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Alaska Native Languages in Transition

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Since the earliest days of contact with the civilized world all the Alaska Native languages have undergone continuous decline in terms of viability and number of speakers. Most influential in the decline was the assimilation policy of American education, since 1884 in Alaska which openly suppressed the use in classrooms of any language other than English. Although some Native languages are still dominant in rural areas in spite of the ever-increasing encroachment of English, others are moribund or have long since passed the point of no return. Most of the languages were supposed to follow the same course in due time. The tide has changed, however, since 1970 when bilingual education was launched in the Central Yupik Eskimo area (southwest Alaska), followed within a few years by several other language areas. The bilingual programs together with other language movements outside school have started to counteract the long-standing drift toward the decline of at least some languages. Now is probably the most crucial time for survival of the Alaska Native languages.

This paper is a brief introduction to the changes in the language situation in post-contact Native Alaska and the recent language renaissance with special reference to Central Yupik. [Alaska Native Languages, Eskimo, Central Yupik, Bilingual Education]

INTRODUCTION

Despite the ever-increasing pressure of English, the Native languages are still dominant in rural areas of Alaska. A recent survey by Michael E. Krauss (1974) identifies as many as 20 distinct Native languages in Alaska, the distribution of which is depicted in the great jigsaw of the *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska* map. In view of both history and typology these 20 Native languages may reasonably be classified into three groups:

- (1) Eskimo-Aleut: Inupiaq, Central Yupik, Sugpiaq, Siberian or St. Lawrence Island Yupik (Eskimo); Aleut.
- (2) Tsimshian.
- (3) Na-Dene: Ahtna, Tanaina, Ingalik, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Tanana, Tanacross, Upper Tanana, Han, Kutchin (Athapaskan); Eyak; Tlingit; Haida(?).

There exists a vast variety of language situations in rural Alaska primarily as the

result of different interactions between a Native language and a European language, notably Russian or English. At one end of the spectrum are villages in which more than 90% of the people are basically monolingual in their native language, and at the other extreme are places where most of the people, old and young, are monolingual in English. Some Native languages have retained more or less great viability, while others would have to be classified as moribund.

Krauss [1974] classifies Alaska communities according to their level of Native language use, identifying three types: Type A (most or all of the children speak the language), Type B (some of the children speak the language), and Type C (very few or none of the children speak the language). The number of Native communities according to language use, the Native population, the number of speakers, and basic information about the groupings of the Alaska Native languages are given in the Table below and Appendix. The fullest account of each of the languages, however, will appear in Krauss's forthcoming comprehensive book, *Alaska Native Languages*.

Table 1: Statistics of Alaska Native Languages.

LANGUAGES	POPULATION	NUMBER SPEAKING	NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES*			
			Type A	Type B	Type C	Total
ESKIMO-ALEUT						
ESKIMO						
Inupiaq	11,000	6,000	1	15	16	32
Central Yupik	17,000	15,000	28	21	20	69
Sugpiaq	3,000	1,000	1	1	20	22
St. Lawrence Island Yupik	1,000	1,000	2	0	0	2
Aleut	2,000	700	1	4	8	13
Tsimshian	1,000	200	0	0	2	2
NA-DENE						
Haida(?)	500	100	0	0	3	3
Tlingit	9,000	2,000	0	0	16	16
Eyak	20	3	0	0	1	1
ATHAPASKAN						
Ahtna	600	200	0	0	10	10
Tanaina	900	250	1	0	8	9
Ingalik	300	100	0	0	4	4
Holikachuk	160	25	0	0	1	1
Koyukon	2,200	700	0	0	13	13
Upper Kuskokwim	150	140	2	0	2	4
Tanana	360	100	0	0	2	2
Tanacross	160	120	0	1	2	3
Upper Tanana	300	250	0	2	0	2
Han	60	20	0	0	1	1
Kutchin	1,200	700	2	4	3	9

* Based on Krauss [1974] and Alaska Department of Education [1977].

The following description draws heavily upon its section on the Eskimo-Aleut languages, which Michael E. Krauss generously allowed me to read in manuscript, as well as on his previously published papers [particularly 1973a; 1973b].

This paper is a very brief introduction to the postcontact changes in Alaska Native languages and the current language movements in Alaska which have bilingual education as their nucleus. Major emphasis is placed on Central Yupik. The description remains sketchy and selective mainly because my stays in Alaska have been intermittent and my involvement has been restricted to Eskimo, and that only in its narrow linguistic aspect. Many important problems are left totally untouched, e.g., the financial and administrative aspects of bilingual education.

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES IN THE POSTCONTACT PERIOD

The Russians played a prominent role in the acculturation of the Native peoples in Russian America, as Alaska was once known, and their influence left a deep imprint on the Native cultures. The extent and nature of this influence is indelibly reflected in the vocabularies of the Native languages. The Russian colonization, however, was too limited in space and time to exercise a great effect on the education of the Native children except in the Aleutian Islands and southwest and southeast Alaska. North and interior Alaska were entirely or comparatively free from Russian influence, with the Native languages not being disturbed seriously.

The Russian schools were primarily meant for the few Russian children and the mainly bilingual creoles, but not necessarily excluding Native children [FEDOROVA 1971: 219]. In these schools (though inactive at intervals) the students were instructed in Russian, arithmetic, religion (e.g., Church law), some vocational skills needed in the colony (e.g., nautical and clerical), European housekeeping, and the like. If the reports of G. I. Shelekhov who founded the first Alaskan Russian settlement in 1784 are to be believed, he started a primary class on Kodiak Island and found that "the (Native) children very soon understood their lessons and some of them... learned to talk Russian so well that one could readily understand them" [SHELEKHOV 1978: 39-40]. The schools which served the Natives were mainly of the parochial types, and the teacher was usually a member of the clerical staff. It was among the Aleuts that the Russian educational influence was the greatest. In the Aleutians the Russian school in general "was perceived as benevolent and came to be an integral feature of Aleut culture" [JONES 1969: 97], particularly because the Russian church school was tolerant of the Native culture, a remarkable contrast to the later American government schools.

The Russian Orthodox Church did not try to eliminate the use of the Native language among the people. On the contrary, its utility for missionary purposes was clearly realized. It is probable that attempts to write the Native language were stated by some of the monks in the first ecclesiastical mission which arrived at Kodiak in 1774—the beginning of Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska. When he dropped anchor at Kodiak during his circumnavigation from St. Petersburg to Japan and Russian

America (1803–06), Count Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, intermediary between the Russian government and the Russian American Company, ordered the clergy in the colony to study the Native languages [TIKHMENEV 1920: 101], and he compiled a comparative dictionary—a magnificent achievement considering the times—which contained more than 1,100 words for each of six Alaskan languages: Unalaskan Aleut, Kodiak Sugpiaq, Chugach Sugpiaq, Tanaina, Eyak and Tlingit [REZANOV 1805]. Also at that time, according to an 1807 letter to Father German from Father Gedeon, the latter of whom joined Rezanov's circumnavigation (though not in the same boat) and spent the years 1804–07 on Kodiak Island to make firsthand observations of the conditions in Russian America, there was a plan to draw up a dictionary of the "Aleut" (i.e., Sugpiaq) and a brief sketch of its grammar [PIERCE 1978: 65]. Actually, however, the Native language attainments among the Russian missionaries were not high in general [FEDOROVA 1971: 238], and lack of knowledge of Native languages was in part the cause of the slow progress of evangelization in the areas concerned.

Father Ivan Veniaminov, who opened the church school at Unalaska in 1825, was apparently one of the few notable exceptions. He began preaching his sermons in Aleut a few years after he arrived at Unalaska, thereby creating a base of loyalty to the Russian Orthodox tradition among the Aleuts. In addition to writing a grammar of the Aleut language and an historical and ethnographical description of the islands of the Unalaska district, both of which are most important sources of Aleut information [1840; 1846a], he supposedly devised (or rather completed) the excellent Aleut writing system using Old Church Slavonic characters, which was to be cherished with reverence among the people for a long time to come. In that system the ecclesiastical literature of the Church soon became available. Aleut was the first Alaskan language to be written. Particularly helpful in disseminating literacy as well as in facilitating Veniaminov's linguistic work were the Aleut chief, Ivan Pan'kov and the creole priest, Iakov Netsvietov [BLACK 1977].

In spite of the Russians' outrageous devastation of Aleut land and culture—or perhaps as the utmost possible reaction to it—the Aleuts successfully preserved their own language, although it underwent considerable change from the precontact days due to Russian influence. The fact that Aleut could be written was highly instrumental in its successful preservation. Literacy spread very rapidly among the people (including the old men), who were quick to realize both the practical and the symbolic value of writing [see RANSOM 1945]. In every church school the children were taught to read and write Aleut as well as Russian, although people also learned to write Aleut by self-instruction. As early as 1840, Veniaminov wrote [1840: 322]:

In later time, i.e., since translations in their language appeared, the number of those who can read was greater than one sixth, while there are villages where more than a half of the men are literate, and on one island (St. Paul's) almost all can read....And judging by their avidity to learn one may positively assert that with time all the Aleuts will become literate.

In addition to Aleut and Russian, active participation in church services required the people to read (but not necessarily comprehend) prayers in the Old Slavonic language, which they did somewhat better than in Russian according to a bishop who visited Unalaska in the early 1890s [NICHOLAS 1972:2]. They really were a literate people.

