New Deal Navajo Linguistics and Language Documentation

Char Peery

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NEW DEAL NAVAJO LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how with the New Deal, the US government committed itself to the construction of a Navajo ethnonation or a democratic polity that could interface with the US federal government. For my research methodology I used archival research and examined the papers of linguist Robert Young, a linguist and BIA employee who throughout his decades of work with the Navajo Tribe compiled some of the most extensive documentary material on the Navajo language, as well as his published works. I examined documents including correspondence between linguists Robert W Young and J.P. Harrington, dictionaries and other linguistic materials for evidence of the US government’s efforts.

In looking at Young’s work with the Navajo I show how he endeavored to create a standard register of Navajo for use in political and educational institutions, helped to
develop democratic political institutions on the reservation and worked to model a modern ethnic Navajo who was integrated into the United State’s wage labor and market economy.

In this dissertation I look at some of the early ethnographic work that has been done on the Navajo tribe. I then discuss language documentation projects and some of the critiques that have been made as well as strides that have been made to improve such projects and consider what a change from an ethnolinguistic paradigm to a historical dialectic paradigm could offer. I then give a little background discussion about the New Deal to provide some historical background for my discussion of Young’s linguistic work with the Navajo. I then reflect a little more on the two paradigms, exploring their intellectual roots. I then conclude by looking at the ethnonational paradigm in larger, historic nation building projects in Europe and how these ideologies have been mapped onto new nations.
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New Deal Navajo Linguistics and Language Documentation

"Reorganized in 1991 to form a three-branch system (executive, legislative and judicial), the Navajos conduct what is considered to be the most sophisticated form of Indian government. While the Council is in session, you'll likely hear delegates carry on the tradition of speaking in Navajo, providing a perfect example of how the Navajo Nation retains its valuable cultural heritage while forging ahead with modern progress."

Introduction

The Navajo Nation is considered a modern and thriving Native nation. Functioning under the auspices of the United States federal government, the Navajo Nation is organized into the same three branch system but as the opening quote from their official web page points out, it retains its own unique traditions through the use of the Navajo language. In today’s world in which nations are naturalized and ubiquitous the Navajo Nation appears as an example of a native sub-nation operating semi-sovereignly under a larger state government. However, if we look at the rise of the idea of nations and nationalisms and the ideologies embedded within them we discover that like all other nations and subnations the Navajo Nation is a modern political construct.

This dissertation explores how with the New Deal, the

\(^1\)http://www.navajo-nsn.gov/history.htm
US government committed itself to the construction of a Navajo ethnonation or a democratic polity that could interface with the US federal government. For my research methodology I used archival research and examined the papers of linguist Robert Young, a linguist and BIA employee who throughout his decades of work with the Navajo Tribe compiled some of the most extensive documentary material on the Navajo language, as well as his published works. I examined documents including correspondence between linguists Robert W Young and J.P. Harrington, dictionaries and other linguistic materials for evidence of the US government’s efforts. In looking at Young’s work with the Navajo I show how he endeavored to create a standard register of Navajo for use in political and educational institutions, helped to develop democratic political institutions on the reservation and worked to model a modern ethnic Navajo who was integrated into the United State’s wage labor and market economy.

One way to approach this research is to see these issues and cultural structures as completely fabricated, following something like an Invention of Tradition approach. However, my research takes a more constructivist approach. While I am looking at new formations that are
taking shape during the New Deal time period, I recognize that they are not solely colonial impositions but also involve indigenous aspects. Instead, I try to follow the development of both Young and the BIA’s work with the Navajos as well as the development of the ideologies they held. In this dissertation, I propose two paradigms that can be used to approach the study of language and culture. The first I call an ethnolinguistic or ethnonational paradigm which attributes an aspect of primordial nature to ethnic groups or tribes. Languages and cultures are seen as primordial attributes possessed by these groups. The second paradigm I call the Historical Dialectic paradigm, this paradigm is rooted in historical anthropology and sees ethnicity, culture and language as processes that respond to shifting political and economic contexts.

As John Breuilly argues, nationalism is best understood as an “especially appropriate form of political behavior in context of the modern state” (Breuilly 1994:1). Rather than assuming that nationalism arises out of some inherent or primordial national identity or even a class interest, economic, social or cultural formation Breuilly approaches nationalism as a means for developing or maintaining political power and control of the state. He
explains that the central task is to “relate nationalism to
the objective of obtaining and using state power” (Breuilly
1994:1). Brueilly also points out that “the view of the
world as divided into nations with long and distinct
histories only became a popular and then a ‘natural’ one in
the nineteenth century” (Breuilly 2007:5). The rise of the
idea of the naturalness of nations also corresponds with
the rise of anthropology as an academic discipline and we
find this ideology embedded in a great deal of the
ethnography of native groups both past and present.

The approach to ethnography that perceives groups as
having an original state of cultural and/or linguistic
homogeneity that is the basis for their national character
is called “primordial ethnonationalism” (Dinwoodie
2010:651). It can also be referred to as an ethnolinguistic
or culturalist approach or paradigm and embodies the
ideology that nations are the original, natural state of
humanity. Indigenous groups are then approached from this
assumption and analyzed based on the criteria of
nationhood. This approach does not question or explore how
these ethnographic subjects see or understand their own
community, instead a homogenous primordial ethnolinguistic
community is imagined for them and further research is
based on this assumption.

Going back to Breuilly, we can see that these ideas of nationalism are more often than not about the exercise of state power and we can see the development of colonial power hierarchies implicit in the creation of these ethnolinguistic groups. The creation and linking of a standardized language and nation (one language=one nation) was part of the European nation building process, the development and use of state power, and does not necessarily reflect the historical development of other groups. As James Collins explains, "the overriding of local allegiances to language was part of the history of modern language standardization as it occurred in tandem with nation-building efforts in the 19th and 20th centuries in nation-states across the globe (Anderson, 1983), but that model of language and polity does not necessarily suit smaller-scale, differentiated, Native American societies, in which there can be more intense loyalties to family and band than to tribe and nation" (Collins 2004:496). In many cases where anthropologists or government agents were working with Native American societies, this allegiance to the family or band and lack of a European type nation was seen as a deficit or shortfall of a community that was not
living up to the potential of its primordial nationhood.

This idea that these groups or communities are “imagined” (Anderson 1991) or created in the service of colonial power relations is complicated in the present day by tribes such as the Navajo who have in many ways been able to regain some amount of political control and authority in their subnational context. Many use this idea of their nation as a way forward to gain more control and autonomy. Therefore, in this dissertation I do not say that the Navajo Nation is nothing more than a creation made by early anthropologists and the US government because that erases all that those who have been called the Navajos have done and chosen and implemented in their own right. Instead, I want to point out the drawbacks to an approach that is rooted in this 19th century ideology that was developed to maintain state power and point to a different approach that needs to be taken in order to see beyond these 19th century assumptions by taking a historical or historical dialectic approach to both ethnography and communication.

This approach which I call the historical dialectic paradigm, is rooted in historical anthropology and sees ethnicity, culture and language as processes that respond to shifting political and economic contexts (Dinwoodie
Michael Silverstein explains, "languages and cultures are emergent phenomena of sociocultural process, unstable and sociohistorically contingent as they are themselves invoked by 'the natives' as a contributory part - a moment - of a dialectical process of politicoeconomically and historically specific meaning making" (Silverstein 2005:115). This paradigm, rather than seeing nations or communities, cultures and languages as natural objects or natural states, approaches culture, language and nationalism as emergent phenomena that groups use to form and reform themselves as well as position themselves in modern political economies.

A historical dialectic approach does not take communities at face value or in the form they are found in today but looks to the historical processes involved in their creation. Rather than assuming primordial national groups, ethnic groups, language groups, etc. a historical dialectic approach will look at the historical forces and events which caused these groups to be formed. The concept of a dialectic can suggest a couple of different ideas. The first is that scholars take a dialectic approach to the historical construction of any community they work with. They make a “critical investigation of truth through
reasoned argument, often by means of dialog discussion” (Oxford English Dictionary). We need to enter into a dialog or discussion with community members, with other scholars, and even with the historic data that we have (often by considering historical sources similar to how individuals discuss their own bias and positionality) and bring together opposed or contradictory ideas to develop a better understanding of a community’s development.

A second way to approach the term dialectic is to think of the process of a community’s development as a dialectic; a dialogue of many opposing and often contradictory forces, ideologies, and events which have created the community that we see today. As many anthropologists work with marginalized indigenous communities we must realize that despite the enormous power that colonial states have inflicted on them, that as in a dialog they also respond to these (often contradictory) forces and ideologies with ideologies and actions of their own. A historical dialectic approach is a shift in ideology that rejects the idea of any group having some kind of a primordial essence or natural form and instead focuses on the construction of things like ethnicity, race, and nationalism as responses to historical forces and events that have been used to
navigate changing political economic environments.

In addition to the idea of nations being taken as a natural state, much of the ethnographic research that relies on this ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm also assumes a very simplistic notion of community, especially in the correspondence of language and community. Often those using an ethnonational or ethnolinguistic ideology conflate the concepts of linguistic communities (or language communities) and speech communities. In his discussion of language standardization, Michael Silverstein makes this important distinction. He explains, “a linguistic community, such as the kind we refer to as a culture of standardization, is a group of people who, in their implicit sense of the regularities of linguistic usage, are united in adherence to the idea that there exists a functionally differentiated norm for using their 'language' denotationally (to represent or describe things), the inclusive range of which the best language users are believed to have mastered in the appropriate way. There may be no actual historical individual who, in fact does; that is not the point" (Silverstein 1987:2). In a linguistic community, speakers have an allegiance to an idea of a language seen as a standardized abstraction of
grammatical rules and a lexicon. They believe that there is a correct or most appropriate way to speak, though it rarely directly maps to how they speak. We often use this concept when discussing national languages, in this way we can speak of American English speakers or German speakers or French speakers.

In contrast, however, we must make the distinction between these linguistic communities and speech communities. John Gumperz defines the speech community as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage” (Gumperz 1972:219). Therefore, speech communities are characterized by groups that participate in regular and shared interaction.

However, it is also important to realize that speech communities are not just small homogeneous groups, rather they are highly complex groups of people. First, as Gumperz points out later in his article about speech communities, not all individuals within a speech community control the entire set of variants or repertoires that exist within the community. “Control of communicative resources varies sharply with the individual's position within the social
system" (Gumperz 1972:226). Second, as Silverstein points out "as has long been recognized, speech communities are frequently plurilingual, that is, they encompass speakers who belong to more than one language community. Sometimes such plurilingualism is even a normative attribute of individuals within the speech community, so that there will be a regular differentiation of their using one language in some socioculturally defined occasion type and another language in another occasion-type" (Silverstein 1998:407).

Again, speech communities are highly complex and often multi-lingual groups of people that have regular interactions and therefore have a set of shared varieties of communicative resources which are variously held among members of the community. Too often, when approached from an ethnonationalist or ethnolinguistic paradigm, communities are represented as homogeneous, monolingual groups of people speaking the same language, in the same way at the same times. However, this representation of a community is nothing more than an idealization and does not look at all like the actual groups of speakers that are supposedly being described.

This ideology of ethnonational or ethnolinguistic communities where communities are seen as homogenous,
monolingual groups is rampant in early ethnography. This dissertation will look at the example of early Navajo ethnographers who to varying extents approached their subjects as a culturally and linguistically homogeneous community though they rarely actually found a homogeneous community during their research. These ethnographers had various ideas of what this variation and lack of homogeneity meant and even more important what it indicated their relationship with the United States should be.

Looking more specifically at language documentation projects, I will address some of the critiques that have been made. Though there are many good and useful critiques made of language documentation projects, even these critiques rely on the same ethnolinguistic ideologies and simplistic notions of community. In this section, I will discuss the need of taking a historical dialectic approach to language documentation and the archiving of language materials.

I will then take a closer look at the Navajo situation first by backing up and taking a historical perspective by addressing the Indian New Deal and John Collier, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Commissioner during the New Deal. Next I will focus on the documentation work of Robert Young, a
linguist who worked for the BIA, which began as a New Deal project to create educational material in Navajo to help begin to teach literacy skills and culminated in an extensive dictionary project. Together with collaborators including William Morgan, Robert W. Young launched what is considered to be one of the most sustained and most effective efforts at Native American language documentation and analysis on record. I will discuss how these efforts helped to support the U.S. federal government’s agenda of creating a democratic polity on the Navajo reservation. This example helps show the need for greater reflexivity in contemporary language revitalization efforts. Young’s work showed excellent skill and a distinct desire to conserve native language and culture, yet even this explicitly oriented conservation project still both intended and affected change (particularly in the political organization) among the speakers that he worked with.

I will then reflect a little more on the two different approaches: the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic approach to language and the historical dialectic approach to communication, considering them as paradigms and looking at how each emerged. Finally, I will look at the ethnonational paradigm in larger, historic nation building projects in
Europe and how these ideologies have been mapped onto new nations.
Chapter 1 - Navajo Ethnography

Ethnographic interest in Navajos has long been an important topic in Anthropology. By the time Robert Young became an anthropology graduate student at the University of New Mexico, many individuals that were interested in both Navajo language and culture had been attracted to the Navajo reservation, many of whom made significant contributions and helped frame the field of Navajo studies. Those earlier scholars of Navajo language and culture included army surgeons and clergymen in addition to formally trained linguists and anthropologists.

To a certain extent each scholar approached their topic in a similar manner by taking for granted that the Navajo were a solidary and culturally integrated community. Even the trained linguists and anthropologists approached their studies from the position that the Navajo Tribe constituted a culturally integrated group, something primordial or at least a proto-nation and used their findings to justify this assumption rather than using their research methods to explore if and what type of group the “Navajo” really were. However, each of these researchers also had different ideas of what it meant to be a solidary and culturally integrated group, what level of nationhood had already been achieved
by Navajo speakers, and what their relation should be to the rest of the United States.

In discussing how social-political standing is evaluated in land claim cases in Canadian courts, David Dinwoodie points out two approaches that can also be seen in early government relations with tribes as well as anthropological theory and practice. The first he refers to as “a version of social evolutionism based on a categorical divide between primitive community and formalized society” (Dinwoodie 2010:651). In land claim cases this approach bases rights to land on the presence or absence of formalized political institutions. This evolutionary framework can be seen underlying the justification of the forced assimilationist policies of the 19th and early 20th centuries, like boarding school and land allotment policies. Historically Navajos did not have a formal, centralized political structure and were seen as inhabiting a more “primitive” stage along the track of evolutionary progress. Policies such as removal of children to off reservation boarding schools and christianization were intended to “civilize” Navajos by teaching them the language, religion and arts of American society thereby helping them move up into a new stage of evolutionary
progress.

The second approach Dinwoodie calls primordialist ethnonationalism and which I call the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm in this dissertation. In this approach groups are “examined for evidence of a putative original state of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, a condition understood to be the basis of indigenous nations” (Dinwoodie 2010:651). This approach caused anthropologists to reify both culture and the groups that they perceive as possessing it. People studied by anthropologists were seen as coherent groups with systematic, shared beliefs whether or not all historical evidence indicated such a group or not. In addition, practices such as salvage anthropology focused on describing the particular cultural characteristics for each group before they were lost or irredeemably altered. Historical processes were acknowledged, however, groups were perceived as homogeneous cultural and linguistic units, primordial coherent and solidary groups whose cultures could be recorded and preserved.

A shift between these two approaches, the social evolutionism based approach and primordial ethnonationalism, can be seen in the shift from policies of
forced assimilation to the Indian New Deal policies that encouraged tribes to maintain symbols of their ethnic nationalism like language and traditional arts and focused on developing the groups into ethnonational polities. During this period and beyond, some administrators like John Collier and other anthropologists saw native communities as embodying many virtues they felt were lacking in white, American or Western society. As Berkhofer explains, Collier “saw the Indians as repudiating the materialism, the secularism, and the fragmentation of modern White life under industrialism for a simpler, more beautiful way of life that emphasized the relationship of humans with one another, with the supernatural, and with land and nature. The integrated life of the Pueblos stood as a reproach to atomized modern civilization; and their harmonious, democratic ways a vital lesson to all White Americans” (Berkhofer 1978:178).

However, though Collier and others saw some virtues in native cultures, they still saw the majority of native practices as problematic and in need of change. They wanted to form native communities into ethnonational subgroups that retained those aspects of their cultures that were seen as virtues by the liberal reformers of the day.
primarily so that white American society could be reformed. The idea of evolutionary progress was not completely eliminated from this approach. The “modern” nation-state was still assumed to be the pinnacle of, if not social evolution, then of social progress and native communities were seen as possessing a primordial nationhood that had the potential to be developed into a fully modern ethnonation. Native groups were still seen as “the other” (Spivak 1988) and in need of guidance and direction to both fix the aspects of their society (i.e. political organization) that liberal reformers found problematic and to keep those they saw as virtues. The nationalism that they perceived as inherent in native communities was neither a full sovereignty nor a full participation in American society, but a special subnational status that allowed tribes to still be under the guidance and tutelage of the federal government. Though there is a great deal of work on the concept of Native sovereignty today (Clifford 2001; Barker 2005; Cattelino 2006; Bruyneel 2007; Cattelino 2008; Sturm 2011; Sturm 2014) in this dissertation I only address the actions of the US federal government and the anthropologists and linguists who were attempting to set up a particular kind of democratic polity among Native groups
living on reservations. The BIA during the New Deal period particularly wanted to apply scientific knowledge to managing indigenous communities and many anthropologists and others studying native communities worked closely with the BIA.

However, many scholars suggest that the idea that “nations, in the sense of ethnolinguistic polities, are the original condition of humankind - is a postindustrial ideological construct” (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992; Dinwoodie 2010:652). For anthropology in particular this idea of stable cultures and languages that could be studied, displayed and preserved is an ideological construct that underlies much of anthropological theory and practice. Michael Silverstein also discusses this topic explaining, “it has been through such an anthropology of praxis that one can now see that the very concepts of stable 'cultures' and 'languages' are ideological constructs that have their own sociocultural conditions of viability. That is not to say that languages and cultures are not 'real'; indeed, they are very real, though just not the kind of natural objects upon the existence or boundaries or essence of which anthropological theories in all of the subfields of the museological era have depended"
The two approaches, the social evolutionism based approach and primordial ethnonationalism, are compared to a third approach “that examines the dynamic of ethnolsymbolism in history - the ways in which people are perceived and ways in which people act and represent themselves as they address historical change” (Dinwoodie 2010:652). I call this approach the historical dialectic paradigm in this dissertation. Dinwoodie uses Anthony Smith’s term ethnic community and explains how it is different from the idea of a primordial ethnonation. “Ethnic community in this sense is not necessarily a permanent condition, nor is it one in which all members of a population participated to the same extent. It is act- and event - based and varies in terms of how encompassing and enduring it is” (Dinwoodie 2010:652). This approach sees ethnicity as well as culture and language as a process that responds to shifting political and economic contexts. Silverstein explains, "Languages and cultures are emergent phenomena of sociocultural process, unstable and sociohistorically contingent as they are themselves invoked by 'the natives' as a contributory part - a moment - of a dialectical process of politicoeconomically and historically specific meaning
making" (Silverstein 2005:115).

Cultural anthropologist Paul Silverstein also points out that it is often the political expediency of nationalism that creates ethnic categories to begin with and which can be missed if we work from the assumption of a primordial nature of ethnic groups. He explains, "from the very beginning, assumptions of primordiality and modularity shared by theorists and critics of nationalism gloss over the historicity of ethnic categories and, likewise, the role of nationalist discourses in their constitution" (Silverstein 2002:127).

This third approach is perhaps better suited to explain Navajo history, particularly early relations with other tribes, like the Pueblos, in the Southwest. Since based on early ethnographic reports around the time of European contact and even based on the reports of those ethnographers working under an ethnonational paradigm, it appears that the Navajo functioned more like heterogeneous aggregates of bands (Matthews 1994 [1897]). However, the majority of anthropologists (and even the non-anthropologists) working on the Navajo reservation have focused on creating descriptions of the Navajo as a primordial, coherent ethnic nation.
In this chapter I will look at some of the early ethnographic work to see how ‘the Navajo’ are understood and presented. In general each of these early ethnographers takes a primordialist view in seeing the Navajo as having something, whether trait or essence, that has throughout the ages continued to adhere them together as an integrated and coherent group. They also take a very simplistic approach to the idea of community as well as conflate linguistic communities with speech communities.

However, what this primordial groupness means in regarding their status and relationship with the United States differs widely among the various researchers. The rapid western expansion and growing American populations in the west during this period meant that questions of the relationship between the various native tribes and the American settlers particularly in regards to land rights and use were of the utmost importance. How the Navajo were perceived in relation to the United States, as wards, a subnational group, and as a sovereign nation, had major impacts on US policy. While each of these early researchers saw the Navajo as a coherent group, they differed in their ideas about what that meant, what kind of a relationship they had with the US and what should be done to help solve
what was called the “Navajo Problem.”

**Washington Matthews**

One of the earliest credible ethnographers to work with the Navajo tribe was Washington Matthews. Matthews was a US Army surgeon stationed along the Western frontier. During this period, Army doctors were expected to follow and report on other scientific work such as botany, geology, and anthropology in addition to their regular duties. Early in his career, Matthews was stationed at Fort Berthold in Dakota territory. This is where he first came into contact with Native Americans and developed an interest in ethnographic and linguistic work. His work on the Hidatsa language, completed while he was stationed in the Dakota territories, secured his recognition as an ethnologist and he became an official scientific collaborator with the Bureau of Ethnology (an unpaid position that conveyed scientific status and affiliation).

Matthews began his studies of Navajo language and ceremonies when he was stationed at Fort Wingate, Arizona in the fall of 1880. Though there were other earlier accounts of Navajo life, the accounts were often sketchy and rarely based on any kind of primary ethnographic evidence (Matthews 1994 [1897]:xiii). Matthew’s first
published manuscripts on Navajo topics discussed Navajo weavers and silversmiths (Matthews 1968). He begins each of these manuscripts discussing theories of diffusion for various aspects of these skills. In his discussion of Navajo weaving he begins,

The art of weaving, as it exists among the Navajo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona, possesses points of great interest to the student of ethnography. It is of aboriginal origin; and while European art has undoubtedly modified it, the extent and nature of the foreign influence is easily traced. It is by no means certain, still there are many reasons for supposing, that the Navahos learned their craft from the Pueblo Indians, and that, too, since the advent of the Spaniards; yet the pupils, if such they be far excel their masters to-day in the beauty and quality of their work. It may be safely stated that with no native tribe in America, north of the Mexican boundary, has the art of weaving been carried to greater perfection than among the Navajos, while with none in the entire continent is it less Europeanized. As in language, habits, and opinions, so in arts, the Navajos have been less influenced than their sedentary neighbors of the pueblos by the civilization of the Old World (Matthews 1968:1).

Matthews then proceeds to give a highly descriptive account of how each of these skills is performed. Discussing everything from how yarn is dyed, how looms are built and operated and the type of bellows and tools used in silversmithing. His descriptions are clear and detailed. In his discussion of dying yarn, Matthews covers the procedures for each of the colors that he had observed being dyed.
There are, the Indians tell me, three different processes for dyeing yellow; two of these I have witnessed. The first process is thus conducted: The flowering tops of Bigelovia graveolens are boiled for about six hours until a decoction of deep yellow color is produced. When the dyer thinks the decoction strong enough, she heats over the fire in a pan or earthen vessel some native almogen (an impure native alum), until it is reduced to a somewhat pasty consistency; this she adds gradually to the decoction and then puts the wool in the dye to boil. From time to time a portion of the wool is taken out and inspected until (in about half an hour from the time it is first immersed) it is seen to have assumed the proper color. The work is then done. The tint produced is nearly that of lemon yellow. In the second process they use the large, fleshy root of a plant which, as I have never yet seen it in fruit or flower, I am unable to determine. The fresh root is crushed to a soft paste on the metate, and, for a mordant, the almogen is added while the grinding is going on. The cold paste is then rubbed between the hands into the wool. If the wool does not seem to take the color readily a little water is dashed on the mixture of wool and paste, and the whole is very slightly warmed. The entire process does not occupy over an hour and the result is a color much like that now known as "old gold" (Matthews 1968:5).

His descriptions in these early reports are reminiscent of nineteenth century field guides or nature descriptions. Later his interest turned to Navajo religion and ceremonies. Matthew’s published many articles and several book length manuscripts on various aspects of Navajo ceremonialism and myth (Matthews 1885; Matthews 1886; Matthews 1888; Matthews 1889; Matthews 1896; Matthews 1897; Matthews 1901; Matthews 1901; Matthews 1902; Matthews and Goddard 1907; Matthews 1970; Matthews 1970; Matthews 1994
Matthew’s major contributions to the field of Navajo studies are considered to be his books *Navaho Legends* and *The Night Chant: A Navaho Ceremony* (Matthews 2002 [1902]). In her discussion of Matthew’s work Charlotte Frisbie explained that Matthews studied the Night Chant ceremony for 21 years and considered it as one of the most important ceremonies then in existence (Frisbie 1997:28). In his book *The Night Chant* he describes the ceremony in painstaking detail. He begins with a general description of Navajo ceremonies which works to dispel early reports of the Navajo being without any kind of religion, as seen in the example below.

A great number of ceremonies are practiced by the Navahoes. The more important last for nine nights and portions of ten days; but there are minor ceremonies which may occupy but a single day, or night, or a few hours. As far as has been learned, the great ceremonies are conducted primarily for the curing of disease; although in the accompanying prayers the gods are invoked for happiness, abundant rains, good crops, and other blessings for all the people (Matthews 2002 [1902]:3).

He then describes all the various aspects of the ceremony, discussing important symbolisms, giving descriptions of the various gods that are mentioned in the songs, and describing the material objects created and used, including sand paintings, masks, baskets, and medicines.

In the next section Matthews lays out the ceremony in
chronological order describing what happens on each of the
days and nights. Afterward he writes out an account of the
myths used and finally, in the last section, he provides
transcripts of the chants and prayers in Navajo with both
interlineal and free translations. However, he does not
provide Navajo transcripts for the myths; they are
presented only in English. His explanation for this was
that it was not practical to record the original texts of
all the stories because neither he nor the shamans had
unlimited leisure time (Frisbie 1997:34).

In his book *Navaho Legends* Matthews begins with a general
discussion of Navajo life, including a discussion of their
"arts, religion, ceremonies, etc." (Matthews 1994 [1897]:1)
to give the reader some knowledge and background about the
Navajos. Though still mainly descriptive, his later works
begin to foreshadow a bit of functionalism by focusing on
how elements of Navajo culture reflected and helped them to
deal with their environmental and social conditions. As
Matthews states, "the religion of this people reflects
their social condition. Their government is democratic.
There is no highest chief of the tribe, and all their
chiefs are men of temporary and ill-defined authority,
whose power depends largely on their personal influence,"
their oratory, and their reputation for wisdom. It is difficult for such a people to conceive of a Supreme God. Their gods, like their men, stand much on a level of equality” (Matthews 1994 [1897]:33).

Matthews then presents the English texts of three different legends/myths. He explains that he used the word legend in the title because “the tales contained herein, though mostly mythical, are not altogether such. In the Origin Legend, the last chapter, ‘The Growth of the Navaho Nation’ is in part traditional or historical, and it is even approximately correct in many of its dates” (Matthews 1994 [1897]:1). From his work on Matthews’s notes and manuscripts Paul Zolbrod suggests that Navaho Legends may actually be “a retrospective compilation of notes and recollections collated as a unified text and edited intentionally or unintentionally to demonstrate to an English-speaking audience that Navajos did indeed have literary traditions comparable to those of the Greeks” (Zolbrod 1984:8).

In much of Matthew’s work, he intentionally refutes popular ideas of the savageness or inhumanity of the Navajos. Earlier accounts tended to represent Navajos according to popular ideas of evolutionary stages,
dismissing unique aspects of native culture as savage or barbarian customs (see example of Matthews response to Dr. Letherman below). Though Matthews held some tenets of evolutionary theory, he was more interested in studying diffusion and, like Young and other more contemporary ethnographers, he was committed to showing the complex and vibrant nature of native cultures rather than dismissing them as relics of evolutionary stages. At the end of his early report on Navajo silversmiths Matthews indicates that in addition to his discussion of diffusion he meant to represent the Navajo as being docile, intelligent and creative. He states, “here ends my description of the smithcraft of a rude but docile and progressive people. I trust that it may serve not only to illustrate some aspects of their mental condition, their inventive and imitative talents, but possibly to shed some light on the condition and diffusion of the art of the metalist in the prehistoric days of our continent, notwithstanding the fact that some elements of their craft are of recent introduction and others of doubtful origin” (Matthews 1968:36). Here Matthews is attempting to illustrate what he considers a vibrant piece of Navajo culture that illustrates the groups capacity for inventive and imitative art.
Matthews makes a point in particular to contradict one early report by a Dr. Letherman who stated that the Navajos had no form of religion, no knowledge of their origin or history and their frequent dances and singing were no more than a succession of grunts (Matthews 1994 [1897]:22-23). By working to contradict people of his time period that saw Navajos as an evolutionary relic of savagery, Matthews goes forward to do groundbreaking work studying and describing Navajo ceremonies and chants, showing their intricate and complex nature. In his discussion of his arrival in New Mexico, Matthews states that he

"had not been many weeks in New Mexico when he discovered that the dances to which Dr. Letherman refers were religious ceremonials, and later he found that these ceremonials might vie in allegory, symbolism, and intricacy of ritual with the ceremonies of any people, ancient or modern. He found, erelong, that these heathens, pronounced godless and legendless, possessed lengthy myths and traditions - so numerous that one can never hope to collect them all, a pantheon as well stocked with gods and heroes as that of the ancient Greeks, and prayers which, for length and vain repetition, might put a Pharisee to the blush" (Matthews 1994 [1897]:23).

