

10 Theorizing Saliency: Orthographic Practice and the Enfiguration of Minority Languages

*Nishaant Choksi and Barbra A. Meek**

Introduction

A favorite pedagogical exercise of Meek's when teaching about representations of American Indians and Alaska Natives is an optical illusion (by Winson; www.optical-illusionist.com/illusions/eskimo-face-illusion#comments) that she projects onto a screen and asks the students to identify.

Some see an American Indian man with an extraordinarily large proboscis, raven black hair, an earring, and slitty eyes. Some find an Eskimo walking away, in a fur-trimmed parka and mukluks. Others discover both; others, neither. Those students who discern neither image often hail from another continent, but those raised in the United States and Canada easily treat the image as depicting an indigenous North American figure. Obviously there is a saliency to the image and to the arrangement of features, though ambivalent, that encourages these mutual interpretations (readings). That is, these readings are socially mediated, as indicated by the distributions of readers and non-readers, those students who "see" the indigenous character and those who do not. The visual manifestation(s) and bivalency of the imagery is rendered interpretable because of its ideological resonance. The social-ideological domain through which it circulates (and is in part created) informs our reading of the image, rendering the two images salient. Similarly, linguistic practices inform and are informed by social-ideological domains, rendering certain interpretive aspects salient and obscuring others. Saliency, then, is a process whereby the (strategic) use of socio-culturally inflected elements *enfigures* representations (utterances, texts, images, performances), investing and

* We would like to thank Anna Babel and Kathryn Campbell-Kibler for inviting us to participate in this project and for their provocative feedback on earlier drafts. We are equally indebted to the anonymous reviewer and to participants of the University of Michigan Linguistic Laboratory, who provided critical yet encouraging comments. We are also grateful for the research support we've received from the following organizations: Wenner-Gren, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Fulbright-Hays, the America-Scandinavia Foundation, and the University of Michigan. Any mistaken or uninterpretable enfiguring of evidence, saliency, or obscurity are our own doing.



Figure 10.1 Indian Eskimo Illusion

Image credit: public domain; www.optical-illusionist.com/illusions/eskimo-face-illusion

constraining them with a certain provenance that will elicit an interpretation.¹ It is a coming-into-being of enfiguration. It is not necessarily awareness, and neither the producer nor the perceiver-interpreter necessarily control or have detailed knowledge about the elements involved in the enfiguring of a representation.

Saliency is the semiotic, socially constituted dynamic within linguistic practice that affects the individual-centered processes of the "reflective" (controlled, metapragmatic awareness) and the "reflexive" (automatic, perceived or "felt" difference) (see Drager and Kirtley, this volume). That is, saliency is a social-culturally entangled and constitutive aspect of a process of representation, where part of what is representable may be cognitively derived and the other part may be socio-culturally derived. A range of linguistic phenomena, from acquisition to literacy, demonstrate and participate in this process. Our focus here will be on projects developing conventions for representing

¹ By "enfigure," we draw on Goffman's notion of "figure" such that what is being circumscribed sociolinguistically is a character or characterization of a type of person. This phrase is analogous to Agha's use of enregisterment and Brigg's and Bauman's uses of entextualization, indicating the making into and marking of some formation as a register and/or text. In our case, "enfigure" refers to the making into and marking of a type of person or a persona, the process of personifying some form in and through practice.

indigenous minority languages. The first case derives from Meek's research in the Yukon Territory, Canada, showing how the representational strategies used in different domains of aboriginal language revitalization brought into relief certain expectations and disagreements. The second case comes from Choksi's work in India with an *adivasi* (a generic term meaning "original inhabitant") group, and focuses on the plethora of representational forms and their distillation across different domains of practice. Once developed, these styles of representation have the potential to circulate and become standardized. Through standardization, they become the taken-for-granted norms of representation. The Yukon case illustrates this goal of language standardization as the aboriginal languages took shape through entextualization and the desire to establish unique orthographic conventions for each of the eight territorially recognized aboriginal languages. These representations instantiate certain phonological and social differences that in return mediate the everyday expectations of language learners, teachers, and observers. The Indian case describes how the enfigurement of one phonetic feature in particular has come to provide an identical basis for competing claims of authority for proponents of multiple competing orthographic systems, refracting ideologies of unity and difference.

Saliency: Linguistic Anthropological Approaches

Although important in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and related disciplines, the concept of saliency has been subject to multiple and often conflicting theorizations. For instance, Auer *et al.* (1998) suggest that the sociolinguistic literature has a conflicted view of saliency, describing the concept as both "objective," that is, as a property of linguistic form, and "subjective," that is, as subject to speakers' attitudes. In their own work on dialectic accommodation, they suggest that it is the "subjective" criteria, such as style switching, representation in writing, or stereotyping which brings certain linguistic features into the speaker's awareness, thus sheltering the feature from accommodation to other linguistic varieties. Recent approaches such as Preston (this volume) have attempted to rethink older concepts of saliency (such as in Trudgill 1986), arguing that rather than thinking of saliency along a subjective/objective binary, one should examine how forms come to be noticed both consciously and unconsciously as part of a wider "folk linguistic theory" (Preston 1996).

Linguistic anthropologists have considered the relationship between saliency and awareness by considering the semiotic processes through which speakers relate linguistic forms to wider social and cultural ideologies of language and language use. Instead of focusing on subjective or objective characteristics, linguistic anthropologists instead consider under what conditions speakers can articulate sociolinguistic difference, and how these articulations, both grounded

in the grammatical organization of the language as well as the socially conditioned organization of communicative practice, become either subject to conflict, debate, and political dispute, or how they serve to inform commonsensical, often unchallenged assumptions about languages and their speakers (cf. Agha 2007; Irvine and Gal 2000).

Questions of saliency in the linguistic anthropological literature have usually been encompassed by explorations in how speakers come to be "aware" of certain forms and not others. For instance, the contrast between "subjective" speaker-centered accounts of language and "objective" linguistic accounts is the subject of Silverstein's 1981 essay, "The limits of awareness." He argues that "meaning" does not reside in the referential content of a particular utterance, but in the pragmatic considerations that render a particular linguistic form subject to metalinguistic awareness. For instance, when certain linguistic features presuppose relationships that are beyond the speech event, such as the difference between "ordinary" and "mother-in-law" vocabulary in the Australian language Djirbal or honorific use in Indonesia, the contrasting features find articulation by native speakers through metapragmatic discourse. Such patterns contrast with Silverstein's own field experience with Wasco-Wishram speakers, where the phonetic gradations between augmentative, neutral, and diminutive nominal forms, though easily manipulated by speakers, were not subject to metapragmatic awareness. This is because, as Silverstein argues, these features created relationships as part of the speech event itself rather than being presupposed. Silverstein suggests at the end of his essay that "the salient aspect of the social fact is meaning; the central manifestation of meaning is pragmatic and metapragmatic speech, and the most obvious feature of pragmatic speech is reference. We are now beginning to see the error in trying to investigate the salient by projection from the obvious" (1981: 21). Saliency is not always obvious nor is it equivalent to awareness. Rather, saliency emerges as part of a process of creation, creating a relationship between linguistic elements and socio-cultural phenomena.