Aleut literacy, which was primarily designed for a religious purpose, now extended to secular uses, e.g., for writing letters, keeping diaries, making community notices, etc. The people took up writing with great veneration and enthusiasm. It was transmitted to the younger generations (especially male) long after the Russian schools ceased to exist, and was perpetuated despite official disapproval in American times. Its still active daily use in the late 1930s is reported by Ransom [1945]. To this widespread literacy can be attributed that pride in the native tongue which is more strongly retained among the present day Aleuts than any other Native group in Alaska. Aleut is a very good example of literacy helping create the prestige of a language and thereby the prestige of the people themselves.

After his transfer to Sitka in 1834, Father Veniaminov studied the language native to the people there, which is Tlingit, and started schools for them as he had done for the Aleuts. Rezanov had earlier forced the clergy to begin compiling a dictionary of the Tlingit language, but to no avail [OKUN' 1951: 213]. Now several gospels, prayers, and masses were translated into the language, and church services in it started in 1849 [TIKHMENEV 1920: 219]. Unlike the Aleuts, however, the conversion of the Tlingit people to Christianity did not progress smoothly nor did literacy apparently take root. On the other hand, according to Veniaminov's report [1972: 46] on the history of the Russian Church in Alaska, the people (particularly the women) learned Russian very quickly.

Sugpiaq was another concern of Father Veniaminov who did not overlook the fact that it has almost exactly the same structure as Aleut [VENIAMINOV 1846b]. Prior to Veniaminov's involvement in Sugpiaq, however, Father Gedeon is said to have translated the Lord's Prayer into that language during his stay at Kodiak [PIERCE 1978: 62]. The first printed book in Sugpiaq that we know of (*Christian Guide Book*) was compiled by Il'ia Tyzhnov whom Veniaminov brought from Irkutsk as his assistant in linguistic work in 1841 [TYZHNOV 1847]. It was followed by a few others of the same kind. Evidence exists that some Kodiak people learned to read and write the native language in Old Slavonic characters [e.g., PETROFF 1884: 25, 42], but Sugpiaq literacy did not flourish as Aleut literacy did. Nor did it stimulate pride of the people in their own language as among the Aleuts. In Sugpiaq villages, however, the Orthodox Church has remained the dominant ecclesiastical power and the use of Russian associated with its activities has persisted to varying degrees depending upon the village.

The Central Yupik area became a new mission field in the 1840s when Father Veniaminov dispatched Father Netsvietov, who had served the Atka church, to Ikogmiut (now Russian Mission). Cyrillic orthography was adapted to Central Yupik as well, and translations of religious literature were prepared for publication.

Many Natives around Nushagak mission were very eager as of 1843 to learn the orthography [TIKHMENEV 1920: 517–518]. The Russian parochial school education established in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area, however, did not enjoy much success in the face of active evangelization by the Moravians and Roman Catholics who came later. It was among the Bristol Bay people that the Russian influence remained longest and most pervasive, although even here literacy did not become widespread.

After the United States' purchase of Alaska in 1867 the Russian Orthodox Church continued to hold services and to operate schools, though often they were in deplorable condition and only poorly run. The Church even increased its efforts by consecrating new churches and opening additional schools, chiefly to resist the Moravian intrusion [FEDOROVA 1971: 241]. This explains at least to some extent why the Russian language did not easily pass into complete disuse in former centers of Russian culture in American Alaska. The first official report on American education in Alaska, which started in the mid-1880s, states that many Aleuts understood Russian and only very few the English language [JACKSON 1886: 28]. The growing opposition raised by the American authorities, however, caused Russian education to decline until in the second decade of the 20th century the last Russian school closed. The flourishing language and literacy of the Aleuts were also discouraged and forbidden by the American schools, which instead forced English upon the school children, although the people strongly resisted the suppression of their native tongue.

Since the transfer of Alaska in 1867, several different American agencies have been involved in the delivery of educational services there—missionary groups, the federal government, incorporated towns, and the territorial/state government. This multiplicity of school systems was and still is the cause of several problems including some in the field of current bilingual education.

Although the federal government traditionally assumed responsibility for the education of Indian children, it completely neglected Alaska from 1867 to 1884. Apart from the Russian schools, Alaska during this period had only a few schools maintained by the Presbyterian Church in the southeast and by the Alaska Commercial Company at Unalaska and on the Pribilof Islands. Except for a Lutheran missionary who arrived at Sitka in the 1850s to serve the Scandinavians in the employ of the Russian American Company and the Church of England which started missionary activity in interior Alaska at Fort Yukon in the 1860s, the Presbyterian Church was the first denomination to enter Alaska (i.e., in 1877) after the purchase and to consider education for the Natives. The most successful of the Presbyterian schools of the day was probably the Sitka Industrial School (now Sheldon Jackson College). The Alaska Commercial Company, which won the seal trade monopoly (1870–90), was required by the terms of the Seal Island lease from the government to maintain a school for a period of not less than eight months a year on each of the Pribilof Islands [ELLIOTT 1884: 108]. Here it was difficult, however, to get the youths of the villages to attend the schools, chiefly due to their concern about losing the Russian

language which was most important to their deep-seated faith in the Russian Orthodox Church [ELLIOTT 1886: 246].

The 1884 Organic Act made Alaska a district with its first civil government and provided for the establishment of schools for all Alaskan children of school age without reference to race. The United States Bureau of Education (Alaska Division) was accordingly authorized to establish government schools and Sheldon Jackson, Superintendent of the Presbyterian missions in Alaska, was appointed in 1885 as General Agent of Education for Alaska. A man of high ideals, but apparently with strong prejudice against Native ways, Jackson was in favor of speedy assimilation of the Natives and firmly believed in replacing Native languages with English. His belief had a long-standing influence upon the policy of the government schools well after his retirement in 1908.

According to Jackson's estimation in 1885, not over 2,000 (mostly white) people out of 36,000 in Alaska spoke English, and that mainly in the three settlements of Juneau, Sitka, and Douglas [JACKSON 1886: 22]. A good many of the acculturated Natives in southeast Alaska had adopted a few English words from English-speaking traders, but very few could really converse in English. The Native people in other areas mostly remained monolingual or multilingual but in Native languages and the majority of the Aleuts continued to speak Russian instead of English.

By 1890 about two dozen government schools for secular education had been established in Alaska [JENNESS 1962: 10-11]. A little more than one-third of them were the so-called "contract schools" run by missionary groups under contract to the federal government, although a shift away from this arrangement gradually took place after the mid-1890s. In accordance with an agreement the principal Protestant organizations had reached as to the regional apportionment of Alaska for their evangelizing efforts among the Natives, the first American school established north of the Alaska Peninsula in 1885 at Bethel was operated by the Moravian missionary, and those in the Aleutians opened in 1886 at Unga and in 1889 at Unalaska were run by the Methodist Women's Home Mission. Wherever an American and a Russian school came to coexist, competition or antagonism between the two inevitably occurred. As in Nushagak the Russian priests attempted to frighten the children out of learning English, whereas at the same time the government saw the Russian Church as an obstacle in its educational efforts and waged a strong campaign to discourage the speaking of Russian [VANSTONE 1967: 92; TORREY 1978: 115].

Starting with the Organic Act of 1884, no differentiation was made between the education of the Natives and the whites. A few white children attended the government schools in southeast Alaska, but because of the numerical composition of the population, the public school system under the Federal Bureau of Education came to be looked upon as a Native school system. With the increase of the white population, however, a demand developed (among those who were not satisfied with what they considered inferior education) for a separate school for their children. This materialized before 1890 in towns such as Juneau, Sitka and Douglas, where the population was sufficient to warrant more than one school. The Nelson Act of 1905 provided

for the establishment of two separate educational systems in Alaska (apart from missionary schools) which basically still prevails. The education of Native children remained under federal control, while the management of schools for white children and children of mixed blood who led a civilized life in areas outside incorporated towns came under control of the Governor of Alaska (later under the Territorial/State Department of Education). In spite of this segregation, however, the number of Native children in Territorial rural schools and that of white children in government schools steadily increased due to the impracticability of establishing two schools in small villages and of sending Native children in white towns to Native schools elsewhere. The dual system, based as it was upon the premise that different types of education should be offered for the white and Native populations, seems to have been induced by the difficulty with which individual Natives are transculturalized in the terminology of Hallowell [1963] into white-American society that has low receptivity toward non-whites. This duality as such had no small relevance in maintaining and increasing racial discrimination. If assimilation had been the only determined policy, it would have been more reasonable to educate both populations in one and the same school system. In fact the discouragement of transculturalization at the level of the individual is strangely contrasted with the encouragement of acculturation at the group level.

The federal government traditionally did not appreciate the richness and value of the nation's diverse cultural heritage. Its guiding principle for education was that all diverse cultural groups should be ultimately incorporated and assimilated into a homogeneous society at the expense of their native cultures. In the matter of language, this melting pot theory translates itself into an English only in American schools policy. Apparently there was no recognition whatsoever that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue and that assimilation may mean dispossession. Alaska was not exempt from the assimilation policy in spite of the fact that it is a land of remarkable cultural and linguistic diversity. The report of the United States Commissioner of Education [1888] laid down the principle that the children should be taught to speak, read and write the English language, that they should be taught in English, and that the use of school books printed in any foreign language should not be allowed. The foreign language in this context presumably referred to the use of Russian among the Aleuts and the southwestern Eskimos.