Here he points out that Navajo ceremonies are just as full of allegory, symbolism and intricate ritual as any other modern or ancient people’s religious ceremonies and compares their myths of Gods and cultural heroes to the pantheon of the ancient Greeks. By showing these parallels,
Matthews works to prove to his readers that Navajos are not the savage and alien people that they had previously believed them to be, but were comparable in content of religion, ceremony and myth to the ancient European founders of Western civilization.

In all his works, Matthews emphasizes the Navajo’s humanity presenting for his American audience a picture of a people that though dependent on the US government and vulnerable were actually worthy wards of the state, worth the efforts and aid being directed to them. Conversely, this also sets up the military and the US government as benevolent wardens that were helping to sustain a noble people. In addition, his work also helps to excuse the US military’s incarceration of the Navajo Tribe at Bosque Redondo. By focusing on traditional elements and survivals of native customs, Matthews and many of the other anthropologists who worked with the tribe subsequent to their return to New Mexico, obscured the damage that had been inflicted on the tribe. Matthew’s work simultaneously works to change some of the negative, prejudicial attitudes about the tribe and exculpates the US government in their role of what is considered ethnic cleansing (Anderson 2014). By representing the Navajo tribe as a coherent
solidary traditional people, it obfuscates the damage and change that the incarceration and subsequent return to a reservation system wrought among the Navajo. It also justifies the reservation system in representing it as a homeland for the Navajo people rather than the imposed foreign domination that it was.

In most of Matthews work, he perceives the tribe as a coherent and solidary group. In his work on Navajo weavers and silversmiths he discusses influences on the Navajo from other groups like the Pueblos and the Spanish, who he also represents as being coherent and solidary groups. However, he questions this to a certain extent in his book Navajo Legends. He explains, “the Navahoes are usually regarded by ethnologists as being, by blood as well as by language, of the Dene or Athapascan stock, and such, probably, they are in the main. But their Origin Legend represents them as a very mixed race, containing elements of Zuni and other Pueblo stocks, of Shoshonian and Yuman, and the appearance of the people seems to corroborate the legend” (Matthews 1994 [1897]:9). Though Matthews acknowledges here the complex interrelations between groups that was the norm in the Southwest, he still considers and describes each of these groups as a coherent and solidary tribes. A
simplistic idea of a native community as a homogeneous group speaking one language underlies this description of the various “stocks” that contributed to the Navajo origin and appearance.

In his book *Navajo Legends* he uses the term “nation” as part of a title to one of the sections of the origin myth called “Growth of the Navaho Nation.” Though this term may indicate some sense of seeing the Navajo in nationalistic terms or as some kind of a proto-nation, during the time period of early English colonization the term nation retained an older usage as a designation for a foreign people of another religion or culture as well as the territory they occupied. Early on, the term nation was applied to what was later called a tribe. Matthews likely does not consider them as fully national as much as he sees them as a tribe or a group with much potential and humanity, worth the military and governments efforts and benevolence.

**Clyde Kluckhohn**

Clyde Kluckhohn was another important academic anthropologist who worked with the Navajo tribe. Kluckhohn’s work was extremely influential in Navajo studies. Kluckhohn worked on a number of cross-disciplinary
projects and co-authored several books on Navajo topics. His work was so prevalent that the 1940s and 1950s was called the “Kluckhohn era” in Navajo studies (Witherspoon 1975). Kluckhohn was a proponent of “New Anthropology,” the idea that anthropology had the scientific methods and knowledge needed to reform the world (Gilkeson 2009:251).

Kluckhohn’s book The Navaho, co-authored with Dorothea Leighton, was part of the Indian Education Research Project. Kluckhohn explains “the ultimate aim of the long-range plan of research of which this project is the first step is to evaluate the whole Indian administrative program with special reference to the effect of present policy on Indians as individuals, to indicate the direction toward which this policy is leading, and to suggest how the effectiveness of Indian administrations may be increased” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:20). Kluckhohn saw anthropology as having the ability to offer solutions to government administrators working with native groups.

Kluckhohn saw the Bureau of Indian Affair’s (BIA) work as essentially positive and based in scientific principles. He explained, "whatever its defects, the government program has been without a doubt one of the closest approaches yet achieved to an intelligent, planned, and integrated
application of scientific knowledge to the practical affairs of a whole people" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:26). Kluckhohn felt that the only reason that the BIA had not achieved complete success was because administrators lacked an understanding of certain human factors which anthropologists through ethnographic research could supply. He then explains that the main purpose of his book is to “supply the background needed by the administrator or teacher who is to deal effectively with The People in human terms" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:26). Kluckhohn’s desire to apply his research to helping administrators change the tribes they were working with and to help solve the problems this change entailed is also shown in his collaboration with the BIA. This project, as well as several others that Kluckhohn participated in, was undertaken jointly with academic committees like the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago and government departments like the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The book The Navaho by Kluckhohn and Leighton was not intended to be a complete description of Navajo life, history and customs. Rather, according to the authors, “this book is a description of those aspects of Navaho
culture that bear most immediately upon the government’s capacity to help The People strike a working balance between human needs and fluctuating resources” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:28). They explain, “in recent years the Navahos have become the nation’s foremost Indian problem” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:24). Kluckhohn believed that if anthropological research could offer government administrators and others who work with the Navajo a better understanding of “The People,” then new and better solutions could be found to solve the problems then plaguing the reservation communities.

Kluckhohn also criticized those he considered unenlightened administrators in the BIA, saying, “too often administrators have forgotten that to change a way of life you must change people, that before you can change people you must understand how they have come to be as they are” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:27). Therefore, in The Navajo, Kluckhohn and Leighton set out to explain those aspects of Navajo culture, beliefs and practices that they believe must be understood before effective changes could be made. They begin by sketching what they consider the prehistory and history of the Navajo relying on archaeological and linguistic evidence in addition to early Spanish colonial
documents. After setting the Navajo tribe up as a coherent group with a cohesive history, Kluckhohn and Leighton then turn to a discussion of Navajo land and livelihood to give a background to what Kluckhohn and Leighton consider the main problem facing Navajos. They explain, “beautiful as this land may be, it does not favor the survival of large numbers of people who have limited technologies and remain isolated from the main arteries of commerce” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:46).

Despite the fact that people had been living in this environment for centuries, with the arrival of American settlers, Kluckhohn and Leighton see acquiring new technology and becoming integrated into the markets as the only opportunity for survival in the region. In this chapter, topics such as population, soil erosion, agriculture, livestock, arts and crafts are discussed setting out the challenges of resource fluctuation facing the Navajos. Kluckhohn and Leighton then turn their attention to aspects of Navajo social organization. This information is also meant to give background information about the subsistence problems on the reservation. They explain, “human beings always get their food and shelter by working with other human beings” (Kluckhohn and Leighton
Kluckhohn and Leighton begin from an outside point of view by focusing on describing “The People as they appear to the visitor” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:84). This section covers topics such as physical appearance, hogans, the division of labor, recreation, and Navajo humor. They then focus in a little closer and talk about personal relations among the tribe, including the biological family, extended family, “outfits” and clans. In addition, they discuss how ownership and inheritance work after which they turn to a discussion of community relations. In this section they discuss the Navajo as a developing tribe. They explain that historically the Navajo had no central governing body that had authority over the whole group. They point out “The People are only beginning to have what may accurately be designated as a ‘tribal’ or ‘national’ consciousness. Previous to 1868, the largest unit of effective social cooperation seems to have been a band of Indians who occupied a defined territory and acknowledged the leadership of a single local headman” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:122-123). Kluckhohn and Leighton present the Navajos as an emerging tribe or nation. Though he does not question whether this means that before this emerging
tribal or national consciousness they really were a coherent group, a proto-tribe or nation, he sees them as learning to become a tribe or subnational unit through the help and tutelage of the US government supported by the scientific counsel of anthropologists.

Kluckhohn and Leighton then turn their attention to describing Navajo views of the supernatural and how that impacts the way they live and act. They then attempt to change their focus somewhat as they begin their discussion of the Navajo language. They explain, “thus far in this book the point of view has been very largely that of the outsider who carefully observes an unfamiliar way of life and tries to interpret it as best he can” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:253). However, their chapter on language and the chapter following entitled ‘The Navaho View of Life’ is meant to allow the reader “to get a little way inside the Navaho mind” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:253).

In the chapter on language, Kluckhohn and Leighton take a rather naive Whorfian view of language as a window into how a people think and conceive of the world. They explain, “the aim is to sketch some structural features to show the reader how the climate of feeling, reacting, and thinking created by the Navaho language is different from that
created by English and other European languages” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:256). They then follow up on the focus of the language chapter to get a more internal view of Navajo culture by more directly trying to offer the reader a “view of life which lies behind the special character of Navaho adaptation” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:295) by discussing Navajo ethics, values, and thought.

This book offers a good example of Kluckhohn’s view of the Navajo as a coherent group who simply need to learn to become a fully functioning tribe or subnational group in the US. From Kluckhohn’s perspective, this can be done through the help of US government administrators who, though well intentioned, need the additional understanding of the Navajo that anthropologists can offer in order to fix the, at the time, very desperate problems of survival, such as starvation and lack of an adequate land base for the population, being faced on the reservation.

Kluckhohn’s assumption that the Navajos were a coherent and solidary group was based on their speaking a common language. He explains that the term Diné (the People) “is a constant reminder that the Navahos still constitute a society in which each individual has a strong sense of belonging with the others who speak the same language and,
by the same token, a strong sense of difference and isolation from the rest of humanity" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:23). However, he was also very aware of the great amount of cultural variation found on the Navajo reservation and much of his work and his methods focused on dealing with this variability (Aberle 1973). Kluckhohn saw the Navajo as a linguistic community that could be united around a common standard language, despite the fact that there was a great deal of linguistic variation and many different speech communities on the reservation where other languages were also used.

In addition, Kluckhohn points out the lack of tribal unity on the reservation. He explains, "a major problem in the past, and still present to a degree, has been the lack of tribal feeling of unity and solidarity. Navahos understand responsibility to relatives and even to a local group, but they are only commencing to grasp the need for thinking in tribal terms" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:160). Instead of exploring when and how the sense of belonging with others who speak the same language was manifest (especially considering the linguistic variation present on the reservation) Kluckhohn rather framed the Navajo as merely a deficient nation, one who lacked proper
feelings of unity outside kin and clan groups.

Another trait of Navajo political organization that Kluckhohn pointed to as a deficiency in developing an effective nation was the Navajo’s lack of a representative government. He explained, “further, they have no notion of representative government. They are accustomed to deciding all issues by face-to-face meetings of all individuals involved - including, most decidedly, the women” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:160). As these examples show, the underlying expectation that the Navajo must be a nation or a proto-nation (even if a slightly deficient one) can be seen in Kluckhohn’s work. Because of this assumption that nations are the basic form of indigenous groups, Kluckhohn does not explore what kind of a group Navajo’s consider themselves to be and how the shifting of when and how they consider themselves to be a united group and when they do not may be socially, politically and economically relevant rather than merely a deficiency.

As mentioned earlier, several of Kluckhohn’s projects were undertaken jointly with the BIA or with government funding. Kluckhohn’s expectations that his work could help administrators develop better ways of working with Navajos and making the cultural changes they felt were needed also
tied into the BIA’s goal during the New Deal of creating self-governing polities within tribes that were modeled after and able to interact within the hierarchy of the US government. Kluckhohn explains, "it is very much to be expected that the next decade (1960-1970) will bring to The People a much greater political awareness, in terms of their active participation both in their own self-government and development and in their role as U.S. citizens; indeed the system of tribal self-government within the framework of the state and federal governments might well be likened to that of an incredibly large (in area) township or county in other areas" (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:161-162).

This goal of creating a more nationally based political awareness on the Navajo reservation and creating a tribal government that fit within the hierarchical structure of the US government model was one expected and worked towards by Robert Young and many of the contemporary anthropologists and linguists working on the Navajo reservation. One picture in Kluckhohn and Leighton’s book The Navaho seems particularly illustrative of their view of the Navajo as a learning and developing tribe. The picture shows a council meeting taking place in a schoolhouse. The
council members are all seated in school desks and the blackboards behind them are covered in Navajo words (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1946:160). This picture captures the essence of Kluckhohn’s and many other white academics’ and administrators’ view of the Navajo as being in a learning phase of developing a functional democracy.

**Gladys Reichard**

Another early anthropologist to work with the Navajos was Gladys Reichard, a student of Franz Boas. Reichard began her studies of the Navajo on a trip to the reservation in 1923. Though committed to Boasian descriptive ethnography, Reichard also used experimental textual strategies in some of her work that became popular decades later as anthropologists tried to create dialogic texts that attempt to capture the various voices of informants and anthropologists (Lamphere 1997:vii).

In her book, *Spider Woman: a Story of Navajo Weavers and Chanters*, Reichard herself is the central character and she describes, in a storytelling fashion, what is going on around her. Once her first rug is halfway completed and taken down from the loom to reposition it for easier reach, the pulling of the “insidious drawing in of the weft” becomes apparent. In this scene, Reichard describes
everyone’s reaction to the imperfect rug.

“The family are present in a body at this event. They are more sympathetic than amused. They say most first attempts are like that. Marie says some women always weave like that, no matter how long they are at it. Tom says the rugs can be buried in damp sand and stretched to a better shape. Red Point says this one will not be good, the second will also not be good, but the third, that will be all right. He says this one has a nice pattern with its different-sized stripes, the wide black one in the middle. It looks like the old dresses the Navajo women used to wear. Why don’t they weave patterns like this now, old-fashioned patterns?” (Reichard 1997:31).

In other cases she quotes conversations between herself and others. “‘All black must be dyed,’ says Marie. ‘The black will become brown if not dyed.’ ‘Just like old hair,’ I remark. ‘You know white people sometimes keep curls or hair and it always gets lighter.’ ‘Just the same,’ agrees Marie” (Reichard 1997:51).

Outside of her use of experimental textual strategies, Reichard’s work is heavily taxonomic and highly descriptive. In her book Navajo Religion: A Study of Symbolism, Reichard discusses Navajo cosmology, symbolism, and ritual in great descriptive detail. In her discussion of the types of supernatural beings she describes persuadable deities and undependable deities who “are persuadable only with difficulty because of meanness or the desire to do mischief is a large part of their makeup”
(Reichard 1950:63). She also discusses supernatural helpers of deity and man, intermediaries between man and deity, persuadable deities, dangers that are conceived of as deities, orders of monsters, and supernatural beings between good and evil (Reichard 1950). Reichard is just as descriptive about the material culture used in rituals, in her discussion of prayersticks she explains, “there are five talking prayersticks or wands in the Shooting Chant and Mountain Chant bundles, eight in the Hail and Night chants. They are called ndi•á, ‘those-which-project-upward,’ as are the bundle objects of other chants that can be struck into the ground” (Reichard 1950:311).

However, for the most part Reichard focused on understanding, describing and analyzing native categories rather than imposing her own Western categories like many other anthropologists of her day. Reichard is very aware of the imposition of categorizations that her Navajo informants did not share. She explains, “none of my Navaho informants concurred in the classification of the ceremonies, each being deeply concerned with the details of his own knowledge but only vaguely or hesitantly with the entire scheme. In other words, generalization is our affair, not that of my Navaho acquaintances” (Reichard
Yet despite generalization being the outsider ethnographer’s affair, Reichard was still deeply concerned about how her Navajo acquaintances would conceive of the various chants, and as a result, takes a different approach in her categorizations. When introducing her classification system she talks about how hers differs from other Navajo ethnographers:

“Of the several classifications of Navaho ceremonies the most inclusive is that of Wyman and Kluckhohn, which is based partly on Father Berard’s terminology. My own attempt, far from complete, was arrived at by another method. Instead of starting with the comprehensive view which assumes that each chanter understands the religion as a whole, I began with the details. Proceeding from the specific to the general, I find myself with a vast number of details - mythological episodes and incidents, rites, color, sound, directional symbols, ritualistic acts, and the like - bound together in a complex organization. Any one of the parts may be slipped from one context to another with ease and with what the Navaho considers complete consistency” (Reichard 1950:314).

That her classifications, no matter how different from her informants, would still function in a way that Navajos would consider completely consistent was of the utmost importance to Reichard. "Reichard's attempt to analyze Navajo categories, symbols, and the structure of Navajo prayer in their own terms, rather than imposing more Westernized constructs (whether based on Freudian theory or
scientific classification systems) prefigured structuralism and ethnoscience" (Lamphere 1992:108). Focusing on native categories and trying to portray a native point of view was also a way that Reichard tried to present cultural relativity. By describing the richness and the logic of native categories from a native point of view she was attempting to portray the complexity and humanity of her Navajo informants.

Reichard also saw the Navajo as being a coherent ethnonational group, as having an a-historical essence that endured through all the historical changes. For Reichard this essence was found in their ceremonial and religious structure. In her book on Navajo religion, Reichard states, "Navaho Religion: A Study of Symbolism tries to demonstrate that there is much more to the dance, song, and sandpainting than the primitiveness that meets the casual eye; that there is a religious system which has for years enabled the Navaho to retain their identity in a rapidly changing world" (Reichard 1950:xxxiii).

However, despite her descriptions of their complexity, humanity and coherent identity, to a certain extent Reichard also saw Navajos in a student role. For example, Reichard ran what she called a Hogan School to "teach the
pupils to write Navajo” (Reichard 1945:158). Though not seeing the Navajo as being nearly as deficient as Kluckhohn’s perception of them, she still found the need to help with their development into a literate, democratic society. In addition, her focus on tradition religious ceremonies also ignored the major wrenching cultural and social changes that were occurring as Navajos adjusted to their position as reservation Indians.

**Evon Vogt**

Another anthropologist, Evon Vogt was a proponent of the cultural continuity position and also focused his writings on how through all the historical changes there remained a core essence of the Navajo people or Navajo nation. We can see in his later work with the Maya in Chiapas that he is still interested in the core essence of a people and how it changes or resists change from cultural contact.

His interest in change is clearly explained in his research proposal for the Harvard Chiapas project (a group of researchers focusing on indigenous issues in Southern Mexico instituted in 1957) entitled "Mexican Cultural Change: Comparative analysis of the processes of cultural change in Tzotzil and Tzeltal Indian communities in Chiapas, Mexico" (Vogt 1994:82). In describing the
situation in the Maya highlands, he represents the Maya and Ladinos in that area as living an intercultural life that had undergone little change after the disruptions of the initial Spanish contact. Studied in the 1940s by Sol Tax, a new government program of changes that included “health education and the establishment of clinics; formal school, especially to teach the Indians to speak, read, and write Spanish; the establishment of Indian-controlled stores in each village; the building, for the first time, of roads to many of the Indian settlements; and the improvement of crops and agricultural practices” (Vogt 1994:83) was underway from the Indian Institute of Mexico which had established an operating center in San Cristobal in 1950.

Vogt asserts that, “with this program, the National Indian Institute has been a major force for change in the Indian culture of Chiapas – indeed, probably the most important event that has affected these cultures since the Spanish Conquest in the 1520s” (Vogt 1994:83). He proposes that this project will be of major theoretical importance because he will be able to observe cultural changes as they happen. He explains, "in my judgment, the research findings should add significantly to our scientific knowledge of the conditions and processes of cultural change among American
Indians and, more broadly, to other culture-contact situations in the world where indigenous peoples are in the process of becoming modernized and integrated into national societies and cultures” (Vogt 1994:87).

His interest in the core essence of indigenous people who are caught in these historical processes of change can be seen in his work in Zinacantan, a Tzotzil Maya-speaking village. In his 1969 book Zinacantan: a Maya community in the highlands of Chiapas, Vogt explains, "by the second and third seasons, it had become more and more apparent that Zinacantecos were not Catholic peasants with a few Maya remnants left in the culture, but rather that they were Maya tribesmen with a thin veneer of Spanish Catholicism" (Vogt 1969:390). Here we can see Vogt trying to figure out if the community he is studying has fundamentally changed into Catholic peasants or if they have retained their ethnolinguistic core as Maya tribesmen as he asserts with only a veneer of Spanish Catholicism. This is in many ways a continuation of his concerns when working in the Southwest.

Vogt’s goal in his book chapter on the Navajo in Edward Spicer’s Perspectives in American Indian Culture Change (Spicer 1961) is to show the cultural integrity of the
Navajo tribe despite all the many changes they have undergone. He places the emergence or the separation of the modern Navajo tribe at the time of their close contact with the Pueblos and their adoption of agricultural practices. “The 'Apaches de Navajo' emerge with a special culture by the end of the period, largely by virtue of more intensive contacts with the Pueblos and of adjustments to the Colorado Plateau environment” (Vogt 1961:289).

This is somewhat different from other anthropologists working within the ethnonationalist or ethnolinguisit paradigm. Here Vogt recognizes historical processes that created the group he calls the Navajo, however, once these processes have occurred and they have separated from other Apache groups and been influenced by the Pueblos, suddenly they have a coherent cultural structure, or a unified core that makes them what many others see as an ethnonation. Vogt refers to this as a resistant institutional core. He explains, there is “a resistant institutional core a the heart of Navaho culture composed of a system of social relationships, ecological adjustments, and values that has formed a coherent and distinctive Navaho pattern at least since about 1700” (Vogt 1961:326). Though he does not site this coalescence in primordial times like most other
ethnonationalists, his concept of the community, once this “resistant institutional core” is established, functions as a coherent, homogeneous and integrated group. At this point Vogt shifts his focus from the historical processes that developed this core to looking at how acculturation and culture contact is dealt with among indigenous communities.

Vogt goes on to explain the many changes the Navajo have experienced in terms of an incorporation model where changes are merely added into a coherent cultural structure. He traces the continuity of Navajo culture and supports the idea of an a-historical essence, or what he calls an institutional core, that persists despite the many historical changes experienced by the tribe. "It is also clear that cultural content, or the cultural inventory, has undergone impressive changes since about 1700, but insofar as I can determine, the structural framework of this institutional core has persisted with remarkable continuity" (Vogt 1961:327). He uses the metaphor or an image borrowed from Arthur Woodward of a Navajo man who wears layers of clothes adapted from both American and Spanish-Mexican sources on top of a native breech clout. This image portrays Vogt’s belief in the internal or core
cultural integrity of Navajo society that has merely 
incorporated other elements into its “growing and expanding 

However, unlike Kluckhohn and even Reichard, Vogt is not 
interested in teaching or working toward Navajo 
“development,” instead, as is shown in his later work, Vogt 
is more interested in protecting indigenous groups and 
finding ways for them to maintain their traditions in the 
face of a rapidly modernizing world. In 1972, Vogt helped 
organize a group called Cultural Survival, this 
“organization grew out of a concern with self-determination 
for indigenous people and the desire to help those 
populations threatened with ethnocide to achieve the 
economic means to maintain their way of life” (Nash 

Vogt’s work shows that though native people may look less 
and less Indian, they are still authentically native at 
their core and anthropologists have the opportunity to help 
them maintain those core traditions and cultural integrity. 
This is a good example of an approach based on an 
ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm. In both his work 
among the Navajo and in Chiapas, Vogt sees the indigenous 
people he encounters as being part of a primordial group
that despite the major changes of colonialism still retains its essence. He sees anthropology as offering a way to uncover and help preserve this essence for indigenous groups throughout the world.

**The Handbook of North American Indians**

The Handbook of North American Indians, published by the Smithsonian Institute (1978-2008), is an important publication that brings together the work of several Navajo studies specialists. The handbook is an encyclopedia series summarizing information about all native federally recognized Native tribes in North America. The twenty volumes cover different areas and each tribe is covered in separate chapters. This format also reinforces the idea that each of these tribes is a separate, solidary and coherent group.

The Navajo tribe is discussed in the second volume covering the non-Pueblo tribes of the Southwest. It contains multiple chapters by some of the top Navajo studies scholars on topics including Navajo social organization, education, ceremonial system, music, arts and crafts. In addition, Navajo prehistory and history as well as a discussion of the development of the modern tribal government are covered. There are also chapters entitled
The Emerging Navajo Nation and The Navajo Nation Today showing again the expectation that the Navajo are a nation today and in the past were an emerging or proto-nation.

In this section I will look at how these chapters on Navajo history and the development of the tribal government along with the chapters specifically about the Navajo as a nation set up this model of an a priori coherent ethnonational group who have grown and developed (with the help of the US government) into a strong modern nation. This follows the model of nationalist historiography which became popular in the nineteenth century. This type of historiography supports the view that the world is divided up into nations with distinct histories (Breuilly 2007). John Breuilly points out the fallacies found in this type of historiography, he explains, “it is easy enough to identify the typical fallacies of nationalist historiography: the arbitrary assumption of some a-historical essence which underlies historical change and development and the teleology which sees the end of national history as implicit in its earlier stages” (Breuilly 2007:21). However, we see this particularly clearly in the structure of the articles about the Navajo tribe in the Handbook. There is an arbitrary assumption of
an a-historical essence of the Navajo that underlies the historical change and development that the authors discuss in the various handbook sections.

The chapter about the prehistory of the Navajo tribe, written by David Brugge, follows this model and constructs a history that shows the development of a coherent people, the beginnings of the proto-nation. The article begins by identifying them as named by Spanish colonizers, the Apaches de Nabajo. The article details theories of migration routes into the Southwest for the various Apache groups. It lists the culture traits believed to have been practiced by these early Athabaskan speakers. These shared culture traits (shared among all Apacheans at this point) and then their unique history once settled in the Southwest seems to be the supporting reasons for considering the Navajo as a coherent ethnonation. Brugge explains, “only the Apaches de Nabajo practiced agriculture to such a degree that it was noted by the early Spaniards. This alone has been sufficient to suggest a somewhat different history from that of other Apacheans prior to initial contact” (Brugge 1983:490-491). In addition, the mixing in of Pueblo cultural elements becomes another step in the historical development of the Navajo nation. In discussing the
incorporation of Pueblo refugees during the Pueblo Revolt, Brugge states, "with this influx of refugees the two major ancestral roots of Navajo culture, Athapaskan-Apachean and Anasazi-Puebloan, were joined. The development of Navajo culture as it is known today was far from complete, but the two peoples quickly merged sufficiently to form a single tribal entity with the Apaches de Nabajo providing the political unit and linguistic unity while the theology of the Pueblo Revolt gave sanction to the Puebloan participation" (Brugge 1983:493).

This chapter as well as the chapter on Navajo history from 1850-1923 develops this theme of an underlying a-historical essence that perseveres despite the major shifts and changes that occur. "Perhaps no other period in Navajo history reveals as clearly the capacity for Navajo culture to adjust, to change, and to bend yet never to break, as does the period immediately following the return of the Navajo from the Long Walk" (Roessel 1983:522). Though Navajo culture varies, adjusts and changes, the authors of the Handbook of North American Indians articles remain committed to the idea of an underlying a-historical essence that can be traced through all these changes and shown through the historical development of the tribe to lead to
the modern Navajo nation of today. This is in fact exactly what the Handbook does, is set up this model of a primordial ethnonation that can be described through its pre-history, history and modern development as a solidary, homogeneous group who through changes necessary for “modern progress” maintains its essence.

In his article about Navajo social organization, Gary Witherspoon directly addresses this idea of solidarity. He explains, "K’é is one of two main kinds of solidarity that hold the Dine 'Navajos' together as a society or tribal group. The other type of solidarity can be characterized as reciprocity. The former might be called kinship solidarity and the latter nonkinship solidarity, for reciprocity is the pattern of social relations among those not related by k’é" (Witherspoon 1983:524). He recognized the main form of solidarity among Navajos is between family members called k’é but also asserts that reciprocity is another form that holds the group together at a tribal level despite the Navajo focus on clan level solidarity.

In addition, the article ‘A Taxonomic View of the Traditional Navajo Universe’ by Werner, Manning and Begishe directly addresses the great amount of variation found on the Navajo reservation but asserts that despite this
variation the spirit of the Navajo culture can still be captured. "As the Navajo population increases and diversifies by religion, profession, income, and education, a greater heterogeneity of culture and language is introduced. On one analytical level this variation is all part of the 'same' culture. On a lower level it may be equated with (among other largely unknown social factors) varying schools of thought in the Navajo population, or with exposure to similar experiences. The more we are able to say about the nature of the variation and disagreements among consultants who are native speakers of Navajo, the greater the confidence the reader should have that we have captured the spirit of Navajo culture" (Werner, Manning et al. 1983:579).

These authors credit the growing diversity to population increase on the reservation, however, a great deal of variation and heterogeneity among the Navajos has been acknowledged from the earliest ethnographers (Matthews 1994 [1897]:9-10). But as this quote shows, these authors like many other ethnographers working on the Navajo reservation abstract from these variations a sameness, essence or spirit that they believe underlies and unifies the heterogeneous bands or resident groups. This is in line
with the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic ideology that people naturally belong to national units and though these units may be degraded or ravaged by historical changes, there is an ahistorical essence that has the potential to unite them as a nation. This ideology is still fairly ubiquitous but we must remember that nationalism is actually a historically recent means for developing and maintaining political power and control of the state (Breuilly 1994).

This development of political power can be seen in the sections about the contemporary Navajo government. The sections about the emerging Navajo nation and those detailing the development of the Navajo tribal council show the success of the Navajo in developing a democratic government that can functionally integrate with U.S. federal government. Here the development of a limited amount of state power is desired among those living on the Navajo reservation.

