed the use of an alphabet as self-evident.

Third, within the alphabetic system, TOLP members elected to use the Latin script, and their decision to do so was quite understandable given that English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities use this script. Given the proximity of the Than Ówîngeh speech community to that of English and Spanish, it would not make sense to use an Arabic or Cyrillic script to represent the heritage language, as these community members likely have had very little, if any, exposure to the Arabic and Russian languages. While the idea to create an entirely new script—one that bears no resemblance to the Latin script (consider the Shavian Script)—was briefly discussed by the TOLP, members quickly concluded that such invention would require more effort on the part of language planners (and readers!) than it was worth.

Fourth, TOLP members intuitively recognized the need to borrow the left-to-right, top-down orientation of the Latin script for use in the Than Ówîngeh orthography. This point never was discussed, and the absence of such a discussion, I believe, only further illustrates that TOLP members perceive this orientation as self-evident. After all, it would make little sense for the TOLP to choose an alphabetic system in the Latin script only to throw the potential reader a curve by modifying that script to, say, a right-to-left or bottom-top orientation.

Fifth, in extended pieces of written Tewa, formatting features such as paragraph indentations and line spacing, and other formal conventions (e.g., left justification) also have been borrowed. Once again, this point was never explicitly discussed by program members, again illustrating that such decisions were perceived as self-evident.
Sixth, the representation of words in the Than Ówîngeh orthography had to be considered. Because the morphosyntax of English and Tewa are so markedly different, notions of what constitutes a “word” in Tewa had to be negotiated. The concept of a “word” is very difficult to define even among linguists, and many definitions and judgments of what constitutes a word in a language are often made in reference to its written representation. Obviously, this presented a challenge to TOLP members in considering what makes a Tewa word, as there is very little written material from which to draw. For example, because Tewa exhibits heavy agglutinative morphology as well as a complex PVP system, TOLP members were faced with questions concerning the written representation of the verb complex in sentences such as (1) below:

(3)  
{\textit{ti-bii-kohsay}}  
y/n question-2s(INT)-swim.PAST  
‘Did you swim?’

This simple utterance serves to illustrate the problem of representing the verb complex in written form. Linguists might prefer to represent this utterance as one “word” in order to reflect the boundedness of the PVP bii- to the verb stem. For the same reason, linguists might want to attach the yes-no question marker {\textit{ti}}- to the verb complex because of its obligatory position in the construction. However, as our consultants have pointed out, such a strategy renders the verb system more inaccessible to second-language learners, and if one of the primary goals of using a writing system is to facilitate language learning, it may be preferable to represent this phrase not as one word but as three separate words.
Such differences reflect what England (1996) refers to as “a tension between ... popularist approach[es] ... and technical approach[es] to decision making ...” (185).

Here, the former approach represents the interests of the local community in forming a majority, whereas the latter approach is characterized by loyalty to linguistic analysis. This issue brings us full circle back to the importance of community members making such orthographic choices. By allowing community members to make their own judgments on how best to represent the heritage language in written form, they retain authority over their language (and all of the domains in which it is used).

Seventh, many of the spelling conventions used in the Than Ówîn geh orthography were borrowed from English. Notable examples include the representation of [i:] as <ee> (as in such English words as seen, feel, and green) and [o:] as <oe> (as in such English words as toe and doe). This second example is a particularly interesting one. Early in the program when decisions on sound-symbol correspondences began, TOLP members discussed the representation of [o:] as <oo>. However, as our consultants remarked, the use of this digraph likely would lead a second-language Tewa learner (as reader) to pronounce the form for ‘water’ as [p’ú:] rather than as [p’ó:]. Therefore, program members unanimously agreed to represent [o:] as <oe>, thereby guiding readers to pronounce this vowel more accurately.

Finally, surface-level features, such as punctuation, were borrowed from English. Extended pieces of writing in Tewa include periods, commas, colons, semi-colons, question marks, and exclamation marks, just as they are used in English. As with the orientation and formatting features of the orthography, the decision to use such punctuation marks was never explicitly discussed—TOLP members simply began to use
them in their writing. Again, the absence of conversations about whether and how to use punctuation in writing illustrates that such conventions were taken as self-evident.