Critical to a linguistic anthropological conception of saliency is Bauman and Briggs's (1990) discussion of "entextualization," and its related processes of decontextualization and recontextualization. As entextualized forms circulate through different domains of practice, speakers arrange these forms in a dialectical relation with their existing ideological commitments. Stylistic or generic elements that maintain links across different texts guide individual interpretations (of relatedness or similarity) without necessarily resulting in individual articulations (or awareness) of the links that allow for these intertextual connections. Unlike the concept of awareness where there is an available metapragmatic commentary, saliency assumes a more tacit juncturing of everyday phenomena. In summary, saliency, in sociolinguistic terms, is the semiotic process by which a figure takes shape through particular linguistic

flourishes (such as in the way in which the Hollywood Injun English enfigures a character as American Indian and socializes an audience to recognize this enfigurement thusly; cf. Meek 2006).

Form and Interpretation: Designing a Language in the Yukon

Our first case from Meek's fieldwork in the Yukon Territory (Canada) attends to salience in relation to aboriginal language revitalization projects. Such projects amplify individual awareness of linguistic form and practice in that they emphasize language documentation and evaluations of linguistic knowledge. They are explicit projects of representation, and thus "reflexive activities" (Agha 2007). At the same time that awareness of linguistic form is heightened in these activities, certain elements gather increasing salience. That is, those elements that are salient in multiple ways (cognitively, socially, culturally, etc.) will be more likely to be enfigured as a language in these cases. However, different participants with different life experiences and expectations will have different ideas about and practices for enfiguring a language.

While the documentation of aboriginal peoples in North America has been a mainstay of European colonization, identifying and mapping populations to specific regions, efforts to document aboriginal languages have been more intermittent. In the Yukon Territory, Canada, early linguistic documentation happened primarily through efforts to preserve aboriginal narratives (e.g. Teit and Boas 1898). Even as late as the 1970s and 1980s, attention to aboriginal language practices happened through the guise of narrative, and often in a standard style of English, thus fueling the pervasive aboriginal tale of theft and abandonment by non-local researchers. Concerted efforts to document aboriginal languages and analyze grammatical structure emerged alongside nationwide efforts to empower First Nations and territorial efforts to negotiate land claims.

As the civil rights movement took shape in the United States, its aboriginal counterpart emerged in Canada. Spearheaded by the Assembly of First Nations, aboriginal peoples began to demand equal treatment and compensation by the Canadian Government. At the same time, Francophone communities were also demanding recognition of and support for their language needs.² Eventually,

² The majority of Canadian legislation regarding language focuses on French and English. Initiated by a study on Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism in the late 1950s, incoming Premier Trudeau established Canada's Official Languages Act in 1969 and then incorporated language policy into the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, sections 16 through 23, making up the first part of the Canadian Constitution. The effect of this legislation was twofold. It placed French on equal (constitutional and institutional) footing with English, and it mandated minority language education rights. That is, it demanded the provision of funding for minority

the Canadian Government instituted an official language policy, recognizing both English and French, established initially in 1969 under then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and then revised in 1988 to accommodate the Constitution Act of 1982, which made explicit reference to language policy and practice for Ottawa, New Brunswick, and Quebec. The Yukon Territorial Government and the Council of Yukon Indians (now Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN)) saw the impending amendments as an opportunity to negotiate their own official languages policy with the Canadian government and approved the Yukon Official Languages Act in 1988:³

(3) The Yukon recognizes the significance of aboriginal languages in the Yukon and wishes to take appropriate measures to preserve, develop, and enhance those languages in the Yukon. S.Y. 1988, c. 13, s. 1.

(3) Le Yukon reconnaît l'importance des langues autochtones au Yukon et souhaite prendre les mesures nécessaires pour maintenir et valoriser ces langues au Yukon, et en favoriser le développement. L.Y. 1988, ch. 13, art. 1

Both the nationwide and territorial discourses incorporated a recognition of and concern for the plight of aboriginal languages (Hinton and Meek, forthcoming; Meek 2009). Funding accompanied this concern, resulting in an initial five years of support from the federal government and renewable thereafter for the documentation of aboriginal languages in the Yukon Territory and the development of programming for aboriginal language education, including teacher training. Language, and languages, became a salient figure in the formatting of minority and aboriginal politics, bringing into the design aboriginal languages while at the same time obscuring to some extent emerging Aboriginal-English dialects and English more generally.⁴

Regimentation of Form: YNLC and Textual Production

The first attempts at institutional documentation by the territorial government and CYFN happened through the Yukon Native Languages Centre, or YNLC. Initially a program, the Centre's establishment in 1985 coincided with initiatives to change national language legislation and recognize multiculturalism as an important dimension of the conceptualization of the Canadian nation-state.

language education, from training teachers to developing curriculum materials, within the provinces and territories.

³ See www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/acts/languages.pdf.

⁴ This is not intended to suggest that the majority language, English, was ever threatened by the political resurgence of minority languages. It is simply to point out that discursively English and English language competence were backgrounded in the legislation and aboriginal proclamations regarding aboriginal rights, languages, and education during a time when the Canadian Government was attempting to terminate Indian status as an answer to aboriginal poverty.

These bureaucratic changes eventually included the commitment of federal funds for language documentation, preservation, and revitalization for the Yukon's First Nations. Under the direction of a MIT-trained linguist, the Centre was responsible for shepherding the emerging aboriginal language programs in the territory's public schools. The model for language reflected in the Centre's discourse, practices, and mission suggest an underlying formal linguistic model, a model that would guide the orthographic conventions developed to represent the territory's eight aboriginal languages.

The Centre remains active today, developing new materials (such as audio books, online language lessons), publicizing aboriginal language activities and accomplishments, supporting the Native Language Instructor Program, and expanding as a resource for indigenous language research and development. As its website notes, "[t]oday the Centre staff is actively teaching, documenting, and promoting Yukon Native languages."⁵ It houses a significant amount of linguistic data (texts, recordings) and documentation of the territory's aboriginal languages. It has also produced a range of texts, available through its website, for learning and teaching the territory's aboriginal languages. According to its website, "[t]hese [materials] include a curriculum guide; language lesson booklets and audio CDs / tapes, and interactive computer CDs; dictionaries and reference materials; story booklets; and games and teaching aids. YNLC continues to expand its website to include more screen and audio materials." Notably, while texts appear to make up the majority of the Centre's efforts, recording and orality are emphasized in the Centre's discourse about the creation of these texts and in their pedagogical orientation.

In the Centre's discussion of the creation of the texts and lessons, it emphasizes that the staff "begin with sound," recording a fluent speaker and then "YNLC linguists . . . prepare the transcriptions of the recorded sentences. Note that we do not proceed from the written to the spoken as is usual with similar projects, but do the reverse. *The fluent speaker is the model.*"⁶ The Centre continues by pointing out the necessity of having the highest possible sound quality for these recordings, in order "to accurately reproduce *the subtle phonetic distinctions which are critically important.*"⁷ While such subtle phonetic distinctions might certainly be important in general, and most certainly to a linguist documenting an endangered language, never once did a speaker or teacher of any of these aboriginal languages bemoan the loss of these phonetic elements in either a learner's speech or in their non-representation in the teaching materials and texts. Although salient to many (at least as dialect differences; see Meek 2007), awareness and metalinguistic

commentary enfigured these languages in relation to the experiences and expectations of the linguists managing these projects.