The political goals of termination can been seen in some of these chapters as the authors discuss the tribes ability to govern themselves and not need special assistance from the U.S. government. For example, Mary Shepardson explains, "Navajo Indians, through the Tribal Council, have taken a
long stride toward self-government. Navajo leaders have become the most important decision makers as well as the executors of self-determined policies" (Shepardson 1983:635). These authors build on the idea of earlier efforts by the federal government being for the learning and development of the tribe who are now ready for the responsibility of handling their own internal governmental affairs.

However, this does not mean an actual complete national sovereignty, total state power, nor being completely or solely just American citizens with equal access to all institutions. Rather something like a subnational ethnic group, who maintain important symbols of their culture, traditions and difference from white society and are worthy to function as their own tier under the US government structure is described through the various articles of the Handbook.

**Bibliographies**

In addition, a look at a bibliography on Navajo topics even from the late 1960s shows thousands of books, articles and manuscripts (Correll, Watson et al. 1969). Areas of research that seem to be of particular interest to a wide range of writers are topics on Navajo arts and crafts such
as weaving and silver work, ceremonies and ceremorialism, including legends and myths, sandpaintings and chants, general descriptions of culture, education, language, histories & prehistories of the tribe. Each of these works also presupposes the existence of a coherent group and serves to show some aspect of their essence or traditions that make them a unified ethnonation.

Though decades after the BIA’s initial attempts to create a Navajo ethnonational polity that could fit within the US federal structure, scholars working with the tribe continued to frame their writings in terms of a coherent, solidary group who though they have gone through many, many changes still hold on to some kind of a-historical essence that defines them. This helps to hold onto the Romantic notion of the Noble Savage who can serve as a critique of certain aspects of American society that potential reformers see as corrupt and harmful and in many cases offers justification for unequal access to economic, social and political capital that is experienced by native groups in the United States.

Linguists: Sapir, Haile & Hoijer

In addition to the early ethnographic work on the Navajo reservation, during the early part of the twentieth
century, there were also scholars working specifically with the Navajo language. Edward Sapir worked with a local Catholic priest, named Father Bernard Haile on both creating an orthography for Navajo and describing the language. During the summer of 1929, Sapir ran a field school for the Laboratory of Anthropology in Crystal, New Mexico, where Sapir with Father Haile, Harry Hoijer (who actually published the texts after Sapir’s death) and some other students worked with Navajo speakers to collect Navajo texts. As Regna Darnell explains, though likely not his sole reason for changing professional specialties, “Edward Sapir, ostensibly abandoned Germanic philology on the grounds that the Boasian challenge to record aboriginal languages before they were utterly lost was more important than ongoing scholarship on established Indo-European texts” (Darnell 2001). Like other anthropologists, Sapir’s focus was on documenting the Navajo language and myths before they were irrevocably lost. The focus was on traditional culture that could be documented rather than the immense changes that were occurring. Because Sapir leaves for a position at Yale, the texts and other linguistic work are not published until years later by Harry Hoijer (Hoijer 1942; Hoijer and Sapir 1945; Hoijer
1974). However, these texts, though not explicitly about the contemporary situation of the time of the field school still offer unique insights into both life on the reservation and participation in the field school. David Dinwoodie explores one such text by the “informant” named Barney Bitsili who ostensibly describes the origin of the Shaking Chant. However, Dinwoodie shows how Bitsili uses his elicitation sessions as an opportunity to fashion a new voice that speaks to a wider public about contemporary challenges rather than simply recounting tradition.

Conclusion

Looking at the various ethnographers that have worked on the Navajo reservation we can see the development of the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic ideology in their work. With Washington Matthews we find a focus on the humanity of the Navajos, as not just a savage tribe but a people who are worthy wards of the state. Matthews is not really working from the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm but we begin to see glimmers of it in his writing. For Matthews the Navajos are an administratively delineated group but as he argues for their worth as being kept wards of the state and their humanity he approaches them as a solidary group even if they are quite heterogeneous.
Matthews uses the religious and ceremonial life that he observes, not to argue that it is some underlying national essence but that the Navajos are not undifferentiated savages without religion or ethics. This sets the stage for later ethnographers to see these qualities or others as a national essence.

Clyde Kluckhohn is a little more grounded in the ethnonationalist ideology as he assumes a national essence based on a shared language among Navajo speakers. However, he only sees the Navajo as a potential nation rather than an already existing one. Kluckhohn sees the Navajos as a deficient nation that needs the help of the US government and anthropologists to be able to develop their full national potential.

Following Matthews groundwork, Gladys Reichard does assume a cultural essence based on Navajo religious and ceremonial structure. Reichard’s work, like Matthews’, also focuses on portraying the complexity and humanity of her Navajo informants. Though perhaps not as committed as Kluckhohn to the idea that the Navajo need to "progress" in their political structure she still takes the role of the teacher in the Hogan school where she teaches Navajos to write their language.
Evon Vogt approaches his ethnographic work from a cultural continuity and change perspective. Vogt embraces an ethronational ideology even though he doesn’t actually assume an ahistorical essence like most other ethnographers. Vogt writes that the Navajo core emerged around 1700 and that they now are a coherent culture or ethnonation that needs to be preserved. Most of Vogt’s ethnographic work explores how Navajos deal with change and still maintain their cultural core.

As we get to more current work we can see the *Handbook of North American Indians* as almost a guide for ethnonational or ethnolinguistic native groups. The Handbook presents a model of an a priori coherent ethnonational group who have grown and developed (with the help of the US government) into a strong modern nation. In addition, a look at a bibliography of work on the Navajo reservation shows each work also presuppose a coherent group and serve to show some aspect of their essence or traditions that make them a unified ethnonation. And finally, even the work of linguists such as Sapir, Haile and Hoijer focus more on documenting perceived cultural and linguistic traditions rather than current challenges.

All of these government agents and ethnographers
discussed in this chapter encountered the Navajos after their forced relocation and then return to their current reservation location, however, all focus on aspects of culture that are assumed to have been maintained from some primordial state. Rather than seeing how these aspects of culture like ceremonies, ethnicity, language, etc. were mobilized and used to navigate traumatic colonizing events such as the long walk and then relocation back to a reservation, they are seen instead as symbols or tokens that give credence or justification for being or becoming an ethnonational group. Language, ceremonies, and other cultural elements are taken as objects or property that Navajos have heroically held onto or protected rather than being seen as particular ways and means for navigating a complex colonial situation.

Because of this, these cultural elements become proof or justification for current (ethno)national status and the need to keep these elements pure and unchanged and perceived of as traveling through history unaffected becomes important. Many of the anthropologists who have worked with the tribe have been dedicated to helping establish and maintain these symbols. However, these cultural practices have not always been symbols, rather
they have been used in various ways by different groups among Navajo speakers to navigate the treacherous and changing tides of colonial encounters making them important anthropological topics but not necessarily unimpeachable proof of a primordial nation, which is, in actuality, a postindustrial ideology that supports the exercise of state power.
Chapter 2 - Language Documentation and Archiving

In this chapter, I will address several of the issues that scholars working on language documentation projects have brought up and discuss how many of these problems stem from a historical reliance on the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm. To address these problems, many have called for the inclusion of ethnographic research in documentation projects, particularly with attention to language ideologies. I then discuss how the awareness of these various issues in language documentation, as well as the call for more ethnography, is influenced by a shift from an ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm in approaching language to a better understanding of language variation.

However, as the practice of ethnography has also historically been rooted in an ethnonational paradigm, which has constituted essentially a hegemony in past anthropological practice, there is more that needs to be addressed than just to add some ethnographic data to language documentation programs. More research from a historical dialectic paradigm perspective can help us to better understand the actual speech communities dealing with language shift by removing simplistic notions of
language and community. I then finish by discussing how this new paradigm affects language archiving.

While many of the critiques that will be discussed in this chapter have a great deal of merit and stem from a more complex understanding of language and communicative practice, most still either conflate linguistic communities and speech communities and/or are based on a simplistic notion of the speech community being homogeneous and monolingual. As has been discussed earlier, a speech community is a group of people who participate in regular and shared interaction. John Gumperz defines the speech community as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage” (Gumperz 1972:219).

Speech communities are not homogeneous as members of speech communities do not all share the same linguistic resources, “control of communicative resources varies sharply with the individual's position within the social system” (Gumperz 1972:226). Speech communities are complex groups with individuals in varying positions within the social system and different access to communicative
resources as a result. In addition, speech communities are rarely monolingual. As Michael Silverstein points out "as has long been recognized, speech communities are frequently plurilingual, that is, they encompass speakers who belong to more than one language community. Sometimes such plurilingualism is even a normative attribute of individuals within the speech community, so that there will be a regular differentiation of their using one language in some socioculturally defined occasion type and another language in another occasion-type" (Silverstein 1998:407).

And though, many critiques of language documentation programs are based on a better understanding of the complexity and variation within communication, the complexity and variation of the speech community and its members is rarely addressed. Instead, the idea of a speech community is often conflated with that of a linguistic community. In a linguistic community, speakers have an allegiance to an idea of a language, usually a standardized abstraction of grammatical rules and a lexicon. They believe that there is a correct or most appropriate way to speak, though it rarely directly maps to how they speak (Silverstein 1987:2). We often use this concept when discussing national languages.
However, in minority language communities, there may not be a linguistic community in the same way we see linguistic communities around national languages such as French or Japanese. Minority language speakers and especially speakers of languages that linguists and anthropologists consider endangered are usually members of other linguistic communities, using national languages in addition to their endangered language. In situations of language shift and language loss, speech communities are guaranteed to be complex and pluralilingual as speakers with differing communicative resources and abilities in multiple languages both national and local interact.

**Critiques of Language Documentation**

Language Documentation has been defined as being “concerned with the methods, tools, and theoretical underpinnings for compiling a representative and lasting multipurpose record of a natural language or one of its varieties. It is a rapidly emerging new field in linguistics and related disciplines working with little-known speech communities” (Gippert, Himmelmann et al. 2006). While not the only reason for initiating a language documentation project, language endangerment is often an important factor in the decision (Fishman 1991; Hale and
The field of language documentation is rapidly developing and changing, shifting in many ways away from older models of language documentation projects (Woodbury 2003; Austin and Grenoble 2007). As a result, many of the problems inherent in the language documentation and language archiving process have been addressed by both linguists and linguistic anthropologists. In a paper which calls for language documentation to be its own field, Nikolaus Himmelmann acknowledged some of the problems with the concept of descriptive linguistics including its “abstract and ahistoric conception of the speech community as a homogeneous body” and its disregard of the complexities of spoken language (Himmelmann 1998:164). Himmelmann makes a distinction between the description of a language where a language is “a system of abstract elements, constructions, and rules that constitute the invariant underlying structure of the utterances observable in a speech community” and language documentation which focuses on the “linguistic practices and traditions of a speech community” (Himmelmann 1998:166).

Himmelmann calls for more emphasis, up to being its own field of research, on language documentation. This requires
more cooperation and interdependence between linguists and anthropologists, as Michael Silverstein has also argued is necessary (Silverstein 1998). Himmelman explains,

"The two approaches to the compilation of a corpus of communicative events sketched in this section — the anthropological approach and the linguistic-structure approach — are based on different conceptual frameworks and aim at two different kinds of comprehensiveness. The results of these approaches, that is, the kind and number of communicative events chosen for inclusion in the corpus, however, substantially overlap and complement one another. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the combination of the two approaches should, in practice, result in a sufficiently varied and comprehensive corpus, which will be amenable to further analysis in a broad variety of analytic frameworks" (Himmelmann 1998:183).

Though calling for more attention to communicative processes, Himmelmann still calls for a structural approach as a complement to the more ethnographic approach. This shows a continued reliance on an ethnolinguistic or ethnonational paradigm, which sees a speech community as being complex but also as a primordial group, with a primordial language that can be abstractly described rather than a dynamic group that is continually changing and positioning themselves within larger socioeconomic systems.

The impetus to see communities as homogeneous bodies and to disregard the complexities of speech is born out of the post-enlightenment ideology of normative monolingualism
exemplified by Johann Gottfried Herder’s writings and finds it strongest expression in colonial policies that used language as a way to separate indigenous populations into administrative units (this will be discussed further in chapter 6). Himmelmann argues that in order to produce data that could be used for a broad range of purposes, language documentation needs to be its own field of research because “language documentation is NOT some kind of "theory-free" enterprise” (Himmelmann 1998:190). Rather, it is a field informed by a variety of theoretical frameworks and requires its own attention to theory. Therefore, what is being documented and how it is being collected need to receive scholarly attention because language documentation is not a theory free or politically neutral endeavor.

This idea has also been addressed by Nora England who discusses her experience working with Mayan languages. She discusses Mayan speakers’ criticisms of foreign linguists and their work. She explains, “we are asked, at the very least, to recognize the social and political roles we play and not to pretend that our role is 'purely scientific' and neutral” (England 1992:33). As will be shown in the chapter four discussion of the Navajo case, linguists and anthropologists are not only not neutral but often play an
important role in the execution of political agendas and the political organization of the members of the speech communities in which they work.

In addition, many scholars have drawn attention to problems of ethics when dealing with communities and their languages (Dwyer 2006). In the past, not only were Western ideologies and institutions imposed on communities, local linguistic resources were co-opted by linguists and anthropologists and used without permission or consent.

For example, Debenport discusses the importance of respecting a community’s wishes regarding the circulation of cultural property even if it means not being able to publish any examples of the documented language outside the community (Debenport 2010; Debenport 2010). In addition, by being a part of the documentation project, Debenport noticed how she was influencing how the language was taught, its institutionalization and its standardization despite being carefully aware of her role as community outsider (Debenport 2010:233).

Pamela Innes shows the importance of including copious amounts of ethnographic metadata to the documentation so that later users of the material can understand the circumstances in which it was recorded and who was included
or excluded from the speech event. This comes out of her experience of working with archived Mvskoke language materials where she encountered narratives that were considered dangerous for certain audiences. She explains how including ethnographic material in the metadata for archived language materials is extremely important both for ethical reasons so that information about how the community expects the narratives to be handled can be preserved and respected but also for research purposes so that later users of the material will have more cultural data for contextualizing the linguistic material and for tracking changes in language ideologies over time (Innes 2010).

Both of these critiques point to important shortcomings of earlier linguistic research and the need to take into account speaker’s wishes and language ideologies. However, a more robust conception and description of the speech community and its structure, including who has control over the disputed linguistic resources could be a beneficial result of a continued use of the historical dialectic paradigm.

Other scholars have addressed the problem with the discourses used to justify language documentation projects. Though many of the ideologies used to promote language
documentation projects appeal to members of dominant language groups and their funding agencies, they often have unintended consequences for the speakers of these languages. Jane Hill identifies several discourses that linguists and others use to discuss the importance of language documentation and revitalization that she argues can be detrimental to communities with less spoken languages.

"The theme of universal ownership specifically alienates endangered languages from their speakers and other members of communities in which the languages are spoken. The discourse of hyperbolic valorization converts endangered languages into objects more suitable for preservation in museums patronized by exceptionally discerning elites than for ordinary use in everyday life by imperfect human beings. The theme of enumeration, which censuses endangered languages and their speakers, expresses a form of power that may amplify the alienation of endangered languages from the domain of quotidian practice of those who use them to the domain of esoteric expert knowledge" (Hill 2002:120-121).

In addition Errington points out how appeals to the idea of a common linguistic heritage of humanity parallels claims to natural resources considered the common natural heritage of humanity which have been used to limit local communities’ use of these resources (Errington 2003:727). Others have identified problems with language rights discourse. Bill Maurer points out how documents like the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights treat language
rights like property rights. He explains, “This is not surprising, since rights themselves have historically been figured in terms of property and since property rights are the model for other kinds of rights in societies structured by liberal law” (Maurer 2003:776). In addition this supports the colonial ideology of discreet homogeneous groups that each possess one language. “Documents like the UDLR assume that reified languages belong to the people who speak or once may have spoken them. ‘The people’ is understood to be a singular collectivity: one people, one language” (Maurer 2003:776).

In his work with the Hopi language, Peter Whitely shows how the discourse and ideology of language rights conflict with local language ideologies. He explains, "effective responses to the Hopi language crisis depend on the adoption of a linguistic ideology, including "rights," that most older Hopis conceive as alien: an ideology in which the language is not integral to an embedded series of religious beliefs, ritual practices, and social and economic forms but, rather, is seen as detachable, secularizable, and in fine readable and writable. Such views are anathema to preexisting Hopi, and more generally Pueblo, values that emphasize linguistic privacy as a
technique of sociopolitical autonomy" (Whiteley 2003:716).

Whitely also observes how the use of language rights discourse objectifies a language and causes it to be seen as an object that can be separable from a person or community. This also allows language to be seen as a commodity that can circulate in the marketplace. However, this often conflicts with the interests of many small scale indigenous groups who try to avoid allowing the market to appropriate their cultural practices (Whiteley 2003:713).

Others have addressed the effects of language documentation and its products on the communities themselves. Errington discusses how looking at past colonial language programs both secular and religious had the effect of creating linguistic hierarchies. He shows how print technologies have the effect of privileging some varieties of speech while devaluing others (Errington 2003:727). Often in colonial encounters, this creation of hierarchies was not just an accidental by-product of the language policies but actually an intended effect. Colonizers used hierarchies to help in governing native populations.

In the Navajo case the linguistic hierarchies that were created through the documentation of certain varieties over
others helped to form the type of polity that could both mirror and integrate with the American federal government. Eisenlohr addresses another way documentation projects affect local communities in his discussion of how the process of selection and collection can end up producing the “heritage” of a people (Eisenlohr 2004:27). As a result, the linguist or anthropologist “may occupy a pivotal role in shaping credentials for ethnolinguistic recognition” (Eisenlohr 2004:27). Therefore, documentation decisions of what to include and exclude can end up having important political consequences for communities looking for sociopolitical recognition. Indeed they can often create the people or group along with their supporting heritage from whatever politically objectionable (from the point of view of the dominant political group) organizations that were in existence before.

And finally, others, such as Salikoko Mufwene, have questioned the efficacy of language documentation and its resulting revitalization efforts based on the creation of orthographies and literary texts. He explains, “Efforts to revitalize some of the endangered languages have been devoted largely to developing writing systems for them and generating written literature. Noble as they are, most of
these endeavors have also confused revitalization, which promotes usage of a language in its community, with preservation, which does nothing more than preserve texts in (and accounts of) a language basically as museum artifacts." (Mufwene 2004:p.208).

Using an ecological model (Mufwene 2001), Mufwene argues that revitalization of a language requires a restoration of the ‘ecologies’ or economic and social circumstances which caused it to flourish in the first place. He states, "Advocates of the revitalization of endangered languages must tell us whether the enterprise is possible without restoring the previous socioeconomic ecologies that had sustained them. Like cultures, languages are dynamic, complex adaptive systems that cannot be considered independent of the adaptive needs of their speakers" (Mufwene 2004:219). In a keynote address given at the 2014 High Desert Linguistic Society’s conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Mufwene questioned whether language revitalization is even possible or if linguists promising revitalization are guilty of false advertising. He argued that cases where revitalization is generally seen to have occurred, like in the Hebrew case, are really revitalization of languages so much as the creation of
linguistic and social change, the creation of new ecologies or economic and cultural circumstances that create new possibilities for its use.

Calls for an Ethnographic Approach to Language Documentation

The attention to these problems by linguists and linguistic anthropologists has led to a call for more ethnography in language documentation practices, particularly with attention to language ideologies. Hill explains, "Documentary linguists need to be ethnographers, because they venture into communities that may have very different forms of language use from those of the communities in which they were socialized as human beings or trained as scholars" (Hill 2006:113). Scholars are recognizing that entering a community and imposing Western ideologies of language through literacy and creation of a standard variety embodied in dictionaries and grammars does not capture the richness of linguistic and communicative variety inherent in the communities they are documenting. Instead more attention needs to be paid to how speech communities conceive of language and communication.

However, just the inclusion of more ethnographic data is not enough to untangle language documentation projects from
the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm because as was shown in chapter 1, ethnography is based to a large extent on an ethnonational ideology that approaches the subjects of ethnography from a nationalist perspective. One solution has been a focus on language ideologies. Debenport explains that attention to language ideology can mediate a wide range of potential problems, “attending to the varied regional, community, and individual linguistic ideologies involving literacy and textual circulation not only has the potential to strengthen theoretical arguments and promote successful partnerships between academics and communities, but also alerts those involved with documentation projects to the potential ethical dilemmas specific to each community” (Debenport 2010).

This call for attention to language ideology and the inclusion of more ethnography in documentation projects as well as scholars attending to many of the problems and shortcomings of language documentation projects is a result of a better understanding of and attention to language variation. As linguists and linguistic anthropologists turn their attention toward communicative practice, rather than looking for abstracted systems of rules, a different view of what language is, what people are actually speaking and
how that should be documented is emerging.

However, in addition, the complex nature of speech communities also needs to be addressed. Paul Kroskrity begins to address this concept with what he calls ideological clarification. He explains, “this notion covers the conflicts of ‘beliefs, or feelings, about languages’ … that are the inevitable outcome of the interaction of indigenous, colonial, post-colonial, and professional academic perspectives” (Kroskrity 2009:71). Kroskrity also points out that a community generally has multiple contradictory language ideologies as well (Kroskrity 2009:73). That speech communities are heterogeneous in their perspectives toward language use and other language ideologies is an important understanding. To understand these differences and complexities that emerge in the interaction of indigenous, colonial, post-colonial and academic ideas and perspectives a historical dialectic approach must be taken.

**The Historical Dialectic Paradigm**

The historical dialectic paradigm offers new perspectives and questions for those working on language documentation projects. Changing the focus from developing an abstract set of rules and a list of vocabulary words to documenting
communicative practice in praxis affects the entirety of the documentation process from what is chosen to be recorded and documented to who is included in the project to what the outcome of the documentation should look like. This shift can already be seen underway in the literature about changing focus to a more “discourse centered” approach (Woodbury 2003). By understanding language as more of a social practice rather than an object the importance of including ethnographic information in the documentation product becomes apparent. Since social contexts constrain communicative events and communicative events can also constrain, create, maintain or modify social relations and contexts, it’s important to take into account a larger range of variables than just the linguistic utterances being used.

Therefore, the old paradigm offered a much more achievable goal. The creation of a high quality dictionary and grammar was a great deal of effort to produce but a complete grammar and a fairly comprehensive dictionary could be achieved. Though most good linguists, like Robert Young, admitted that their dictionaries were not entirely comprehensive. In the introduction to his hefty 1,069 page dictionary, The Navajo Language, Young admitted “although
fairly extensive, the vocabulary is by no means exhaustive” (Young and Morgan 1980:vi). However, if even a comprehensive list of vocabulary was rarely possible, even for a linguist who had spent 50 years working on the language, how much more impossible is a comprehensive documentation of communicative practices in a community.

Under this new paradigm, what the goals and outcome of the documentation should be also needs to be addressed. This however, can be an advantage as speech community structures are understood and members are brought into the discussion and their goals and ideas are taken into account. Those documentation projects that are directed by native communities and have a high degree of community participation often do insert their own ideologies and ideas about language even into such a Western form and colonial tool as a dictionary. Erin Debenport offers a good example of how the community she was helping to develop a dictionary used the example sentences in the dictionary more for moral and cultural examples than for illustrating grammatical regularities (Debenport 2010:231; Debenport 2010:207). This is just one way that communities have attempted to bend the language documentation process to achieve their own ends and goals.
In addition, the fact that a complete documentation is impossible to achieve can actually help direct linguists and linguistic anthropologists to relying more on ethnographic research and the research of historical developments within the speech community which will help to bring in more social and historical aspects of the communicative practices to the documentation process. Because all the aspects of the context of a communicative event are so numerous that they are impossible to fully record, ethnographic research from a historical dialectic perspective becomes an important tool for figuring out which aspects of a context or a communicative event are salient to the participants. Unless the linguist is a member of the community itself, what is important in a social situation may be extremely different then her or his expectations, requiring the use of ethnographic research and the close involvement of community members to determine those aspects of communicative practice that are most important to a speech community and to provide more data that can be collected with the documentation.

A historical dialectic paradigm can also be helpful in understanding the community that would like to document or revitalize its language. Within this paradigm an
understanding of the community as well as the historical processes that led to its construction would be important to understand before beginning a project. Determining actual speech communities (as opposed to linguistic communities), how they are structured, who has access to which types of communicative resources and why would all be important aspects to understand before undertaking a project. Also, in taking a dialectic approach there would be an emphasis on dialog with the various community members as part of any documentation project and an understanding that there may be many contradictory and opposing viewpoints on any aspect of the project.

The historical dialectic paradigm also highlights the importance of paying attention to language ideologies. This can also help with the documentation process since an understanding of the various ways a speech community sees their language and where and how it should be used is an extremely important part of what should be documented under the new paradigm but it also helps the researcher to foresee any ethical conflicts with the process of documentation and publication. Exploring and documenting the language ideology of a community is useful for many different endeavors that may use language documentation
materials but particularly for language revitalization efforts.

For a language to be truly revitalized in a community, speakers must begin to formulate expressions for themselves and start using the language to create and modify social relations. This means moving beyond just recreating the historical use of the language. By having an understanding of the ideologies held by historical speakers, modern speakers have a foundation from which to build these new expressions and registers where they can feel that they are their own, rather than just a recreation of Western social structures with their native language. This offers a community hoping to revitalize their language more tools for using their language in ways that work for them and feel more authentic.

Language Archiving

Another important aspect of language documentation is language archiving, or what is done with the documentation to make it available to communities and other scholars now and in the future. There has also been a fair amount of discussion about language archiving options and practices. The majority of the work has focused on the technological aspects of language archiving and how to improve the
These discussions are important because linguists and linguistic anthropologists recognize that the use of a digital audio or video recorder is not a panacea nor does it automatically make the documentation complete or more useful. Because of this, attention is also being given to the content of the documentation, how to be as comprehensive as possible, bringing up such questions as “what audio data needs to be collected to count as a record of a language that is likely to disappear?” (Nathan 2008:60). As well as to the concept of protocols and permissions to help protect communities and any sensitive information gathered. As David Nathan points out, endangered language communities are often under a range of social pressures and these must be acknowledged and taken into account both when doing fieldwork and when setting up access to the documentation materials (Nathan 2008:60).

These questions of how best to comprehensively document a language, what data counts as a record of a language and
how to include the community in determining what materials can be made public are arising now because of as linguistic anthropologists shift away from an ethnonational or ethnolinguistic ideology toward a more historical dialectic paradigm. As a new understanding of what a language is or what needs to be documented for a speech community to maintain or revitalize its linguistic traditions is emerging, these questions about the content of language documentation projects and how to respect communities’ agency are gaining attention.

In an article dealing with issues of portability and longevity in documentation data, Bird and Simmons explain the difference between language documentation and language description in a way that points to the beginning of this shift in paradigm. "Language documentation provides a record of the linguistic practices of a speech community, such as a collection of recorded and transcribed texts. Language description, on the other hand, presents a systematic account of the observed practices in terms of linguistic generalizations and abstractions, such as in a grammar or analytical lexicon" (Bird and Simons 2003:557) Here language description is represented as squarely falling into the ethnolinguistic paradigm through the
production of the generalizations and abstractions found in dictionaries and grammars. Language documentation on the other hand does not deal in nor create these abstractions but instead is to focus on recording the linguistic practices of a speech community.

This begins to edge into the new historical dialectic paradigm by expanding the view of what is to be documented in documenting a language. Instead of recording a list of grammar rules and words as ‘the language’, now the focus is shifting to linguistic or social practices, recognizing language as more than the abstract symbol of a community but as integral social interactions.

This can also be seen in David Nathan’s discussion of the importance of creating skillful audio recordings in documentation. He explains, “the materials of linguistics - its data - were written materials, such as dictionaries, grammars, and texts. Audio was (where it played any part) mainly an inconvenience on the route to analysis. This view caused a tragic loss of much linguistic information that would be highly valued today; in Australia, some linguists were even instructed by their funders to reuse tapes (i.e. record over them), and to not "waste" tapes by recording narratives and conversations!” (Nathan 2008:65). Here
Nathan illustrates this expanded view of what counts as language and language documentation by his incredulous exclamation of how funders used to encourage linguists not to waste tape on narratives and conversations, now considered important linguistic practices to be documented.

In addition, language documentation projects often rely on a list of interaction types to try to include in their documentation such as interaction, instruction, performance, etc. (Johnson and Dwyer 2002). Again, this expands the idea of what counts as language and includes variation found in these social interactions as an integral part of linguistic practices. Further attention to the makeup of the speech community in conjunction with this research is also important.

Another example of the expanded view of what language is, how the speech community is structured and what needs to be taken into account when documenting it comes from Widlok, et. al.’s work on the Khoisan language #Akhoe Hai||om. In their report of their fieldwork efforts they show how multimedia can be a useful component in both analysis and presentation of data. They talk about how though many metadata and archiving software packages offer lots of ways to describe speakers there is a tendency for the
relationship between the speakers to be left out. In their research they felt that video recording gave them a good platform from which to document relationships between speakers as well as what was said, how and where. They explain, “video sessions, like the one described below, allow us to keep connections intact that are present and critical in speech but which are often carelessly cut in our documentation record because of a Western bias to consider speakers (and disciplines) as isolates” (Widlok, Rapold et al. 2008:357).

This example shows more expansion of the idea of language as a social process, where relationships between the speakers are an important part of what needs to be documented. However, Bird and Simon’s reliance on a collection of recorded and transcribed texts as the example of what language documentation is, shows some amount of attachment to the older paradigm where language can be made into an object, in this case an archive of recorded texts, rather than an abstracted grammar.