6.5.2 Utilitarianism in the Than Ówîngeh Orthography

Utilitarianism can be observed in the use of the orthography among community members. As mentioned earlier, Ogowée T’ún, often accompanied by another Tewa member of the TOLP (usually Póví Kweeyo and/or Kó’ôe Chaenu), holds weekly Tewa classes at the Pueblo. Although the Than Ówîngeh orthography figures prominently in the language materials used in the classes, adhering to the rules of the orthography is not required. Rather, students often are told they can “spell Tewa how they want”, stressing that the orthography merely serves as a foundation on which decisions about spelling can take place. As such, TOLP members recognize that the practice of writing in Than Ówîngeh will be used for various purposes. While some may choose to engage writing for practical purposes, such as for learning the heritage language or being able to write letters in Tewa, others may envision writing as a means of renegotiating their indigeneity, such that achieving functional proficiency in the Than Ówîngeh orthography would represent a means of entering into a dialogue with previous generations of Tewa speakers, whose stories often were written down.

Here again we can see the tension inherent to the orthography and its use come to the surface. While many discussions early in the program focused on establishing the orthography itself—and many of these discussions continue to this day—TOLP members agree that the orthography should be taken to supplement the learning of spoken Tewa, not as a substitute for it. So while great care has been taken to establish the rules of the
system, ultimately program members agree that such a system cannot and should not be used to impose strict regulations on the writing of Tewa, which they believe would defeat the purpose of using writing in the first place—as a means of helping to preserve and learn the language and to help readers enter into a community of users of the language.

6.5.3 Variationism in the Than Ówîngeh Orthography

The language ideology of variationism can be observed in several places in the Than Ówîngeh orthography. First, many of the decisions pertaining to the sound-symbol correspondences were made based not only on technical considerations, but also on aesthetic and political considerations. As can be seen above, the TOLP’s choice to use ‘\textgreater{}’ rather than ‘\textless{}ʔ’ was made for several reasons. As mentioned, TOLP members believed that the ‘\textless{}ʔ’ too closely resembles ‘\textless{}ʔ’, which could cause confusion with readers. However, they also commented—as with many of the decisions on sound-symbol correspondences—that the Than Ówîngeh orthography should be different from the Ohkay Owingeh orthography, not merely because they believed improvements should be made in the service of transparency and learnability (e.g., use of ‘\textgreater{}’ rather than ‘\textless{}ʔ’, use of ‘\textless{}f’ rather than ‘\textless{}ph’) but because it should look different. Such aesthetic uniqueness can be taken to index not just the Than Ówîngeh language but what it means to be a member of the Than Ówîngeh community. Thus, the sound-symbol correspondences of the Than Ówîngeh orthography were motivated by technical as well as by aesthetic and political reasons.

Also, as mentioned above, the fact that TOLP members emphasize that learners should write Tewa the way they want and for the purposes of their own choosing
illustrates the utilitarianistic ideology that writing represents a tool. I would further argue that this idea also involves a variationist ideology, as writing is taken to represent a fundamentally pluralistic practice; that is, writing in Tewa is not guided by a strictly prescribed set of functions through a limited number of sanctioned forms. The TOLP therefore recognizes that in the process of learning to read and write in Tewa, students are actively developing their own ideas and intuitions about how the heritage language should be represented in writing. As Jaffe (2000) contends, “Becoming literate is not just about the acquisition of orthographic decoding skills, but also involves the development of a (culturally conditioned) graphic sensibility” (509). Students’ ability to develop such a “graphic sensibility” emerges as a negotiation of their indigeneity as a Than Ówîngeh community member, informed by their own life histories and educational experiences.