A similar discourse appears with respect to the site's discussion of the production of the Native Language Audio Story Books. The Centre emphasizes orality and "local ways of speaking;" "[s]ound is a useful tool for teaching and learning any language. But sound is even more useful for native language teaching where the emphasis, especially in earlier grades, is on oral rather than written language."⁸ The site also points out that the story books produced by YNLC are not simply translations of English (or even French) printed materials. Instead,

[a] YNLC story book begins with a set of black and white picture pages. The author composes a story in her own language to match the pictures, and on each page she writes the text corresponding to the picture. When the native language text is complete, the author provides an English translation. Next, the author's voice is recorded, sentence by sentence, onto the computer. The voice recordings and the native language text are then combined with colour pictures into the first draft of the audio story book. At this stage *the linguists can verify that the native language text is spelled correctly* by playing the voice recordings, and they can confirm that the English translation is accurate. Then the book is posted to the web. If a print version is desired, it is made after the audio version is finished.⁹

Unsurprisingly, expertise for oral production resides with fluent Native language speakers and expertise for textual production resides with linguists. Thus, the enfigurement of the territory's aboriginal languages reflects the presuppositions and experiences of university-trained linguists (Meek included) and not necessarily those of fluent Native speakers.

In addition to audio story books and language lessons, the Centre produces materials that specifically target the acquisition of literacy skills, referred to as listening exercises, and these are used in the YNLC's literacy workshops to help students (language teachers and interested others) discern the sound-symbol correspondences. "A typical exercise has three parts: a short list of common words which contrast the sounds; a series of sentences containing one or more of the target sounds; and a sheet with pictures for each of the sentences."¹⁰ The exercises focus on differences between similar sounds (in terms of place of articulation, but differing in manner), such as <tl> and <t'l'> or <t> and <t'>. Vowel sounds were contrasted primarily in relation to length and nasality, with occasional exercises focused on tone. These exercises are intended to socialize the novice writer into a representational scheme designed for aboriginal languages, a scheme that highlights the sound differences within and across languages.

⁵ See www.ynlc.ca/ynlc/index.html.

⁶ See www.ynlc.ca/materials/audio_lessons.html. Emphasis added.

⁷ Emphasis added.

⁸ See www.ynlc.ca/materials/story_books.html.

⁹ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

¹⁰ See www.ynlc.ca/materials/highs/literacy.html.

Interpretation of Form: Learning and Representing the Kaska Language

Literacy exercises were part of Kaska language revitalization from the beginning, facilitating the creation of texts, curriculum materials, and the training of teachers for public school instruction. They were also a regular component of the language workshops that Meek helped organize and run from 1998 to 2000. While elders either demonstrated the pronunciation of the sounds or worked on their beading, the other workshop participants engaged in the exercises, diligently concentrating on what they heard and how to represent the sound on the worksheet. On one occasion, however, the focus was on providing Meek with practice writing and listening, socializing her into appropriate interactional norms and expectations. This meant that Meek stood at the white board and wrote what she heard while each person in the room read out the sentences. Additionally, as linguists, there was interest in documenting the various dialects, especially the one with the interdental fricatives. The enfigurement of Kaska at these literacy events was not only to socialize all of the participants into certain orthographic norms, it was to learn these norms in relation to the particular varieties of Kaska spoken in the community.

The enfigurement of Kaska in the public elementary school classroom rendered this orthographic component salient in slightly different ways towards different ends. For younger grades (kindergarten through second), the literacy exercise emphasized pronunciation, such as demonstrating the difference between “l” and barred or Indian “l” ([l] and its voiceless counterpart). However, rather than having students write the sounds on a piece of paper, they were asked to point to the appropriate letter displayed, using a yard stick.¹¹ In the fourth-grade classroom, this routine played out differently in that we began to focus on sound-morpheme correspondences rather than exclusively sound-phoneme relationships. For example, the verb forms for “X feels Y” offered an opportunity to transform a salient pattern into an explicit, patterned awareness of pronominal form. The teacher pronounced the verb words, such as <sesdl’> (*I feel cold*), the students suggested spellings of her utterance, and then the teacher contrasted that form with a similar one, <sendl’> (*you feel cold*) and so forth. In this way, a salient grammatical pattern for the teacher became an overt one and part of the students’ awareness of Kaska grammar. Pedagogically, the teacher explained that she tried to design her teaching “based on words the children can produce.” In practice, her students seemed to be able to produce a wide range of words and sounds, including novel verb forms that they had never seen, written, or perhaps even

¹¹ The teacher noted that “Native kids appeared to be better” at identifying the differences than the non-Native students. They also appeared to be more proficient at reproducing the sounds.

heard prior to those lessons. In the classroom with younger language users and/or novice learners, this model of language emphasized sound over text, enfiguring the Kaska language as pedagogically different from English and French, the model of language that guided other instruction. In student discourse, this difference underscored students’ decisions to switch from Kaska to French, prompting explanations such as “they’re not coming anymore because they say that French gives them a better education and prepares them better for high school.” The differences in pedagogical styles and norms between these language classes were clearly salient to some students, if not explicitly identifiable discursively.

In order for aboriginal language literacy to occur and to a lesser extent classroom instruction, orthographic conventions were needed. One of the first steps towards textual production in the Yukon was the creation of orthographies with which to depict the various aboriginal languages. To that end, the Centre developed eight distinct orthographies, one for each of the eight territorially recognized aboriginal languages.¹² The forms of the letters are based on Roman script, with sounds aligning somewhat with the conventions of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). For example, the symbol <a> is usually pronounced [a] and not [æ], and <i> is often articulated as [i] in the First Nations’ orthographies. These symbols do not correspond with typical English spelling conventions, those that most First Nations individuals acquired in school and use in their daily lives. That is, the sound [i] is not represented as <ee> or <ea> and the sound [æ] is not represented as <a>, as in <cat>. Instead, it is symbolized by an <e> with a straight line over it. And [u] appears as <u> with a straight line over the top, whereas in other aboriginal languages the symbol <u> (or <u> with an umlaut) indicates [schwa]. However, certain distinctions and styles of representation salient to the linguist may not be as transparent or parse-able to the non-linguist.

During workshops and in interviews with teachers, learners, and elders, people often complained that these specialized symbols were cumbersome, especially the diacritics. In part, their frustration with the orthographic conventions managed by YNLC reflected the fact that these practices diverged from their own intuitive orthographic habits, habits derived from their experiences with English. At the workshop where we developed the Kaska alphabet book (Meek *et al.* 2002), the women with whom Meek worked decided to modify some of the representational elements in order to make the text “more accessible” and “more readable.” Plus, as one of them put it, “[they] already

¹² The eight languages are: Tlingit, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Han, Kaska, Tahlan, Tagish, and Gwich’in. On a logo developed by the former Aboriginal Language Services to symbolize aboriginal language revitalization in the Yukon, each language is represented encircling in translation the phrase “We Are Our Language” (see Meek 2010: 131).

know the tones so why would [they] have to mark them?" A few years later, when Meek was visiting one of these women at her office, she leafed through a copy of the book only to discover that it had been marked up with bars over "u's" and other similar "corrections" – the diacritics that had been removed had been re-added. Could it be that the linguists at the Centre who managed and corrected orthographic representations in their own texts had altered this one? Regardless of the answer, the women's attempt to eliminate elements that were salient to them had re-materialized. While aboriginal language revitalization in the Yukon has in part been an attempt to re-enfranchise First Nations peoples, it remains at the same time a national project invested in modern, dominant conventions of linguistic representation salient and sanctioned institutionally.