Therefore, a historical dialectic approach needs to be used in the language documentation and archiving field in order to better address the issues that are currently being raised. Those working in the language documentation field
need to gain a firmer grasp on what language is and how a speech community is organized in order to come up with better ways to document communicative practice. Rejecting the old paradigmatic idea of language as an object is an important first step that many have either already taken or are in the process of taking. This complicates the field of documentation and archiving which is built on the foundation of the idea of a museum where objects, that in some way represent various groups of people, can be collected and preserved.

However, continuing to objectify linguistic behavior rather than to understand it for what it is will continue to lead to the same problems that we see with historic documentation projects like the Navajo case and many others. Under this new paradigm we will need to find ways to move away from the idea of archiving language as collecting and preserving objects. A better understanding of how the communities themselves would like to use documentation products for their own revitalization and other cultural projects may help offer ideas for how this can be done.

Changing the understanding of language from an object to a social process in a complex community opens up a myriad
of questions on how best to document these processes. Linguistic anthropology and those working from a historical dialectic perspective offer new tools and theories, such as registers and language ideologies, to help those working in the field begin to discover new ways of documenting linguistic practices. This will require a great deal of ethnographic research to understand the structure of linguistic practices in these communities as most of them will differ significantly from the structures and ideologies that those documenting the language are accustomed to.

This also means that the products of language documentation will vary considerably as each community will have different ideas of what their language is and how best to document it. As David Nathan explains, "a more realistic view of documentation outcomes is that they are unique, situated, negotiated collections that depend on the specific people and processes that gave rise to them" (Nathan 2008) p.63. This will be a great change from the fairly uniform grammars and dictionaries of earlier documentation projects. But hopefully, the great and fascinating diversity of human social and linguistic practices can be better represented, leading to more useful
data for scholars, language revitalizers and community members.

In addition, a historical dialectic approach raises questions about what an archive is and how it functions. Some scholars working in historical anthropology have begun to question assumptions that have been made about archives. Nicholas Dirks points out that “the archive is constituted as the only space that is free of context, argument, ideology – indeed history itself” (Dirks 2002:48). And yet, as Schwartz and Cook point out “archives are social constructs” (Schwartz and Cook 2002:3). They further explain that this is evident because, “archives have their origins in the information needs and social values of the rulers, governments, businesses, and individuals who establish and maintain them. Archives then are not some pristine storehouse of historical documentation that has piled up, but a reflection of and often justification for the society that creates them” (Schwartz and Cook 2002:11-12).

Indeed, archives are about power because their founding purpose is often about justifying whichever ruling power created them. “Archives, ever since the mnemons of ancient Greece, have been about power – about maintaining power,
about the power of the present to control what is, and will be, known about the past, about the power of remembering over forgetting” (Schwartz and Cook 2002:3). In addition, the power that archivists wield over what is deemed worth keeping and what should be forgotten has also been called into question. David Zeitlyn discusses the role of archivists, he explains that archivists are the “gatekeepers selecting which items are archived and which are condemned to oblivion by being omitted. This process is another instrumentality of power. Present choices determine future history, selecting the materials available to future historians” (Zeitlyn 2012:463).

Another area where the power of archives and archivists is and has been particularly relevant is in the realm of identity politics. Schwartz and Cook explain, “whether conscious of it or not, archivists are major players in the business of identity politics. Archivists appraise, collect, and preserve the props with which notions of identity are built. In turn, notions of identity are confirmed and justified as historical documents validate with all their authority as ‘evidence’ the identity stories so built” (Schwartz and Cook 2002:16). Ethnic identities, national identities, and other political identities are
often founded based on evidence found within archives. We cannot assume that archives are neutral storehouses of historical truth, "archives, then, are not passive storehouses of old stuff", but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed" (Schwartz and Cook 2002:1).

However, scholars who are taking into account the positionality and bias of the archive, understanding its history and function in its society, find that other viewpoints can be found within archives as well. Zeitlyn argues that “close reading and assiduous research ('mining the archive') allow us to ‘excavate’ hidden or silenced voices" (Zeitlyn 2012:464). He discusses the work of scholars like the Comaroffs who have read “against the grain” of the archives to find additional sources to help interpret the records found in the archives and other scholars like Ann Stoler who read along the grain “to identify the biases and preoccupations of the creators of archived documents” (Zeitlyn 2012:464).

In discussing the work of historical anthropologists, Ann Stoler argues that we need to attend “not only to colonialism's archival content, but also to its particular and sometimes peculiar form” (Stoler 2002:157). Brian Axel
also argues that “this attention to the interrelation of form and content redescribes the notion of bringing an ethnographic sensibility to an archival object” (Axel 2002:14). Archives need to be approached from an ethnographic viewpoint, rather than assuming that archives are repositories of historical facts that can be accessed by researchers, archives need to be seen as a particular type of colonial artifact.

In discussing the trajectory of scholarship in historical anthropology, Brian Axel argues that "we must be careful to regard archival documents not as repositories of facts of the past but as complexly constituted instances of discourse that produce their objects as real, that is, as existing prior to and outside discourse" (Axel 2002:13-14). This can also be seen in examples of archives of historical language documentation projects, the language is made into an object or artifact through the creation of dictionaries and grammars and then once placed into an archive it is reified even further gaining greater authority and permanence. Therefore, in addition to an expanded view of what language is or what content should be archived, attention to what form that should take so as not to objectify and freeze a living, changing language into a
historical object.

Yet despite these problems with archives and language archiving in particular there are some tribes that are finding valuable information about their languages which are no longer being spoken. One example in particular is the archived collection of linguist J.P. Harrington’s field notes. Harrington’s notes provide extensive documentation of many California and other native languages. Though somewhat typical of salvage ethnography or linguistics (and focused on collecting information for the typical grammar and dictionary), Harrington’s obsessive preoccupation with collecting linguistic data makes his papers fairly extraordinary. Though posing many difficulties for both scholars and tribal members working with his records, they nevertheless provide a great deal of linguistic information that is not recorded or available anywhere else (Anderton 1991; Golla 1991).

In the next two chapters I will discuss the documentation of the Navajo language in more detail. This documentation started out as a New Deal project and Robert W. Young, an anthropology student at University of New Mexico, was asked to help on the project. Young later became an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as a Navajo language
specialist and after retiring from the BIA became a linguistics professor at the University of New Mexico working as co-director with Bernard Spolsky of the Navajo Reading Study Program (Iverson 1994:269). He also completed several Navajo Dictionaries in his long career, including the impressive 1490 page Analytical Lexicon of Navajo.

Much of the research for this project was based on Robert W. Young’s archival papers housed at the Center for Southwest Research. For this project, I attempted to read along the grain, as suggested by Ann Stoler, to look for biases, agendas, and ideologies that Young brought to his linguistic work as an anthropology student and employee of the BIA. In the next chapter I will describe a little bit of the historic context for the documentation project as a part of the New Deal before looking in detail at the New Deal Navajo linguistics and language documentation.
Chapter 3 - The New Deal

The New Deal brought new energy, new resources, and new people to the Navajo reservation. In his construction of what has since been called the Indian New Deal, John Collier was able to direct funds from many of the general recovery programs to native groups. Collier, a passionate reformer, used this turbulent and creative period of policy changes to reform the Bureau of Indian Affair’s relationship with native tribes.

Collier aimed to chart a bold new course. To heighten the novelty of his ideas, he contrasted it with previous policies, which he depicted as being uniformly assimilationist. Collier argued that native groups had a valuable communal quality that was missing in white Westernized individuality and, therefore, native cultures and religions needed to be preserved. He also wanted native groups to begin taking over some of the internal governmental responsibilities being handled by superintendents and BIA personnel.

Collier was not wholly successful in these goals and despite his lofty ideals, his programs had very mixed results. In general Collier left a very mixed legacy. While many appreciated the changes that he brought to the BIA,
others see him as continuing paternalistic policies and programs under a new guise. In this chapter, I will discuss a little about the New Deal in general and then cover the Indian New Deal in more detail. I will discuss the various views of the Indian New Deal addressing both the positive and negative critiques of both Collier and his programs.

The New Deal

The New Deal was a series of programs introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 to try to bring an end to the Great Depression and reform the American economy. When Roosevelt assumed office in 1933, the United States was in desperate economic trouble. Banks were closed, many people had lost their savings, unemployment was running at twenty-five percent and higher and many, many Americans were in despair.

The introduction of New Deal legislation became a very pivotal time in this turbulent period. The first set of legislation enacted in 1933, often referred to as the ‘First New Deal,’ targeted short-term recovery programs for a variety of groups. This legislation included banking reform, emergency relief for those unemployed, and agricultural and industrial reform measures.

The second set of legislation enacted in 1935-1936,
often called the ‘Second New Deal,’ included programs for the support of labor unions, funding of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), creation of the Social Security Act and aid packages to assist farmers. Some of this legislation was judged unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and many projects failed however, those that succeeded have created lasting changes in the structure of the federal government. The New Deal created a series of new state institutions that greatly expanded the role of the federal government.

The New Deal reflected the progressive ideals that Roosevelt and many of his associates held including a commitment to government regulation of the economy. With the New Deal, in its new expanded role, the federal government was now responsible for providing at least minimal assistance to the poor and unemployed, stabilize the banking system, regulate financial markets, subsidize agricultural production, protect the rights of labor unions and build low-income housing, as well as many other things that had not previously been a part of the federal government’s responsibilities.

John Collier

In this general expansion of federal responsibilities and
continuing progressive reform, newly appointed Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), John Collier was also able to bring his progressive ideals to help reform Indian policy. Collier was an energetic reformer. However, he was also a very polarizing character. As Margaret Connell Szasz explains, “during Collier’s decade or so of reform crusading he had made enemies as well as allies. His ideas aroused strong emotion and his extremist techniques encouraged a polarized response one either loved or despised the man” (Szasz 1999:39).

Early in his career Collier worked with immigrant populations in Manhattan but a visit to Taos pueblo began his lifetime interest in Native American communities and his fight for Indian rights. Collier spent five months in Taos, staying with Mabel Dodge Luhan, and found that the people of the Taos Pueblo were living in the type of communal society that he had dreamed of forming among the immigrants he had worked with in Manhattan. He believed that the Pueblo Indians “demonstrated how organized groups of people, joined together in community life, could save mankind from the negative consequences of the industrial age” (Collier 1963:93-94). Collier highly valued this communal aspect of native cultures and saw in some of these
cultural practices a way to mitigate the negative effects of the overly individualistic white industrial society.

This theme is seen throughout much of Collier’s writings. Margaret Connell Szasz summarizes Collier’s argument as “The American way of life, he felt, was based on a ‘shallow and unsophisticated individualism,’ which had allowed itself to become subservient to the goals and means of a technological society. As recently as the 1920s the ‘white race’ had thought that this way of life was unquestionably superior to that of other cultures. The Depression had demonstrated that this was not true, and now in the 1930s Western civilization was on the verge of collapse.”

Further, “Collier urged the nation to turn for advice to the ancient culture of the American Indian” (Szasz 1999:44-45).

Therefore, if native communities were to help reform white society as well then Collier felt that the shift away from policies of assimilation, started with the Meriam Report, needed to be accelerated. Collier called for native communities to have the rights of religious and cultural freedom and above all to stop the allotment process started with the 1887 Dawes act. Collier wanted native communities to be able to maintain what he conceived to be their
communal land holdings, which happened to correspond to reservations, and use these as the basis of new economic opportunities.

In addition, he wanted to help tribes begin to manage their own internal political and economic affairs. With his appointment by President Roosevelt as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Collier’s role as an outside critic changed drastically. When Collier first took office his stated objectives included “economic rehabilitation of the Indians, principally on the land; organization of the Indian tribes for managing their own affairs; and civil and cultural freedom for the Indians” (Collier 1963:173).

These goals then guided Collier’s first major piece of legislation called the Wheeler-Howard Act, introduced in early 1934. In addition to being a rather radical piece of legislation, Collier in an unprecedented move also held regional meetings called regional congresses with the tribes to explain the provisions of his bill and receive their comments. Prior to Collier, tribes were rarely involved in any kind of decision making on a federal level. This legislation which after much revision by Congress was passed as the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) and its implementation in native communities of many of the New
Deal emergency funding programs became known as the Indian New Deal.

**The Indian New Deal**

As soon as Collier took office he began looking for ways that Roosevelt’s New Deal programs could be utilized to help native communities. The first thing Collier asked for was that the CCC establish a separate program for Indians. This was approved and the Indian Emergency Conservation Work (IECW) program was started. Between 1933 and 1942, approximately 85,000 Indians worked for the IECW (Philp 1981:122). As Margaret Connell Szasz points out this program “provided a tremendous opportunity for vocational training. IECW workers learned to be carpenters, truck drivers, radio operators, mechanics, surveyors, and engineers” (Szasz 1999:42).

Collier also got native communities involved in the Civil Works Administration (CWA) project which employed 4,423 Native Americans during the winter of 1934 to repair government and tribal buildings other tasks included clerical work, road construction and the making of clothes (Philp 1981:124). Collier also used money from the Public Works Administration (PWA) to build day schools, hospitals, roads, irrigation projects, and sewer systems on some
reservations. In addition, this program helped to promote Indian arts and crafts by constructing several museums for the demonstration and marketing of Indian products (Philp 1981:125).

Collier also made use of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration (NYA) programs with the WPA employing over 10,700 Native Americans annually on projects such as indexing and filing documents for the bureau while young Natives were allowed six dollars a month to help pay for clothing, school supplies and lunches at day schools (Philp 1981:125).

And finally, Collier was able to negotiate the use of the Resettlement Administration's (RA) program of crop loans, drought relief, and subsistence grants for native communities (Dinwoodie 1986). Later RA program funds further assisted native communities by spending over $1.3 million for projects such as the development of canning kitchens, root cellars, sewing centers, and low-cost housing (Philp 1981:125-126).

This New Deal emergency funding had a tremendous impact on reservation communities and tremendously increased the BIA’s role in helping native tribes by making funds nearly equal to the Bureau’s yearly operating budget available
"The combined funds of the WPA, the PWA, and the CCC provided jobs as well as job training, income, and vast improvements on the reservations, not only in construction of buildings and roads but in conservation of land, streams, and forests" (Szasz 1999).

In addition to gaining access to many of the New Deal emergency funding programs Collier also crafted legislation that he hoped would help tribes to become economically self-sufficient and allow some measure of self-government. He introduced the Wheeler-Howard bill in February 1934. The first section was named Indian Self-Government and its goal was to prevent further land loss by prohibiting allotment and provide for the renewal of Indian political and social structures destroyed by the Dawes Act. Collier hoped that eventually communities would assume with federal guidance many of the powers that the BIA currently held in relation to administering their internal affairs (Philp 1981:141).

The second section of the bill was entitled, Special Education for Indians. This section represented Collier’s desire to preserve native cultures and values. The aim of this section was “to promote the study of Indian civilization” and instructed boarding school staffs to prepare courses in Native American history, arts and crafts
and even courses dealing with problems of native self-government (Philp 1981:141-142).

The third section of the bill which contained the most controversial aspects, created procedures to consolidate allotted and heirship lands. Collier hoped this would allow communities to put together enough land to function as viable economic resources for community use (Philp 1981:142). The last section of the Wheeler-Howard bill, established a federal court of Indian affairs.

However, because of the many controversial sections, the bill was completely redrafted, the first and fourth sections were removed entirely and in the end the bill bore little resemblance to Collier’s original legislation. Regardless the bill was signed by President Roosevelt on June 18, 1934 and became known as the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). Though not exactly what Collier wanted, the act was a milestone in federal Indian policy.

The IRA stopped allotment and authorized funds to purchase land for native communities. Funds were also authorized to help tribes organize chartered Indian corporations and a revolving credit fund was established to promote economic development among tribes that chose to incorporate. Charters of incorporation were granted to
tribes who adopted them that gave them the right to purchase, own, manage, operate, or dispose of their property. All tribes were empowered and encouraged to adopt constitutions and by-laws for their own self government as approved by a majority of the adult members of the tribe. These constitutions were meant not to create separate sovereign nations but to create a subnational system of tribes with their own democratic governments that could interface with the US federal government. Funds were also made available for native children who desired special vocational or trade school education. Civil Service requirements for positions in the Indian Service were waived for Native Americans.

This act also empowered the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations concerning range conservation and stock carrying capacity of reservation range lands (Kelly 1970:166). The IRA is generally considered to have been an imperfect product that was not able to meet the diverse needs of the many different tribes it applied to. Some see the IRA as nothing more than a continuation of assimilation and government paternalism, while others see it as a flawed attempt to offer tribes a chance at self-determination.

In addition, Collier also instituted educational reforms
on the reservations as a part of his New Deal policies. He wanted to replace boarding schools with local day schools and he put Willard Beatty, who was a proponent of continuing progressive reforms in education, in charge of Indian education. Beatty believed that native students could better learn the mechanical skills of literacy, reading and writing, in their own languages. These skills could then be transferred to English literacy as they were subsequently taught the English language. Therefore, Beatty set up programs to develop alphabets and pedagogical materials such as primers and dictionaries in native languages. For the Navajo project Beatty contracted linguist J.P. Harrington who engaged as his assistant Robert W. Young. This New Deal project began Young’s lifetime involvement with the Navajo language and its documentation.

**Opinions on Collier and his work**

There are many contradictory views on both Collier and his Indian New Deal. Even while proposing and implementing his policies and legislation there was a great deal of controversy and conflicting opinions. While many were excited by Collier’s views and his policy changes others opposed his views. For example, Navajo J.C. Morgan opposed
Collier’s appointment claiming that Collier “wanted to keep Indians 'in the blanket' by encouraging native dances and traditions instead of educating his people in a modern way of life” (Parman 1976:28). Since that time historians have continued to debate everything from the merits of Collier’s policies to his negative personality traits.

Positive views of Collier are often based on his opposition to earlier policies of allotment and assimilation and his support of cultural pluralism. As Donald Parman explains, "the central theme of Collier's policies was an uncompromising rejection of past efforts to assimilate Indians into white society. As commissioner, Collier sought to carry out a philosophy of cultural pluralism which both tolerated and encouraged Indians to be Indians" (Parman 1976:xi).

Others saw in Collier’s New Deal legislation an attempt to offer more authority and self-determination to tribes in political and economic spheres. As Dalia Mitchel states, “the New Dealers recast Indian tribes as groups with political and economic autonomy over their reservations and worked to grant them more authority over their economic, social, cultural, and political affairs. This endeavor became known as the 'Indian New Deal'” (Mitchell 2007:4).
Kenneth Philp asserts, "the major thrust of the IRA was to encourage the process of tribal self-government" (Philp 1995:17). Collier also followed up on this goal by involving native groups to a certain extent in decision making by holding regional congresses and even including two Native Americans, Darcy McNickle and Henry Roe Cloud in his administration. Vine Deloria, Jr. describes the IRA by explaining, “under the provisions of this act any tribe or the people of any reservation could organize themselves as a business corporation, adopt a constitution and bylaws, and exercise certain forms of self-government” (Deloria Jr. and Lytle 1984).

Although the IRA was designed to permit tribal governments to engage in some kinds of economic developments and business enterprise, the failure of Congress to appropriate sufficient funds made the economic recovery of the tribes difficult and blunted progress" (Deloria Jr. and Lytle 1984:5). That more benefit did not come from the legislation is attributed to Congress not appropriating sufficient funds to allow for a successful economic recovery on the various reservations. As Philleo Nash explains, Collier “had to push the IRA through a hostile Congress which was not committed to Indian reform”
Others however, saw at least the beginning of economic recovery through native participation in other New Deal programs. Philp explains that Collier’s administration “started economic recovery on reservations by bringing Indians under most of the New Deal relief programs and by creating a separate Indian Civilian Conservation Corps” (Philp 1995:17-18).

One of the main benefits of the IRA was its repeal of the practice of allotment and its attempt to consolidate tribal land holdings. As Philp explains, “the IRA was designed to protect and increase the amount of land set aside for Indian homelands. It ended future land allotment, extended trust restrictions on Indian land until otherwise directed by Congress, permitted the voluntary exchange of restricted allotments and heirship land to consolidate checkerboard reservations, and restored to tribal ownership remaining surplus land created by the Dawes Act” (Philp 1995:17). E. Reeseman Fryer asserts that “because of the IRA and John Collier, tribal lands are not longer being lost by the process of allotment. The majority of the tribes are self-governing, and while functioning with varying degrees of friction, each tribe has kept its
community intact. These communities were held intact and strengthened as long as John Collier was commissioner" (Philp 1995:87).

Benjamin Reifel commends Collier for several improvements, "speaking of the benefits of the Indian Reorganization Act, we now have more young men and women in universities and colleges. . . Conditions have improved. Tribal councils have been organized. . . Conditions are better from the standpoint of health, from the standpoint of food getting into the families' mouths, and from the standpoint of getting a little better education" (Philp 1995:55,57,58). Donald Parman also attributes improvements to health and living conditions to Collier’s policies, "The New Deal launched a variety of major programs on the Navajo reservation to alleviated poverty, disease, and other afflictions affecting the tribe in the 1930s" (Parman 1976:3).

Others attribute the existence of tribal entities at all after the Dawes Act to Collier’s work. Wilcomb E. Washburn of the Smithsonian Institution maintains, "Collier's work as Commissioner of Indian Affairs is probably the most impressive achievement in the field of applied anthropology that the discipline of anthropology can claim. Collier
reversed a policy of tribal disintegration that had been accepted as a national goal for over one hundred years and established a new political, economic, and social status for America's Indian minority. . . . Collier succeeded in preserving Indian identity from complete absorption in the 'melting pot' by creating a system of autonomous tribal entities within the political and economic superstructure of American society as a whole. He pursued this policy because it offered the best chance of preserving Indian tribal identity: Indian 'grouphood' as he put it" (Philp 1995:29). Washburn further contextualizes Collier's work in comparison to the ideology behind earlier Indian policy. He contends, "The alternative to involving tribes in the context of the American political system was not that they would remain independent nation-states. It was that they would be extinguished entirely. I do not think there would be a single Indian tribe in existence today if it had not been for John Collier and the Indian Reorganization Act” (Philp 1995:104).

Others look to Collier’s stated appreciation of native traditions and customs. Alfonso Ortiz explains, "there are many, including me, that believe the most enduring contribution that the Collier policies made to Indian life,
especially after half a century, was to encourage traditional cultural expression. . . What happened with the Collier New Deal policy was basically to give us breathing room, to let the dancers, let the arts, come back. The arts were not in good shape in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But after the Santa Fe Indian School, through the person of Dorothy Dunn, started encouraging the art program, there was a tremendous efflorescence in Indian art" (Philp 1995:93).

Collier’s support of other cultural and religious traditions has also been appreciated. Dalia Mitchell explains, “Collier was a self-proclaimed cultural pluralist. He wanted to preserve and conserve the cultural and social traditions of Indian tribes and to create on reservations 'civil liberty, including group and cultural religious liberty within a framework of continuing federal protection and assistance.' For Collier, Indian cultural revival was a means of saving America society from what he saw as the ruins of capitalism” (Mitchell 2007:82).

However, while his belief in the religious and cultural freedom of native groups is acknowledged, it’s the framework of continuing federal protection and assistance that many others say undermined Collier’s intentions and
resulted in the IRA being just another phase of assimilation.

Barsh in his special issue of American Indian Quarterly argues that American policy in the twentieth century has not been a series of policy reversals as most scholars claim but rather a consistent effort to gradually assimilate and integrate Indians. He contends, “Progressive-era bureaucrats viewed the subdivision of Indian lands, establishment of tribal governments and corporations, and transfer of federal responsibilities to the states as successive stages of a single policy of gradual integration and assimilation of Indians” (Barsh 1991:1). Barsh and others saw Collier’s policies, not as a reversal of assimilationist policies but merely a different stage or direction of assimilation.

Associated with this view, many others saw too many strings attached to IRA governments to consider them as instruments for self-determination within tribes. As Dave Warren explains, "The political situation that the IRA would institute is a separate American form of government that would allow the experts to come from Washington. If you get in trouble running an IRA government, you are going to have to go to Washington because that is where its
authority comes from. When you have your own authority and your own power, it becomes harder for federal officials to influence what is going on in our council” (Philp 1995:100). As Warren points out, IRA governments were an American form of government. As Mitchell asserts, "by making the tribe the basic unit for political and economic reform, the New Dealers helped sustain 'an essentially artificial institution in Indian life' and failed to recognize the many internal and lasting factions coexisting on reservations. When one adds that in the fifty years prior to the passage of the IRA, government officials had sought to break down tribal organizations, it is not surprising that many Indian groups viewed the tribal governments established under the act as a completely foreign means of organization" (Mitchell 2007:111). Deloria further argues that, "self-government, consequently, has come to mean those forms of government that the federal government deems acceptable and legitimate exercises of political power and that are recognizable by the executive and legislative branches. . . It is crucial to realize at the start that these have not necessarily been the forms of government that the Indian people themselves have demanded or appreciated and are certainly not the kind of government
that most Indians, given a truly free choice in the matter, would have adopted by themselves" (Deloria Jr. and Lytle 1984:18-19).

While Collier called for self-determination and autonomy in political and economic affairs, it was a limited autonomy and self-determination, meant to be exercised within a specific framework allowed by the federal government. Others have seen the federal government’s Indian policy as a means of creating economic dependency rather than autonomy. Richard White shows how in the Navajo case as among other examples, federal policy was extremely coercive and resulted in the destruction of the tribes subsistence abilities. He explains, "coming to the Navajos with a program promising economic rehabilitation, Collier had crippled their way of life and accelerated the onset of dependency. Advocating Indian rule, the Bureau of Indian Affairs instead dictated policy. And in an administration best remembered for its championing of civil and cultural freedom for Indians, the Navajos felt the coercive power of the government to an extent unequaled since the Long Walk. That all of this had been done in the name of conservation did not make it any less disastrous and self serving" (White 1988:313).
Others have criticized Collier as being paternalistic and overbearing. Rupert Costo, president of the American Indian Historical Society asserts, "of late years, somewhat of a cult has developed around John Collier. He is perceived as the hero of Indian rights, a warrior in the struggle for recognition of such rights. He is not our hero. Collier was vindictive and overbearing. He tolerated no dissent, neither from his staff nor from the tribes" (Philp 1995:28). Even historians who otherwise take a very positive of Collier and his work do recognize his shortcomings. As Philp admits, "I would agree, however, that one can criticize Collier for being paternalistic and domineering" (Philp 1995:60).

Though Collier opposed the attitude of Protestant reformers who felt that they knew what was best for native tribes, Collier, a deep believer in conservation, science and progressive ideals, also felt that he knew what was best for native communities and especially in the Navajo case, didn’t often hesitate to impose his will whenever tribes disagreed with him. Philp discusses Collier’s relationship with the Navajo tribe explaining that, "His authoritarian tendencies were best revealed in his posture toward the Navajos. He demanded that they accept day schools when it was obvious they preferred boarding facilities. The Navajos were also compelled
to adopt his conservation program which included rational planning and the careful use of their land. But they showed a violent revulsion at the grass roots level against his approach to resource management which started reservation-wide stock reduction and the fencing off of their grazing areas for soil experimentation. This resistance caused Collier to reorganize the tribal council in order to make it more complaisant, a response similar to the action of Albert B. Fall, the former secretary of the interior" (Philp 1981:240-241).

Though Collier wanted to offer tribes autonomy and self-determination, his deep belief in his ideals and that he truly knew what was best for the various native tribes such as the Navajos caused him to continue to use many of the same tactics that his predecessors had relied on in their relationships with the tribes. As Berkhofer points out, "although Collier sought advice from tribal congresses after drafting his bill, the Indian Reorganization Act, in the end, represented, as did his whole program, his idea of what was best for Indians, and not always what Native Americans in their diverse circumstances thought best for themselves” (Berkhofer 1978:185).

Many critics of Collier consider his work with the Navajo and other tribes as a complete failure, referring to these critics, David H. Dinwoodie explains, “except in the case of the Iroquois, they portray Collier, essentially, as failing the Indian groups by bringing to their immensely
difficult problems a shallow knowledge of Indian life, a rigid and often spiteful manner, and inappropriate and frequently manipulative methods” (Dinwoodie 1986:293).

In general Collier was neither wholly heroic nor fully a villain, but was a flawed man, with conflicting intentions working within the cultural framework of his society. As Alfonso Ortiz explains, Collier “comes across as enigmatic because there is a fundamental contradiction in his thinking and his policies. Collier was content to uphold and celebrate and honor our expressive life, our cultural life, namely, the arts and religion. At the very same time, he was also content to deliver our more fundamental freedoms such as sovereignty and tribal self-government into the hands of the federal government. These two things seemed to work simultaneously in his life, and so both things are true” (Philp 1995:69).

In addition, as David H. Dinwoodie points out, in his work with both native and Hispano groups, Collier assumed a uniformity and cohesiveness to communities that did not exist. Dinwoodie explains, “in disregarding the position of assertive, middle-size stockmen in the Hispano villages, Collier may have mistakenly attributed a uniformity to the communities that was similar to his misperceptions of
tribal cohesiveness” (Dinwoodie 1986:322). In this, Collier’s views were similar to many anthropologists working with native groups who approached their subjects as apriori coherent ethnonational communities. While Collier did manage to make several positive changes such as bringing tribes emergency relief funds available under the New Deal and instituting a respect for native arts, culture and religion, his paternalism and his support of Navajo stock reduction policies have left a very controversial legacy.