While Grenoble and Whaley’s principles of learnability, transparency, and acceptability offer useful guideposts for the creation/revision and implementation of orthographies, they are nonetheless rather subjective. Any given strategy may be viewed by one person as enhancing the learnability of an orthography, while for another person that same strategy could be viewed as impeding the learnability of that orthography. The same can be said with the principles of transparency and acceptability. Therefore, the language ideologies of syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism offer a useful model for understanding what those principles mean to speakers of the heritage language.
CHAPTER 7
LOOKING FORWARD: IT TAKES A CHILD TO RAISE A VILLAGE

In this study I have attempted to demonstrate that the use of writing to represent the heritage language at Than Ówîngeh involves a confluence of social, cultural, political, and personal factors. The use of writing itself is a contentious issue in Puebloan societies, and even though the practice of writing has been accepted and promoted among members of the Than Ówîngeh Language Program (TOLP), this sentiment is not necessarily shared by others in Than Ówîngeh and in other Tewa-speaking communities. Although writing is clearly viewed as a valuable practice, as mentioned earlier, it cannot be taken as a substitute for speaking but merely as supportive of it. In chapter 1, I introduced the research questions motivating this study, and it is at this point that I would like to review what I have found in my research and through the course of my fieldwork experience.

With regard to the primary, and most general, research question (what historical and sociocultural factors give rise to a general acceptance of or resistance to using a writing system to represent the heritage language?), I have identified four factors that motivate such resistance. First, if a community (or community member) views writing negatively, and therefore is resistant to its use for the heritage language, it may involve the idea that writing removes the spirit of spoken language itself. Many consider spoken language as imbued with a vitality that is utterly absent when rendered as written symbols on a page or computer screen. In this view, the spoken modality, though undeniably evanescent as compared to the relative permanence of writing, potentiates a performative power in which words can affect reality in real and substantive ways (see Silverstein...
1979). The spoken word can summon, transfer, and imbue meaning where writing can only reflect and redirect it. Further, that speech can be acquired (whereas writing must be learned) speaks to the basic natural origins of language as a living, breathing activity, an observation that iconically positions spoken language as primary to and dominant over written language. In this view, writing, at best, renders the language as static, void of body and context; at worst, it defiles the very cultural practices of its speakers.

Writing may also be viewed as undermining traditional norms of information acquisition. If a group of people have traditionally relied solely on oral transmission for the dissemination of information in a community, that information may be more easily monitored and authorized (see Brandt 1981 and Hinton 2001). The introduction of writing, then, can be perceived as allowing information (from inside as well as outside the community) to be accessed in culturally unsanctioned ways. Here writing could allow one to circumvent erstwhile tribal social relationships necessary to gain new knowledge.

Closely related to and extending from this idea is the view that writing can allow for the appropriation of the heritage language by outsiders. The salvage research that characterized anthropological and linguistic inquiry in the past—and which, regrettably, still continues today—has understandably led many indigenous communities to distrust the motives of outsiders, no matter how well intentioned these investigators’ aims may be.

Writing may also be treated negatively in that it is viewed as inhibiting the language learning process. Although most of the languages of the world remain unwritten, speakers of these languages are required to learn a whole host of cultural literacies; however, in contrast to the Western educational model, writing is treated not
merely as unnecessary, but as antithetical to the human spirit. So while Westerners may marvel at the seemingly incredible feats of memory displayed by members of an “oral”-based society when recounting lengthy spoken epics and tales verbatim, these speakers may similarly view the use of writing as something akin to an ineffective crutch, or even a third wheel, whose use constrains the mind, rather than frees it.

Finally, implementing writing for use in a community language program—or for a community more broadly—presents logistical challenges for its members. Writing is not a self-contained modality because the act of writing requires artifacts through which its use is mediated (e.g., pencils, paper, computers)—all of which cost money. Therefore, even if a community accepts or promotes the use of writing to represent the heritage language in theory, ultimately that community may choose not to implement writing in practice, as the perceived costs may outweigh the benefits.

Conversely, I have identified four factors motivating a general acceptance of the use of writing to represent the heritage language. First, writing can be viewed as helping to preserve the heritage language, so that if, in the worst case scenario, the language disappears there will remain a written record of the language to serve as a reference for future generations. Ideally, such a written record would serve to supplement any audio recordings of the language, but many times such recordings may not be available.

Second, writing can be viewed as a means of facilitating the language learning process. If a community (member) accepts or promotes the use of writing, they are likely to draw upon the argument that the medium of writing allows one to more effectively learn another language, by, for example, being able to record linguistic forms that are difficult to remember, or to visually organize verbal paradigms. The use of writing for
this purpose has been implicitly built into the Western model of education and is often taken as a matter of course among students in language classes. Ultimately, the perceived value of writing in this sense is that it serves as a resource to which the language learner can refer as needed.