Another complicating feature is the unique representational form of the different orthographies. Captured succinctly in the Yukon Territory's logo for aboriginal languages, each language and accompanying language communities have their own style of orthographic representation (see footnote 11). YNLC's website also demarcates the languages and groups of speakers in this way, together with guidelines for using each orthography in their language lesson booklets. (The alphabetic charts for representing each of the eight recognized languages can be found through the website's "Language" link that takes users to a list of the eight languages and links to PDFs of the alphabets for each language.¹³)

Some of the linguistic differences rendered orthographically are already salient to language users, if not part of their discourse about linguistic differences. For example, Northern Tutchone has grammatical high tone, while Southern Tutchone has grammatical low tone. Northern Tutchone speakers remarked on this difference as well as deploying it to personify different characters in oral narrative performances. In contrast, other orthographic differences are not as well motivated. For example, to represent an unstressed vowel, schwa, orthographic conventions vary – an "a" with an umlaut in one case versus a bare "a" versus a bare "u." This variability – especially in relation to the use of an elaborate system of diacritics – inhibits comprehensibility across languages (and dialects) and inhibits usage of the orthography and writing more generally. It also deviates from the writing system already known to those who read and write – the English alphabet. Across the board, Kaska speakers and learners indicated that they would prefer a representational system that coincided with their current writing habits. The one exception was an elder who asked Meek to develop a syllabary for representing Kaska, analogous to the syllabic systems used for Inuit (Inuktitut) and Cree. The

¹³ See www.ynlc.ca/languages/index.html.

rationale for this request suggested an alignment with other First Nations and their writing traditions in counter-alignment to the nation-state and a traumatic colonial history epitomized for many by residential schooling and its association with the Roman alphabet.

Another challenge raised by orthographic representation concerns dialects and their recognition. While dialects are certainly salient and socially significant, the conceptual predisposition to orthographically recognize group differences aggravates contestations over linguistic representations in texts and pedagogical materials and confrontations around pedagogy and teaching. Kaska parents and grandparents were concerned that their child or grandchild would learn the "wrong" dialect in school, or not learn their own dialect. This concern related to their awareness of dialects and their association of dialects with matrilineal (Meek 2010). That is, dialect differences were part of the enfigurement of familial belonging in this community. These concerns over dialect differences, however, did not extend to English or French. Similarly, another parent thought that the then preschool teacher "[was] going to teach the children Cree," an indirect resolution to the dialect dilemma that obscures the variability within Cree itself. Thus, the linguistic variation within Kaska became indexical of and enfigured familial belonging, which then mediated the language's representation on the page.

This complexity heightens the recognition of difference across languages (and First Nations) and to some extent discourages written communication across aboriginal languages and First Nations. Given the trauma of residential schooling, whether directly as physical abuse or indirectly through neglect and isolation, where literacy skills were mandated, the practice itself is already a fraught one for many First Nations individuals. The added orthographic complexity intended to represent features iconic of dialect differences begins to mask the mutual intelligibility of these languages, and these forms. Salience of one kind – intelligibility – is swapped for salience of another kind – sociolinguistic difference.

Saliencies of Sound and Saliencies of Script: The Case of Santali

Similar to the discussion of orthographies and language construction in the Yukon, in eastern India among *adivasi* communities, sociolinguistic difference does not arise from any substantive difference in the phonetic form of the features, but rather in their visual properties as orthographically instantiated within a script. Thus, what is considered a salient phonetic difference between languages or even within a given language, may in fact result from the differential ideological associations attached to the multiple script systems in use, and how orthographic practice and ideologies of script enfigure both evaluations of correct "pronunciation" and speakers' political commitments.

In order to illustrate this, we draw on the rich and politically fraught linguistic and graphic milieu of eastern India, focusing especially on the graphic practices of Santali-speakers, with and among whom Choksi has conducted research since 2009. Santali is spoken throughout the eastern Indian states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal, as well as in Bangladesh and Nepal. It is classified as a Munda language of the Austro-Asiatic family, and like speakers of most Munda languages in India, Santali speakers are considered *adivasis* (indigenous people, or in India, scheduled tribe) by the Indian Government. Most Santals are bilingual in at least one or more of the dominant Indo-European languages (Bengali, Hindi, Oriya, Assamese, etc.), in addition to often knowing other Munda languages spoken in the area.

Santali was first written down by missionaries in the late nineteenth century. The first printed book in Santali was a song collection documented by American missionary Jeremiah Phillips in 1845 and published in a modified Eastern Brahmi (Bengali) script. In 1863, drawing on the work of German linguist Karl Lepsius, Norwegian missionaries L. O. Skrefsrud and P. O. Boddling created a modified Roman orthography to represent Santali, and they later began a Santali-language printing press, publishing numerous grammars, dictionaries, and story and song collections, as well as a Santali-language Bible.

Following Indian independence in 1947, India was divided into federal states on linguistic grounds, and each territory had an official language to be represented in a single, official script. For instance, the official language of West Bengal was Bengali in Eastern Brahmi script, while for Orissa it was Oriya in the Utkal script. Bihar (and later Jharkhand) were to adopt Hindi as their state language in the Devanagari script. Santals, who mostly resided in the forest and hill areas far outside urban centers, found themselves on multiple sides of the borders of these newly created entities. As a result of literacy programs, Santals learned to read and write in the script of their respective territory. Santals then modified the respective state scripts (Eastern Brahmi, Utkal, or Devanagari) with some diacritics in order to write their own language in those scripts.

Right before and after Indian independence, there was a movement in the *adivasi* areas of Bengal, Orissa, and Bihar for a separate *adivasi*-majority state called "Jharkhand." The state was eventually not recognized in the initial federal organization in independent India; however, the movement spurred on new social movements among various *adivasi* groups around language and cultural assertion. As part of this movement, a Santali schoolteacher, poet, and dramatist, Raghunath Murmu, developed his own script for Santali known as "Ol-Chiki" or "writing-symbol." In addition, Murmu also wrote a grammar (*Ronod*) justifying the use of the script as, he argued, it better represented the sounds of the Santali language than any of the existing scripts in use at the

time, including the Roman orthography. The Ol-Chiki script became popular, especially among the southern Santali speaking areas of Orissa, southern Jharkhand, and southeastern West Bengal.

Because Santals had a tightly knit social and ritual system that resisted incorporation into the Hindu caste-hierarchy, they were targeted for missionary evangelization in the nineteenth century. As in many contexts, language became a primary site of missionary activity. When missionaries first encountered and began describing Santali, they immediately noticed its phonetic and morphological differences from the neighboring dominant Indo-Aryan languages. Santals themselves have a distinction between their own speech, what they called *hor roꝛ*, or speech of "men" and *diku roꝛ*, or speech of "foreigners." Yet, the distinction was more a recursive differentiation between an already existing social distinction between *hor* and *diku*, and differed, as Banerjee (1999) notes, in different times and places. Thus, the distinction between "Santali" and "Bengali" or other Indo-Aryan languages at the level of phoneme was most likely a product of missionary intervention.

Enfiguring Sounds and Persons: The Case of the Santali /ə/

In this section, we discuss how certain phonetic elements have become metapragmatically salient, acting recursively to signal differentiation at multiple social levels. We argue that it is through the process of writing, and socialization into a missionary-derived ideology of isomorphism, that the Santali language requires a unique "script" in order to adequately grasp the phonetic system that has in fact rendered these elements salient. Yet, the salience of these phonetic elements is foregrounded not by continuities with missionary practice, but rather by the discontinuities and conflicts which have arisen as Santali-language literacy increases within a multilingual and multiscriptural milieu in which issues of script, language, and representation continue to exist on a contested political terrain.