Conclusion

In general, the Indian New Deal policies were often contradictory, in part because of the many different people and conflicting agendas that were a part of the legislation. There are some interesting parallels between Collier’s work, particularly with the native language programs, and the Soviet Nativization policies from the same time period. Both the US and the Soviet Union created deliberate language policy in dealing with their native populations that were based on national needs and agendas. Lenore Grenoble explains, "language policy was central to the Soviet planning from the very moment of its foundation. Its significance comes, in large part, from the multi-
lingual nature of the State, which no leader could ignore. Yet the role of language policy was also determined by the government's own aspirations for the nation” (Grenoble 2003:2).

One of these aspirations was the need to raise education levels to enable the country to industrialize. This entailed raising the literacy rates of all citizens which in turn entailed the deliberate development of language as a tool for education. Therefore, ethnographers, linguists and statisticians were sent throughout the Soviet Union to identify, codify and create literary languages for the many indigenous languages living within their borders (Grenoble 2003:39).

In addition, the Soviet Union needed to develop literacy in order to communicate and develop their political ideals. Grenoble argues, "the inability of the Bolsheviks to communicate the political ideals and goals of the Communist Party played a key role in determining the emphasis placed on establishing widespread literacy, a policy decision which at first may seem odd for a country which has just come out of a period of civil war" (Grenoble 2003:37). The US government also worked closely with anthropologists and linguists and under Collier’s administration specifically
developed orthographies and literary languages that could be used within government and education settings. Native languages were used both to help more quickly raise literacy levels and to help lay a foundation for the democratic polities they were trying to create (see chapter 4).

However, the use of native languages and the development of subnational groups were not necessarily the end goal for either nation-state. Teaching students to read in their native language first and a national language subsequently was considered the fastest and easiest way to transition monolingual native speakers to speakers of the national language. In both the countries orthographies for native languages were also developed based on political ideals.

In the US with the Navajo and many other indigenous languages as much of the English alphabet as could be used was incorporated into newly developed native orthographies so that native speakers could more easily transition to English after learning their own language because the alphabet would at least be somewhat familiar. In the Soviet Union at a certain point there was a switch to using the Cyrillic alphabet for native orthographies in order to facilitate the acquisition of Russian (Grenoble 2003:194).
And although Collier’s end goal was a multi-national state, with native communities retaining some of their cultural characteristics to provide a counterpoint to what Collier considered the evils of individualism found in industrialized societies; others in the US government did not share this goal. Those that did not share Collier’s goal more closely resembled the Soviet’s intention that the multiethnic state would just be a stage on the way to state unification. Lenin’s ultimate goal was a unified Communist state. Grenoble explains, "Lenin's nationalities policy would seem to directly contradict that goal. But it seems that Lenin saw this as only an intermediary state that was a necessary prerequisite to reaching the higher, Communist stage of development (Grenoble 2003:35). Whether to function within the in nation-state as subnational groups or be acculturated into the wider national society, literacy and education needed to be advanced and the language policies of the Indian New Deal focused on these aims. Taking a closer look at the Navajo case will illustrate many of these points."
Chapter 4 - New Deal Navajo Linguistics

The New Deal brought new resources, people and commitment to the study and documentation of indigenous languages in the United States. Though just one of many New Deal language programs, the Navajo project, in which new language programs and programs to reduce the number of livestock on the reservation and their ecological impact on the desert environment were being implemented simultaneously, offers an example of how linguistic documentation and language programs can be used to advance political agendas. Robert W. Young was the linguist and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employee responsible for the most comprehensive documentation of the Navajo language. Young began his documentation of Navajo as part of a New Deal project during the 1930s and continued to work on the language and with the tribe throughout his life.

This chapter examines Young’s correspondence and publications to demonstrate that, rather than conceptualizing his work as a politically neutral descriptive project of linguistic documentation, we need to consider the political goals that he was helping to achieve. In his work, Young endeavored to create a standard register of Navajo for use in political and educational
institutions, helped to create and model the federal government’s concept of the ideal modern Navajo citizen, and worked to institute a public sphere of Navajo discourse modeled on, and able to interface with, the American public sphere. Though considered one of the best and most thoroughly documented Native American languages, this chapter shows how language documentation is not simply an apolitical project. Young was working within the political economic realities of his time and while choosing the most sympathetic approach he could we still see major implications from the political agendas of the time. It’s important to realize when we are thinking of revitalization projects in the present and for the future that even language policies that were explicitly oriented to conserve language and culture both intended and affected a great deal of change.

This chapter is a socio-historical study using archival and published sources to explore how Robert Young’s documentation of Navajo contributed to the Indian New Deal’s political and economic agenda for the Navajo reservation. For the archival portion of the research I examined the collection of Robert Young’s papers donated to the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New
Mexico. This collection contains materials written and gathered by Dr. Young. The collection, organized by Young himself, appears somewhat self-effacing and focuses more on the tribe than on himself. Though it documents his work on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) with the Navajo tribe, the collection focuses more on documenting the culture and history of the Navajo in general and their relationship with the United States government through time. Young’s organization of these materials offers a clear narrative of his view of the tumultuous history of Navajo relations with the US government, a view molded by the particular language and political ideologies that Young espoused.

Young’s work with the BIA often directly involved him in many of the turbulent interactions between the federal government and the Navajo tribe, as he was responsible for translating into Navajo federal regulations on range management, educational materials for use in schools, and the documents (such as a constitution and voting regulations) needed to establish a democratic tribal government. As will become clear, Young had a particular language ideology, which I would argue was based on his own institutional background and the hegemonic use of Standard
English in US government and education. His work on Navajo shows his reliance on the assumption that there must be a standard or correct version of a language for use in official settings, and that, although speakers use a variety of registers and a great deal of variation can be found, there is ultimately a correct version or register that needs to be taught in schools and used in public or official settings. As an anthropologist and linguist, Young also valued native languages and cultures, and as an employee of the BIA during the New Deal, Young’s political ideology aligned with Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier’s philosophy of multiculturalism and goals. These goals included creating tribal governments that maintained some aspects of their traditional cultures such as language but were also able to both manage tribal resources and interface with the US federal government. Though he occasionally disagreed with how these new policies were implemented\(^2\), Young was an ardent supporter of the New Deal rhetoric of valuing native languages and culture and the goal of returning some amount of autonomy and self-government to tribes.

For evidence of the political and language ideologies

\(^2\) One such disagreement can be found in Young’s criticism that Collier’s range management plan was rushed
that Young brought to his work, I have examined Young’s publications and the archival documents in his collection. In this article, I examine entries from Young and William Morgan’s dictionaries, articles and reports authored by Young, excerpts from Young’s correspondence with linguist J.P. Harrington, examples from language primers he helped to create, and illustrations from the Navajo language newspaper Young helped establish. While these materials show a sincere effort to maintain Navajo as a viable language and to liberate the tribe from the destructive policies of assimilation by helping them achieve a certain amount of self-government and self-realization, they also show the parallel intention of the BIA during the New Deal era to create a Navajo polity patterned after the American government. This closely follows the pattern of the development of standardized or national languages among other post-colonial societies. Though often represented as being the same “natural” process of development for both languages and nations (or sub-nations in cases where sovereignty was not being offered) that the major European nations underwent, in reality, it more closely resembles the efforts made by colonizing governments to use language and should have been implemented over decades rather than years.
policies to shape the types of colonized subjects they wanted to create. The work begun on Navajo during the New Deal by Robert Young and other BIA personnel was deeply rooted in an ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm and brings with it “the structure of sociopolitical relations of domination” (Silverstein 2003:3) that have historically accompanied it.

Robert Young brought to his work with Navajo extraordinary linguistic skills, an intense commitment to the work, and a particular language ideology based on his education and his own cultural background. These ideas about the social and linguistic relationships of language in general and Navajo in particular, together with Young’s moral and political interests as an employee of the BIA, informed Young’s attitudes regarding appropriate language use as part of a documentation project, often determining which aspects of the Navajo language he chose to document and the types of projects he undertook. Joseph Errington, noting the lack of documentation of linguistic variation in his exploration of colonial encounters of linguists and native language speakers, explains that linguistic differences met by colonialists were challenges that were resolved by documenting certain ways of speaking and
ignoring others (Errington 2008:10). As Young encountered linguistic variation among Navajo speakers he chose some ways of speaking over others to include in his dictionaries and primers. His choices for what to document were guided by both his language ideologies and the broader factors and purposes of the BIA’s political, social and economic agenda for the Navajo reservation.

Background

Relations between the Navajo tribe and the US government exhibit a long history of contradictory policies and unstable situations. For several decades at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century the federal government pursued a policy of forced assimilation of Native groups into mainstream American society. Assimilation policies of the time particularly targeted education, and government-run boarding schools were instituted to educate Native children in English and American cultural values. In addition, efforts were made to eradicate the use of Native languages and participation in Native culture. However, by the mid-1920s reform groups, as well as some government officials, began to question the

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At this time the majority of the tribe lived on the Navajo reservation located in the Southwestern United States, covering an area of approximately 25,000 square miles, encompassing parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.
effectiveness of these policies, and in 1928 Congress authorized an extensive study of federal Indian policy. The result, known as the Meriam Report or The Problem of Indian Administration, found that the current assimilation policies were not effective and were instead leading to increased poverty and disease among Native communities (Meriam 1928). Education policies as well as the conditions found at the boarding schools were particularly criticized in the report and extensive suggestions were offered by the progressive educators involved in the study.

While the Meriam Report proposed sweeping changes to education and other federal Indian policies, the administration was slow and reluctant to implement the changes. However, with the election of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933-1945) and his choice of the well known social reformer John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the change in policy away from forced assimilation accelerated. Collier began by introducing the Indian Reorganization Act, also known as the Indian New Deal, which secured various rights for tribes and funding for education, medical care and agricultural assistance. Collier advocated a position of cultural pluralism that accepted and encouraged the use of Native languages and the
practice of Native cultures, and proposed to institute tribal self-government within each tribe (Kunitz 1971; Parman 1976; Young 1977). Though Collier opposed the older policies of forced assimilation, his changes in policy, which encouraged tribes to institute their own tribal governments, did not translate to complete sovereignty or a removal of federal control. Instead, as Young explains,

> It was not with a view to re-establishing the Indian tribes as political enclaves in the nation that the reorganization of tribal government was encouraged — rather, this course was taken in the conviction that social and economic progress on the reservations was possible only if the Indian people themselves were organized to participate in planning and carrying out the essential programs (Young 1975:16).

Collier and the other reformers working in the BIA during the New Deal wanted to involve the tribes in developing and instituting programs that would help overcome the problems on the reservations publicized by the Meriam Report but had no intention of offering the tribes complete sovereignty. As Vine Deloria Jr. Makes clear, there is a major difference between nationhood and self-government. He explains, “nationhood implies a process of decision making that is free and uninhibited within the community, a community in fact that is almost completely insulated from external factors as it considers its possible options. Self-government, on the other hand, implies a recognition
by the superior political power that some measure of local
decision making is necessary but that this process must be
monitored very carefully so that its products are
compatible with the goals and policies of the larger
political power. Self-government implies that the people
were previously incapable of making any decisions for
themselves and are now ready to assume some, but not all,
of the responsibilities of a municipality" (Deloria Jr. and
Lytle 1984:14). The BIA’s view was more of setting the
tribes up as subnational groups, functioning under the
hierarchical control of the US federal government.

Though the idea of setting up a government and involving
tribes in their own administration seems straightforward,
the federal government had very particular requirements for
how participation should work. As Deloria explains, “all
subsequent discussions of self-government by both federal
officials and Indians involved facing the question of
organizing the tribes and reservations to enable them to
carry out certain functions that the federal government
wanted performed in a predetermined manner” (Deloria Jr.
and Lytle 1984:23). Because they did not want tribes to
revert back to their traditional political structures and
were not offering tribes absolute sovereignty, the BIA
under Collier needed to find a new way to incorporate Native groups into the federal political structure. Cities and states were already structured hierarchically under the federal government and organized into tiered polities, each with their own iterations of the three branches of government (Silverstein 2009:9).

A city is not completely autonomous but subject to superseding state and federal laws; however, it has a local government and democratically elected representatives from its constituents, who are given a limited sphere wherein they can govern. Also, states, though not completely autonomous but subject to federal laws and regulations, are also given limited authority to govern and manage local resources. Each level of polity also conforms to a very particular structure mirroring the structure of the three different branches of the federal government. Collier envisioned Native groups as another iteration in that hierarchy, though not a city or a state, at least a polity or subnational group sharing a common government that could fit in the American political structure, under and subordinate to the US federal government.

Though the BIA had a fairly clear idea of the new relationship they wanted to establish with the Navajo and
other tribes, they faced the overwhelming difficulty that the tribes, not sharing the same social and political history as the US, were not conveniently pre-structured in a way that could easily be incorporated into the political hierarchy. The Navajo, with their matrilineal clan system, were particularly foreign to the BIA because they lacked both a centralized form of government and a tradition of broadly coercive laws. Traditionally Navajos were not organized under an agency with centralized authority but by clans with leaders chosen by their prestige and their ability to persuade. When the clans periodically came together they were represented by their leaders, who were either designated peace or war chiefs, depending on their responsibilities (Young 1978:48). Both types of chiefs lacked any kind of coercive power within the tribe or their clans.

This structure caused many difficulties for the US government because they wanted a centralized agency they could deal with that had the power to speak for the tribe in matters dealing with natural resources found on the reservation and with the coercive power to stop members of various clans from conducting raids and moving beyond the reservation boundaries. Continuing conflict resulted in a
military campaign in which the Navajos were forced to surrender and were driven to Fort Carson. Eventually they were returned to their current reservation area, becoming wards of the state, and the federal government began taking a more direct role in the tribal government through Indian Agents employed by the BIA to manage the affairs of the tribe and to appoint chiefs that could help carry out and enforce all the laws and regulations required by the US federal government. Therefore, wanting to return some measure of self-government to the tribe, the BIA under Collier’s Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) first offered the Navajo the opportunity to adopt a constitutional government and, after that was rejected, reorganized the tribal council, to focus on establishing a Navajo polity that could function as a part of the American civic hierarchy.

While the BIA implemented direct changes such as establishing a more centralized version of the tribal council and procedures for democratic elections, they also used language policies to help structure the tribe politically and socially, patterned after the logocracy of the US government (Silverstein 2009:4). The BIA was also

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4 Because of some internal political divisions among the Tribe and the Tribe’s association of the IRA with Collier’s livestock reduction program the measure was rejected by a narrow margin during a general election.
aware of the importance of language in the process by which societies become polities (Silverstein 2009:13), and Young’s work can be seen as an attempt to use language and language policies to form the tribe into a logocratic polity that would fit into the American political structure. Conceived of as helping the Navajo begin on the path of “natural” political and linguistic development followed by other European nations, in actuality, it was merely another iteration of colonial control and the shaping of colonized subjects. Young notes that one of the biggest challenges the BIA faced in involving the Navajo tribe in their own administration was the difficulties in communication, both between the US and the tribe and between the Navajos themselves. Young explained that “prerequisite to effective involvement of many Indian communities, including the Navajo, was the development of improved media for communications between the Federal Government and the tribe, and among tribal members” (Young 1977:460). The improved media of communication that Young is referring to here are both governmental institutions and the need for literacy to create the type of democracy that the BIA envisioned.

Though boarding schools had been in operation for several
decades, only a very small percentage of Navajos spoke English. The BIA, wanting to start immediately implementing their reforms, did not want to wait for English literacy rates to rise. In addition, progressive educators such as Willard Beatty, Collier’s appointee as director of BIA education, believed that learning to read first in their native language would help students to more easily acquire English literacy (Szasz 1972:11). They felt that since reading and writing were mechanical skills, they could be learned earlier and more easily if applied to a language the student already spoke; once these literacy skills were learned, they could then be applied to the learning of English. This, they hoped, would lead over time to higher rates of English literacy among the tribe as well as offer the benefits of literacy in the native language more immediately. Therefore, the BIA saw the Navajo language already shared among the tribe as a tool that could be used to help implement the democratic government system they were trying to create (Young 1977:460).

To help with the goal of teaching literacy skills in Navajo, Willard Beatty asked Native American language specialist and linguist J.P. Harrington to create a simplified orthography for Navajo and to begin publishing
Navajo primers for use in Navajo day schools (Iverson 1994:258). However, Harrington was at the time unfamiliar with Athabaskan languages and therefore enlisted the help of Robert W. Young, a University of New Mexico anthropology student who was interested in Navajo and had begun studying the language. Through his association with Harrington, Young began documenting Navajo and helping to create primers and was eventually hired by the BIA as a Navajo language specialist.

By the 1930's the Navajo reservation was an extremely complex place, socially, economically, and politically. Missionization was well entrenched, resulting in several different denominations of Christian Navajos. In addition, many Navajos had spent several years away from the reservation attending boarding schools. The presence of traders brought a market for wool, rugs and silverwork to the reservation and Navajos were beginning to participate in off reservation wage labor. Also, oil and mining companies were beginning to show interest in the natural resources found within the reservation. With the coming of the New Deal, the massive shifts in federal policy also had an enormous impact on the Navajo reservation. It was in the midst of this very complex and dynamic situation of
political and economic change that Robert Young began his work documenting the Navajo language.

As a student of anthropology, Young was greatly influenced by Boas’ assertion that all languages are equally efficient at communicating ideas (Boas 1911; Boas 1940:206-207). Young’s detailed exploration of the Navajo verb system, his work on Navajo dictionaries and his Analytic Lexicon (Young, 2000 #2005; Young and Morgan 1980; Young and Morgan 1992) show an immense commitment to clarifying the systematic and logical character of Navajo grammar and lexicon. Because of his interest in the language and his belief in the progressive education goals promoted by Collier, Beatty and others in the BIA, Young became an important proponent of Navajo language use in schools and in reservation politics. Young’s documentation work throughout his life was geared towards creating materials for use in these institutions. These, however, were not uniquely Navajo institutions, and Young brought to his work on Navajo his own ideology based on ideas of Standard English use found in contemporary American education and politics.

Early American political speech was conceived of as being practical, rational and simple by virtue of being of the
people and not having complicated caste variations (Cmiel 1992). Some of these ideologies can be seen in Gilbert Tucker’s *North American Review* article defending the value of American English as compared to British English. Tucker explains that “it ought to be remembered also that the ordinary language of the United States includes not greatly more of what may be called caste variations than of those that are attributable to differences of locality” (Tucker 1883:56-57). He also asserts that all spelling differences originating in the US have “been in the direction of simplicity” (Tucker 1883:58). These ideologies have been and continue to be pervasive in American discourse about language and standardization (Silverstein 1987). Young was influenced by this model to create what he considered practical dictionaries and grammars (Szasz 1972:3) of a Standard Navajo language that could be used in practical situations like tribal government and education.

**Young’s Documentation Project and the Creation of a Standard**

The Navajo reservation during the New Deal had diverse categories of persons in a situation of complex and rapidly shifting social practices. While Young would have encountered a complex variety of registers being used, his
documentation does not reflect much of this social diversity. Young’s language ideology was likely influenced by the hegemonic nature of Standard English. Asif Agha explains that registers such as Standard English are “promoted by institutions of such widespread hegemony that they are not ordinarily recognized as distinct registers at all. In a common ideological view, Standard English is just ‘the language,’ the baseline against which all other facts of register differentiation are measured” (Agha 2007:146).

Following this model, Young went out to document ‘the language’ of Navajo, or the standard register corresponding to that of Standard English. However he had difficulties finding this register and instead set about to create it.

Based on his correspondence with Harrington, Young was aware of the linguistic variation and differing groups of speakers on the reservation. Three examples from Harrington’s papers show that Young found and recognized variation in the field, from which he determined descriptive standards. In the first, Young notes an example of the geographical variation found across the reservation. He says, “I notice that around Red Lake the people say ‘aoo’ yes, instead of ‘oou,’ so there is such a word all right” (Harrington n.d.). This type of variation does show
up to a small extent in his documentation. The two
pronunciations for the word yes, mentioned above, and the
variation in the pronunciation of the word snow, zas and
yas, are among the few regional variations included in his
dictionaries. Many other regional differences both
mentioned in his correspondence with Harrington and those
still evident today found across the reservation were left
out.

In the next example, Young encounters examples of
variation in the pronunciation of certain affixes where
nixi- becomes nehe- and -koh becomes -hoh. In Young’s
explanation to Harrington these pronunciation differences
are determined to simply be the result of “careless
speakers” such as “school kids” and Young picks which
pronunciation he believes is “correct” (Harrington n.d.).
Young’s explanation to Harrington points to a particular
social category of person, that of “school kids” and points
to Young’s awareness that registers were associated with
different categories of person and that different groups of
speakers on the reservation spoke Navajo in different ways.
However, Standard English is generally not exemplified by
carelessly speaking school kids; therefore, Young makes the
assumption that their pronunciation is incorrect while the
pronunciation of other speakers, perhaps older members of the tribe or those in leadership positions, are the correct forms. Though Young does not mention the category of person that pronounces it correctly, he assumes that the pronunciation of school kids would be the non-standard form and therefore chooses the alternate form to document. This is also an example of Young’s search for the formal register of Navajo that would correspond with the formal register of English.

In the third example, Young is reporting to Harrington on a conversation with linguistic informant Alfred Sanchez, who was asked by Young how two types of respected Navajo speakers, the “big orator” (exemplified by Chee Dodge) and the “old time man” (Harrington n.d.), would pronounce the voiceless velar spirant that Young describes as either the slightly harder x or the slightly softer h. These two locally recognized categories of speakers are interesting in that they represent two fundamentally different political systems on the reservation. Chee Dodge was bilingual in English and Navajo and was active in the US-implemented tribal government from an early age, having been appointed Chief by the federal government. Though given power by the US government, Dodge still needed to
have the oratorical ability to both persuade the tribe to follow the federal government’s laws and regulations and to explain those laws to the many monolingual Navajo speakers. By contrast, “old-time men” presumably meant respected elders of the tribe, leaders after a more traditional manner. Though the federal government had removed much of the political power of the traditional headmen, replacing them with appointed chiefs, the clan system still existed on the reservation and respected members were still looked up to for their leadership. These were likely the “old-time men” that Young is referring to, respected men who, though having little overt political power, were respected for their oratorical skills and ability to persuade others and settle disputes. Young’s mention of Chee Dodge and an “old time man” shows an awareness of some particularly important local social categories of people on the Navajo reservation, and the variation in their speech.

Young reports that Sanchez says that big orators such as Chee Dodge would make the softer h sound while an “old time man” would make the harder x sound. In response to the dilemma of having both types of speakers use a different form, Young (rather exasperatedly) replies “splendid” (Harrington n.d.). Again, Young is looking for the standard
variety of Navajo. Based on his model of Standard English, Young would expect two different respected political orators to use the same standard register even if their political views differed. However, in this case each speaker has his own pronunciation, perhaps indexing particular registers associated with particular social roles or practices, and Young is unable to find a standard register of Navajo that would correspond to his understanding of Standard English. Young’s dictionary reflects the presence of both sounds but by the 1980 publication he explains that they are two separate phonemes, one found in syllable-initial position and the other in syllable-final position (Young and Morgan 1980:xxiv) rather than how they appear in this example as allophones that may identify a particular political orientation. Presumably, in the examples that Young is asking about (the letter does not specify the words, only the sounds) each type of speaker uses more of either the softer or harder sounds in either position. However, in his dictionary Young leaves out this variation, calling each sound a separate phoneme and chooses to represent the sound graphically as h, what Young considers the softer sound, which according to Alfred Sanchez is more in line with the
pronunciation of the “big orators” such as Chee Dodge or those less traditional leaders that were active in the US instituted tribal government. Here, Young used his own ideology and criteria to determine which version he wants to become the correct form of each word by including only the one pronunciation in his dictionary.

**Spreading Standard Navajo**

In cultures with standardized languages, the very concept of language requires the institutional paraphernalia of standardization such as dictionaries and grammars (Silverstein 2000:123). These then become reference tools for speakers to use as models for correct or standardized speech and allow the standardized form to spread beyond the originating institution. Young’s best known works, created in collaboration with William Morgan, are his dictionaries and Analytical Lexicon. Young and Morgan published four dictionaries together, in 1943 they published *The Navaho Language*, in 1951 *A Vocabulary of Colloquial Navaho*⁵, in 1980 *The Navajo Language*, and in 1992 the *Analytical Lexicon*. Each dictionary had a slightly different purpose and structure. It is in these dictionaries that Young elucidates his model of Standard Navajo, developed out of

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⁵ In his earliest work, Young used the spelling Navaho but later switched to the now standard Navajo.
the variation he found in the field. While proving the logical and systematic nature of Navajo, these dictionaries also function as strong prescriptive works in that they set up standardized pronunciations and grammatical rules for use by Navajo speakers and others learning the language. In the first dictionary, published in 1943, Young makes a point of explaining Navajo’s equal linguistic status with English. "It is quite obvious that the Navaho language is not a primitive tool, inadequate for human expression, but a well developed one, quite as capable of serving the Navaho people as our language is of serving us" (Young and Morgan 1943 [1971]:114). The dictionary’s function as a prescriptive work is illustrated in an account by Anthony Webster published in 2006 of working with Navajo consultants who turn to Young’s dictionary to confirm a particular form (Webster 2006:314), showing that Navajo speakers still use Young and Morgan’s dictionary as a reference tool to look up the ‘correct’ forms of the standard register much as English speakers may use a dictionary to be able to correctly use Standard English.

Young and Morgan’s first dictionary, The Navaho Language, published in 1943, was meant to be a resource for the layperson trying to gain a practical understanding of the
Navajo language. In addition, it was hoped that it would also be of assistance to native draftees and Navajo school children in learning English (Young and Morgan 1943 [1971]:I). The Navajo section entries were organized by verb stem listed under their progressive form, the form indicating a continuing action. The second dictionary, *A Vocabulary of Colloquial Navaho*, published in 1951, was meant to be a companion volume to the first dictionary, which did not contain any example sentences. It was also meant to include idiomatic expressions to help the learner of either language express themselves colloquially (Young and Morgan 1951:I). The dictionary still used Young’s model of standard pronunciation and grammar, though it contained colloquial phrases and was aimed at practical use in everyday situations.

The last two dictionaries that Young and Morgan published represent the culmination of their lives’ linguistic work. These dictionaries exhibit an intricate level of detail, developed from a collection of index cards which listed each word, an example sentence and the appropriate verb root. These cards were then used to construct the dictionaries, one organized by word and the other by the verb root. *The Navajo Language*, published in 1980, lists
full lexical forms in the first person singular mode and gives example sentences. Young explains that the structure used in this version is “of great use to learners of the language, as well as to native speakers searching for an inflectional form of a verb entry” (Young and Morgan 1992:ix). Young pictured Navajo speakers using the dictionary to find the proper or standardized inflectional forms for words much like English speakers use a dictionary to look up the proper spelling or use of a word. The Analytical Lexicon published in 1992 is organized by verb root with the lexical derivatives listed with each root. By the 1990’s, with Navajo being taught in several universities and reservation schools, Young felt that a large enough number “of native speakers have acquired insight into the morphology and structure of the language they speak” (Young and Morgan 1992) and were therefore able to identify verb roots and look them up accordingly.

In addition to constructing a standard model of Navajo morphology and grammar, Young and Morgan’s dictionaries were also influenced by the political expediencies of the time, the main goal being to remove tribes from their dependency on the federal government. They worked to support the federal government’s agenda of creating a
democratic polity on the Navajo reservation that could represent the tribe in local matters and interface with the US government. The standardization of the language was an important part of creating a Navajo polity patterned after the US government. And as the standard was being created so too were the domains in which it was to be used such as various iterations of the Navajo Tribal Council, judicial and executive branches of the tribal government, democratic elections and their paraphernalia as well as the attempt to create and encourage the tribe to adopt a constitution. Creating a Navajo polity was not a seamless transition and Young spent much of his time as a BIA employee teaching and developing these democratic institutions and procedures. This focus also appears in his linguistic work as he makes his dictionaries another resource for information on—and advocacy of—democratic principles. For example, one dictionary entry for the verb ‘to vote’ includes the example sentence Diné ‘atah naaltsoos ‘andayii’niííi t’éiyá bee haz‘áanii t’áá bił yá’ádaat’ééh shi,i,t’áá bí ‘ádeil’i,’ “only people who (have the right to) vote can make the laws they want” (Young and Morgan 1951:347). Also, procedures such as recall elections are described in example sentences like Nahji’ háádoodááigo naaltsoos bee
siłtssoozííí bee n’diijeeh, “a recall election is held for him (lit. a resolution calling for him to step aside is voted on)” (Young and Morgan 1992:267). Even American political parties such as the Republican Party (chi.í.ì yee ’adilohííjí) and Democratic Party (téliíjí) are included as entries (Young and Morgan 1951:387,417). In addition, other imperatives for a functioning democratic society are included as example sentences such as ’ál’chíní hasta.á.’
dego hodees’áago t’áá ’altsó da’óltahgo yá’át’ééh, “all children from six years on up should be in school” (Young and Morgan 1980:450). These entries show how these dictionaries, though seemingly neutral descriptive projects, were also intended to help support the federal government’s objective of setting up a centralized and democratic tribal government on the Navajo reservation based on the American model. This prevalence of terms for all aspects of a democratic government also show Young’s intention that the standard register would be used in these governmental institutions.