The government teaching policy had been only partially (if at all) successful by the early 1930s when the work of Native education in Alaska was taken over by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a federal organization that had been in charge of all Indian affairs including education since 1824. In an extensive survey of the sociological and educational status of Alaska Natives [ANDERSON and EELLS 1935: 189], which was undertaken at the request of the United States Commissioner of Education and which itself contributed to the organizational change of the Alaska Native education system, we are told:

Schools have been in operation in Eskimo Alaska for over thirty years, a time long enough for the present adult population to have been subjected to their influence and to have acquired the rudiments of the English language. Yet the Eskimo language is still the means of discourse of the people, and many Eskimos are unable to use English at all....Children learn and use English in the schoolroom, but as soon as they leave the schoolhouse they are back in their native language environment. Teachers have exerted herculean efforts to break the force of the tribal tongues, but to little avail.

The assimilation policy of the Bureau of Education was basically maintained by its successor, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. But the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (Wheeler-Howard Act) represented a noticeable change in the federal attitude toward Indians and Indian education. It allowed a policy that recognized the value of cultural diversity. A "Brief Statement on the Background of Present-day Indian Policy" prepared by the Office of Indian Affairs in 1938 has this to say [cited in COHEN 1942: 28]:

To help Indians in making adjustments to the drastic changes in their way of life made necessary by the overwhelming invasion of the alien white race, and yet to *foster the perpetuation of much of their cultural heritage*, to train and stimulate them for complete economic self-sufficiency, looking toward a better standard of living for this vital race, are the ultimate goals of the present Administration. [Italics not in the original.]

It was part of the New Deal to the native Americans that the BIA, while retaining the emphasis on English teaching, decided to encourage the use of a native language by Indian children as well as to encourage the preservation of the native culture. The BIA initiated the incorporation of culturally relevant teaching materials and methods, and established a program for teaching literacy in Navajo and training interpreters. Bilingual reading materials were prepared for the Sioux, Hopi and Tewa. All the projects were discontinued, however, because Indian parents manifested little enthusiasm for the programs and Congress was unwilling to renew the funds during the Second World War. At any rate, it should be noted that the basic intent of these BIA programs was not necessarily to preserve native languages but to use them to achieve mastery of English and to facilitate easier adaptation to American culture. The method was merely a more patient one whose ultimate purpose was still to achieve the basic policy of getting Indians assimilated. The same intent was to be manifest concerning Alaska Native languages in the 1970s. The policy of stamping out native languages persisted.

It is to this temporarily modified BIA native language policy that we owe a Department of the Interior publication, Richard Henry Geoghegan's *The Aleut Language* [1944], in the main a translation of Father Veniaminov's grammar [1846a]. But apparently the effects of the modification of the federal attitude were not measurably felt in the remote land of Alaska, so far as the language problem in schools was concerned. A recently published recollection by Jay Ellis Ransom [1978] gives us some

idea of the educational situation in the mid-1930s at Nikolski on the island of Umnak. The advice he was offered at the Alaska Native Service, the BIA's Alaskan branch, in Juneau before leaving for the Aleutians to teach in 1936—"Look around the village, see what needs to be taught, then teach it!" (p. 20)—certainly indicates that no appropriate programs and teaching materials for the village schools were available and that everything was left up to the teacher. Strikingly contrasting with this unpreparedness was the avowed observance of the linguistic assimilation policy by the federal agency, as is seen in the admonition to the following effect which Ransom received from the superintendent (p. 20):

Whatever you do, you must not allow the Native language to be spoken anywhere on government property, and especially not in your school. The Indian Service policy is that all Indians, Aleuts and Eskimos must learn only English. You must not permit a single word of Aleut to be spoken, even by the village adults, and that is an order from Washington.

On arriving at Nikolski, however, Ransom discovered that nothing could be done without his learning Aleut, and acquired what he named "instant bilingualism"—more than 30 years before bilingual education came to be a hot issue in Alaska. While simultaneously teaching English to children, he had to try to communicate with them in Aleut against the policy of the federal government which was hostile to the persistence of the local native language.

The Native people retain vivid memories of those old days when, only because they uttered a single native word in school, they had to go without lunch, had a piece of tape put over their mouths, or received even more severe corporal punishments. Some parents, fearing reprisals from teachers, ceased to speak their own language even at home. Until the late 1960s it was illegal to teach in any language other than English.

The language barrier between children and teachers obviously made the educational programs less effective than they could have been. The teachers appeared to "be shouting lessons over a great gulf—with little feedback from the students," while the latter "sat dutifully in class, amazingly intent upon the teachers' words or else quietly squirming, yawning, and stretching" [COLLIER 1973: 64]. For beginning pupils to be taught in a language which they had just started to learn was a source of psychological frustration and scholastic retardation.

It was not only the language that was discouraged or prohibited in school. The cultural background of the children as well was totally neglected or denied in the school curriculum which, apart from emphasizing English, usually included the standard subjects taught in the public schools of the continental United States. The instructional materials were those appropriate to white American society, and as such they were not culturally oriented for the use of children in rural Alaska. The gulf between the materials and the children's actual knowledge hardly appeared bridgeable. Little effort was made to develop or utilize materials keyed to objects and ideas connected with the immediate world of the Native children. The children

could not become interested in learning what amounted to someone else's way of life. It is easy to understand that emphasis on things *Kass'aq* (i.e., white) coupled with denial and neglect of everything Native adversely affected the children and led to their developing a sense of shame, inferiority complexes, and the weakening of their self-concept.

Due to the isolation and small population of Alaskan villages, the Bureau of Education school and of its successor BIA, as the only federal agency in daily contact with the villagers, could be a positive contribution of white civilization to village life in one way, necessarily performing many services not ordinarily considered part of the duties of a school (e.g., medical care, communication with the outside, police and other governmental works, etc.). But the assimilation-oriented school, which, along with the teacher's residence, was usually the best maintained structure in the village, very often looked to Native villagers not so much an integrated part of the community as an overawing colonial fort of the powerful invading white civilization. The school was apt to isolate itself from the villagers, and the non-Native teacher was seldom considered a resident of the village. This gap in community and school relations still lingers on in some remote villages.

In spite of the gradual increase in the number of village schools for Native children, the non-availability of higher training in villages obliged high school students to go hundreds or thousands of miles away from their homes for education, and that during the most important years of their formative period. This estrangement from the Native environment could and often did break cultural and linguistic in addition to family ties.

To be successful in this system of education inevitably implied alienation from one's own family and Native heritage. Expansion of American education in Alaska slowly but surely trod down the Native cultures and diminished the viability of Native languages. In this connection, parenthetically but clearly, it should be remembered that it was not only the educators who were responsible for the assimilative trend: anthropologists and linguists in particular, to whom the native cultures and languages were a rich mine for research, were nevertheless not active in helping maintain and encourage them aside from preserving them in cold filing cabinets, at least until very recently.

The general trend of education which affected the Alaska Natives had begun to change slowly by the early 1960s when the first Native political organization in north Alaska was established. Its origin can be traced back to the efforts to preserve traditional land and subsistence rights which were being infringed. Apart from the much earlier attention paid to the land problem by the Alaska Native Brotherhood (the first intertribal organization founded at Sitka in 1912 for the purpose of preparing the Natives to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship), two public issues triggered the active political involvement of the Native people. One of them was the proposed Project Chariot of the Atomic Energy Commission (c. 1958) for creating a harbor by atomic explosion near Cape Thompson (42 km. southeast of Point Hope) to ship

minerals and other resources from the northwest coast. The local people, on becoming aware of the danger of atomic contamination and of the consequent possibility of village relocation, strongly opposed the plan. The other issue was the arrest of a Barrow Eskimo in May, 1961, for shooting eider ducks out of season as established by the Migratory Bird Treaty between Canada, Mexico, and the United States, followed by the protest of 138 aroused hunters who appeared for arrest with shot ducks before the federal game wardens. The point in this issue was the fact that the birds protected by the treaty are not present in Alaska when they are in season but are only in the south at the right time. Although hunters in southwest Alaska had pleaded guilty in a similar case in the preceding year, the charge against the Barrow hunter was eventually dropped—a victory for the unity and determination of the community.

To deal with these issues, village leaders of northern Alaska held a conference in Barrow in November, 1961, only to realize the existence in other villages of the same problems concerning aboriginal land and hunting rights and economic and social development. This conference prompted the development of a new regional Native organization called Inupiat Paitot, which in turn soon established affiliations with other Native organizations, each of which had begun speaking out strongly as the result of a growing political awareness. The cooperation necessary for solving similar problems and the sense of identity thereby promoted among the different Native groups finally led to the establishment in early 1967 of a statewide organization, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), comprising most of the Eskimo, Aleut and Indian local organizations. The AFN acted as a powerful political force, publicizing the Native points of view and attitudes concerning political, economic, educational and cultural problems. The most impressive success that the AFN ever celebrated was the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act signed into law on December 18, 1971 (Public Law 92-203, 92nd Congress, H. R. 10367), under which Alaska Natives (i.e., Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts of one-fourth blood or more who were living when the bill was enacted) acquire title to 40 million acres of land and \$962.5 million to be paid over a period of years [see ARNOLD 1976].

Increased awareness of ethnic identity stimulated a resurgence of interest in Native languages. Some people, both Native and non-Native, began to express dire concerns about the languages which were moving dangerously close to extinction. They, or at least a portion of them, realized that the significance of preserving the language goes far beyond a "largely symbolic" one [LANTIS 1973: 116]. Certainly the big fight of the AFN was over land rights, not over languages, but the political success of the Native Land Claims Settlement Act obviously gave an impetus to the language revival movement as well.