One particular vowel, the mid-central vowel /ə/, illustrates this complexity. According to Anderson (2007: 11), the /ə/ in Santali either can exist as an "allophone of /a/ or phoneme of limited distribution /ə/ in both Northern and Southern Santali dialects." Indeed, during Choksi's fieldwork, he heard examples of both [a] and [ə] in free variation, but also, in certain words, as clear phonemic contrast. The /ə/ in Santali, however, although transcribed by linguists such as Anderson as a mid-central vowel, is slightly higher than the /ə/ in Indo-European languages such as Hindi. Thus, it is perhaps closer to the close-mid central vowel, transcribed in Vietnamese (also in the Austroasiatic language family) as /ɛ:/ (Brunelle 2014: 94). In either case, it remains distinct from the Hindi /ə/, as well as the eastern Indo-European languages such as Bengali, Oriya, and Assamese, which do not have /ə/ at all.

While the phoneme is not exceedingly common, it nevertheless occupies a pre-eminent position in debates around Santali script and language. This likely has to do with the way in which it came to be recognized as a salient element of distinction, both in the entextualization of Santali grammar and in the creation of the Santali script. In what was perhaps the first grammar of Santali, Jeremiah Phillips's *An Introduction to the Sántál Language* (1852), which was written in Eastern Brahmi (Bengali) characters, the phonetic distinction is not made within the orthography at all. The only thing "peculiar" to Santali mentioned by Phillips in his opening section is the "half-formed guttural sounds" (3), or word-final glottal stops. As far as vowels, Phillips's description follows closely the vowel paradigm of Bengali.

It was later, during the development of the Roman script, that the /ə/ vowel was specifically encoded within the script through the use of diacritical marks. The Norwegian missionary P. O. Bodding, who was one of the most influential and prolific documenters of Santali grammar, justifies the use of Roman script in his material because, he suggests, the Bengali and Devanagari characters "do not lend themselves easily to diacritical marks" (1922: 3). Diacritical marks, moreover, are necessary, according to Bodding, because "the lack of them is the cause of much uncertainty and wrong pronunciation, specifically with foreigners, both when reading and speaking the language" (5). Thus, the Roman script facilitated what Bodding believed to be "correct" pronunciation specifically for *foreigners* (most likely foreign missionaries).

However, for Bodding, the enthusiasm with which Santals learned to write their language in the Roman script also justified its use. Bodding writes:

Santals have a mind much directed towards concrete and special subjects. To distinguish in writing between the different sounds is therefore something in accordance with their mental character. We have very little trouble in teaching them to write correctly, when they use our system. A better proof of its soundness is not needed (1922: 5).

Bodding's statement above reveals a double ideological move that occurred during the period of socialization into the Roman script. On the one hand, we see that an ideology of "correctness," which Bodding mentions in relation to acquisition by foreigners, was also simultaneously applied to the training of Santali speakers. On the other hand, the "correct writing system," in the case of the modified Roman script, corresponded not only with Santali sounds, but also enfigured the Santali "mental character." Thus, sound, script, and the collective psychological character of a group were all merged, Bodding claims, in Santals's adoption of the Roman-Santali script. That is, whether or not Santali speakers were aware of their intellectual proclivity towards the Roman-Santali script, the script's adoption renders salient a system of representation that emphasizes sound differences, and correlates that system with the unique psycho-cultural characteristics of a Santal person.

Bodding's activity was mainly in the northern Santali-speaking region of the Santal Parganas (in what is present-day Dumka district, Jharkhand), but the Roman writing system was adopted by all the major missions in the Santali-speaking region in an agreement brokered by Bodding in 1905.¹⁴ Within the script, the /ə/ was clearly marked as part of what Bodding called the "resultant" vowels. Resultants were marked with a dot (.) diacritic below the vowel, what in Santali is called a *tudək*. Bodding says that in Santali, "all the 'ordinary vowels' may be resultant ... in writing we use the dot only with ə [ə] sometimes with o when it is demanded by necessity and seldom with e" (1922: 2). The [ə] vowel as it is written in Roman script, the only regularly marked "resultant" in the Roman script, actually stood in for several concomitant sounds. It "seems to be a modified high-back narrow ... mid-back narrow ... or a modified low-mixed narrow. ə thus represents several sounds" (1922: 13). The [ə] therefore represents, like any grapheme, a range of phonetic variation in addition to being allophonic with [a] in many cases. Thus, only through orthography does the [ə] come to stand for a distinct sound segment.

As Santals became trained, Bodding noted, to write "correct" speech, they also became trained to notice certain distinctions. Missionaries and literate Santals underscored these distinctions as *unique* to the Santali language, as well as the Santali "mental character." The intertextual linkages between script, particular sounds, and a unique language and culture were part of a broader missionary agenda to foment a national identity among the Santals as distinct from Hinduism in order to promote evangelization and build an independent national church (Carrin-Bouez 1986). Script, and in particular the diacritics utilized in orthography and the sounds associated with those diacritics, became foregrounded in literacy socialization as a salient feature of differentiation. They not only iconized the Santali people and language (*hoṛas* opposed to the *diku* or non-Santal), but they also recursively iconized "correct" language and script over all the other script systems in current use (such as the Devanagari or Bengali scripts).

The use of Roman script was limited in numerous ways. Roman-script presses were only available at a few missions, while by the mid twentieth century Brahmi-script presses were widely available. Also, increased access to public education meant that Santals were becoming literate in the Indo-Aryan languages and Brahmi script, and thus Brahmi-script literacy far outpaced literacy in Roman. Finally, Roman script, because it was developed and propagated in a missionary context, was associated with evangelization.¹⁵

¹⁴ MS Fol 1686, 9:6, Santalia archive, National Library, Oslo.

¹⁵ Thus, Roman script is often associated with Christian Santals, although non-Christian Santali speakers, particularly in north Jharkhand and northern West Bengal, use it as well.

Table 10.1 /ə/ [or /ə:/] in Santali Orthographic Systems

Script	Symbol	
Roman	ə	“Resultant” (Bodding 1922: 2)
Devanagari	आ	Modified from आ /a/
Eastern Brahmi	𑒗	Modified from Bengali অ+র্‌ /au/
Ol-Chiki	𑒗	<i>gəhlə tudək</i> (Murmu 2005: 8)

Yet, even though Devanagari and Eastern Brahmi scripts were adopted, the saliency of certain phonetic features that were first encoded in the Roman script remained the same. Even though Brahmi-script Santali was never taught in a formal setting, both the Eastern Brahmi and Devanagari scripts were modified with diacritics or elements that do not exist in Bengali or Hindi respectively to represent the “resultant vowel” encoded in the Roman script ə (see Table 10.1).

For a non-standard script, this modification remains remarkably consistent, spreading mostly through contact with published material, including pamphlets, books, posters, etc.