The political terminology that developed around the US implemented tribal government was for the most part neologisms. Because of the structure of Navajo, most speakers tend to create new terms through a process of
adding a series of descriptive prefixes onto a stem to describe the new object, role or situation that is being communicated. However, occasionally some loan words are adopted, such as the word Wááshingdoon to represent the US federal government. Other words are then created by adding further description in Navajo. One example is the term for the President of the United States, Wááshingdoon Sitiinii, which literally means “the one who reclines in Washington” (Young and Morgan 1992:1010). Terms for political positions closer to home are formed using the same process without the loan words. For example, the term for the Tribal Council is Béésh Ba.á.h Dah Naaz’ání, which literally means ‘the ones with the badge’. Young explains, “the name reflects the metal badges of office that were formerly used to distinguish council delegates” (Young and Morgan 1980:166). These terms, and several others identifying committee chairs and even some local BIA positions, like the Superintendent and Head of the Branch of Education, are all based on the stem ‘A.,’ which, when combined with the proper theme, etc., means ‘to plan’ or ‘to govern’ (Young and Morgan 1992:21). This is also the root of terms for traditional leaders such as Peace Chief, Hózho.ó.‘jí Naat’ááh and War Chief Hóchxo.ó.‘jí Naat’ááh.
Spreading the Standard and the BIA’s Ideal Modern Navajo

Young also helped in the publication of primers used to teach Navajo literacy in the new day schools that Collier was implementing on the reservation. These primers not only used the standard register of Navajo created by Young, but they also helped in teaching this register to children. In addition, these stories also portray aspects of the BIA’s ideal modern Navajo, an ideal colonial subject and citizen of the new democratic polity, and what Agha has refers to as characterological figures, or images of personhood performed through a semiotic display (Agha 2007:177). Characterological figures link a social persona to a way of speaking and invite role alignment; they link a way of speaking to personal social characteristics. In Young’s work a way of speaking, or the use of the standard register of Navajo, is linked to a particular type of social personhood.

An example is found in the series of Little Herder primers. These bilingual primers were intended to represent Navajo culture in a way that would be more familiar to beginning readers, thereby making the stories easier for them to understand. However, though subjects like sheep herding are represented, the characterological figure that
is created is the BIA’s image of an ideal Navajo, someone who has internalized the government’s conservation policies and consciously abides by them. This is shown in the following excerpt from the primer “Little Herder in Spring”:

Earth, they are saying that you are tired. They are saying that for too long you have given life to the sheep and The People. They are saying that the arroyos are the hurts we have made across your face, that the moccasin track and the sheep trail are the cuts we have given you. Earth, my mother, believe me when I tell you, we are your children, we would not want to hurt you. I am only little. I cannot do big things, but I can do this for you. I can take my sheep to new pastures. I can take them the long way around the arroyos, not through them, when we go to the waterhole. This way their little feet, their sharp pointed feet, will not make the cuts across your face grow deeper. This way the worn pastures can sleep a little and grow new grass again. I can do this to heal your cuts, to make you not so tired. Earth, my mother, do you understand? (Clark 1940:70-75).

This example provides a clear picture of a characterological figure that embodies the BIA’s conservation ideals. Standard Navajo is used and linked to the character of a young girl who grazes her sheep according to approved BIA policy to show care and concern for the land. These types of examples of proper herding practice along with the new regulations limiting herd sizes were meant to replace the local ideal of large herds being a symbol of wealth and prosperity.
This example also shows the extent to which political ideology can be entwined with language programs in that the particulars of the government’s range conservation policy are demonstrated for Navajo children learning Young’s standard register. It shows how these documents can help shape and model the type of colonial subject or citizen of the new democratic polity that the BIA is trying to create. This excerpt is by no means a neutral, apolitical tool for helping children learn to read. Not only were the programs to teach Navajo themselves politically motivated, but even the smallest pieces reflect and advance these social reformist and modernizing goals.

Another important piece of Young and the BIA’s efforts to create a Navajo polity patterned after the US was the publication of the monthly Navajo language newspaper Adahoonilígii, begun in 1945 and distributed out of Window Rock. Young, concerned about the tribe’s lack of access to information, initiated the paper and was its first editor (Szasz 1972; Iverson 1994:265). The newspaper was written in Standard Navajo using the government orthography Young helped to develop and included English translations of all articles. Like the primers, the newspaper also modeled the BIA’s version of an ideal modern Navajo citizen. This is
particularly evident in the 1951 advertisement for the Sherman Institute (a government funded Indian boarding school in California). Photographs of graduates were worked into a collage of successful, educated, modern Navajos working in a variety of jobs in the US wage economy, such as painters, glaziers, bakers and foundry workers (see figure 1).

By incorporating these pictures in a Navajo language newspaper with the intention of being circulated across the reservation, these figures are being linked to particular aspects of Navajo culture such as language and place. The use of Navajo as a written language in the newspaper at this time was quite controversial as many people (missionaries, older BIA employees, and even mission and boarding school educated Navajos) felt that the use of native languages was a hindrance to the educational success of the tribe. However, under Collier’s Indian New Deal, tribes were encouraged to keep some aspects of their heritage and traditions while simultaneously being able to participate in and contribute to the larger U.S. economy. Young expressed both this hope and his confidence that with the Navajo language still in use in the 1970s that “Indian people today have found their place as American citizens in
the national society without losing their identity as Indians” (Young 1975). These pictures represent that ideal of modern Navajos fully integrated into the modern, technological US economy, working as wage laborers with technical skills.

In addition, articles written by members of the tribe on topics of importance to a developing democratic polity such as school attendance and the importance of voting were included in the newspaper. One example, entitled *We Want All Our Children in School* was written by an older gentleman who did not have the opportunity to attend school, he encouraged the building of new schools on the reservation explaining that, “the great amount of gray hair on my head is for naught. There is nothing that I know” (1950). He continued by encouraging the younger generation to get an education. Another example, entitled *Why Is It We Navajos Take So Little Interest in Our Affairs* (1951) encouraged Navajos to become involved and informed and to support their tribal council. These types of articles also serve as instructions and models for members of the democratic polity the BIA is attempting to create.

Even more important than modeling the BIA’s version of the modern Navajo, Young intended this newspaper to be a
vehicle for disseminating information about the war and
government programs and policies to Navajo speakers. This
illustrates Young’s vision of a Navajo public sphere of
communication that functioned similarly to public discourse
and media in the United States. His intention for a
newspaper that contained information on current events,
like the war effort, and proposed government referenda
illustrates Young’s vision of the creation of a nearly
Habermasian public sphere among Navajo speakers. Habermas
points out the importance of the improvements in printing
technologies and the use of newsletters and journals to
circulate information which could then be used in public
debate (Habermas 1989). Young attempted to use his
newspaper to circulate information he considered relevant
to the Navajo public he was trying to form. In particular,
Young used the publishing of government referenda that
Navajos would be expected to vote on as a way to circulate
information for public debate before elections.

Though Young tried to institute a Navajo version of a
public sphere, he faced particular difficulties when it
came to reservation literacy rates and geography. Though
not many people on the reservation could read Navajo at the
time, Young expected that the lack of literacy could be
overcome by those who were literate in Navajo reading the paper and passing the information on to others who could not read (Szasz 1972; Graber 2012) [see similar cases in (Graber 2012)]. However, the immense geographical distance and lack of easy transportation were even bigger problems in trying to circulate information to the entire Navajo tribe and create a Navajo public sphere, and Adahooniılıgii was discontinued in 1957.

In addition the idea of a Habermasian public sphere is founded on culturally specific ideologies of public and private realms and who has access to these various realms that is not universally shared. Many scholars criticize Habermas’ assumption that all people have equal and unfettered access to the public sphere. Many critics have pointed out that Habermas’ public sphere is very narrowly conceived and does not take into account power and coercion which function to limit access of certain groups of people to the public sphere (Crossley and Roberts 2004:10-12). Also, assumed aspects of the public sphere such as its constitution of anonymous private members are also shown not to be universally shared such as in the Pueblo example

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6 The reservation encompassed approximately 25,000 square miles with a population of approximately 40,000 people Young, R., 1958. The Navajo Yearbook: Published Annually as a Manual and Program Planning Guide. Navajo Agency, Window Rock, AZ.
given by Debenport. In this example Debenport shows that unlike the Habermasian idea of print materials being circulated to an anonymous public in the Pueblo community where she works, written material is controlled and disseminated to a public that consists of “known but indirectly addressed individuals” (Debenport 2012:201). These problems, in addition to tribal members’ resistance and the subsequent inconsistencies of federal government policies, undermined many of Collier and Young’s efforts, leaving their vision of a Navajo polity directly patterned after American society only partially fulfilled.

Even Young’s coauthor William Morgan can be seen as a model of the type of Navajo the BIA wanted to promote. David Dinwoodie in his article on William Morgan asks, “Was he a model of his time? Certainly, judging from the situational portrait, Morgan by his typewriter and dictionary reviewing the headlines of the Navajo Newspaper . . . , Collier’s Bureau of Indian Affairs saw in him the possibility of a genuine Navajo public discourse grounded in a modern Navajo language” (Dinwoodie 2003:431). Here Dinwoodie is referring to a picture of William Morgan posing next to his typewriter, the book The Navajo Language and holding a copy of *Adahooniiligii*. This picture embodies
many of the attributes of the model modern Navajo that the
BIA was trying to mold: literate and skilled with language,
reliant on proper mediums of written language like
dictionaries and a participant in creating discourse for
the public sphere by being an editor of Adahooniligii.

Despite the discontinuation of a Navajo language
newspaper, Young continued to work to encourage Navajo
literacy. In his later years he became a proponent of
Navajo literature. Though, as a non-native speaker, Young
did not write any literature, he worked to encourage Navajo
students to write in Navajo. On the occasion of the 35th
anniversary celebration of Navajo language instruction at
the University of New Mexico, Young explained that “the
next step is literature. A language without a literature
has a poor chance of survival. It is very important that we
encourage people who are studying Navajo at the University
to become authors, authors of literature” (Young 2005). As
Agha points out, works of literature are very effective at
transmitting ideas of standard language use because “they
depict icons of personhood linked to speech that invite
forms of role alignment on the part of the reader” (Agha
2007:215). Young clearly envisioned a literature in Navajo
that could further spread the use of Standard Navajo and
even more concretely model the ideal of the modern, educated Navajo for Navajo speakers.
Figure 1
Conclusion

The Indian New Deal introduced a shift in policy from complete forced assimilation to encouraging tribes to form polities that could take a place within the US governmental hierarchy. However, creating the type of polity that would be acceptable to the US government required some extensive changes in the political and social structures of tribes such as the Navajo. Based on the immense importance that language and literacy play in the political ideology of Western governments, the BIA used language programs to help establish a democratic tribal government and society among the Navajo. Robert Young’s documentation project played an important role in this process. His standardization of the language, creation of dictionaries and primers, development of a Navajo language newspaper and encouragement of Navajo literature show the efforts of the federal government to develop and spread these logocratic institutions. These efforts, based in the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm, also show how the post-colonial developments of “nations” or sub-nations do not follow the European model of national and linguistic development but instead are rooted in the colonial process of shaping colonial subjects. These topics will be discussed in the next two
chapters.

Though the BIA had a fairly comprehensive approach to developing this new Navajo polity, there was still a great deal of resistance from many factions of the tribe. Some resisted because they favored the traditional forms of government, others resisted Collier’s plans because they believed that success for the tribe could only be found through more complete assimilation. Also, with the start of World War II, the federal government’s attention shifted to war efforts, and much of the federal funding for these New Deal programs disappeared, to be replaced after the war with new policies geared towards terminating the tribe’s reliance on the federal government and another shift towards discouraging the use of native languages. However, despite the incomplete adoption of the BIA’s vision of a Navajo polity, the New Deal and Robert Young’s subsequent work on language documentation and policies have had a major impact on what has developed into the modern Navajo Nation.
Chapter 5 - Language Documentation Paradigms

The documentation of indigenous languages has been seen as a necessary and significant scholarly work for centuries. Particularly during the era of colonization, non-European languages were identified, recorded and transcribed. Even today the documentation of “endangered” languages is receiving significant funding and attention.\(^7\)\(^8\)

Originally represented as a politically neutral and objective scholarly endeavor, current scholars are now exploring the political expediencies behind language documentation projects and how those agendas determined what was documented and how the documentation was used. As Michael Silverstein explains, "the Enlightenment project of 'saving' language data for generalized humanity's scientific good comes along with a structure of sociopolitical relations of domination of which the very Enlightenment project is part and parcel" (Silverstein 2003:3).

In this dissertation I have discussed two paradigms for the approach to both ethnography and documenting languages, the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm and the

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\(^7\) For example, the NSF/NEH Documenting Endangered Languages grant (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12816)

\(^8\) For example, the documentary about language documentation, "The Linguists"
historical dialectic paradigm. In this chapter I will discuss each of these paradigms in more detail and address how they were developed and the traditions from which they emerged. For the ethnolinguistic paradigm I will also address some of the problematic implications of using this paradigm that have recently been addressed in the literature. For the historical dialectic paradigm I will show how this paradigm offers a better understanding of the process of communication within communities and how language documentation projects approached through the ethnolinguistic perspective have generally been a process of the creation of a standard register that helps to support the structures and relations of domination in colonized societies.

The ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm has been the foundation for the way in which we approach languages and people since the beginning of the colonial era and continues to the current day. This paradigm is based in the idea of primordial ethnonationalism discussed by David Dinwoodie (Dinwoodie 2010:652) that reflects the assumption that the natural and original state of humanity is a collection of groups of ethnolinguistic polities. This
paradigm focuses on language and views language as an object that a homogenous and bounded community possesses. This object, language, is not actually what is being spoken in a community but is an abstracted system of grammar rules. Each group (sometimes called a nation) that resides in a particular area possesses one language, or abstract system of grammar that is uniquely their own. Based on this view, a linguist can go into a community, describe the object and draw a circle on a map around the area where this language resides. This paradigm is based in and developed out of some fundamental Western ideologies and has historically been used to support colonial agendas.

The second paradigm, which is currently emerging, I have called the historical dialectic approach to communication. This approach focuses on communicative practice as it is embedded in a historically emergent social structure rather than an abstracted system of rules. Gumperz explains, "while Saussurian and Chomskyan grammars treat languages as self-contained systems independent of the social worlds in which talk occurs, contemporary linguistic anthropology over the past two decades has provided new, integrated ways of looking at communicative practice" (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:280). By focusing on communicative practice or
Saussure’s *parole*, this approach directly confronts the linguistic variation that is found within every community and makes this variation the focus of study (rather than the part to be cleaned up and explained away). As a result, this approach offers a better understanding of communication within communities and finds that what Saussure considered the messy variation of everyday speech actually indexes and in many cases creates or transforms important social relations.

This paradigm is rooted in Historical Anthropology, a movement which turns away from older ethnographic practices of the production of ethnographic objects created by describing a particular group of people in a particular place and a particular time and focuses on the political, social and cultural processes through which a group has come into being. David Dinwoodie explains that one reason for this is that “historical anthropology has been revitalized in debates over the interpretation of events that look one way from one point of view and another way from another” (Dinwoodie 2002:106). As a result, “historical anthropologists have contributed to such debates by attempting to describe the processes through which historical realities are determined” (Dinwoodie
Historical Anthropology takes a critical look at the fields of both Anthropology and History and shows how the practice of history and anthropology were an integral part of the creation and maintenance of colonial power structures and continue to play an important role in post-colonial nation building projects (Green 2002:809). As Brian Axel explains, “rather than the study of a people in a particular place and at a certain time, what is at stake in historical anthropology is explaining the production of a people, and the production of space and time” (Axel 2002:3). Historical Anthropology throws out the assumption long held under the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm that there are primordial groups or nations and instead turns its attention to the historical processes that created these groups.

In addition this change in how language documentation projects are viewed is partly a result of a shift in the language ideology of linguistic anthropologists as well as a move to considering the language ideologies of both the speakers and linguists. Introduced by Michael Silverstein in 1979 as the “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived
language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979:193), Judith Irvine defines language ideologies with a more social emphasis as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989:255).

By turning attention to the language ideologies of both the speakers of indigenous or endangered languages and to the linguists, missionaries, anthropologists, etc. that study and document them, new questions about what is being documented and for what purposes are being asked. These questions also point out that neither the current documentation projects nor those of the past are merely neutral, objective descriptions of communication within a community.

The Ethnolinguistic Paradigm

The ethnolinguistic paradigm emerged out of a post-enlightenment language ideology of normative monolingualism. This ideology imagines the world made up of distinct groups that each have their own language and their own territory and is today a foundational ideology of nationalism (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992). Johann Gottfried Herder’s work explicates this ideology particularly clearly. "It is nature which educates
families: the most natural state is, therefore, one nation, an extended family with one national character . . . Nothing, therefore, is more manifestly contrary to the purpose of political government than the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixing of various races and nationalities under one scepter” [Herder quoted in (Bauman and Briggs 2000:184)].

According to Herder a nation must be homogeneous. Diversity is unnatural and dangerous. Unfortunately, homogeneity is not something that human groups regularly achieve. Generally, this homogeneity is an abstraction, based around a particular symbol such as religion or particular cultural practices. Because Herder is German, this homogeneity of one people, or extended family, and one nation also revolves around the idea of just one language (this will be discussed further in the next chapter) and it is in a nation’s language and particularly their national literature that Herder finds the essence of the nation or Volk. Bauman and Briggs explain, "Indeed, in Herder's conception, it is the possession of its own distinctive language that constitutes the touchstone of a people or Volk, the sine qua non of its national identity and spirit" (Bauman and Briggs 2000:173).
The need for a language to serve as an object that is emblematic of a people or Volk was supported through the development of the modern study of linguistics. In delineating the object of study for linguistics Saussure separated the concept of langue or the structure of language from and the concept of parole or what could be considered speech or language behavior and emphasized that linguistics’ proper object of study is langue or the structure of language. Out of this division then came the field of formal linguistics, which follows Saussure’s admonition to study the structure of language.

One of the main proponents of formal linguistics is Chomsky, who like Saussure also distinguishes between language structure and use through his use of the terms competence and performance. Chomsky’s approach to formal linguistics focuses on grammar or what is traditionally considered the account of competence (Chomsky 1966:10). Furthermore Chomsky explains, “a generative grammar (that is, an explicit grammar that makes no appeal to the reader’s ‘faculté de langage’ but rather attempts to incorporate the mechanisms of this faculty) is a system of rules that relate signals to semantic interpretations of these signals. It is descriptively adequate to the extent
that this pairing corresponds to the competence of the idealized speaker-hearer” (Chomsky 1966:12).

This approach focuses solely on the structure of language by using abstract idealized sentences that conform to or are generated by the proposed system of rules. These sentences are the decontextualized forms that are normally described in traditional grammars (Hanks 1989:97). All aspects of the social context of language are ignored or avoided by positing idealized speakers and hearers and idealized sentences that are never impacted by the performance factors of speech or context. This ideal speaker-hearer and his language can then become a symbol for a cohesive and bounded group/nation and a model for all the less than ideal speakers within the group.

This ethnolinguistic paradigm of mapping languages and the idea of languages being emblematic of their speakers is often found in the literature advocating the documentation of endangered languages. A current and very clear example of this paradigm is found in the book Vanishing Voices (Nettle and Romaine 2000).

This book takes the one to one association of language and territory one step further by tying language directly to the biome of a group’s territory and creating an
ecological metaphor that suggests that saving endangered languages will also save endangered species and environments. While Nettle and Romaine recognize the model of a centralized nation-state, based around one language as a European ideology that was exported throughout the world and not an accurate reflection of the current linguistic situation, they still champion the one people (though not state), one language, one territory model as being the primordial and natural state of linguistic equilibrium in the world.

Nettle and Romaine point to Papua New Guinea as being a more natural state of linguistic affairs and showing less corruption by European linguistic complexity. They explain that the pattern of diversity found there can be considered “primordial, by which we meant it is close to what we would expect of language in its natural state” (Nettle and Romaine 2000:80).

They then construct an ideal model of the Paleolithic era where linguistic equilibrium was ensured by the egalitarian nature of the various separate and bounded hunter-gatherer groups, small primordial ethnonations, living in their own environmental and linguistic niches though also interacting with nearby groups. This Edenic equilibrium was lost with
the Neolithic introduction of agriculture and resultant structural inequalities among the different groups that was further compounded by the industrial revolution.

This sets up the model of one small (egalitarian) group with one language and one territory as the lost ideal that we need to some extent recapture to save both linguistic and ecological diversity. This concern for the loss of both linguistic and ecological diversity is laudable however the use of this paradigm brings with it “the structure of sociopolitical relations of domination” (Silverstein 2003:3) that have historically accompanied it.

The expectation of one people, one language and one territory and the use of this ethnolinguistic paradigm when confronted with linguistic diversity was particularly clear in colonial contexts where we can now see how this paradigm was used to support a colonial agenda. This ideology about language was often used to help colonial governments identify units for colonial administration and in effect ended up creating ethnonational groups. Kuipers explains, “from the colonial government's perspective, the goal of language study was to develop a way for administrators effectively to communicate with their people so that they could effectively keep order; and secondarily, to use the
local languages as a means of identifying 'rational' units for administrative structure” (Kuipers 1998:10).

Though many colonial governments after identifying these linguistic units then attempted to extinguish the linguistic diversity in favor of shifting all colonial subjects to using the colonizers language for administrative convenience, other colonial governments saw the use of indigenous languages as a convenient way to maintain boundaries between colonizers and the colonized. Van der Bersselar discusses the example of the colonial support of the Igbo language in what is today Nigeria. Though the colonizers depended on African clerks who were fluent in English, the colonial government decided that the main ethnic languages of the area should be developed and Africans should be educated in these languages instead of English. This decision was a way to discourage Africans from thinking of themselves as British citizens. It was feared that by teaching English native Africans would come to expect jobs in the colonial government and a higher status. Rather than encourage Africans to become “imitation Europeans” vernacular languages were taught in order to establish and maintain a hierarchy of colonial society (van den Bersselaar 2000:126).
Irving and Gal also offer an excellent example of how European colonizers used the ethnolinguistic paradigm to help them understand and organize the territories they were attempting to administer and also offered justification for the goals of colonialism. In this example, Irving and Gal explore the colonial mapping project of the languages spoken in Senegal. They explain that despite the colonizers expectations of simple groups each with one simple language, multilingualism and complex sociolinguistic systems that indexed political and religious relationships were actually the norm. Therefore, when the Europeans came across situations where the language of the aristocracy or the political elite differed from others in the area they had to choose which language to put on their map, because according to their paradigm there could only be one per territory.

In the case in Senegal, the language mapping project became a way for the Europeans to unravel the supposed history of conquest and to figure out which natural monolingual group belonged in each area (Irvine and Gal 2000:53). The colonizers then used this approach to support and justify their presence there. Irving and Gal explain,

“To produce this representation, the cartographers had to ignore the multilingualism that characterized
indigenous political life in the southern regions. But doing away with indigenous political institutions was the ultimate purpose anyway. Since the French colonizers' conception of regional history was that the Sereer had been enslaved and tyrannized by Wolof and/or Manding aristocrats and Muslim clerics, France would be justified in overthrowing these oppressors and substituting French rule” (Irvine and Gal 2000:53).

Irving and Gal’s research here illustrates how colonizers used this paradigm to both interpret the diversity they found and justify and further their own interests.

The linguistic anthropologist, Joseph Errington, also explores colonial encounters of linguists and native language speakers by looking at the linguistic documentation produced. He particularly notes the lack of documentation of linguistic variation.

“Such linguistic differences, always facts of social life, were encountered by colonialists as challenges which they dealt with by selecting some ways of speaking as their objects of description, while ignoring others. The ways they chose to make one way of speaking stand for many was always shaped by broader factors and purposes, allowing questions to be posed about what guided their strategies of selection, whether they knew it or not. What assumptions, interests, beliefs, and purposes shaped the ways they devised models of speech which could then be used as models for speech?” (Errington 2008:10).

Colonialists saw the linguistic variation they encountered as a challenge, an opportunity to overcome the chaos of the primitive with civilized order. And by allowing the broader purposes of colonialism to shape what they chose to be ‘the
language' for each bounded area they were able insure that their interests were served and supported even at the level of language education and policy. This can also be seen in the inclusion of American political terms and instructions for a functioning democracy in the Navajo language dictionary as well as in the use of soil conservation concepts in pedagogical materials like primers.

Another example of how language policies were developed to support the broader mission of colonialism is discussed in Johannes Fabians research on the use of Swahili in the former Belgian Congo. Fabian explains how though the rhetoric may have been about bringing the benefits of civilization to the natives, on a higher administrative level the real motive for many of the language programs he came across in his research was a growing need for a skilled and moderately literate labor pool and the creation of new markets (Fabian 1986:70). Joel Kuipers also talks about the use of language studies to help develop markets, he explains, “for the British, by contrast, one important goal of language study in colonial India was a kind of 'market research' to better understand, create and shape consumer needs and thus enlarge their markets” (Kuipers 1998:10). Though the ethnolinguistic paradigm may seem
benign on its own, it was developed as a tool for administrating and developing colonial empires and still carries much of its potential for creating and sustaining “the structure of sociopolitical relations of domination” (Silverstein 2003:3).

The Navajo Case

The way linguistic variation was dealt with in the documentation of Navajo provides another example of the use of the ethnolinguistic paradigm in language documentation and colonial programs. The Navajo were and often are perceived as a homogeneous bounded group with one language. In an article about the development of the tribal government Young explains, “although in historic times there was a group of people interrelated by kinship and clan, who shared a common Navajo language and culture, thus comprising a "Navajo Tribe" from one point of view, the emergence of that Tribe as a cooperating political unit is recent” (Young 1972:169). Thus, according to Young and many others the sharing of a common language was as important a component to being considered a unified group or tribe as was kinship, while a unifying political structure was not necessary.

This conception of a Navajo people united by a common
language obscures the variation that was and is inherent in these communities’ communicative practices. In an early article about the Navajo language, Gladys Reichard comments on the amount of linguistic diversity found on the reservation, "there is so much diversity in the Navaho language that, if its distribution were different, we should classify it as dialect. It may indeed transpire that we shall yet do so once we discover the amount and consistency of the diversity“ (Reichard 1945:158). One example, also noted by Young, is the difference in the amount of aspiration given certain stops. Reichard explains,

“There is a great difference in the amount of aspiration used with certain unvoiced stops and affricatives: t, k, ts, tc. This is only one phase of the larger problem of Navaho phonetics which may be called the h-problem. There is a continuant, x, and a sound h, each felt to be distinctive by the Navaho themselves. These sounds are articulated with a greater or less degree of aspiration so that it is at times difficult to judge whether or not the aspiration is significant. Certain speakers exaggerate these sounds so that h becomes x, x may even become x, and the stops t, k and affricates, ts and tc, sound like consonant clusters tx, kx, tsx, tcx. Navaho who do not emphasize the breathiness refer to those who do as x-speakers (x da'ání x they say), and mimic them by articulating the affected sounds almost as if they were coughed” (Reichard 1945:159).

This variation was considered a great problem, as Reichard states, enough so to merit its own name, the h-problem,
because it was found all across the reservation and could not be explained as a regional variety. A second example of variation acknowledged by Navajo speakers offered by Reichard was use of zas and yas. “Another way in which they characterize speech is to refer to zas-speakers (zas da'ání), that is, those who use zas for yas, the word for snow” (Reichard 1945:159). Reichard goes on to offer many more examples of variation in all aspects of the language from phonology to grammatical structure. In addition she also refers to several examples of variation in ceremonial performances and customs in different parts of the reservation (Reichard 1945).

Young also found a great deal of diversity as he worked with various native speakers. In a letter dated May 10, 1937, discussing an interlinear translation that he was sending to Harrington for possible inclusion in the primer they were working on, Young explains why he included two different spellings for some words. “One thing you will no doubt notice is the occurrence of two spellings for one word. . . This is not an error, but the word occurs both ways and since it was given to me in both ways I retained it and did not standardize it. I argued with myself over whether I should standardize it or not, and decided to keep
everything just as it was given me” (Harrington n.d.). In another letter from May 23, 1937, Young explains to Harrington the variation he was finding in the use of aspiration. "These aspirations are merely separated one from another by degree of harshness, and it is worthwhile noting that there is no great amount of consistency in their pronunciation amongst the Navajos” (Harrington n.d.). And in a letter from August 28, 1938, Young states, "In reality you would have a hard time to swear whether it is -áih or -éih - some speakers tend to 'áih and some to 'éih, just exactly as in citchaih, citcheih, my grandfather" (Harrington n.d.). Therefore, there are plenty of examples of variation both linguistic and cultural documented on the Navajo reservation, however, what level of difference was needed to consider a faction a separate group is fairly arbitrary and depended on the perception of government agents and what would best serve their goals and interests.

**A historical dialectic Paradigm**

As new scholars are addressing the ways in which the ethnolinguistic paradigm is rooted in Western language ideologies and concepts such as the Herderian idea of language representing the essence of a distinct and bounded ethnocultural group (Moore 2006:302) they are recognizing
the many limitations of this paradigm when it comes to trying to understand how people in communities that speak endangered languages (or any communities at all) actually communicate. As Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz explain,

“We have argued that the view of grammar as a separable system is both empirically untenable and theoretically flawed, in that it builds on an impoverished database. This essentialized notion of language developed out of a historical process that led linguists to disregard the inherent variability of real-life speech communities in order to derive internally consistent rules of syntax. These efforts provided historical justification for national claims to legitimacy, because grammar of the language, defined by abstract Saussurian rules, was taken to be representative of a community as a whole” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:280).

Not only do these documentary products provide an impoverished view of the linguistic resources of a community, their main purpose was generally to justify the political structures being imposed.