Third, writing can be viewed as a means of increasing domains of use for the heritage language. The very use of writing to represent language opens up the possibility for the language to be used in novel ways, both practical and creative (e.g., grocery lists, liturgical scripts, poetry, novels, blogs). One of the common symptoms of endangered languages is that their use is often restricted to specific contexts, such as the ceremonial domain, outside of which the language cannot gain foothold. It is for this reason that the use of writing is solicited for use in heritage language programs.

Fourth, writing can be viewed as a means of enhancing the status of the language itself. This may be perceived as the most compelling reason for community members to adopt a writing system for their language, as it speaks to promise of elevating the prestige of the language, something for which stakeholders of all endangered languages strive. That writing should be viewed as conferring more value upon a language may stem largely from the features and functions of writing itself. In contrast to spoken and signed modalities in which language displays evanescent qualities, the relative permanence of the written medium can serve to index increased authority among those who accept or promote the use of writing.

With respect to my second and third research questions (if community members have agreed to create/adopt a written system, what factors motivate the use of one such system [e.g., alphabet, syllabary] over another? And if a particular writing system has
been agreed upon, what factors motivate the use of certain sound-symbol
correspondences?), the principles of learnability, transparency, and acceptability were the
factors motivating the TOLP’s decision to use an alphabetic writing system as the basis
for the Than Ówîngeh orthography. Given that Than Ówîngeh is located in the American
Southwest, it is therefore surrounded by English- and Spanish-speaking populations, and
both of these languages employ alphabets. As a result, members of the TOLP
unanimously agreed that the preferred writing system for the heritage language should be
an alphabet. Those who grew up in Than Ówîngeh speak English and/or Spanish, and
since these two languages’ writing systems employ alphabets, the decision to use such a
system for the heritage language at Than Ówîngeh maximizes learnability.

The use of an alphabet also maximizes transparency, or the idea that a writing
system should share features of the writing systems of the languages of wider use. Most
of the spelling conventions present in the Than Ówîngeh orthography are borrowed from
American English, and although the American English represents an example of a deep
orthography (less one-to-one sound-symbol correspondences than, say, Spanish), Tewa
language-learners are very familiar with the often idiosyncratic nature of spelling in
American English. Therefore, the decision to represent [oː] in Tewa as <oe> illustrates
the incorporation of features present in the American English orthography.

Like any orthography, the Than Ówîngeh system is far from perfect, but the
principles of learnability, transparency, and acceptability have served as useful
guideposts in the development of this system. Of course, an orthography’s relative ease
of learnability and transparency by no means guarantees that it will be accepted among
all members of a community (or even members of a language program), but they do go a
long way. As mentioned earlier, there was neither unanimous support for the use of writing to represent the heritage language nor for the sound-symbol correspondences governing the Than Ówîngeh orthography. However, most community members who have encountered the orthography have agreed with (or at the very least, have accepted) the TOLP’s decisions. When the TOLP was formed in 2003, none of its members could have predicted the challenges that would face the program, the future vitality of the heritage language, and the Than Ówîngeh community. These challenges are numerous and complex, and discussions about the future of the heritage language rarely—if ever—concern just the language itself, as language revitalization efforts necessarily involve aspects of culture, social structure, and personal and governmental politics.

Several questions remain: How will the external political climate as well as internal changes within the Pueblo affect the sovereignty of Than Ówîngeh? To what extent will these changes and the assimilatory pressures exerted upon the Pueblo affect the vitality of the heritage language? Will the dialect of Tewa spoken at Than Ówîngeh survive the next few decades? What fate awaits the Tewa language more broadly? If future generations continue to speak Tewa, will they choose to use writing? If so, for what purposes will writing be used? While no one can state with any certainty the answers to these questions, I would like to take some time to offer some provisional answers.

*How will the external political climate as well as internal changes within the Pueblo affect the sovereignty of Than Ówîngeh?* The sovereignty of Than Ówîngeh as a federally recognized pueblo is likely not threatened, and I am optimistic that the increasingly diverse ethnic and linguistic makeup of this country will foster an
environment of enhanced awareness of and appreciation for contemporary issues facing Native Americans. The results of the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections have ushered in a time of increased openness and tolerance in the US, and such acceptance of differences extends to the domain of language rights as well. However, the future sovereignty of the TOLP remains uncertain for several reasons.