Despite the widespread use of Brahmi scripts for writing Santali, Raghunath Murmu and other supporters of Ol-Chiki script argued that none of Bengali, Devanagari, or Roman adequately represented the Santali phonetic repertoire, and a separate script was necessary (Zide 1999). The script was also seen as integral to larger Santali aspirations for separate statehood and was popularized in song and drama (Lotz 2007). In the post-independence period, Murmu founded an organization known as ASECA (Adivasi Socio-Educational Association) in order to promote the use of Ol-Chiki in Santali-speaking areas. As Murmu notes in his grammar (2005: 8), part of Ol-Chiki’s innovation is the accuracy in which it represents Santali vowels, in particular the /ə/. Murmu represented this vowel through the creation of what in the Ol-Chiki system is called the *gəhlə tudək*, a diacritic (.) attached to the Ol-Chiki grapheme /a/ 𑒗 to make 𑒗. /ə/. Consequently, although the script replaces the graphic set with new characters, it maintains and underscores aspects of phonetic segmentation that are salient to the very claims of autonomy that underlie the script’s creation in the first place. Moreover, in the Ol-Chiki system the diacritic is given an actual name and explanation within the orthographic system, which heightens its saliency as a point of differentiation. For Ol-Chiki advocates, therefore, no longer does the vowel itself, as segmented out in script, signify differentiation and “correct” speech, but rather it is the specific use of the named *gəhlə tudək* diacritic within Ol-Chiki, over and above other means of signification. Thus, the *gəhlə tudək* once again, within the ideology of Ol-Chiki script, re-enfigures a unique representation of the Santali language/culture.

Throughout Choksi’s interviews, Ol-Chiki advocates and ASECA members consistently emphasized the importance of the *gəhlə tudək* as both central to the Santali language and simultaneously a unique innovation of Ol-Chiki script. During initial interviews with a former general secretary of ASECA West Bengal, one of the first things he mentioned about Ol-Chiki script in relation to Eastern Brahmi or Devanagari was the *gəhlə tudək*. He said that no other script provides accurate pronunciation of the /ə/ vowel. When Choksi asked him whether the Eastern Brahmi-Santali convention to write the /ə/ with a modified “ou-kar” (see Table 10.1) represents the sound equally well, the former secretary responded by saying, in English, that this representation was “against the rules of Bengali grammar and therefore not accepted by linguists.” In his formulation, the Eastern Brahmi script enfigured “Bengali” grammar as well as “Bengali” persons (i.e. non-Santals), and because the writing of the /ə/ in Eastern Brahmi did not correspond to conventional Bengali orthography, it was not correct. “Correct” grammar and pronunciation requires, in this view, a unique orthographic convention which foregrounds not only the vowel sound, but also the various semiotic elements (ideological and intertextual) that render this vowel sound salient.

The *gəhlə tudək* is seen by Ol-Chiki advocates as not only representing Santali sounds, but also promoting a version of correct speech that enfigures a distinct notion of Santali language and culture. This is highlighted by the fact that some Ol-Chiki advocates, such as one of Raghunath Murmu’s close colleagues who has devoted most of his life to the promotion of the script, argue that the *gəhlə tudək* is being lost in some regions. For instance, he reported that in some regions of West Bengal, instead of *dəl* “lentil soup,” they say *dail*. This is because, he suggested, of the “Hindi” influence in the region (in standard Hindi, it is pronounced *dal*). He went on to say that one has to preserve and maintain “tradition,” and this is why the Ol-Chiki script, and the innovation of the *gəhlə tudək*, is so important. He emphasized that this is “our own” pronunciation and for that we need “our own” script to maintain that tradition. However, the very emphasis on the distinction of the *gəhlə tudək*, as the advocate’s discourse makes clear, obscures the widespread phonetic diversity practised in everyday speech throughout the Santali-speaking area.

Indeed, in Ol-Chiki classes attended by Choksi, other students, who were all native speakers, sometimes pronounced words written with the *gəhlə tudək* with [a] sounds. This is likely because the phoneme, as noted above, in everyday speech or in some dialects has tended towards /a/. Yet, the pronunciation was corrected by the teachers, in part because learning to pronounce the *gəhlə tudək* correctly was part of learning to read Ol-Chiki script. Thus, the saliency of the *gəhlə tudək* sound was socialized in and through the learning of Ol-Chiki, which is perhaps why it inspired such passion in Ol-Chiki advocates. The relevance and adequacy of the script rested on its claims to uniquely map

onto a whole set of distinctions that have been circulating since Santali was put into writing a century ago, and thus innovations like the *gəhlə tudək'*, which may not be as relevant in everyday speech, have to be emphasized at the moment of learning. This was illustrated by the fact that as we were studying the *gəhlə tudək'* in class, one of the Ol-Chiki teachers mentioned that sometimes ASECA members go too far, placing the *gəhlə tudək'* on words which are correctly pronounced without it.¹⁶

At the same time that Ol-Chiki advocates justify the uniqueness of their script by appealing to the /ə/, Roman script advocates justify the uniqueness of their script through an identical discourse. As Choksi was talking to an editor of a Catholic Santali-language journal that employs the Roman script, the editor mentioned that in his area of the Santal Parganas (northern Jharkhand) there was a movement to promote the Ol-Chiki script. However, he said that he believes that Ol-Chiki is clearly defective, because it does not adequately represent the /ə/. This is because, he argues, Ol-Chiki developed in the southern Santali speaking areas, where they speak a mixed language and do not routinely pronounce the /ə/, and now they want to impose their style upon Santali speakers in the Santal Parganas where /ə/ is routinely pronounced. In addition, he added, the Ol-Chiki movement is explicitly anti-Christian, and they are trying to exclude Christians through the medium of script.

While it is doubtful that the editor knows how to read Ol-Chiki, as the *gəhlə tudək'* is a central feature of the script, the sound has become salient for him at a number of levels. The phonetic feature enfigures regional differentiation (northern versus southern Santali), where northern Santali, the language recorded by Bodding, is often seen as more “original” or “superior” to the dialects of the southern region from where Ol-Chiki originated. Finally, the feature also refracts a distinction between Christian and non-Christian Santals. Hence, supporters of different script systems can make *identical* linguistic arguments about an *identical* phonetic feature, but still believe their positions to be diametrically opposed to one another. The phonetic-graphemic feature thus is not salient as an abstract linguistic feature, but acts as a metonym of an entire orthographic system that in turn enfigures claim to distinction and uniqueness, rendering, in the name of language, certain sets of speakers, regions, and histories salient, while obscuring others. This claim to both unity (of form, speakers, script, and code) and differentiation (between scripts, speakers, regions, etc.), made by advocates of both Roman and Ol-Chiki, is built on long-standing ideological distinctions between *hoj* and *diku* and its recursive manifestations, such as “correct” and “incorrect.” Consequently, the claims to uniqueness rely on the

¹⁶ The notion that ASECA was trying to promote the use of the *gəhlə* by expanding its use was one encountered by Choksi elsewhere as well.

presence of multiple systems. Conflict and opposition within a multisciplinary milieu ensure that features such as the /ə/ remain salient.

Discussion: Salience and Obscurity

In the previous sections, we outlined the relationship between ideology, salience, and linguistic and orthographic form. Both cases involved indigenous-language minorities who have been subject to a history of colonization and marginalization (in the form of British imperialism), and who recently have been involved in projects to create new orthographies for their languages. The Kaska case examined differences and similarities in the ways in which Kaska language users and more formally trained linguists crafted and standardized an orthography for Kaska, and how such representational processes mediate and conflict with everyday expectations. The second case involved the history of orthographic practice among speakers of Santali, an indigenous Austro-Asiatic language spoken in eastern India. In both cases, we showed how a small segment of grammar and usage, when crafted into the socially contested field of orthographic practice, became salient icons of much larger social, political, and historical debates taking place within these two indigenous communities.