In the earliest days of formal education there was very little motivation or social pressure to learn English on the part of Alaska Natives. But, as the new cultural situation expanded their world beyond the small community and its environs, the growing demand for ready intelligibility in their contacts with the whites and other Native Alaskans gave a tremendous impetus to the desire to acquire English. The

peoples in southeast Alaska appreciated the benefits of learning English earlier than any other Alaska Natives. The Alaska Native Brotherhood stressed speaking English in the original draft of its constitution, and decided to conduct all proceedings in English at the annual convention [DRUCKER 1958: 16, 68]: at the time of its formation in the first decade of the 20th century, a fair proportion of the younger and middle-aged people spoke English with some ease and were literate. By the 1960s no Native people were naive enough to think that they could survive in the English-dominated American society by using only their Native tongue, being fully aware that English would continue to mean prestige and opportunity for employment.

But at the same time they began to appreciate the value of retaining the ancestral tongue through the understanding (either conscious or unconscious) that the demise of a language means the irretrievable loss of ethnic identity. In the late 1960s I remember reading in the *Tundra Times*, the statewide Native newspaper, a poem written by an Eskimo to the effect that if one loses one's native tongue, one will be lost in the mosquito-like swarm of whites and will die a cultural death. Language is probably the most important aspect of culture that demarcates a Native group from a non-Native one and that helps to retain Native identification. But to switch to English and to abandon one's mother tongue would not directly lead to his acceptance in a non-Native or white group. It would be quite possible that by so doing he would end up being a marginal man who is ostracized by both groups.

In addition to reflecting on the significance of Native languages, the Natives' increased desire for self-determination and local control together with stirrings of ethnic pride began to make them antipathetic to the prevailing ethnocentric (even though well-intentioned) attitude towards Native education. It is frequently the case that unsolicited gifts from without come to be received with unconscious resentment or even hostility.

On the other hand, the specialists in Native education came to the grudging realization that education in and of English was not a success even after three quarters of a century of American education in Alaska. The failure was indicated above all in high drop-out rates after a few years in school, minimal mastery of English, and indifference to education—all characteristic of Alaska's rural schools. Besides those aspects mentioned already, a number of nonlinguistic factors were pointed out which presumably had been responsible for the failure. The more important among them were insufficient preparation for the kind of teaching needed in Native villages, prejudice against the Natives, inadequate school facilities and teaching materials, severe and nonstandard living conditions (as they thought) for the non-Native teachers, and the non-sedentary and non-time-conscious ways of traditional Native life. The failure was also ascribed to linguistic facts: that language differences led to misunderstanding and poor rapport between the teachers and the Native children and parents; that to teach children the basic academic concepts of primary grade education in a language which they were only beginning to understand negatively affected mental development and academic progress; and that the

traditional methods of teaching English were not adequate for children whose mother tongue was other than English.

Currently many of the Native people are either bilingual in English and a Native language to varying degrees or monolingual in English, though still a considerable number of people are monolingual in a Native language. Not rarely, however, English as spoken by these bilingual villagers is not only limited but also exhibits non-standard or sub-standard patterns in its phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects to such an extent that much of the English instruction at school has to be of a remedial nature. This is not necessarily a personal problem. There are several kinds of interference from Native languages because of differences in phonological and grammatical systems from English: Eskimo lacks prepositions, articles, the distinction between genders, and voiced vs. voiceless stops, and all of this causes particular difficulties for Eskimo children. Furthermore some peculiarities in English can be specific to a single community. Certain isolated villages have developed non-standard accents in English, which it seems difficult to ascribe to interference from the local Native language. In some places the first teachers could not speak good English (as was the case with schools started by foreign missionaries), leaving a lasting effect on the kind of English spoken by the villagers. In tiny communities where the teacher was about the only native English speaker, his or her teaching of English could largely condition the English spoken by the villagers. In Gambell as of the 1950s "the older generation spoke good English, in most cases better than many young men," which fact Charles C. Hughes ascribes to the thorough instruction of a missionary-teacher in the past [1960: 313].

It is obvious that limited and non-standard English impedes effective functioning of the speaker in a predominantly English-speaking society. In the United States, where the melting-pot theory was long and widely accepted and all diverse cultural groups (both native and immigrant) had to be assimilated into a homogeneous society, the educational, social, and economic sanctions applied against a speaker of a non-standard variant of English were often far from negligible. Some concerned people began to recognize this. The policy which demanded the abandoning of one's native language and cultural heritage—and one's pride and identity together with them—might actually bring forth nothing but economically handicapped second-class citizens in a white-dominant society, which in turn would be another source of discrimination and disharmony within the society. The Native's welfare should depend upon his maintaining his cultural identity through education and appreciation of his own language and culture.

This recognition is not specific to Alaska, however. It is consistent with that nationwide trend toward promotion of non-English languages and cultures which took place at a rapid pace in the 1960s. The BIA started considering a thoroughgoing reform of Indian education which involved proper attention to their languages and cultures. Bilingual education, that is, the use of a native language in education, is the most concrete and marked effect of this transition from the melting pot theory to an emphasis on linguistic and cultural pluralism.

In an international context, it may be appropriate to note that specialists from all parts of the globe who had a UNESCO meeting in 1951 to discuss the use of vernacular languages in education laid down the following as a general principle UNESCO 1953: 52]:

In order to ease the burden on the child, the mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction as far up the educational ladder as the conditions permit (in other words that the transfer to a second language, if necessary, should be deferred to as late a stage as possible); and that authorities should do everything in their power to *create* the conditions which will make for an ever-increasing extension of schooling in the mother tongue, and make the transition from mother tongue to second language as smooth and as psychologically harmless as possible.

The special needs of children from different language groups never had been met officially in the nation until January 2, 1968, when President Johnson signed into law the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This act, which marked the end of the traditional policy of "English only in American schools," was the salient initial step toward providing equal educational opportunity for all children and encouraging the establishment and operation of bilingual education for children who come from environments where the dominant language is other than English. It may reflect the recognition that the government has no power to deny any children the right to remain fluent in their native language. The basic philosophy is merely, however, that the best medium of instruction for a beginning child at school is the language he is most familiar with, namely his mother tongue, until he is well enough advanced in English to be taught in it. This implies that maintenance of native languages is not the primary concern of the act.

The availability of federal funds under Title VII gave an immense impetus to the development of bilingual education projects throughout the nation. As of May, 1969, 56 programs were operating in the continental United States. Yet of the languages included in the projects, only two are native American languages: Navajo (four projects in Arizona) and Cherokee (one in Oklahoma). The rest are the European languages: Spanish (40), French (7), Polish (2), Russian (1), and Greek (1) [ANDERSSON and BOYER 1970]. Bilingual projects have since continued to multiply, increasing the proportion of non-Spanish projects funded. The next four years saw the addition of 14 native American languages in bilingual programs, one of which was Central Yupik in Alaska.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN ALASKA

By the end of the 1960s the need for change in educational programs affecting Alaska Natives had been felt, both among concerned Natives and educational professionals outside the Native communities. An educational research report published in 1959 concluded with several recommendations, one of which suggested the need to

prepare teachers to teach English as a second language [RAY 1959: 273]. It was Michael E. Krauss and Irene Reed (both at the University of Alaska) who were the earliest and strongest among non-Natives in appreciating the language resurrection in Native Alaska and who have turned out to be most instrumental in promoting the language movements. In 1968, these two and Donald Webster of the Summer Institute of Linguistics submitted a proposal on Central Yupik bilingual education to the State Commissioner, who flatly turned it down, particularly for the reason that it would undermine the authority of the teachers in the classroom.

In a hearing of the Special Indian Subcommittee of the United States Senate held in April of 1969 in Fairbanks, while emphasis on English instruction was urged by some Native participants, Emil Notti, the President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, advocated the use of bilingual teacher aides in the beginning grades in the village schools and several witnesses suggested the feasibility of incorporating Native studies and languages as part of the curriculum [COMMISSION OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION 1971: 38-39]. The effectiveness of bilingual teachers who, while using English extensively, can switch into the Native language whenever appropriate was also indicated by a film analysis of a Head Start class (a program of the Office of Economic Opportunity) in the Central Yupik area [COLLIER 1973: 65].

A language survey of entering primary students on the basis of information obtained from 96 (out of 175) rural schools disclosed the fact that 38.6% of the entering students had an inadequate command of the English language. Of this 38.6%, 5.5% spoke no English at all, 13.7% spoke only single English words, and 19.4% used English in no more than phrases. From these figures, the report makes the generalization that bilingual education is necessary in Alaska [HARTMAN 1970: 2].

The BIA, which was traditionally dedicated to a forced assimilation policy, was against the idea of bilingual education and appeared to be very slow (at least to those concerned) to even consider it. But the BIA was getting pressure not only from inside Alaska but also from the lower forty-eight states and other countries which had similar problems with indigenous peoples. The Bilingual Education Act was definitely one of the greatest factors in changing the BIA's attitude. In addition, enlightenment came to the BIA from the influential Conference on Cross-Cultural Education in Circumpolar Nations held in Montreal in August of 1969, where more than a hundred educators, administrators, and behavioral and social scientists from several nations gathered to discuss problems involved in educating the indigenous peoples of the far north [see DARNELL 1972].