The current members of the TOLP who reside in Than Ówîngeh are in the grandparental generation, so it is important that the next generation of motivated Than Ówîngeh community members take up the reigns and become involved in the language revitalization efforts underway in the community. Further, the continued participation in the TOLP among members from the University of New Mexico is not guaranteed either, as they are either faculty members with obligations to teaching and research—both of which require substantial time commitments—or they are graduate students working toward the completion of a degree, who may be teaching and/or working on top of their academic commitments. Also, while members of the UNM team do not require compensation for their time and efforts, TOLP members from Than Ówîngeh most certainly do. Not only are most of them retired—which creates an even greater need for such compensation—but even if such financial concerns did not exist, there is nonetheless an ethical argument that they should be paid for their time and energy. However, with the exception of grants and charitable donations, any compensation these community members receive must come from the tribal government, and with each tribal administration come varying levels of support for the TOLP and the goals of the program. Thankfully, the present administration has agreed to compensate the TOLP
members from Than Ówîngeh, though it remains to be seen how much this will amount to and how long the compensation will be offered.

To what extent will these changes and the assimilatory pressures exerted upon the Pueblo affect the vitality of the heritage language? Although the sovereignty of Than Ówîngeh is not under threat, the future vitality of the heritage language certainly is. There are currently fewer than thirty native speakers of Than Ówîngeh Tewa, and there is no evidence to suggest that this language is being passed down to children in large numbers. Although I know of a couple of young children who are exposed to Tewa on a daily basis because of their familial connections with members of the TOLP, these children nonetheless receive more exposure to English and Spanish through schooling and communication with other family members and peers within the Pueblo.

In terms of mass media, English and Spanish are almost exclusively the languages to which these children and others in the community are exposed through television, radio, newspapers, and the internet. This is why it is vitally important that the TOLP focus its efforts on status planning, rather than on corpus planning, wherever possible. In order to ensure that Than Ówîngeh Tewa is spoken throughout the twenty-first century and beyond, it is necessary not merely to generate increased language resources (that could ideally be used to generate increased numbers of speakers of the language) but to foster an environment in which the domains of use for the language are constantly expanding and evolving.

Will the dialect of Tewa spoken at Than Ówîngeh survive the next few decades? Given that the number of native speakers of Than Ówîngeh Tewa is so few, the prospects are not good. The next few years are critically important for the future of the language,
because when remaining speakers disappear there will not be anyone left to pass the language down to the next generation. At that point, if nothing is done, any community members who want to speak Than Ówîngeh Tewa will have to learn it as a non-native language rather than acquire it naturally. This will require the motivated learner to consult audio and video recordings, narratives, and written language materials in order to access the language. As mentioned earlier, Tewa is an incredibly complex language with a grammar so radically different from that of English and Spanish that learning to speak Tewa would likely require more time and energy than the average community member can devote, no matter how highly motivated he or she may be.

What fate awaits the Tewa language more broadly? Than Ówîngeh is but one among six Tewa-speaking Pueblos in New Mexico, so in the event that Than Ówîngeh dialect of Tewa is no longer spoken, the Tewa language will likely live on for at least a few more years in other dialects of Tewa that have greater numbers of native speakers. It must be acknowledged, however, that the long-term prospects of Tewa are not good, given that there are only an estimated 1000 Tewa speakers across dialects. Even the future vitality of Cherokee and Navajo, the most widely spoken indigenous languages in North America, is far from guaranteed, as fewer and fewer children are acquiring these languages at home.

If future generations continue to speak Tewa, will they choose to use writing? If so, for what purposes will writing be used? The use of writing among future generations of Tewa speakers—whether at Than Ówîngeh or any of the other New Mexican Pueblos—ultimately depends upon the number of speakers. If Tewa survives the next few decades, but only among small numbers of speakers (say, a couple dozen or fewer), it is
unlikely that writing will be used for any other purposes than it is used currently—as a means of aiding in the language learning process or simply as a means of accessing the language itself (i.e., studying the fine points of Tewa grammar). If the heritage language exists in such small numbers, it is doubtful that writing would be used for the purposes of interpersonal communication.