Our cases are not unique; they coincide with other documented situations in which speakers, through orthographic practices, render certain linguistic segments both salient and obscure. For instance, in describing a writing and literacy program among the Tolowa, a Native American community from the Pacific Northwest, Collins and Blot suggest that the “question of textual form, whether to use Unifon or IPA, had implications for claims to identity, that is, affiliations with different families and claims to tribal identity. These questions brought into a play a politics of tribal recognition and academic authority, of powers desired and feared in practices of writing and styles of representation” (2003: 14). Consequently, the absence of standardization and ideological regimentation and the diversity of the ways in which linguistic segments are crafted in orthographic form foregrounds those segments in ways that other discursive domains may not have foregrounded them.

Thus, the “phonetic component” of language becomes “salient” not simply due to disputes over pronunciation. Rather, the form of representation (i.e. how a character is shaped and what orthographic system is used) also becomes subject to discussion and dispute (also see Bender 2002; Mitchell and Webster 2011; Schieffelin and Doucet 1998; see also, Cahill and Rice 2014). While the Tolowa debate may ostensibly be over phonetic value, the phonetic value only becomes salient in metapragmatic discourse as it is intertextually aligned with orthographic form, family and tribal affiliation, the politics of tribal recognition, and a linguistic academic discourse which privileges a “faithful”

representation of sound. At the same time, as Collins and Blot also note, the alignment between social categories and linguistic form as a process of entextualization necessarily leaves out, or obscures, the multiplicity of divergent ideologies to which that form may have been aligned, rendering an orthography or orthographic character ideologically contested within a given community of practice.

Thus, in tracking the creation of orthographies, both among aboriginal communities in the Yukon, Canada, and among an *adivasi* community in eastern India, we have outlined conditions under which speakers became aware of linguistic form as well as the processes by which these particular grammatical forms assume sociolinguistic salience. This has involved, as the Yukon case suggests, the entwining of different discourses, which have intertextually connected emergent orthographies to official Western ethnolinguistic ideologies of nation and ethnic difference, while at the same time signifying First Nation movements for sovereignty and autonomy. Similarly, among Santali speakers, /ə/ has come to enfigure, through missionary discourses and post-independence political mobilization, ethnic difference and sociolinguistic unity among proponents of multiple script systems.

When discussions of linguistic form enter into metapragmatic discourse, and are mobilized in political practice, these forms garner a new set of meanings, anchored through intertextuality and more particular semiotic processes such as fractal recursivity and iconization (Irvine and Gal 2000). As long as speakers are aware not only of difference in form, but also anchor these differences within a larger sociopolitical field of difference, we suggest, these forms will continue to remain sociolinguistically salient. However, we note as well that practices, forms, and ideologies may become jointly sedimented in standardized repertoires such as orthographies, and differences may no longer be seized upon. For instance, the equation of orthography with groupness, or the phonetic foundation of orthographic systems in both the Yukon and eastern India, have obscured other relevant vectors of difference that could have potentially informed the sociopolitical field. In the case of Santali, the seeming agreement of the entextualization of /ə/ within different Santali scripts has obscured the significant and important differences in everyday pronunciation upon which speakers could also have drawn to assert both difference and unity. For the Kaska language, competing orthographic representations (as in “corrections”) constrain salience, shifting into focus a salient pattern that matters to one audience (the linguists), but not the other (Kaska language speakers and teachers). Salience is limited by social experiences, expectations, evaluations, and context, the elements that allow for connections to be made or obscured. Yet salience constrains dimensions of awareness and obscurity immanent in processes of sociolinguistic enfigurement at the very moment of its emergence.

Conclusion: Salience and Awareness

Is salience about production or is it about perception? For us, it is about (establishing) the relationship between the two. Although Labov’s “monitor” model and Silverstein’s metalinguistic model suggest that salience is primarily about perception (listener awareness), Preston’s levels and McGowan’s degrees of awareness (as discursive availability, accuracy, detail) and (speaker) control, together with Briggs and Bauman’s model of entextualization, suggest that (sociolinguistic) salience happens in relation to both perception and production. Salience emerges through the discursive mediation of performance (production) and the habitual attenuation of interpretation (comprehension/perception) from exposure or experience in everyday life (cf. Drager and Kirtley, this volume). Salience becomes artifactualized in the reflexive adjustments made by interlocutors in relation to the interactional project and their investment in that project, that is, in relation to the socio-cultural context (such as individual biographies, national politics, cultural heritage, and social differences). In our case, we focused on the creation and implementation of orthographies for minority languages, revealing how (con)textual salience provoked reflexivity and awareness of linguistic form beyond the form itself. Both cases show how linguistic representations influenced and were influenced by the models of language into and through which people had already been socialized, alongside the political-economic context of their creation. These cases were useful for investigating salience and awareness because they were “reflexive” activities (Agha 2007), “activities in which communicative signs [were] used to typify other perceivable signs” (Agha 2007: 16), i.e. orthographic form to typify linguistic form. And, as Campbell-Kibler notes, “through these activities, reflexive models are produced, transmitted, and altered, and through these models speakers and listeners make social sense of their own and others’ linguistic (or human) behavior. Such activity is as much a part of sociolinguistic behavior as the utterance of sociolinguistically variable forms itself” (this volume; p. 130).

Thus, salience, as a kind of indexical process, connects production and perception. It is the process by which an utterance or other linguistic gesture evokes an interpretation (perception of a linguistic performance or utterance) through the use of particular linguistic elements under particular socio-cultural conditions, rendering the linguistic gesture sufficiently meaningful. Of course, this process can be far more precarious, resulting in unintended connections (and interpretations), as well as obscuring others. For example, Drager 2011 shows how experience influences interpretation differently. Participants from different generations listened to speech samples. Older subjects “heard” a difference between speech samples from older speakers and those from younger speakers, while younger subjects did not. While overt awareness

of differences may be minimal, if at all, the paths through which relevant activation takes place may be more routinized and established in long-term memory of older listeners than for younger listeners (Drager and Kirtley, this volume). Memory and routinization (or socialization) participate in the management of salience. Similarly, McGowan (this volume) provides evidence showing how in production several (non-Chinese-speaking) actors' performances of Mandarin-Chinese-accented English demonstrated "[a] surprising availability and control of a range of features which shared many features in common either with reported features of authentic L1 Mandarin-accented English or with aspects of authentic alternations" (p. 55). While they were unaware of their own "authentic" linguistic maneuvers, they were able to present an interpretable "Asian" character for an English-speaking audience. Their grammatical knowledge, together with their training as actors and participants in US society, rendered their linguistic characterizations readable as "Asian" (although not necessarily as "Mandarin Chinese"). In our exploration of orthographic development, linguistic and social dimensions proved relevant and salient to these projects of typification. Through the enfigurement of two different minority languages, particular features of these languages were recruited to signify particular social differences, while others were obscured in order to heighten (or diminish) the various aspects of difference that were being invested in by the parties involved in these projects of extextualization. For the Kaska case, one administrative goal was to mark Kaska (the language and its speakers) as socially and politically distinct. This marking happened in part through the development of particular orthographic conventions. For Santali, political distinction was also entailed in the development and use of orthographic conventions, although in this case, a range of scripts was used across different contexts to index and assert a Santali presence within the social and linguistic landscape. The salience of these linguistic practices became emblemized orthographically and strategically placed textually in order to raise political awareness.