Once motivated, the response of the BIA was very fast—at least it appeared so to those from other countries where bureaucratic control does not allow any prompt innovation in education. The BIA's Bethel Agency, which has jurisdiction over the Central Yupik area, lost no time in studying bilingual education and began working out the pioneer program during the 1969-70 academic year. Simultaneously the Center for Northern Education Research of the University of Alaska, together with its newly formed Eskimo Language Workshop (see REED [1974] for its functions)

on the Fairbanks campus, worked to plan an elementary level language program in Central Yupik.

Among the Alaska Native languages, Central Yupik is spoken by the greatest number of people (see page 170). It is so predominant in most of the villages in its area of use that many children enter school with Central Yupik as their only satisfactory means of communication—a fact probably attributable to the relatively high population density of the area, the few inducements in the past to white intrusion except for canneries, and the relatively late establishment of American schools. Of a little more than 5,000 Alaska Native school children who speak a Native language, about 3,500 are Central Yupik speakers. It was, therefore, quite natural and logical to make use of the Native language in schools in this area.

After the long period of total neglect of this logical necessity and of enormous pressure on the people to assimilate, the experiment was begun enthusiastically in the fall of 1970 in the first grades of three BIA schools in Nunapitchuk, Akiachak, and Napakiak and involved 28 children. These pilot villages were chosen because of the predominance of the Native language (95% Yupik monolinguals), the desire of the parents for the program, the availability of facilities and the availability of trainable Native speakers as prospective teachers. The villages, all located within 30 miles of Bethel, are reached chiefly by bush plane, and have populations of from 300 to 400 who live on 80% subsistence food and whose average education level ranges from second to fourth grade. For the purpose of comparison three control schools were selected in other villages which were considered culturally and linguistically similar to the villages in the experimental program. As qualified local teachers who spoke the Native language were extremely rare, two residents from each pilot village were recruited to attend an eight week training session in the summer of 1970 at the University of Alaska. One of the two was recommended by the local board and the principal as an associate teacher and the other as a teacher aide who could be a possible substitute for the associate teacher.

Efforts were exerted to familiarize parents with the idea of the program, since many of them were concerned that the use of Yupik in school might prevent the children from learning English well enough. The concern persisted even after the start of the program until everyone realized that the children were learning English more easily, were showing better achievement in all subjects, and were now beginning to enjoy school. It is natural that the children should have shown better academic achievement and spontaneous reaction in the classroom as they could now completely understand what the teacher was saying to them in Yupik. The fact that the bilingually taught children significantly surpassed the English-only children of the control schools in learning English was all the more surprising to the people since the use of English was reduced in the bilingual classes to only one hour a day. However, recent experience in many places has proved that an equal or better command of the second language can be imparted if the school begins with the mother tongue as the medium of instruction [see UNESCO 1953: 49].

In addition to academic progress and the parents' increased interest in the

children's education, attitudinal changes were most apparent and a positive self-concept was enhanced among children. The bilingual teacher and aide with the same Native backgrounds as the children could serve as the bridge between the community and the school which had been missing since the start of formal education in the villages several generations earlier. Response to the program became overwhelmingly positive almost everywhere, and comments from parents changed to "I didn't know my child could learn so fast" or "I didn't think my kid was so bright." The advent of the bilingual program, in the words of James Birkin the teacher who started it in Nunapitchuk, "put an end to the stereotype of 'shy little Eskimo kids'" which was what they were when they all had to speak English.

This was the start of bilingual education, which has since developed as a major thrust in Alaska today, affecting most of the Native languages. The program soon received endorsement by the Native leaders: the AFN supported it and resolved that it wanted Native languages to be taught in all Native schools. In the 1971-72 academic year, the Central Yupik pioneer program was expanded to include four more schools (Kasigluk, Kipnuk, Quinhagak, Tuntutuliak), with the first three schools moving into their second year in the program.

This BIA program is called the Primary Eskimo Program (PEP). Its general structure is that the first graders receive instruction in all academic subject matter in Yupik from the Native associate teacher, with a half-hour, twice each day, of English as a second language (ESL). The second and third graders follow the same pattern but English is increased to two 45-minute and two one-hour sessions each day respectively. The ESL component is planned to coordinate with the Yupik language part of instruction: the teaching of English is done for the most part in connection with concepts taught in Yupik. By the time the pupils reach the fourth grade, they are expected to have adequately mastered English, and this generally is the end of bilingual instruction. From the fourth grade on, English is used for instruction—no Yupik hour used to be officially allowed, although some schools offered one hour Yupik instruction for upper grades at the principal's discretion for the purpose of continued cultural enrichment and the BIA extended Yupik instruction (though to a limited extent) to the sixth grade in the fall of 1978.

The BIA was criticized for being very slow to expand the program in spite of requests from other villages and in the face of state law (to be mentioned later) which requires a bilingual program wherever eight (originally 15) pupils speak a Native language. The BIA, after waiting a few years for full evaluation of the results of the pilot program started in 1970 and 1971 in the seven schools, brought six more schools into the program in 1975 and two more in 1977, raising the total number of its bilingual schools to 15, which is about half of the BIA schools in the Central Yupik area. (Incidentally, only about one-third of the BIA schools in the whole of Alaska are currently bilingual.) Approximately 50 Yupik and ESL teachers are involved in teaching more than 800 children (1977-78). No expansion of the PEP program is scheduled for 1978-79.

It should be clearly understood that initiation of the bilingual program by the

BIA does not imply in any way that it has changed its basic policy on Native education. To the BIA, bilingual education is to be of the so-called "language transfer" type as contrasted with the "language maintenance" type and is merely a transitional program for the purpose of helping children adapt to the dominant culture and an efficient preparatory step for educating children in English. The Native language is utilized as a bridge to English, in other words, to help children develop their basic academic concepts and skills before they gain fluency in English. No commitment is made to maintenance of the Native language. William Benton, Education Director of the BIA Bethel Agency, who worked on the initial program once expressed the attitude that it is not the business of the BIA to keep a language alive, but rather to educate. In this respect there is a difference between the BIA's philosophy and that of linguists and Native leaders who have pushed the language movements in Alaska.

The dual system of Alaskan education (federal vs. territorial) turned out to be of little effect educationally and financially. Management of a number of schools in Native villages originally under federal control had been shifted to the Territory by 1959 when Alaska attained statehood. More BIA schools have since been transferred to the State and to local school districts, although many others continue to be federally operated because of the State's financial limitations and the unwillingness of the local communities.

The BIA schools currently take care of two-thirds of about 3,500 school age speakers of Central Yupik, while the remaining one-third are in one of the three borough or city school districts (i.e., St. Mary's City, Dillingham City and Bristol Bay Borough) or in State schools. The latter were under the control of the State Operated School System (SOSS) from 1971 to 1976 and its decentralized school districts called Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAA) since 1976, six of which include Central Yupik speakers, i.e., Lower Yukon, Iditarod Area, Lower Kuskokwim, Kuspuk, Southwest Region, and Lake and Peninsula. BIA schools are located within some of the school districts, but they are not under the control of the district school board.

In the non-BIA schools, which are under local control, more of a language maintenance type bilingual education has been envisioned. Thus a bilingual program also has been established in communities where the Native language is not quite predominant and where accordingly the BIA would not consider one. This necessitates at least two general types of Yupik bilingual program in contrast to the BIA's single PEP program: Yupik as a first language (YFL) and Yupik as a second language (YSL). In the former type of program, for which the PEP as developed by the BIA was adopted but with language maintenance emphasized, the children who enter a school where Yupik is dominant receive their education in it, with English taught as a second language. In the latter type, for which a Yupik language course has been developed [TENNANT and REBERT 1977], Yupik is taught as a second language to children in schools where Yupik is not dominant.

The Yupik bilingual programs in the non-BIA schools have also been in operation since 1970 and have been expanding gradually. In the same year that the BIA put its experimental program into operation in the three schools, a bilingual program (YFL) was first introduced in the kindergarten classroom of the Bethel Kilbuck Elementary School which now belongs to the Lower Kuskokwim School District headquartered at Bethel. The LKSD includes the largest rural Alaskan population. In the following years, the YFL program was started in two schools for first through third graders and the YSL program in one school for first through sixth graders. In addition, eight LKSD high schools now offer Yupik for literacy. The District is planning to greatly expand the bilingual project in 1978-79. However, there have been strong criticisms on the bilingual education of the district in spite of the claim of its superintendent that bilingual/bicultural education is a top priority of the district. Other districts as well have had bilingual programs started.

As in other states where statutes formally allowing only English in the schools were replaced with laws mandating bilingual programs, the Alaska State Legislature passed the Alaska Bilingual Education Bill in June, 1972. It stipulates that a state-operated school attended by at least 15 pupils (changed to eight in 1975) whose primary language is other than English shall have at least one teacher who is fluent in the Native language of the area where the school is located and that written and other educational materials, when language is a factor, shall be presented in the language native to the area (State of Alaska Senate Bill 1972: No. 421). Affecting the State schools, borough and city school districts, though not legally binding the BIA, this bill gave strong impetus to the new movement for bilingual education in Alaska and to the maintenance of the Native languages.