If, however, greater numbers of speakers use Tewa, it would more likely be accompanied by the use of writing in other domains, especially in digital environments where community members could connect with one another using Tewa. As mentioned earlier, technology is becoming an ever-increasing part of young people’s lives; in particular, the popularity of Facebook and Twitter skyrocketed within the span of just a few years, and there is no sign that these social media sites are a trend that will disappear in a few years. In fact, I believe the opposite is true. In the last few decades, the growth of the internet—and the ease and speed at which it can be accessed through personal computers, tablets, and (especially) smartphones—has ushered in a new era of connectivity. Today young people often prefer synchronous text messaging to face-to-face conversation, and while their parents might cite such communicative strategies as evidence that “kids don’t know how to talk to others anymore”, there is no denying that digital modes of communication are here to stay. Ultimately, I feel this is the best chance at long term success for Tewa: the extent to which this language (and, indeed, all endangered languages) can establish footholds in the digital world (in both synchronous and asynchronous modes), may very well determine its long-term vitality.

At every TOLP meeting the status of the Tewa language is discussed, with all members bemoaning the decreasing numbers of native speakers. So strong are members’
emotional attachment to the language that these discussions often leave everyone present in tears. During a 2009 meeting, program members were discussing the critical role that young people play in sustaining the vitality of a language, and Múusa Kwee remarked, “It used to take a village to raise a child—now it takes a child to raise a village.” This quote struck me as more than just a clever play on words, because it got at the heart of the matter: revitalizing the Tewa language at Than Ówîngeh will require active participation among the youth in the community. As a member of the TOLP, I have personally felt that language revitalization work (not just at Than Ówîngeh but everywhere) involves a great deal of salesmanship, not just to those in positions of power, such as tribal administrations and funding agencies, but—perhaps most importantly—to the young people in the community.

Program members often find themselves marshaling arguments to counter attitudes of social Darwinism—that speaking the Tewa language offers no practical advantages and should be allowed to disappear. While such explicit statements are rare, it is far more troubling that these ideas are implicitly followed through inaction and apathy. Therefore, TOLP members understand the need to be proactive in seeking out the participation of the young, for it is to the next generation that the language must pass. Sadly, however, it is a common theme that interest in revitalizing indigenous languages is low. In today’s society, people lead incredibly busy lives, and for the typical Than Ówîngeh community member who works forty hours per week and/or attends school and raises a family, spending what little free time they have on learning an incredibly complicated language without any perceived immediate benefits may not be appealing.
Language revitalization efforts necessarily arise as a response to the wants and needs of the community. Collaboration among community members, language activists, and academic consultants is founded on the belief that these groups all possess unique strengths that can be brought to bear on a language program. It is perhaps ironic then—though not surprising—that these partnerships, forged in the spirit of alliance, often take a decidedly negativist view toward community resources. That is, in language revitalization efforts, there tends to be a focus on what a community lacks: motivated native speakers, local institutions, language materials—not to mention time. Rather than focusing on these negatives, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) develop a model called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Although the authors did not focus on issues pertaining to language, their model provides a useful means of increasing community involvement by concentrating on the resources a community possesses, rather than what it lacks. The first step in ABCD is to conduct a “capacity inventory,” an assessment of existing community resources that can be employed in achieving project outcomes, whether constructing an irrigation system in a rural village or generating increased speakers of a heritage language.

What our Native consultants lack in resources, they make up for in persistence, patience, and a passion for preserving their heritage language. Although they recognize that the use of writing will serve the interests of posterity, they worry that the Tewa language may be relegated to the pages of a dictionary. They worry that aspects of traditional Ówîngeh Tewa culture are rapidly disappearing along with the linguistic practices that index the culture. They worry that if their language and culture disappear, they will be forgotten as a people. Our Native consultants have always emphasized that
writing should only be used to supplement the spoken language, and they desperately want to see the next generation of speakers rise and speak Tewa as an everyday language. Although this is the end goal for which TOLP members strive, we also recognize the need to start small: if just one child acquires Tewa, all the work of the TOLP will not have been in vain. It does indeed take a child to raise a village.
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