In summary, salience is that which is susceptible to being noticed by a particular kind of interpreter or subject who is set to notice and not merely as a property of perception or of language or of memory (of cognition). This susceptibility is also or mutually a result of the social-cultural context within which some (linguistic) form is constituted, uttered, and performed (the situation that sets up the noticing). Expectations mediated by socializing practices can render certain features or dimensions more salient than others. The everyday (built and natural) environment mediates perception, thus socializing individuals into certain (expected) patterns, aesthetics, styles, and arrangements. Language is similarly influenced by discourses and ideologies relating linguistic practice and form to socio-cultural differences and patterns (by group or heritage or politics, etc.). Everyday experiences and expectations also

influence memory, viewed as socialization into linguistic, social, and cultural routines throughout a lifetime. Salience emerges in tandem with these cognitive domains and socialization. However, salience shifts into awareness at moments of disjuncture – whether as perceived difference (Squires, this volume), as ideological and interactional dissonance (Meek 2010), or as orthographic disagreement. Such unexpected moments, remarkable events, or unique experiences affect salience in that they can be, and are, the catalysts for transforming that which is salient into something that can be artifactualized, typified, categorized, and leveraged for other projects, future investments, and social-linguistic change.

REFERENCES

- Agha, A. 2007. *Language and Social Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Anderson, Gregory D. S. 2007. *The Munda Verb: Typological Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Auer, P., Barden, B., and Grosskopf, B., 1998. Subjective and objective parameters determining "salience" in long-term dialect accommodation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 2:163–87.
- Banerjee, Prathama. 1999. Historic acts? Santal rebellion and the temporality of practice. *Studies in History* 15(2):209–46.
- Bauman, Richard and Briggs, Charles L. 1990. Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59–88.
- Bender, M. 2002. From "easy phonetics" to the syllabary: An orthographic division of labor in Cherokee language education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 33:90–117.
- Bodding, P. O. 1922. *Materials for a Santali Grammar I: Mostly Phonetic*. Dumka, India: Santal Mission of the Northern Churches.
- Brunelle, Marc. 2014. Vietnamese (Tieng Viet), in Paul Sidwell and Jenny Mathias (eds.), *The Handbook of Austroasiatic Languages*, Vol. 1, pp. 909–46. Leiden: Brill.
- Cahill, Michael and Rice, Keren (eds.). 2014. *Developing Orthographies for Unwritten Languages*. Dallas, TX: SIL International.
- Carrin-Bouez, Marine. 1986. De la langue au discours : Une dialectique du repli et de la modernisation dans une minorité tribale de l'Inde. *Langage et Société* 35(1):67–91.
- Collins, James and Blot, Richard K. 2003. *Literacy and Literacies: Texts, Power, and Identity*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Drager, Katie. 2011. Speaker age and vowel perception. *Language and Speech* 54(1):99–121.
- Hinton, Leanne and Meek, Barbra. Forthcoming. Language revitalization: Canada and U.S., in S. M. Coronel-Molina and T. L. McCarty (eds.), *The Handbook of Indigenous Language Revitalization in the Americas*. New York: Routledge.
- Irvine, Judy and Gal, Susan. 2000. Language ideology and linguistic differentiation, in Paul V. Kroskrity (ed.), *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*,

- pp. 35–83. Santa Fe, NM and Oxford, UK: School of American Research Press and J. Currey.
- Lotz, Barbara. 2007. Casting a glorious past: Loss and recovery of the Ol-Chiki Script, in Angelika Malinar (ed.), *Time in India: Concepts and Practices*, pp. 235–62. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Meek, Barbra A. 2006. And the Injun goes how!: Representations of American Indian English in (white) public space. *Language in Society* 35(1):93–128.
2007. Respecting the language of elders: Ideological shift and linguistic discontinuity in a Northern Athapascan community. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17(1):23–43.
2009. Language ideology and aboriginal language revitalization in the Yukon, in Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field (eds.), *Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
2010. *We Are Our Language*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Meek, Barbra A., Jules, Leda, Skidmore, Marie, and Magun, Aggie. 2002. *Kaska Alphabet Book*. Whitehorse, YT (Canada): Queen's Printer.
- Mitchell, B. and Webster, A. K., 2011. "We don't know what we become:" Navajo ethnopoetics and an expressive feature in a poem by Rex Lee Jim. *Anthropological Linguistics* 53:259–86.
- Murmu, Raghunath. 2005. *Ronod*. Jhargram, West Bengal: Marsal Bamber.
- Phillips, J. 1852. *An Introduction to the Santál Language; Consisting of a Grammar, Reading Lessons, and a Vocabulary*. Calcutta: Calcutta Schoolbook Society.
- Preston, Dennis. 1996. Whaddayaknow?: The modes of folk linguistic awareness 1. *Language Awareness* 5:40–74.
- Schieffelin, Bambi B. and Doucet, Rachelle Charlier. 1994. The "real" Haitian Creole: Ideology, metalinguistics, and orthographic choice. *American Ethnologist* 21(1):176–200.
- Silverstein, Michael. 1981. The limits of awareness, Sociolinguistic Working Paper no. 84, pp. 1–16. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Teit, James Alexander, and Boas, Franz. 1898. Traditions of the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia . . . collected and annotated, in Franz Boas (ed.), *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, Vol. 6. New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- Trudgill, P. 1986. *Dialects in Contact*. New York: Blackwell.
- Zide, Norman. 1999. Three Munda scripts. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 22(2):199–232.

11 Sociolinguistic Agency and the Gendered Voice: Metalinguistic Negotiations of Vocal Masculinization among Female-to-Male Transgender Speakers

Lal Zimman

Introduction: Agency and Transgender Voices

In both sociocultural linguistics and contemporary transgender politics, there is a strong connection between agency, power, and ideology. Sociolinguists have, since the field's earliest days, recognized that speakers have control over at least some aspects of their linguistic practices, and that understanding linguistic variation depends in part on researchers' ability to tap into these aspects of awareness and agency, as the contributions to this volume make especially clear (particularly Campbell-Kibler, Carmichael, and Babel). Ideology figured prominently in the theorization of sociolinguistic agency from the field's inception, with a "standard language ideology" (per Lippi-Green 1997) driving people towards more standard speech in contexts of greater awareness or, alternatively, away from that standard as an expression of resistance. One question as yet unexplored is how ideologies about sociolinguistic agency itself might be taken up by speakers as a ground on which to constitute certain kinds of subjectivities. In contrast to the normalization of awareness and control to be found in much sociolinguistic literature, the practice of self-consciously shifting the gendered characteristics of the voice takes on a decidedly different ideological valence in some transgender communities. In the analysis to follow, two perspectives on transgender people's control over the gendered characteristics of their voices are examined in order to call attention to the variable ways in which agency can be constructed, the ideological implications of those constructs, and the importance of considering these ideologies when producing accounts of speakers' awareness and control over their sociolinguistic practices.

In transgender communities, agency is a complex and multifaceted issue. Like lesbian and gay activists, trans people often make sense of their gender identities as innate and even biological in origin, in contrast to normative discourses that frame a gender role transition as an unnecessary, even indulgent, deviation from the natural order. This stance, which disavows the ability to choose one's internally felt gender identity, works to legitimize trans