Another factor which gave momentum to the language movement was what is known as the "Lau Decision" which the Supreme Court handed down in 1974, a class action suit (Lau vs. Nicholes) filed by the Lau family in San Francisco on behalf of 1,800 Chinese children. The charge was that the children could not benefit from the school program and were being denied equal educational opportunity in the classroom because they did not speak English and the schools made no provision for their language differences. The decision requires school districts which receive federal funds to provide equal educational opportunities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and specifies the students' right to be educated in their native tongue until they are competent in English. In order to eliminate educational practices ruled unlawful under the Lau Decision, the federal Office for Civil Rights (Department of Health, Education and Welfare) laid down a set of minimum guidelines for bilingual education known as the Lau Remedies for elementary school children with limited knowledge of English and required the State to assess the number of students with language problems and to implement educational plans for them. After several rejections by the Office for Civil Rights of the assessment plans which the Alaska Department of Education submitted, a 217-page handbook was developed in the summer of 1977 to prescribe minimum guidelines which the State education agencies must follow in dealing with students whose dominant or home language is other than

English and in providing special programs for them [ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 1977]. (Its plan would be applied not only to the Native students but also to immigrants from other countries who have no or insufficient practical command of English.) It is a subject of dispute, however, that the BIA is not required to comply with the State requirements, as bilingual programs could presumably be expected to function effectively through a coordinated effort between the BIA and the State schools.

At public hearings on the handbook held throughout the State, the reactions were varied and the revised handbook containing suggestions from the hearings is still controversial among local educators. As of the end of 1977, 16 out of 21 school districts of the State were held in non-compliance with the federal guidelines. The districts found not to be in compliance were threatened with withdrawal of federal funding. Each district has started negotiating individually with the Office for Civil Rights instead of working through the State Department of Education, and compliance is now a local option.

In order to implement bilingual education it was obligatory to make various preparations among which only the more important linguistic ones will be briefly reviewed here. The first task in any bilingual program is the establishment of a standard orthography and it should precede the development of curricula and materials and the training of Native teachers.

Since the last century, missionaries of various denominations working in the Central Yupik area, notably the Russian Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and the Moravian, have devised different writing systems in which to represent the language for their ecclesiastical literature. A Native, Helper Neck, developed his own system originating from pictography. The systems met with various degrees of success. However, they have become all but obsolete, apparently because of insufficient phonological adequacy (some even being chaotic) and insufficient efforts to stimulate literacy, although the Moravian system which is itself not quite adequate phonologically has nevertheless enjoyed considerable acceptance among the people and is still in limited use.

The standard orthography which has come to be used in Central Yupik bilingual programs originated in the preparation of a college level Yupik grammar at the University of Alaska's Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages which came out in print recently [REED *et al.* 1977]. The orthography is a direct result of the strenuous research on the language, particularly between 1967 and 1969, which the writing of the grammar demanded, although it has later been modified and improved in a number of respects. It is a writing system designed to be applicable to all Central Yupik dialects, among which certain phonological and lexical differences exist. The current system consists of 18 Roman letters (*a, c, e, g, i, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w* and *y*), an apostrophe, a hyphen, two diacritics with which to represent sounds, and a small number of orthographical rules for reading and writing the sounds. Punctuation is the same as in English.

Several factors were carefully considered in determining the system. One of the most important was the easiest transition to or from the English alphabet. Another prime determinant was maximum similarity to existing systems for writing Eskimo not only within but outside of Central Yupik. Among those systems devised for Central Yupik, the new system is closest to the Moravian one. The similarity in the external form in which two languages are written not only facilitates the reading of the other language but has the important function of helping people become aware of how much their languages—even if mutually incomprehensible—resemble each other, which in turn may constitute a contributing factor in strengthening ethnic solidarity. It is to be noted, however, that some disagreement in the choice of letters between the Central Yupik orthography and the neighboring Inupiaq system of North Alaska had to remain. A syllabary as used among the Eastern Canadian Eskimo was also suggested, as the syllables in the language are much less numerous than, say, in English.

The Central Yupik system in current use is claimed to be phonologically sound and accurate. It is a very effective system in that a spelling and a sound are mutually determinate so that one can go from one to the other in either direction by following the orthographical rules. It is also capable of distinguishing, if need be, two similar sounds or sound sequences whose contrast carries the lightest functional load. However, it is not perfect and allows a very limited amount of flexibility. Given the spelling and the context in which it occurs, there is only one unambiguous pronunciation, but in a very few words a sound can be represented in either of two spellings [see MIYAOKA and MATHER 1978]. In addition, as most practical orthographies seem destined to have, it has a minimum amount of non-parallelism and of marginal residue, the representation of which remains to be decided in the future, although it is negligible in practical use.

One problem of the orthography is the level of representation of vowels. Recognition of the distinction of a vowel long by nature versus a vowel long by position in Central Yupik (as interrelated with automatic gemination) certainly simplified the orthography. Basically a vowel long by position is one predictably lengthened and it is accordingly written with a single vowel, while a vowel long by nature is written double. But particularly because of a very late phonological rule there occur a limited number of cases with surface contrast between a single (not lengthened) vowel and a lengthened vowel [MIYAOKA: *in press*]. Our teaching experience shows that it is in the distinction as to whether a long vowel is to be written single or double that Native learners of the orthography—even those who are otherwise most advanced in writing—find perhaps the greatest difficulty. It is possible that the level on which the representation of vowels in the current system lies may be a step “deeper” for the Native speakers’ greatest psychological reality. The future will determine whether a more phonetic spelling is generally preferable.

The standard orthography still encounters resistance from some of the older generation who have become familiar with and attached to the competing Moravian system. In spite of these linguistic and socio-psychological problems, however,

Yupik literacy has now affected an increasing number of upper grade students and adults as the emanating effect from bilingual classes.

Preparation of teaching material was a prerequisite for the inauguration of the bilingual program, and provision of textbooks at a higher level will continue to be a desideratum for its expansion. Before 1970 non-religious reading material was rarely prepared in Central Yupik in any writing system. The curriculum designed for the primary grades and the materials pertinent to it thus were developed in an earlier stage by the Eskimo Language Workshop with necessary Native participation in cooperation with education specialists from the BIA and the SOSS. The Workshop was relocated in 1974 at the University of Alaska's Kuskokwim Community College at Bethel (where it was renamed Yup'ik Language Center) so that it could achieve greater Native involvement in preparing materials and more immediate responsiveness to the needs of the children and schools it serves. It has so far published more than 150 items, which include graded series of science, language arts, mathematics and social science texts as well as reading books containing traditional stories, original stories by Native writers, and translations of Western stories with cultural adaptations. The more important published titles are listed in Reed *et al.* [1977].

Since the curriculum content may vary depending upon the language situation, the desire of the community, and the intended goal of the bilingual program, materials most appropriate to a specific curriculum are usually limited. The lack of appropriate and available materials has caused the different school systems to start their own compilation, although it is realized that a single material production project would be economical and that the efforts of different agencies should be coordinated in one way or another. The BIA's Bilingual Education Center, established at Bethel in 1976, has been highly productive. Currently a number of books for a certain school district are being developed by the National Bilingual Materials Development Center in Anchorage, which had devoted its activities to works in other Alaska Native languages (i.e., Aleut, Sugpiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Inupiaq, and several Athapaskan languages) since its establishment in 1976. The LKSD and other districts have also started developing their own materials. These agencies have obtained assistance and guidance in many aspects of their activities from the Alaska Native Language Center—an organization established in 1972 at the University of Alaska by the aforementioned Alaska Bilingual Education Bill in order to study languages native to Alaska, develop literacy materials, assist in the translation of important documents, provide for the development and dissemination of Alaska Native literature, and train Alaska Native language speakers to work as teachers and aides in bilingual classrooms [see KRAUSS 1973c]. As far as Central Yupik is concerned, the Center's most important projects have been the compilation of the pedagogical grammar [REED *et al.* 1977] and a Yupik-English dictionary nearing completion after years of devoted efforts by Steven Jacobson, as well as basic research and teacher training.

No attempt has been made to standardize Central Yupik by selecting any single

dialect. Dialect differences are thus a problem which must be considered in material production, and dialect-specific reading materials have been prepared. Since the orthography itself is designed to be applicable to all Central Yupik dialects, there are few problems in writing different dialects if slight modifications are made. A pupil is expected to read and write his own dialect, but the ability to read any dialect is recommended for upper grades. Since the bilingual programs started with schools in Kuskokwim area, it was in that dialect that the earlier materials published by the Eskimo Language Workshop were primarily written. But, as bilingual education later expanded to the Yukon area, some of the materials have been translated into that dialect. Materials in other than the Kuskokwim dialect are now being developed although they are still very scarce.

Training of Native speakers was another critical task for implementation of bilingual education and still remains an important problem. At least two types of training are to be distinguished: pedagogical training of Native speakers as teachers or aides, and advanced linguistic training to enable Native speakers to translate English writings, to prepare materials and to analyze their own language.

In the earlier stage, the Eskimo Language Workshop in cooperation with representatives from the other agencies such as the BIA, the SOSS, and the Education Department of the University of Alaska, played the most important part in the training of teachers and aides in Yupik literacy, curriculum planning, use of teaching materials, teaching methods, and evaluation. The training was usually conducted during four to eight weeks in the summer, and mid-year in-service training sessions were also held. In many of the training workshops for the bilingual teachers, the certified ESL teachers joined the session as well, as coordination is necessary between them and the Native teachers and aides so that the English hour will not be a separate entity from the rest of instruction done in Yupik.