The understanding of how various language ideologies affect both the product and process of language documentation calls for a new approach to studying language and communication. This new paradigm, that I call the historical dialectic approach to communication, changes the focus from reifying a language that a pre-conceived community (often more at the level of a linguistic community) is expected to speak to looking at how
communication happens within a historically emergent speech community. This involves taking into consideration the tremendous linguistic variation that any speech community uses in its day to day communications. Using the term sociolinguistics broadly to encompass all research that deals with language and social issues, Kathryn Woolard explains,

“The simplest and yet most important contribution of sociolinguistics to social scientific knowledge is its insistence on recognizing the considerable variation in speech that exists within even the most homogeneous of societies. The second important contribution is the insistence that this variation is neither trivial nor a pale reflection of 'real' language, but that it is systematic and that the systematicity of linguistic variation is an imperative object of study in itself” (Woolard 1985:738).

Researchers turning their attention to the intersection between language and social structures were discovering that the language variation they were finding was in many ways systematic. Variation at times indexes and reproduces particular social relations and at other times transforms those relationships or creates new ones. Attention to these aspects of communication is a major shift from the development of abstract rules of grammar and lists of vocabulary words that was the emphasis under the ethnomlinguistic paradigm.

This new approach emerged from many different schools of
thought that have diverged from a formal linguistics focus on the abstracted grammar systems of langue to a focus on actual speech or parole and how it intersects with culture. Some important changes that have emerged from this divergence from formal linguistics have been in the focus on communication as opposed to ‘language’ or abstracted grammar systems, the consideration of speech within its social framework and how language use has the ability to reproduce, transform or even create social relations. Each of these approaches discussed below, though each with their own shortcomings, have together either helped change our understandings of what language and communication is and how it works or offered new tools for exploring the use of language and communication in everyday life.

Functional linguists, for example, renounce the distinction between competence and performance and the use of abstract idealized sentences. Usage-based theories conceive of linguistic structure or regularity as emerging from language use; they assert that grammar is not prior to speaking but is created by language use (Cumming and Ono; Tomasello 1998; Bybee 2003). As Bybee explains, “what may appear to be a coherent structure created according to some underlying design may in fact be the result of multiple
applications or interactions of simple mechanisms that operate according to local principles and create the seemingly well-planned structure as a consequence” (Bybee and Hopper 2001:10). This process is called grammaticalization. Bybee explicates, “in the process of grammaticization, a frequently used stretch of speech becomes automated as a single processing unit and through further frequent use, takes on a generalized and abstract function” (Bybee 1998:252). Examples of this process in English is the development of the indefinite article a or an from the numeral one and the development of the definite article the out of the demonstrative pronoun that.

This functional approach to linguistics shows a shift in focus from language as an object or structure completely divorced from social and cultural practices to one that sees language as an object that is created and transformed through those practices. Bybee explains, “situations and their participants are also repetitive phenomena, and linguistic routinization is ultimately inseparable from cultural practices in general” (Bybee and Hopper 2001:20). Therefore, functional linguists focus on language use and ‘naturally occurring discourse’ instead of abstracted idealizations of language. Though using speech or
‘naturally occurring discourse,’ the goal is still to explain the structure of language or an abstracted system of grammar. Social categories are not considered and speech behaviors are reduced to frequency and conventionalization (Bybee 2003).

In addition, functional linguists and those working in the tradition of the Prague School have developed a number of ideas that look at information structuring in discourse (both at and above the sentence level) and provide “a detailed view of how information is introduced, maintained, and organized hierarchically in speech, and how in particular, the structure of linguistic form interacts with the flow of information” (Hanks 1989:97). An important concept here is the idea of a text and the need for cohesion as a “necessary though not a sufficient condition for the creation of text” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:298). However, generally in linguistics the only type of cohesion that is discussed has to do with propositional cohesion or cohesion at the level of reference. While functional linguistics focus on the goal of describing the structure of language, other social science approaches to the study of language take as their concern the study of speech or discourse in social contexts.
Conversation analysis is another important approach that takes as its object of study speech in interaction. Conversation analysis developed as a field of study in the 1960s and claims to be an approach that “offered a radically new perspective on social organization that integrated the detail of language structure into the analysis of social process” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990:289-290). As a reaction to the structural linguistics emphasis on the analysis of isolated (often invented) sentences, conversation analysis insists that in human interaction, sentences are never treated as isolated or self-contained units, instead sentences or utterances are forms of action which are embedded within specific contexts and understood from within those contexts (Goodwin and Heritage 1990:287).

In turning its attention to the social and cultural context of interactions, conversation analysis promised new resources for approaching many ethnographic dilemmas of the time. Goodwin asserts that conversation analysis holds the key for including emic analysis within anthropology in a way that will improve the rigor of ethnographic description without being dismissed as nothing but subjective reports. He explains, “in its insistence on demonstrating how proposed categories and participant orientations are
articulated in action, CA directly addresses the issue of describing events from 'the native's' point of view. However, this approach to emic analysis is not based on reports to the anthropologist about categories and appropriate behavior, but instead relies upon the actions of participants themselves in the courses of their social lives” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990:301). However, in practice conversation analysts have turned their attention solely to the organization of “turn-taking as a central phenomenon in its own right” and away from any account of the context in which the interaction is socially situated (Sacks, Schegloff et al. 1974:698).

In describing their research, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, leaders in the field of conversation analysis, remark "for the last half dozen years we have been engaged in research, using tape recordings of natural conversation, that has been increasingly directed to extracting, characterizing, and describing the interrelationships of the various types of sequential organization operative in conversation" (Sacks, Schegloff et al. 1974:698). In part this turn of attention to turn-taking was to be able to find a methodology that while retaining an ability to be context sensitive could
also operate context free. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson explain, “turn-taking seems a basic form of organization for conversation- 'basic', in that it would be invariant to parties, such that whatever variations the parties brought to bear in the conversation would be accommodated without change in the system, and such that it could be selectively and locally affected by social aspects of context. Depiction of an organization for turn-taking should fit the facts of variability by virtue of a design allowing it to be context-sensitive; but it should be cast in a manner that, requiring no reference to any particular context, still captures the most important general properties of conversation” (Sacks, Schegloff et al. 1974:700).

Though beginning to appreciate the importance of social and cultural context, conversation analysis is still influenced by earlier linguistic approaches that attempt to create abstract models and rules that remain uninfluenced by those social and cultural contexts. So though conversation analysis offers an approach that takes into consideration language in use and particularly language in interaction, they do not take into account any socially situated considerations of the interaction and thereby lose the ability to understand either the impact of the social
context on speech or the function of speech in creating and transforming social contexts and relations.

Another approach that explores language variation in an attempt to link language use to a larger social realm is sociolinguistics. Silverstein explains “variation-centered sociolinguistics has studied the covariation of forms of language with context-instantiated forms of social structure” (Silverstein 1998:411). The prototype study is found in the work of William Labov, particularly his research on speech in New York department stores. In this study Labov correlates the sociolinguistic variable of the pronunciation of r’s with social stratification or class. Sociolinguists are also reacting to formal linguists’ exclusion of speech and social behavior from the realm of the scientific study of language. Their main objective is to study speech in social situations. Labov explains his hypothesis for this study as “if any two subgroups of New York City speakers are ranked in a scale of social stratification, then they will be ranked in the same order by their differential use of (r)” (Labov 1972:44).

In discussing the design of his famous study, Labov remarks on the problem of using formal interviews to gather speech data. He argues that speech in a formal interview
setting is very different from the regular vernacular speech used in daily interactions. Labov explains, “one way of controlling for this is to study the subject in his own natural social context - interacting with his family or peer group (Labov, Cohen, Robins, and Lewis 1968). Another way is to observe the public use of language in everyday life apart from any interview situation - to see how people use language in context when there is no explicit observation. This chapter is an account of the systematic use of rapid and anonymous observations in a study of the sociolinguistic structure of the speech community" (Labov 1972:43). This is an important shift from the study of an abstracted standardized form of a language to paying attention to the different ways that language is used in different social situations.

In addition, sociolinguists also take into account larger social contexts. Labov explains, “We can hardly consider the social distribution of language in New York City without encountering the pattern of social stratification which pervades the life of the city” (Labov 1972:44). Sociolinguists also reject the idea of a pre-existing “homogeneous, single-style group who really ‘spoke the language’” and realize instead that “this is the normal
situation – that heterogeneity is not only common, it is the natural result of basic linguistic factors” (Labov 1972:203). However, though sociolinguistics attempts to incorporate a larger sociocultural view for the most part their social analysis is not sufficiently fine grained because they restrict their nonlinguistic categories to large designations such as ethnicity, class, gender, age, etc. In addition, by focusing solely on the effect that social categories have on speech they miss taking into consideration the effect that speech has in creating and transforming those categories.

Another aspect of the institutionally focused sociology of language and its approach to the study of contemporary transformations of linguistic communities has been discussed by Michael Silverstein. In this approach sociologists of language study the distribution of languages and dialects over nation-states and across populations and in relation to social domains (Silverstein 1998:414). Understanding local language communities in the context of larger political, national and international processes is an important concept for considering language use with social and cultural contexts. Silverstein explains, “people within local language communities
actively position themselves with respect to the political orders of contemporary nation-states and more encompassing international political institutions” (Silverstein 1998:414).

However, this approach tends to focus on a “functional comparability at the level of institutional structures in polities over which languages are seen to be distributed” (Silverstein 1998:414). In addition, this approach often conceives of language as a “timeless, essential quality of community membership, notwithstanding changes of practical discursive knowledge and practice of it over time” (Silverstein 1998:414).

The ethnography of speaking as an approach was conceived specifically as a way to study language use within its social and cultural context. Hymes intended for these studies to fill “the gap between what is usually described in grammars, and what is usually described in ethnographies” (Hymes 1962:16). In addition variation was to be addressed by exploring the patterns and functions of language use in a community.

Some of the main work to come out of this approach explored the speech genres of indigenous language communities and linked the use of these speech genres to
social situations. In Joel Sherzer’s book *Kuna Ways of Speaking*, he explains, "the ethnography of speaking is an approach to and perspective on the relationship between language and culture and language and society. It is a description in cultural terms of the patterned uses of language and speech in a particular group, institution, community or society" (Sherzer 1983:11).

In many cases a systematic pattern of language use was what was being sought. In Gary Gossen’s book *Chamulas in the World of the Sun: Time and Space in a Maya Oral Tradition*, he states, "my aim is to present the oral tradition of a contemporary Maya community as a complete information system. That is, all genres as defined by the Chamulas are considered, both in themselves and in relation to the rest of the community's verbal behavior and to its world view" (Gossen 1974:vii). In Bauman and Sherzer’s edited volume *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, they state "our primary motivation in producing the book was to establish the viability and productiveness of the ethnography of speaking program, that is to elucidate the patterns and functions of speaking as a cultural system or as part of cultural systems organized in other terms" (Bauman and Sherzer 1989:xi).
In addition to this systemic patterning of language, its social context and the performance of these speech genres was a primary focus for researchers. Sherzer describes the importance of studying naturally occurring speech within its cultural context. In describing his study, Sherzer states, “analysis is based on naturally occurring speech, observed and recorded in actual contexts and studied in terms of its relationship to these contexts” (Sherzer 1983:10).

Gossen critiques anthropologists and folklorists for approaching aspects of a community’s oral tradition as isolated texts. He argues, “to consider the whole of an oral tradition in addition to its parts requires a contextual orientation to the data. Thus, the function of genres within the social fabric must be explored. Yet folklorists and anthropologists have had a traditional liking for the study of oral tradition as 'item' or isolated text, rather than as 'event' or the performance of texts within specific cultural contexts” (Gossen 1974:viii).

This exploration of the cultural patterning of speech and its social and cultural context required ethnographic research. Bauman and Sherzer explain that in compiling
their collection of essays, “we took it as our task to show that there is pattern, there is systemic coherence, and there is difference in the ways that speaking is organized from one society to another, and that this pattern, this coherence, this difference are to be discovered ethnographically” (Bauman and Sherzer 1989:xi).

However, this approach also is limited by its unexamined assumptions of speech communities, specifically “the assumption that communicative systems are functionally integrated with the social order constituted in material terms” (Dinwoodie 2002:5). This approach acknowledges variation at the level of speech genre but does not explore variation found at more micro levels of communication. In referring to Briggs and Bauman’s discussion of this problem, Dinwoodie explains that “approaches that view genre exclusively as an ‘orderly and ordering principle’ are poorly suited to addressing the ethnographic realities of the present” where not only is there “the presence of ‘disjunction, ambiguity, and general lack of fit’” but also people show great “capacity for surmounting these” (Dinwoodie 2002:7). It is in the communicative work of surmounting these disjunctions and ambiguities that a great deal of culture is expressed and created.
Genre studies have also been an important influence on turning the focus of linguistic anthropologists’ research from language to communicative processes and their social and cultural contexts. Bakhtin elaborates on the idea of speech genres in his essay *The Problem of Speech Genres*. He argues, that language is not made up of grammatical forms but of utterances which are embedded in communicative events and determined by them. He explains,

"Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects—thematic content, style, and compositional structure— are inseparably linked to the whole of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres" (Bakhtin 1986:60).

These stable types of utterances are not made up out of whole cloth by the speaker but are given to or learned by the speaker. Though very flexible and allowable of a great deal of creativity, it is not a completely free combination of linguistic resources as Saussure’s idea of parole would imply. Bakhtin critique’s Saussure’s the chaotic free-for-
all concept of the individual’s speech or parole arguing “thus, Saussure ignores the fact that in addition to forms of language there are also forms of combinations of these forms, that is, he ignores speech genres” (Bakhtin 1986:81). Bakhtin also argues that an utterance cannot be understood apart from its communicative context. All utterances are links “in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations” (Bakhtin 1986:94).

The idea that these genres are culturally organized was taken up by ethnographers of speaking in trying to map out the relevant speech genres for the communities where they worked. Others have also focused on the use of various speech genres in strategic ways to achieve social ends. As Bauman and Briggs explain, genre plays an important role in shaping illocutionary force. Much of the work that has been done on genre shows that “genres are far more than isolated and self-contained bundles of formal features. A shift in genre evokes contrastive communicative functions, participation structures and modes of interpretation” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:63-64). In addition, interactions
usually consist of negotiated changes in genre or situations where features of one genre are imbedded in another.

Another influence on the conceptualization of language variation studies came from the field of literary theory and the approach of narratology. This approach offers a focus on the relationship between the narrated and the narrating realm with attention to the concepts of voice and reported speech (Genette 1980; Genette 1988; Dinwoodie 2002) (Onega and Landa 1996). Dinwoodie explains, “recent work on oral and written literature suggests, indeed, that much of the power of literature resides precisely in its capacity for activating the ‘there-and-then’ in the ‘here-and-now’” (Dinwoodie 2002:32). These concepts are particularly useful in understanding how variation is being used to index or activate some other event or idea. In addition, the concepts of voice as discussed by Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1981 [1953]) and reported speech as discussed by Vološinov (Vološinov 1973) have also offered tools for understanding language variation by focusing on how speakers are able to take speech from one context and insert it into another.

Another important tool for exploring how variation is
used in communication, developed by Silverstein, is the concept of metalanguage and metapragmatics. In his article on metapragmatics, (Silverstein 1993) Silverstein argues that in order to understand discourse, linguists’ scope needs to expand to include a wider range of metalanguage beyond the subset of specific metalinguistic referential content such as verbs of speaking. Silverstein contends that much of the metalinguistic action is actually created through patterns of index that implicitly comments on discourse. This creates a shift in focus from a dialectic between structure and use to one between usage and metalanguage or speech and metaspeech, bringing a focus to the constant information of how to interpret utterances that always implicitly accompanies discourse.

Another area of research that has helped researchers to understand the potential of language to impact social relations is that of the performance-based approach discussed by Bauman and Briggs. They begin their discussion with citing J.L. Austin’s “rejection of an exclusive focus on truth-value semantics in favor of viewing language use as social action that emerges in the ‘total speech act’” as the instigator of the shift from the focus of research on isolated sentences and features to a focus on the total
speech act (Bauman and Briggs 1990:62). Ultimately speech act theory represents the same referential reductionism that it attempted to reject in trying to set up a one to one correlation between the semantic content of explicitly performative verbs and their illocutionary force. However, the idea of how language use can impact social relations was opened up as a focus for research.

The development of a performance based approach shifted the focus “away from study of the formal patterning and symbolic content of texts to the emergence of verbal art in the social interaction between performers and audiences” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:59). This fit in with a growing interest among linguists and anthropologists in indexicality, naturally occurring discourse and exploring language as a heterogenous and multifunctional process. As Bauman explains, performance studies “provides a frame that invites critical reflection on communicative processes” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:60). Indeed a focus on what role these communicative processes can play in social life is an important component of performance based studies. This focus on the social context and the communicative process is an important shift; however, as David Dinwoodie points out, especially for historical narratives, the text of the
performance often has major implications for influencing the context of the performance and the relations between the performers and audiences. He explains, “the activities of performers and audience members can only be approached in the most superficial terms without reference to the narrative scenarios being activated in the performance event” (Dinwoodie 2002:32). Therefore, an approach is needed that focuses on both the performance and the text. This is the focus of the entextualization/contextualization approach.

The approach to the study of entextualization and contextualization is part of a growing movement in linguistic anthropology concerned with analyzing the specifics of language use in relation to the larger social and cultural environment. This concept shows that many times variation is the result of a speaker recontextualizing a text from another domain. The process of entextualization is defined by Bauman as “the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit – a text – that can be lifted out of its interactional setting” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:73). The idea that texts have a particular quality of being extractable or being able to be lifted out of their
contexts is an important aspect of entextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Silverstein 1993; Silverstein and Urban 1996; Urban 1996; Bauman 2004). This quality is important because it allows texts to be made into and treated like objects. Bauman explains, “the process of entextualization, by bounding off a stretch of discourse from its co-text, endowing it with cohesive formal properties, and (often, but not necessarily) rendering it internally coherent, serves to objectify it as a discrete textual unit that can be referred to, described, named, displayed, cited, and otherwise treated as an object” (Bauman 2004:4).

The literature on this approach also characterizes entextualization through the various moments of the process. This includes how texts are made to appear cohesive, how authoritative aspects of a text are foregrounded, and particularly the use of poetics and rhetorical devices in creating both cohesion and imbuing a text with authority (Briggs 1988; Kuipers 1990; Briggs 1994). In addition, exploring the social conditions that make entextualization possible in the first place is characterized as an important part of this approach (Silverstein and Urban 1996). And finally, it is also important to consider what happens to a text following the
entextualization process. Bauman explains, “decontextualization from one social context involves recontextualization in another” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:74). Indeed recontextualization into a new context usually occurs simultaneously with entextualization.

The concept of contextualization involves a shift from reifying the background circumstances surrounding a text or a speech event into “the context,” which then needs to be taken into account or described, to looking at the process of how texts emerge from contexts and how texts become indexically linked to their immediate circumstances of utterance (Bauman and Briggs 1990:66; Kuipers 1990:7).

This shift is important because it is impossible to account for or discuss all aspects of the context of a text or an utterance. Nor is it likely that every aspect of the context surrounding a text or utterance will have equal importance to its production. By reifying the context as an object to be described, we also lose the ability to understand how the participants themselves determine which aspects of the context or the social interaction are relevant. Bauman explains, “contextualization involves an active process of negotiation in which participants reflexively examine the discourse as it is emerging,
embedding assessments of its structure and significance in the speech itself” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:69). In addition switching the focus from a reified context to contextualization allows us to explore the way in which speech is able to both shape its setting and transform social relations in addition to being shaped by those social relations.

This shift from context to contextualization highlights the importance for the entire entextualization/contextualization approach of moving the emphasis from a focus on a product to a focus on the process (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Silverstein explains that the terms entextualization/contextualization “emphasize the processual achievement of relative fixity or stability at some point of interactional time” (Silverstein 1993:7). Bill Hanks also characterizes this emphasis on the process rather than the product by characterizing text, not as a “kind of language, but a way of reading” (Hanks 1989:112).

Focusing on the process of both entextualization and contextualization the goal of this approach is to understand texts in context, to tie language use to larger social issues and thereby be able to say something about the greater social and cultural environment in which
participants exist, including how culture is understood, circulated and passed on across the generations. Proponents of this approach claim that these results are possible because entextualization and contextualization is exactly what all social interaction consists of all the time. Silverstein and Urban assert that the processes of entextualization and contextualization “are the central and ongoing practices within cultural orders” (Silverstein and Urban 1996:1). Bauman declares that the linked processes of decontextualization and recontextualization, have “powerful implications for the conduct of social life” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:61), that they “are ubiquitous in social life, essential mechanisms of social and cultural continuity” (Bauman 2004:8). Silverstein and Urban further explain that entextualization and contextualization is exactly what the “natives” (including us) do. We create through the process of entextualization a seemingly shareable, transmittable object of culture, which can then be passed on, transferred to, or used in other situations (Silverstein and Urban 1996).

And finally, the concept of register is also an important tool for understanding how language variation is an integral part of a communities’ linguistic practice. The
linguistic anthropologist Asif Agha provides a very clear description of registers and how they function within communities. He explains, “all human languages are culturally differentiated into distinct registers of discourse that are associated with particular social practices and categories of persons” (Agha 2007:79). Agha defines register as a “linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices” (Agha 2001:212). He further explains that registers typically have a socially distributed existence over populations, so that all members of a language community are not equally familiar with all of its registers (Agha 2001:212).

“Thus, two members of a language community may both be acquainted with a lexical register, but not have the same degree of competence in its use. Many speakers can recognize certain registers of their language but cannot fully use or interpret them. The existence of registers therefore results not just in the interlinkage of linguistic repertoires and social practices but in the creation of social boundaries within society, partitioning off language users into distinct groups through differential access to particular registers and to the social practices that they mediate; through the ascription of social worth or stigma to particular registers, their usage, or their users; and through the creation and maintenance of asymmetries of power, privilege, and rank as effects dependent on the above processes” (Agha 2001:213-214).
The concept of register offers tools for understanding how language variation is an integral part of social life. Each of these schools of thought have led to new insights about how language is actually used in communication and how language is used to both support and create social structures.

All of these approaches have helped to shift the focus of linguistic anthropologists away from the formal, structural study of language as an object of standardized grammar and lexical terms to the process of communication. A focus on the process of communication brings attention to the social and cultural context of communicative events, how language use creates, maintains and transforms social relations and how language variation functions within this process. These approaches leading to this new focus on the communicative process have been an important part of instigating the shift from an ethnolinguistic or ethnonational paradigm to a historical dialectic paradigm.

Today, some scholars are turning away from an ethnolinguistic or ethnonational ideology of studying language as a homogeneous object possessed by a group of people who are considered inherently or naturally a primordially formed nation or ethnic group and instead
using what I have called the historical dialectic paradigm by turning their attention to both the historical processes that have created linguistic communities and speech communities and the processes of communication that form and transform the social structures and relationships within these groups.

This type of approach can be seen in the examples covered earlier in this chapter of how the ethnolinguistic or ethnonational paradigm was used in colonial encounters. Van der Bersselar’s discussion of the use of indigenous languages to enforce stratification within colonial societies and Irving and Gal’s discussion of colonial language mapping projects in Senegal critique aspects of the ethnonational approach and show the need for a historical dialectic approach by specifically looking at historical situations where ethnic or national groups were created and communication systems were structured through historical, political and social processes. In addition, in his book *Linguistics in a Colonial World*, Errington takes an in depth look at how linguistic policy was used in the creation and maintenance of colonial power. Errington explains that the book “focuses on the ways colonial agents made alien ways of speaking into objects of knowledge, so
that their speakers could be made subjects of colonial power” (Errington 2008:vii). Some examples of the work of other scholars that use the historical dialectic approach but who look at more current situations will be discussed below.

Errington’s work on Indonesian takes a less historical focus but still uses a historical dialectic approach. In his discussion of Indonesian language development he explains, “changes in complex, nuanced patterns of verbal interaction may thus furnish clues to shifting patterns of ethnic and national allegiance, to changing perceptions of social status and role relations, and to emerging communicative needs in new institutional settings. Socially significant descriptions of such variation and change in language reflect on differences between ethnically and socioeconomiclly distinct communities, but they can be based on observed patterns of language use: how people speak in different ways, in different contexts, about different topics, to different speech partners” (Errington 1986:330). Here Errington takes as his focus verbal interactions rather than abstracted grammar rules and takes into account the variation of how people speak in different situations to understand how people are constructing their
ethnic and national identities and constructing their social and political world rather than seeing their national identities as a primordial certainty.

Another Indonesian example is offered by Joel Kuipers in his study of ritual speech on the island of Sumba. As Kuipers explains, a form of ritual speech on the island had recently undergone a substantial shift in both its meaning and its use. In his book Language, Identity, and Marginality in Indonesia, Kuipers examines the historical process of that transformation and marginalization of a once important speech form with particular attention to shifting language ideologies. He argues that the changes he is examining did not begin in the late 1980s but "but had their roots much earlier, with the arrival of Dutch administrators and missionaries in the late nineteenth century. This provided the conditions for dynamic, ideological processes" (Kuipers 1998:xii). In addition, Kuipers points out that language itself is not what it is generally conceived to be under the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm. He explains, "Languages - and the boundaries between them, their dialects, and their styles - are just as much 'imagined' as the 'Imagined Communities' that speak them" (Kuipers 1998:149).
Jan Blommaert’s discussion of the artefactualization of African languages gives another example of anthropological work based in the historical dialectic paradigm. In this article Blommaert discusses how grammatical sketches are made for various African languages which then essentially become the “‘birth certificates’ of a language, since it is the deployment of such mature professional representations of languages that defines them as languages” (Blommaert 2008:291). He also shows how these linguistic products made language into an object or artefact that could be possessed, manipulated or transformed. In addition, “having a grammatical sketch meant that a language became ‘official’, that its existence could no longer be in doubt, and that is could start to be used in language maps, catalogues, and other professional linguistic discourses. It could also start to be used as an element of ethnolinguistic identification, and hence, as an instrument of identification in general: you speak Lingala, ergo you are Congolese” (Blommaert 2008:293).

Paul Kroskrity provides another example in his writings about Arizona Tewa language ideologies. Rather than taking an ethnic group as some type of primordial essence, Kroskrity shows how ethnic identities are formed through
language ideology and language use. He shows how "their 'ceremonial ideology,' centered on the kiva as a key site, constructs kiva speech as a shared linguistic resource, erasing clan and class distinctions in favor of an Arizona Tewa ethnic identity 'diacritically'... different from Hopi, Navajo, or Anglo identities" (Kroskrity 2000:25). In addition, he shows how the native linguist Dozier was influenced by his professional and academic language ideology to misrecognize the complex multilingual and multiethnic situation among the Arizona Tewa speakers. Kroskrity explains, "Dozier's professional ideology limited his interpretive choices: the Arizona Tewas had to be either 'Hopi' or 'Tewa,' although they gave ample evidence, in language ideology and linguistic practice, of being both" (Kroskrity 2000:15-16).

Kroskrity shows that the speech community that he works with is a complex group that is not defined by a single ethnic label or nationality but use the various linguistic resources of Tewa, Hopi and English to position themselves within the complex and changing political-economic environment of the Southwest. Kroskrity even criticizes theorists of ethnic groups and nation-states who consider the possession of a single homogeneous language as the
natural state for ethnic groups or nations rather than as something that is ideologically constructed. He cautions, “by doing so, they fail to investigate the role language ideologies and related linguistic practices play in helping to create the ethnic groups they are trying to analyze” (Kroskrity 2000:26).

Another example is Robert Moore’s work with Wasco-Wishram speakers on the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon. In his article describing a birthday party and a naming ceremony on the Warm Springs reservation, Moore challenges categories such as traditional and authentic. He describes a birthday party celebrated on the 4th of July that would not be considered a traditional or ‘Indian’ activity, yet was “conducted in a way that fits very well with everything we know about ‘traditional’ ceremonialism in relation to ‘traditional’ forms of social organization in this community” (Moore 2006:189). He then describes a naming ceremony that would be considered ideologically ‘Indian’ yet the woman receiving the name “conducts herself in a way that fits very well within what we know about identity politics in wider society, a pattern associated with the professional or ‘white-collar’ class” (Moore 2006:193).

Here Moore challenges the preconceived ideas and
expectations that we may have of the ethnonational Warm Springs community and ties in a historical understanding of family celebrations and ceremonies within the community with the present examples he describes. Thereby showing that what is traditional or authentic is just has historically and dialectically constructed as any other community. In another publication, Moore looks at the people with whom his is working on the Warm Springs reservation as a community undergoing fairly typical processes of language loss. However, Moore shows how even in language obsolescence lexical forms are being objectualized in a particularly Chinookan fashion (Moore 1988). This example shows how under the new language variation paradigm, we can see how native language ideologies continue to operate even in a community undergoing language shift. Rather than perceiving the situation as a language disappearing off a map, and therefore leaving the former speakers and descendants of its speakers lumped into the (perceived) homogeneous group of the majority language speakers, Moore’s research shows how language ideology and linguistic forms continue to be used to shape social situations that are distinctly native in character.
And finally, an example can be seen in David Dinwoodie’s work with the Chilcotin speakers of Nemiah Valley. In his book, *Reserve Memories*, Dinwoodie examines the use of traditional forms of narrative discourse to navigate new political and social circumstances among the Chilcotin speech community in Nemiah Valley. He focuses on “situations and practices in which people shape the present, and in a sense advance themselves, by enveloping the flux of unfolding experience within the frameworks available in memories. These frameworks turn out to be structures of voices, past and present, brought into active relation with one another in narrative practice” (Dinwoodie 2002:8).