In the last few years training of Native teachers has changed greatly. Several agencies started training teachers independently but often with assistance from the University of Alaska personnel (especially from the Alaska Native Language Center, the Yup'ik Language Center and the National Bilingual Materials Development Center). The BIA has had in recent years its own training session for the PEP staff members during the summer.

Most of the Yupik bilingual instructors, who carry substantial responsibilities for organization and instruction in the classroom, are nevertheless classified as para-professionals and are not receiving the wages and status of certified professional teachers. The need was emphasized for a statewide effort by the University of Alaska to achieve certification of the Native language instructors. For the Central Yupik speakers, Kuskokwim Community College now has an established training program leading to the A. A. degree in bilingual education as well as a limited number of upper division and graduate courses offered during the regular academic year and summer sessions. Furthermore there are two ways in which village instructors can work for a degree while simultaneously serving in the bilingual classrooms of

their own villages. One of them is delivery in the villages of courses by Kuskokwim Community College's field instructors who periodically visit and work with a small group of village students. The other is the so-called Cross-Cultural Education Development Program (known as X-CED), the off-campus program of the University's School of Education available since 1974, through which village students can take a series of correspondence courses leading to a B. Ed. or M. Ed. in cross-cultural education by meeting the same requirements as urban campus students. In X-CED the instruction is carried out by means of extensive reading assignments, special course packets, and tapes prepared by on-campus instructors with the field coordinators (stationed in several central towns in rural Alaska such as Bethel) mediating between the on-campus instructors and the village students.

The second type of training has been imparted to the majors in a Native language at the University and for some interested students in a summer training session, e.g., a B. A. degree in Yupik offered at the Fairbanks campus and a four week linguistics training program held in the summer of 1975. It should also be noted that some Native speakers have rapidly acquired linguistic sophistication while working as informants with professional linguists to analyze the language and prepare materials. The significance of linguistic training is broader than the preparatory work for bilingual education. A most active role could also be played in language cultivation (e.g., through vocabulary development) by such sophisticated Native speakers. And, as Franz Boas early realized when he wrote an excellent grammatical description of Dakota in collaboration with a trained native speaker [BOAS and DELORIA 1941], the future of the linguistic study of a Native language will critically depend on the Native speakers' participation not just as informants as in the past, but as specialists in technical linguistic work.

As with any important innovation in education, various practical and theoretical issues have aroused discussion. Inclusion of the Native language in the curriculum and instruction in it was welcomed from the beginning by most of the Yupik people concerned and has enjoyed increasingly widespread acceptance. It is natural that the advocates and supporters of the programs favored bilingual instruction and sounded its praises. But during the initial stage, as mentioned earlier, there was some hesitation, apprehension and even opposition from those who felt that learning in Yupik would be a step backward and that the English language was the road to success. In fact the insufficient preparation time for the first year contributed, as some of the founders privately admit, to the inadequacy of the bilingual curriculum and to some criticisms from administrators and teachers. Some specialists responsible for Native education were of the opinion that the total concept of bilingual education was questionable and that the program might not fulfil its initial promise to provide quality education. But most of the opposition gradually weakened in light of the remarkable level of performance which the children in the bilingual primary grades showed in spite of the still far from satisfactory educational conditions.

Control tests planned since the start of the bilingual programs in 1970 provided data for comparison. The first year evaluation included receptive and expressive vocabulary tests in both Yupik and English. Analysis of the results indicated strong evidence for acceleration in the growth of both Yupik and English vocabulary for the bilingual schools [ORVIK 1975a: 38-39]. In the following years the evaluation design received a number of modifications. James M. Orvik, evaluator of the programs for the BIA and the SOSS during the first three years of implementation, summarized his evaluation report by writing (p. 55):

It seems apparent that the children in the bilingual program are gaining a sound basis in nearly all aspects of Yupik literacy, Yupik and English oral language proficiency, and academic performance.

Several comments and evaluations by independent educators or institutions have appeared as well. They generally were favorable, as the following: PEP is "a sophisticated bilingual education program" (Gregory J. Trifonovitch, Deputy Director of the Cultural Learning Institute at the East-West Center in Honolulu) and "the PEP program as presently constituted is one of the best bilingual programs I have seen anywhere" (Heinz E. Meyer, Title I Specialist with the Central Office of the BIA in Albuquerque), both cited in BIA [1976: 6]. It is widely admitted that, in terms of having an excellent orthography and having made headway in developing bilingual instructional materials, the Central Yupik program ranks alongside the Navajo program as the most advanced of the Native American programs. Understandably it has also gained the reputation among foreign bilingual educators as one of the highest quality programs in the United States.

In accordance with evaluations and comments from all levels which provided the programs with the feedback necessary for changes, great improvements have been made in many aspects. But some people, who still regard the whole program as somewhat experimental, have refrained from evaluating its success. This attitude could be considered sensible in that the bilingual situation itself is so complicated with linguistic and non-linguistic factors in each village and bilingual education so varied and complex a phenomenon that blind optimism should be avoided and appraisals should remain provisional.

Concern expressed over many aspects of bilingual programs includes the uncertainty of continuous funding which hampers long range planning, state and federal policy conflicts, and negative attitudes and responses from school administrators and personnel. Although the necessity for cooperation with mutual trust and respect between Native (YFL) teachers and non-Native (ESL) teachers is universally recognized, some villages have reportedly encountered problems in this area, and possibly, in accordance with increased Native involvement in local education, non-Native teachers, however receptive of the theoretical desirability of the bilingual program, may come to sense an intensifying competition with Native teachers and begin to regard with jealousy the greater rapport between them and the pupils.

Finally it should be noted that there is no agreed upon, clear-cut definition of

what should be included and excluded in the term bilingual education. Since each Alaskan community has a different language situation and different needs, it is not only natural but necessary as well that a useful definition of bilingual education be flexible enough to meet the specific conditions of each community [see ORVIK 1975b: 10]. Hence one problem is that the term has been interpreted as loosely as the school administrators want, not necessarily with due consideration for the actual situation and needs of the community. In any case, the Central Yupik program up to now, like most bilingual programs elsewhere, should be considered far from "bilingual," if the term is to be understood strictly to mean education in which two languages as mediums of instruction are given equal status in terms of time and treatment in every portion of the school curriculum.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Is a language nothing but an incidental instrument for expressing the thoughts or feelings of its speakers? If this were the case, linguistic pluralism with such various instruments doing quite the same job would be poor economy. But, if one language is a particular way of organizing and grasping reality, it would follow that different languages represent totally different worlds and that no one language can be a substitute for another in any fundamental sense. Then pluralism should rather be considered as an asset to humanity. As each language forms the basis for the continuity of the cultural identity of the speakers, no one should be allowed to say that his is the only reasonable language and to demand that another should be discarded. The price of mandating uniformity would then be enormous.

Is a Native language an inadequate instrument incapable of all work that may reasonably be required for a modern language? If a Native language at present has not the vocabulary requisite for expressing, say, Einstein's theory of physical relativity or Kantian philosophical thoughts, it is not the language that is to blame. Any language, having enough structural plasticity and adaptability, is potentially capable of meeting, with proper care, new expressive needs the people perceive and of becoming a vehicle of modern communication.

There is a growing desire among the people that bilingualism will continue to survive and take deeper root in Alaska, as it should be allowed to do everywhere else in the world; one language, i.e., English, for inter-cultural use and the other, i.e., Native, for intra-cultural use with the status of a fully accredited medium of expression and thought. It is true, however, that even if such functional assignment goes well, bilingualism itself is a state very hard to maintain among a sizeable group of people for any considerable length of time and that the equilibrium tends to be easily lost. Unstable in nature as it is, bilingualism may end up as nothing but a transitional step into monolingualism. At present two increasingly powerful but diametrically opposed forces are at work in the Alaskan bilingual situation.

Since its beginning in 1970 with four Central Yupik villages—three BIA elementary schools and one state-operated kindergarten—the potential which the bilingual

approach may hold for Native education has been appreciated statewide. Michael E. Krauss aptly characterizes the bilingual schoolroom as "the battle-ground for linguistic and cultural survival or extinction" [KRAUSS: in press]. Bilingual education of one form or another has expanded both horizontally and vertically to include new schools and higher grades, now encompassing five major language groups: Eskimo (Sugpiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq as well as Central Yupik), Aleut, Haida, Tlingit and Athapaskan (Kutchin, Upper Kuskokwim, Central Koyukon, Tanana, Tanaina and Ahtna). Various bilingual programs have been developed depending upon local language situations. Where children no longer speak the Native language (e.g., Tlingit, Tanaina), the immediate goal of the program is language revival through instruction in the language as a second language. Where children speak the language, some programs are no more than a transition type, while others emphasize language maintenance. As of May, 1976, about one-fourth (approximately 1,200) of the school age children who speak a Native language were involved in bilingual programs. It seems apparent that bilingual education in Alaska will generally tend to expand, at least in the foreseeable future, with its quality being improved. It seems as certain, however, that use of a Native language only in a bilingual classroom will not be potent enough to lead to restoration of the language. The necessity of incorporating preschool children and adults in a language maintenance program is realized.

Outside bilingual classrooms, in fact, various efforts have been made in the 1970s to fight the century-long tendency of the steady decline of Native languages and to extend their use. Even where owing to the language situation it is not feasible immediately to start a bilingual program in school, a viable climate for language preservation has been created. Among the Native people in such places there has burst forth eager demand for language classes and Native study programs (art, music, dance, myth, legend and history). Wherever a Native leader offers a regular class of this kind, a strong interest in the distinctive language and culture is thereby awakened among the students.

Where a Native language is predominant, it is beginning to be used much more widely in many aspects of daily life than ten years ago, though still far from sufficiently. Literacy is being disseminated mainly through bilingual classes or can be learned, as in some villages, through the Adult Basic Education program as well as the University of Alaska's village courses. Newspapers which have pages in a Native language (e.g., *Tundra Drums* in Central Yupik) may encourage literacy and spread the habit of reading among adults. An increasing number of official notices and documents which affect the people have been translated into the Native language. As for the spoken language, radio and TV stations broadcast a varying number of programs in the local Native language; e.g., Barrow station (KBRW) once had as much as 65% of its programs broadcast in Inupiaq.

It is significant that, in the case of Inupiaq, the problem of language maintenance now has international relevance. One of the topics discussed in the First Inuit Circumpolar Conference held in June 1977 in Barrow was the possibility of estab-

lishing a common writing system for all Inupiaq (or Eastern Eskimo) countries, i.e., Alaska, Canada and Greenland. North Alaska Inupiaq could be expected to gain more viability through coordination of language maintenance efforts with the other countries having many Eskimo speakers (41,000 in Greenland and 17,000 in Canada) and a long tradition of literacy (since the mid-18th century in Greenland). In the case of Central Yupik, which is the Alaska Native language earliest used in bilingual education, perhaps it is already time to consider the next problem of language cultivation, the most important aspect of which would be a more or less systematic effort to develop a Yupik vocabulary suited to the expression of non-Native concepts (e.g., in scientific and technological subjects).

All these efforts toward language resurrection and maintenance both inside and outside bilingual classrooms can act as a stabilizing and strengthening force for the viability of the Native languages. In view of the oft-repeated attempts of minority peoples in other parts of the world to resurrect their languages and the failure or dubious success of many of these attempts, however, we should perhaps not be too optimistic. Most recently there have been factors at work to counteract the perpetuation of the Alaska Native languages. It may be that the current maintenance efforts as they stand are too feeble—or conceivably too belated—in the face of the powerful bulldozer of English which, as elsewhere in the world, is destroying minority languages, and in the face of the *tsunami* of technology which, as never before, is moving toward uniformity and vandalizing cultural diversity.

It has become widely recognized that the introduction of television in Alaskan villages during the last few years is having a drastically detrimental effect on the Native languages. The children are faced with the fact that English is taught at home as well as—or perhaps more efficiently than—in school. When he discussed the influence of television among the Canadian Inuit, Nelson H. H. Graburn probably hit the mark in seeing in TV “a seductive and relatively effortless form of cultural and linguistic ethnocide” [1978: 13].

Another obvious factor will be the socio-psychological attitude of the Native people toward the spread of English in a rapidly shrinking world. The effect of whether they will continue to feel it as a forced imposition against their will or begin to accept it of their own free will should probably not be minimized. In fact some people fear, in view of the Natives’ increased contact with the outside world, that their language preference may change much faster than expected.

All in all, Alaska is confronted, as is the case with many countries in the world, with a highly delicate problem of reconciling local nativism with national uniformity. Whether the Alaskan movement for linguistic nativism will win out in the long run is very difficult to predict at this point. The future, which should vary from language to language and even from village to village, will depend primarily upon continuation and expansion of bilingual education particularly of the language maintenance type, but also upon a number of political, economic, social and psychological forces which cannot be so easily manipulated.

Despite the rapid upsurge of interest in the Native languages and the youthful

albeit intensifying attempts at their resurrection and maintenance in Alaska which may counteract the decline of the languages, we probably cannot augur well for the future of all 20 Alaska Native languages spoken today. A few of them should be considered already beyond the point of no return. And it remains highly uncertain how many of the languages will outlive the turn of the century. Even in the case of languages which will survive the next two decades, it is very difficult to foretell the degree of vitality or even their natures at that time.

APPENDIX: GROUPINGS OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Eskimo and Aleut are genetically related, each constituting one branch of the two branch Eskimo-Aleut family. While Aleut is a single language, at least five Eskimo languages can be recognized in view of mutual unintelligibility: Inupiaq, Central Yupik, Sugpiaq, Siberian Yupik (or St. Lawrence Island Yupik in an Alaskan context), and Serineq. All but Serineq, which has reportedly come close to extinction in the Chukchi Peninsula, are represented in Alaska.

The Inupiaq spoken in Alaska north of Norton Sound as well as in Arctic Canada and Greenland shows a significant structural deviation from the other Eskimo languages, being accordingly sometimes referred to as Eastern Eskimo as contrasted with Western Eskimo which includes all the other Eskimo languages, although it is not necessarily appropriate to make a rigid bifurcation of the Eskimo languages on the 19th century Stammbaum (family tree) model. North Alaska Inupiaq is spoken by the second greatest number of speakers (about 6,000) of all the Alaska Native languages, but its viability varies depending upon the community.

Among the Western Eskimo languages distributed in Alaska and Siberia, Sugpiaq is spoken in the area facing the Gulf of Alaska (Prince William Sound, Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula) by about 1,000 people, though children who speak it are found only at English Bay and Port Graham. Closely related to Sugpiaq is Central Yupik, which has persisted with the greatest vitality of all the Alaska Native languages, now being spoken by about 15,000 people of all age groups in the area from Bristol Bay north to Norton Sound, including the villages along the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers. Siberian Yupik is not restricted to Siberian Eskimos but is also spoken by about 1,000 people on St. Lawrence Island in Alaska.

Aleut, which is a rapidly diminishing language, is nevertheless still the mother tongue of about 700 people in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, which latter were first peopled by Aleuts in the pay of the Russians in the late 1780s. All of the present speakers are adults except for all the children at Atka and a few children at Belkofski and Nikolski. (The language is also spoken in the Komandorski (Commandor) Islands near Kamchatka, U.S.S.R., by about 40 descendants of the Aleuts who were transferred there by the Russian American Company in the early 1800s for the purpose of engaging in fur hunting.)

Structurally the Eskimo and Aleut languages are located at one of the extremes in the scale of synthesis (degree of morphological elaboration): they belong to the most synthetic, i.e., polysynthetic, type of language and a word may functionally correspond to a sentence. The languages can also be characterized as predominantly suffixing.

Tsimshian is an isolated language assigned to the putative Penutian phylum (distributed in the Pacific coastal areas, Mexico and British Columbia). The language, which

is spoken mainly in British Columbia by some 3,500 people, has another some 200 speakers in southernmost Alaska around Metlakatla—the descendants of the group of Tsimshians who followed William Duncan in 1887 from Old Metlakatla in British Columbia to Annette Island in the oft-told severance of his connection with the Church of England.

Structurally Tsimshian is characterized by the use of a great number of proclitics, a relatively small number of suffixes, reduplication, compounding frequently accompanied by change of stem vowel, and incorporation of a nominal object.

All the Alaska Native languages other than Eskimo-Aleut and Tsimshian have more often than not been combined into a phylum called Na-Dene, but the genetic unity of all these widely diffused languages remains the subject of controversy. Eyak, Tlingit and Haida (whose position is most controversial) in the Alaskan Panhandle and 11 Athapaskan languages constitute Alaskan Na-Dene. [Athapaskan languages are also distributed outside Alaska in two other far-flung and non-contiguous areas of the Pacific coast—with Hupa having the largest number of speakers (about ten)—and of the Southwest—with Navajo having the largest and still growing number of speakers of all the North American Indian languages.]

Haida is spoken in the area near the United States and Canadian border by far fewer than 100 speakers on the Alaskan side and by about 200 speakers on the Canadian side.

Tlingit, distributed along a long stretch of coast and islands in southeastern Alaska with a few inland extensions, is now spoken by over 1,000 people, almost none of whom are children, however, and by additional 200 people in Canada.

Eyak, formerly distributed at the mouth of the Copper River, is on the verge of extinction and is retained by only a few old speakers whose language, a cultural treasure worth more than its weight in gold, was recently rescued from oblivion by Michael E. Krauss in the forms of a comprehensive dictionary and a large volume of texts [KRAUSS 1970a, 1970b]. This is the only language one could safely say is genetically related to Athapaskan in the classical sense of the term.

The Alaskan Athapaskan languages include Ahtna, Tanaina, Ingalik, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Tanana, Tanacross, Upper Tanana, Han and Kutchin. The speakers of the Athapaskan languages live in the interior of Alaska except that the Tanaina reach the coast around Cook Inlet. Only Upper Kuskokwim, Upper Tanana, and Kutchin are more or less viable and are spoken fluently as a mother tongue by children, while the others are mostly or exclusively spoken by the older generation, as is the case with the other Na-Dene languages in Alaska. The total number of the Alaskan Athapaskan speakers is around 2,600.

Like Eskimo-Aleut, Athapaskan is a polysynthetic language with personal relationships, modes and aspects expressed in verb forms wherein, unlike Eskimo-Aleut, nouns may also be incorporated. It differs from Eskimo-Aleut in that it is characterized by the extensive use of compounding and prefixes rather than suffixes and by the system of classificatory verb stems used depending upon the shape of objects to which the verb action refers, and in that the canonical form of roots is monosyllabic. Many of the Na-Dene languages are tonal (i.e., Haida, most dialects of Tlingit, and some Athapaskan languages), although it is now realized that the tone is probably a secondary development from the original stem-final consonant system or vowel nucleus modification system.

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