In addition to clearly defining the speech community he is working with, Dinwoodie also approaches his subject from a variety of approaches, including historical anthropology. He explains, “and thus in this study each of these approaches has been used to a point. Marxism was used to identify what might be the biggest challenges facing the contemporary community at Nemiah Valley. Historical anthropology, a branch of cultural anthropology, was used to emphasize the extent to which members of the Nemiah Valley Indian Band are defining contemporary reality in
accord with a long-standing cultural tradition. And the ethnography of speaking was used to guide the contextualization of unfolding narrative events" (Dinwoodie 2002:107). Here the focus is on the historical transformation of the Nemiah Valley Chilcotin speakers as Dinwoodie looks at how this speech community uses their experiences from the past, particularly traditional narrative discourse, to give them resources to help them continue to construct their present community.

**Conclusion**

The ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm developed out of the colonial need to impose order and domination on a heterogeneous and complex world and when used today still continues to assert those relations of domination even when not intended by modern linguists. The historical dialectic paradigm offers a new way to approach language documentation that attempts to diverge from the underlying language ideologies that support the imposition of those hierarchical relations of domination by focusing on the complexity and variation found within all speech communities, the historical processes that helped create these communities and exploring how communication processes helps to create, transform and reproduce social relations.
Over the last several decades there has been a definite shift in focus from structural studies of grammar to a focus on the communicative processes within communities. The various approaches which have led to this shift in focus have helped to instigate the historical dialectic paradigm that some scholars are now using in their work. In the next chapter, I take a closer look at the types of language development programs that have been developed under the ideology of the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm.
Chapter 6 - Language Standardization and Nationalization

In the last chapter I discussed how the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm developed out of particular Western ideologies and has historically been used to support colonial and capitalist agendas and further discussed the emerging historical dialectic paradigm. This new paradigm allows researchers to see how linguists working under the ethnonational paradigm in colonial and post colonial situations were not documenting their communities’ language use in all its variety, instead they were abstracting from a few informants’ speech to create a standard language that could then be represented by an abstract list of grammar rules and a lexicon, indeed they were often even creating the ‘nations’ or political groups who would then be represented by that standardized language.

Standardization

The idea of the necessity of a standard register for a language, a correct way of speaking or writing, is rooted in Western language ideologies where national languages each have at least a shared norm for how the language is supposed to be used if not how it is actually used.
However, current researchers have found that standard languages are not actual varieties of language but are better understood as idealizations or ideological objects since they do not conform to the usage of any particular group of speakers (Milroy 2000; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005). Indeed this can be seen in formal linguistics where actual talk is considered such a degenerate form of ideal linguistic competence that its use is rejected in favor of the study of idealized sentences created by linguists (Goodwin and Heritage 1990:285). Michael Silverstein helps to explain how standard languages function as an ideal whether or not people actually speak them by making the distinction between a speech community where members “share a set of norms or regularities for interaction by means of language(s)” and a linguistic community.

“By contrast, a linguistic community, such as the kind we refer to as a culture of standardization, is a group of people who, in their implicit sense of the regularities of linguistic usage, are united in adherence to the idea that there exists a functionally differentiated norm for using their 'language' denotationally (to represent or describe things), the inclusive range of which the best language users are believed to have mastered in the appropriate way" (Silverstein 1987:2).

A linguistic community is not maintained by the actual interactional usage of language as in a speech community but by the allegiance to the idea that there is a correct
or standard way to use their language. All major European national languages have this culture of standardization or allegiance to the idea that there exists a ‘correct’ way to use a language.

However, as Milroy points out the standardization of languages is not a universal process (Milroy 2001:530). He explains that in Europe language standardization developed alongside the standardization of monetary systems, weights and measures, etc. as capitalism and international trade were growing. He challenges the assumption made by many historians of language that the goal of language standardization was literary and about making literature available to a reading public. Instead he claims that "the immediate goals of the process [were] not literary, but economic, commercial and political" (Milroy 2001:535).

The idea that there must be a standard version of national languages is also the product of hegemonic institutions. Silverstein explains, "the existence of Standards is very much a function of having hegemonic institutions, such as those that control writing/printing and reading as channels of exemplary communication with language, the operation of which in a society establishes and maintains the Standard" (Silverstein 1987:2). In
addition the existence of a standard supports and helps to maintain the hegemony and authority of these institutions. Each European national language has hegemonic institutions either directly controlled by the state such as education departments or in the case of France the Académie française or by powerful economic interests such as publishing houses that help to set and maintain the standardized version of the language.

In addition, the existence of a standard which speakers have an allegiance to lends authority to those institutions that use and maintain it and helps to support the hegemony of these institutions and the state under which they function.

In addition, within Western language ideology this whole system is seen as a natural development. Silverstein explains,

"this argument, having naturalized, as it were, the processes of standardization, presents the rise of social phenomena with 'power to command' over language, such as 'government school systems' (and, we might argue, dictionaries that are part of the institutional paraphernalia), as merely the natural, or rational, endpoint in concrete institutional form, of the otherwise timeless forces of denotational optimization. So institutions of standardization are created as merely the endpoints of the natural, evolutionary working of the 'invisible hand,' the better to effectuate what is already going on in more informal, non-institutional terms" (Silverstein 1987:5).
With this ideology of a standard register being an endpoint of a developmental process, language documentation in colonial situations is often seen as “a matter of giving the fruits of Standardization, and its paraphernalia, to the local language” (Silverstein 1987:16). Portrayed as a charitable act of a more advanced culture, in reality it functions more as a coercive means of homogenization and absorption into Western markets.

**Nationalization**

However, rather than being an endpoint of a natural development process, standardized national languages in Europe developed out of a particular historical situation and were motivated by specific political agendas. As Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz explain, “national languages are, in a very real sense, social formations, cultivated by intellectuals in response to the exigencies of nation building” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:275). It is also in this climate of nation building that the science of linguistics has its roots and its charter. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz explain that “elements of what in the twentieth century became structuralist linguistic theory were developed in response to a concern with language as a unifying national symbol” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz
In fact, structural linguistics grew out of the efforts of nineteenth century historical linguists to document the legitimacy of Europe’s newly formed national languages (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:275). This was done through linguistic procedures that divorced words and rules from observable facts of everyday talk and created abstract grammatical structures that appeared stable over time. This essentialized notion of language caused linguists to disregard the inherent variability of real speech communities and provided historical justification of national claims to legitimacy by using these abstracted grammars purged of variation as objects that represented an entire population (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:277-280).

In addition, comparative philologists dissected languages into sound systems and discovered laws and regularities of change within these sound systems. In this way, languages were shown to be related or to have descended from an earlier common ‘ancestor.’ Thus by comparing languages and their sound systems, comparative philologists offered tools that could be used to “excavate the new nation’s ‘origins’ and provide empirical justifications for its claims to legitimacy” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:276-277).
this way the new nation could be represented as a homogenous group with primordial ties despite the actual facts of linguistic, religious or political variation that existed.

In addition, for the development of western democratic nations the concept of the public sphere and citizen’s access to join in rational debate within this sphere has been seen as an important part of national development. Habermas explains, “the bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people’s public use of their reason” (Habermas 1989:27). A shared language becomes an important part of this process of public discussion and argument.

In addition, the standardization of language to be used in print media to circulate important political information is also seen as critical. As Crossley explains, the salons
described by Habermas were an important location for the emergence of a public sphere; however, “equally important were improvements in printing technologies and the emergence of popular newsletters and journals. Newsletters and journals were an important source of information about the world which participants in public debate could take as a basis for their arguments and critiques” (Crossley and Roberts 2004:4). The dissemination of this print information was then an important step in the creation of political subjects. As Debenport explains, “in Habermas’s framework, the circulation of certain types of texts played a central part in creating an informed, rational, anonymous group of readers poised to become ideal political subjects” (Debenport 2012:202-203).

The use of standardized language to both create and represent (or imagine in Benedict Anderson’s terms) also helps to portray a homogenous nation. As Cody explains, "as in Habermas’s public sphere, then, print publication serves as a key engine in the development of mass political subjects; but Anderson pushes his argument about the constitutive role of communication further, suggesting that language itself acquired a new fixity through the forms of objectification engendered by the rise of print technology."
The standardization of languages that accompanied the rise of print capitalism entails, for Anderson, a homogenization of the very means by which national publics are imagined" (Cody 2011:39). The use of print media such as Navajo language newspapers to both represent a homogenous political group and try to construct a Habermasian public sphere of discussion and political action on the Navaho reservation was also attempted by Young and the BIA. Young’s publication of the Navajo language newspaper Adahooniiligii was discussed in chapter four.

This development of a standardized language to represent or construct the idea of a homogeneous group can also be seen in the Navajo case. As Robert Young went in to document the language spoken on the Navajo reservation he distilled it down to an abstract list of rules and vocabulary which he then published in dictionaries and grammars. Though the Navajo were not politically united, they were considered to be their own group or tribe based on linguistic and cultural similarities, even though at European contact they functioned more like heterogeneous aggregates of bands.

Initially Young wanted to create a dictionary organized by word roots. He describes this idea in a letter to
Harrington in 1937. In the letter he criticizes the format of the Franciscan’s dictionary and talks about the complexity of the Navajo tenses. He explains, “to give all this would require pages for every single verb, which is obviously unpractical, so the next best thing is to reduce the language to its fundamental regularities, rules and laws and give only the roots of the verbs with a clear and concise prescription concerning the formation of tense forms and personal forms from these roots” (Harrington n.d.) (letter, March 9, 1937) This is a good example of Young following the Western linguistic tradition of reducing a language to its abstract regularities, expunging the variation of everyday talk and creating an artifact that represents a stable durable language.

Dictionaries then become an important artifact in creating a picture of a stable and homogeneous language that can justify the conception of a collection of communities being considered a group or a nation. In addition, they are also important for maintaining the standard variety, since typically very few if any people actually speak the standard, dictionaries provide a way for speakers to access information about the standard. As Young created his dictionaries he followed a long Western
linguistic tradition. Though he changed some of the ways that parts of speech were represented within the dictionary, he still followed the traditional formula of providing an abstract list of rules and vocabulary fairly closely. He explains, “the work presented herewith is composed of three parts, an outline of Navaho grammar, a Navaho-English vocabulary, and an English-Navaho vocabulary. The various parts of speech have been described along the lines dictated by the language itself, rather than along the conventional lines of English grammatical description, for the two languages have little in common.” (Young and Morgan 1943 [1971]) Here, Young disregards some of the conventions of how parts of speech are generally described based on an English or sometimes Latin model because the structure of Navajo was so completely different. Young introduces new and different parts of speech but despite these innovations he is still creating a reduced and abstracted version of the language, closely following the Western linguistic tradition in form if not to the particulars of the content.

Examples of this process can be seen by exploring the role of language and language standardization in the nationalization efforts of France, the United States and
Germany. In each of these cases a national language was developed to help support the political goals of the literate elite of each state or potential state. Though there were many differences in the way language was viewed and used in each case, it was always used as a deliberate tool for creating a political nation.

**European Examples**

It was the French revolution that introduced the idea that the language makes a nation. As Schiffman explains, during the revolution “national unity meant ‘unity of hearts’ which meant ‘unity of language’” (Schiffman 1996:105). This focus on linguistic unity was rather innovative at the time, however, it was not the native use of French which made one French, but the willingness to acquire the language along with other characteristics that was a requirement for full citizenship in the nation (Hobsbawm 1992:21). The French version of nationhood has sometimes been called the “voluntaristic concept (one chooses one’s nationality)” (Loughlin 2004:9). For the French, the emphasis was on the political formation of the nation through the concept of citizenship (Berger 1997:10). The French language was important administratively as a tool for unifying state communication.
French was also seen as having a special role and ability to communicate the values of humanism and the truths of liberty, science and progress to all potential citizens (Hobsbawm 1992:103; Schiffman 1996:78). Therefore, to become a French citizen and part of the French nation one needed to adopt the standardized national French language in order to more fully support and achieve the values of liberty, science and progress. The corollary to this was that those who spoke non-standard dialects of French or other languages were seen as enemies of the revolution and opposing the humanist values they proclaimed (Schiffman 1996:95,102). This attitude encouraged revolutionary leaders to institute policies to stamp out these other varieties and languages in their view to both protect the values of the revolution and encourage the people to gain the linguistic tools to more fully participate in the nation and its humanistic progress. To this day France has very strong overt policies supporting the use of their national language and a national institution (the Académie française) to help maintain the language.

Like the French case, the use of a common language was deemed necessary for the success of the United States.
However, unlike France, the United States did not begin by instituting overt policies but relied more on subtle covert attitudes towards language use (Schiffman 1996:217). Also, similar to the case of the French revolutionaries seeing themselves and their language as having a special role in spreading the values of humanism, Americans saw themselves as having a special mission to extend the values of democracy to the world. Early Americans were also aware of the need in a democracy for an educated and informed public. As a result, language use and education became important components of national success (Heath 1980:19).

In addition, colonists from dissident religious groups saw the new world as a place where they could found a pure and godly community untainted by the corruption of European society (Gray 1999:28). While the more secular colonists saw America as an opportunity to free themselves from the artifices and false entitlements of the European aristocracy (Gustafson 1992:6). Language also played an important role in this vision because colonists steeped in both a classical and Christian tradition connected political corruption with linguistic corruption. Gustafson explains that this tradition is “why Noah Webster, Thomas Jefferson, and other early Americans welcomed revolutionary
changes that would renovate not only their form of
government but the constitution of the English language”
(Gustafson 1992:8).

To turn away from what were considered the false artifices of the European courts and found a nation on principles of freedom and democracy, early Americans turned away from education in Latin and Greek to emphasize the learning of English. The English language was considered a more practical language that would help colonists develop the practical skills needed for both personal advancement and to develop the new nation (Heath 1980:6). Early American political speech was conceived of as being practical, rational and simple by virtue of being of the people and not having complicated caste variations (Cmiel 1992). Some of these ideologies can be seen in Gilbert Tucker’s North American Review article defending the value of American English as compared to British English. Tucker expresses this ideology when he explains, “it ought to be remembered also that the ordinary language of the United States includes not greatly more of what may be called caste variations than of those that are attributable to differences of locality” (Tucker 1883:56-57).

While French and American nationalism focused more on
creating national language speakers out of their citizens or those living within their state borders, German nationalism focused more on making a nation out of German speakers (Bell 1995:1405). In the German case, nationalism was less focused on the political concept of citizenship like in the French case. Instead German nationalism was based more on the ethnic model, with language, literature, culture and history being the founding concepts of the nation. "The 'Germanic' concept of 'nation' was rather different and was based on the notion of sharing a common linguistic culture (even if this was divided into many mutually incomprehensible dialects)” (Loughlin 2004:9). The reason for this, as Berger explains, is “in the absence of a unified German state and in the face of massive lack of interest in nationalism among the political and social elites in the German lands, culture and history, and not politics, seemed to many writers more promising areas in which to locate national identity” (Berger 2004:26). France already had some amount of political centralization while in the area that would later be nationalized as Germany, there were a great variety of territorial political arrangements (Loughlin 2004) therefore, Germany turned to language and culture as the defining aspects of nationhood.
This idea, that it is the possession of a distinctive language which then becomes the embodiment of a people’s or a Volk’s national spirit and identity owed a great deal to the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder. "Each national group, Herder believed, has a peculiar language which, like every other phase of culture, is a characteristic expression of the national soul" (Ergang 1976:148). In addition, a unique language is so important that a nationality cannot exist without one (Ergang 1976). However, the reliance on language to produce a homogenous community that could fit Herder’s notions of a natural nation still presented a major challenge. What was considered the German speaking lands was actually an extremely large and diverse area that contained speakers of a wide variety of dialects and varieties of German. As Durrell suggests the linguistic diversity of the area was so great that "there is no inherent reason why, given different political developments, three or four standard languages should not have arisen in this area" (Durrell 2002:94).

The idea of a supposed centuries long unity of a German speaking people was a myth used by nationalists as a retrospective justification for political unity (Durrell
2002:96). Because the final stages of the codification of the language didn’t occur till after 1871 and it was with the explicit intent of making the national language into a symbol of unity, Durrell argues that linguistic unity was actually the consequence rather than the cause of political unity (Durrell, 2002 #1134).

However, the idea of a shared standard language was not made up out of nothing. The idea of a widespread standard German was based on the use of a written literary form that was the language of educated literacy throughout the empire (Durrell 2002). Though there was still a great deal of variety in spoken language the written language had already begun to be standardized. This written form was based on the variety used in Luther’s Bible. Because of the prestige of the text and its wide distribution this variety became the model for the standard language. Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several grammarians worked on codifying this variety so that by the time nationalists were looking for symbols of unity there was a fairly standardized literary German that was used and recognized by the literate elite throughout all the lands the nationalists wanted to unify.

Therefore, we see in the nationalization of some of the
major European states the use of language as a key feature. In the French and American case there were strong ideologies and assumptions about their languages and the role they played in defining and creating their nations. In these two cases language was seen as a tool to help unify an existing state into a nation. Learning the standard language was one of the requirements for citizenship in these new nations.

However, in the German case, which came slightly later, we see a turn to a more ethnic/linguistic model of nationalization. Because there was not a pre-existing German state, language was used as a justification for political unity in addition to being used as a tool to create political unity. In general, this linguistic nationalism was a literary concept developed by nationalist intellectuals, those that read and wrote rather than spoke the language (Hobsbawm 1987:57 #127; Hobsbawm 1992).

State Making

The ideology of language making the nation had been set in the French and British and American nationalization processes and could then be used by groups without an existing state structure to justify creating one. As Anthony Smith explains, "the idea that language is, and
ought to be, the basis of politics is a thoroughly European one, even though it has subsequently spread outside Europe" (Smith 1986:145). Because language was seen as a foundational concept for nation-states in Europe, other groups who shared a language could then argue that they were already a nation and deserved their own state. However, as we see in the German case, since language is extremely complex and generally consists of a great deal of variation, it’s actually a myth or an illusion of a primordial unified language which must be created and maintained. This has been most effectively done by developing a national language through creating a standardized variety and imbuing it with prestige and authority. This has important implications for developing nations.

Because of the role that language played in European nationalization, “early sociolinguists focused on the history of their own societies and looked at the development of their own national languages as models for language choice and language planning in emerging nations” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005:272). In addition, these linguists’ work was important because their descriptions of languages, the essentialized notions of abstract
grammatical systems that appear to stay stable over time, were important in developing these myths or illusions of primordial unified languages that are shared by a potential nation.

For emerging nations, it becomes essential to create the illusion of a longstanding homogenous linguistic community through the development of a national language and to create allegiance to the idea of the national language as the linguistic standard by speakers within the new or potential nation. Therefore, the creation of a standard variety or national language becomes an important step in the process of nationalization.

Though the view that language is a unifying symbol that portrays the spirit of a nation is a particularly Western ideology, in today’s globalized world, all nations or aspiring nations must adopt this ideology and develop a national language in order to be seen as legitimate. Haugen explains, “Nation and language have become inextricably intertwined. Every self-respecting nation has to have a language. Not just a medium of communication, a 'vernacular' or a 'dialect', but a fully developed language. Anything less marks it as underdeveloped” (Haugen 1966:927). He then identifies the steps of the selection of
a norm, its codification, elaboration of function and acceptance by the community, required for the development of a standard national language (Haugen 1966).

This process followed by the early European states and the United States has now become the model for all nations despite their cultural or linguistic background. As Haugen’s quote implies, in order to be seen as a legitimate nation or to have a legitimate potential for nationhood there must be a standardized national language. In central Europe, language was used as the criteria to determine the borders of new nation states (Kamusella 2001). However, this was problematic because even in Western Europe truly homogenous monolingual communities with defined borders did not exist. And for many non-western countries a shared language was not a particularly important criterion for nationalism. Smith explains, "outside Europe, language becomes progressively less important, and religion and politics more crucial, for defining the nation" (Smith 1982:146).

However, to gain legitimacy in the eyes of other nations a national language must be created or developed. The case of Indonesian is an interesting example. Unlike a lot of the new nations that followed the German example and used a
common language as a justifying factor for nationhood, Indonesian is unusual in that it lacks a primordial ethnic community (Errington 2000:206). Instead, as Errington describes “Indonesian' was little more than a new name for an artificial, state-supported dialect of administrative Malay” which was then developed into a fully viable national language (Errington 2000:208-209). In this way a very linguistically diverse state was able to gain the legitimacy that a standard national language offered.

**Non-Western States**

However, though many new and non-Western nations have made use of this language ideology in their nation building, it does not mean that they are simply following the same path as the major Western European nations and the United States because this ideology is not natively held but is being imposed from without. Often portrayed as a “natural” path of development, the process of nationalization and language standardization in major European nations was not the result of universal natural process but rather was a result of particular ideologies intersecting with particular historical events. Therefore, new nations in the process of nationalizing cannot be expected to follow the same path because the ideologies and
historical particulars are completely different and could not result in the same outcomes.

As just mentioned the case of Indonesian is an interesting example because it “lacks a primordial ethnic community of native speakers” (Errington 2000:206). However, Errington shows that in Jakarta the language is being developed and “special lexicons are being elaborated as part of a covert move to indirectly legitimize the state and to distinguish its new, yet in some ways traditional, technocratic and bureaucratic elite” (Errington 1986:342). As a new state it needs a national language, yet it is being developed in the context of a highly complex, multilingual situation. Therefore in addition to Indonesian being used as a modern national language is also being developed as “a symbol of something that may be termed an indigenous, Indonesian identity” (Errington 1986:330). Though not overtly linked to a primordial ethnic group the language is being developed as a symbol of a new Indonesian national identity that can subsume the heterogeneous multilingual groups and create the appearance of a homogeneous national identity.

In addition, many of the linguistic resources used in nationalization and even the boundaries of the various
languages and groups are a legacy of colonial rule. The administration units and languages that the European’s “discovered” and developed did not necessarily conform to indigenous ideas of political and community boundaries but were often imposed for the convenience and use of colonial governments as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the results of these colonial decisions continue to have real world political effects. As Blommaert illustrates, the textual artefacts of grammars (generally produced by a European linguist) became "in an almost literal sense the birth certificates of many African languages" (Blommaert 2008:293).

Within Africa, as Blommaert describes, though applicable across the world, a language needed to have a grammatical sketch or this abstracted, standardized description, in order to become “official” and be used in identifying ethnolinguistic groups. Blommaert explains, "Having a grammatical sketch meant that a language became 'official', that its existence could no longer be in doubt, and that is could start to be used in language maps, catalogues, and other professional linguistic discourses. It could also start to be used as an element of ethnolinguistic identification, and hence, as an instrument of
identification in general: you speak Lingala, ergo you are Congolese” (Blommaert 2008:293). Therefore, a person’s identity as well as national citizenship was linked to these abstract and standardized descriptions of “language.”

If someone spoke a language that was not represented by one of these official descriptions their very identity was in question as Blommeart described in cases of asylum applications (Blommaert 2008:293). A group must have the Western language ideology inspired artefacts of a grammar and dictionary (usually produced historically by a missionary or other colonial agent) to be considered as a potential nation. Therefore, any new non-European nations must root their legitimacy within the colonial period rather than forming a nation based on their own criteria and ideologies.

Navajo Example

The Navajo case follows many of the same trajectories of language and nation development as other emerging nations. In the major European nations the development of a standard national language was initiated and shaped by local urban elites. However, in the case of new nations or in colonial encounters, the linguistic and national development was initiated and shaped by outsiders, usually Europeans with
varying levels of help from local elites. This meant that the process was shaped and constrained by Western language ideologies that may or may not have been applicable to communities in the emerging nation.

In addition, in most colonial situations, including the Navajo case, while the colonizing countries considered the natives as ethnic nations and used linguistic and cultural criteria to divide communities up into different units for more easy administration, they were not meant to become sovereign nations like the European nations. Instead they were conceived as something like a sub-nation, having their own particular culture, language and history (therefore, remaining identifiably different from the colonials) but still remaining politically subjugated to the colonizing government.

In many cases language policies and projects were ways of both administering colonial subjects and shaping them into the types of citizens demanded by the colonial governments. This was the case with the development of linguistic resources among the Navajo Tribe as discussed in chapter four. But in addition to the shaping of colonial subjects, the creation of a standardized language for a group is also an important step in the creation of a nation or
subnational ethnic group. Therefore, the development of a standardized form of Navajo that could be used in education and government was an important piece of the creation of a democratic Navajo polity that could function within the US government hierarchy as an ethnic subnation.
Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the creation of the Navajo nation as a democratic polity that could function within the political hierarchy of the United States. I have discussed how the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic ideology, which sees ethnic or other types of groups as having a primordial essence that either is or can be developed into nationhood, has set expectations for seeing the Navajo as an ethnolinguistic group from the beginning of European contact. However, early government agents, missionaries and anthropologists did not find the expected homogeneous national entity when they encountered those they called the Navajos. Indeed, it would be hard to expect to find such a case considering that most ethnographic research began after the incarceration at Bosque Redondo and the return to a reservation under the control of federal Indian agents.

Instead, they found rather heterogeneous bands who did not have a centralized political organization and exhibited a great deal of variation linguistically and culturally although there were many commonalities as well. Because of this, many early government agents and anthropologists saw the Navajo as a potential nation that was not living up to
its full promise, which needed the help of the US government or professional anthropologists to fully develop their ethnonational capacity. Other anthropologists did not see the Navajo as a deficient nation needing tutoring and support, yet they still saw them as an ethno-nation with a primordial integrity.

The development of the Navajo as a subnational polity began in earnest with the Indian New Deal. As part of this new initiative and increased funding, Robert W. Young began a project to document the Navajo language and create pedagogical materials for new readers. One of the main outcomes of this project was the development of a standard Navajo, which while not necessarily used by any actual speakers, could function like other national standard languages as a symbol of a homogeneous ethno-nation. Taught in schools, it also provided a formal register for use in the political sphere as well as in education that paralleled the use of standard or formal English used in official settings. Within this project we can also see efforts to create a democratic polity, a public sphere where political ideas and events could be communicated and discussed and a model of the ideal modern Navajo who could function seamlessly within the US political economy yet
still maintain an ethnic subnational identity.

Because of Robert Young’s work, the Navajo language is one of the best documented indigenous languages in the United States. Robert Young’s lifetime of work with the Navajo tribe is admirable and appreciated by many, many people both on and off the reservation. In analyzing his efforts I do not want to devalue his work in any way, I only want to point out that the direction that was taken was not inevitable and was a concerted effort for change in realms of political organization and language use. In thinking about the social construction of the Navajo nation, Ian Hacking provides a useful schematic. In his discussion of the literature involving arguments of social construction Hacking explains that social constructionists hold that “X [some constructed entity] need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is. X, or X as it is at present is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable” (Hacking 1999:6). This in essence is my claim that the Navajo nation, as it is today, was not inevitable, the Navajos were not a proto-nation who just needed the guidance and development they received from the US federal government to blossom into fully functional nation. Instead, it was a result of a series of actions,
policies and reactions to policies that have led to the current political and economic construction that we see today. If other directions had been pursued, there could have been very different outcomes.

Hacking then goes on to explain that social constructionists often go further and argue that “X is quite bad as it is” and sometimes even that “we would be much better off if X were done away with, or at least radically transformed” (Hacking 1999:6). This is further then I want to take my argument at this point. There are many social, political and language related problems that exist on the reservation today as well as many issues with how the US federal government relates to the Navajo tribal government. These are likely affected or made worse by lingering nineteenth century ideologies.

However, I would not argue that Young’s work or even the political changes that have been made necessarily need to be done away with. In looking back at some of the other directions that were possible at the time (forced assimilation or ethnic cleansing as extreme examples), Young’s work to maintain important elements of Navajo language and culture, even while changing other elements to create easier relations with the US federal government and
wider culture can be seen as one of the best options being considered at the time. In addition, the resulting language documentation is something that has become highly valued by Navajo speakers.

By pointing out that this particular course or current state of affairs is not inevitable, that it was created through the interplay of particular policies, actions and ideologies, I hope to open the discussion to new ideas of changes that can be made, new directions that can be followed in confronting problems today. Just changing our perception away from seeing the reservation population as some kind of homogeneous ethnic group, opens up new possibilities of seeing new categories of people, many of marginal status, who are adversely affected by current policies but often remain invisible under current ideological assumptions.

In addition, looking at language documentation projects in general, Young’s work provides an important cautionary tale that shows how approaching language documentation under the expectation of this 19th century ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm can create many unintended consequences. In the Navajo case we see a very talented linguist who was committed to conserving the Navajo
language and culture, yet despite all this talent and good will the project still both intended and affected change within the community. This project reminds us that we need greater reflexivity in our contemporary documentation and revitalization efforts. We need to be aware of the ideologies that we take with us into a community and be very aware of what type of paradigms we are embracing and working under.

In this dissertation I have discussed how Robert Young’s work on Navajo is an example of the ethnonational or ethnolinguistic paradigm. In addition, I have introduced the historical dialectic paradigm and discussed how this paradigm can overcome some of the shortcomings of the ethnonational paradigm and offer new ways of understanding both language and communities. This paradigm sees aspects such as ethnicity, culture and language as processes that respond to shifting political and economic contexts rather than as natural objects or characteristics of primordial groups. By approaching language documentation and ethnography from this emerging paradigm we can explore the ways that people use language, culture, ethnicity and other reified social science concepts to form and reform themselves as groups and position themselves in their
contemporaneous political economies.

This then opens up a new way to approach both current and historical topics in Navajo studies; seeing ‘the Navajo’ not as a natural primordial society but as a heterogeneous collection of people who have formed themselves into different types of groups over the centuries to respond to different political and economic environments. Indeed the variety and complexity of communicative events and resources can be an excellent way to understand the complex, shifting and transforming communities we continue to see on the Navajo reservation and beyond.
Works Cited


