Does Ideological Clarification Help Language Maintenance? Exploring the revitalization paradox through the case of Manegacha, a Tibetan Minority Language

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Abstract: Studies of endangered languages typically emphasize the value of positive attitudes towards the language in maintenance and revitalization efforts. And yet, numerous case studies have demonstrated a 'revitalization paradox' - even when people have positive attitudes towards a language, they may not engage in behaviors that support it. Explanations of this paradox typically suggest that contradictory ideas hinder language maintenance and revitalization, and thus ideological clarification is required before beginning any such program. In this article, I critically explore this issue with a case study of Manegacha, a minoritized language of Tibet spoken by several thousand people in four villages on the northeast Tibetan Plateau in China. Although speakers of the language consistently express positive attitudes towards the language, they also engage in behaviors that undermine the transmission of the language. In investigating this situation, I conclude that there is no necessary link between contradictory attitudes and ideologies and language shift, which in turn would suggest that ideological clarification is not always called for in efforts to support endangered languages. Rather, what seems to be significant is the nature and intensity of contradiction, not its mere presence or absence.

1. Introduction Research on the maintenance and revitalization of endangered languages has repeatedly pointed to what Rindstedt and Aronsson (2002:721) call an 'ethnic revitalization paradox'— "The paradoxical mismatch between ideology and daily practices." This means that although people may *express* positive attitudes and ideologies about their language, they may *act* in ways that do not support language maintenance or revitalization. Examples abound. Boas (2009:277) describes a "…split between the informants' attitudes toward Texas German and their opinion about practical measures supporting language maintenance." Kulick (1992) describes how speakers of Taiap, in Papua New Guinea, describe their language as 'sweet' and 'deep-rooted,' with a capacity for nuance and subtlety, and also express a desire to maintain their language; and yet they teach their children Tok Pisin, not Taiap.

Simpson (2013:383-4), meanwhile, in her work on Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory of Australia, describes a "divergence between how people actually talk in everyday life and their expressed attitudes towards their language and engagement in public language activities promoting that language." Further examples show that it is extremely common for people to express positive attitudes towards their language, but to not act in support of it (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998; King 2000; Kroskrity 2009; Ó hlfearnáin 2013; Dobrin 2014; Senayon 2016; and Curdt-Christiansen and Xiao 2016).

Explanations for this paradox typically argue that people fail to act on expressed positive attitudes because they are actually acting on other, competing attitudes and ideologies about the language. Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998), for example, argue that the paradox manifests as a result of the 'mixed messages' that young people receive—positive attitudes and ideologies about the language, on the one hand, but also deeply felt emotions of shame and anxiety about learning the language, as well as negative attitudes towards the language and its utility. Dobrin (2014:126), in her study of the revitalization paradox amongst Arapesh speakers in Papua New Guinea, claims that positive attitudes are undermined by 'cultural models' that "may be grounded in implicit cultural assumptions that are not necessarily focused on language as such, but instead on more fundamental notions about how the social world works." These arguments claim that speakers have contradictory attitudes—some which support the language, others that do not—but that their positive attitudes towards their language are undercut or overwhelmed by competing sentiments.

A commonly proposed solution to this predicament is what Fishman (1991) calls 'ideological clarification'—a process whereby the community explicitly confronts and resolves these contradictions. Kroskrity (2009:73) defines ideological clarification as:

> …the process of identifying issues of language ideological contestation within a heritage language community, including both beliefs and feelings that are indigenous to that community and those introduced by outsiders (such as linguists and government officials), that can negatively impact community efforts to successfully engage in language maintenance and renewal.

He goes on to state that the purpose of such clarification is to resolve contradictions in favor of 'appropriate discourses,' or, at worst, to allow a "tolerable level of disagreement" (2009:73) (Anderson 1998, meanwhile, speaks of the 'ameliorating' contradictions). Linguists such as Bradley (2002), Grenoble and Whaley (2006), and Austin and Sallabank (2011) have also emphasized the crucial role that explicit positive attitudes play in language maintenance and revitalization, and efforts have been made to parse negative and positive attitudes (e.g. Dorian 1994, Kroskrity 2009, Bell 2013, Sallabank 2014, Thomason 2015) in order to support language maintenance. Discourses on ideological clarification and the important role of positive attitudes, as well as attempts to identify and parse negative and positive attitudes, all suggest that contradictions hinder language maintenance and

revitalization, and thus must be resolved or ameliorated if such efforts are to be successful.

There are good grounds to critically examine this assumption. Michael Herzfeld, for example, has looked at what he calls 'cultural intimacy' — "…the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality…" (Herzfeld 2004:19). One can therefore feel embarrassed or ashamed of something, such as language, and yet still use it as a source of belonging; negative attitudes can be a source of solidarity. Webster (2010) has applied this insight to language, demonstrating that linguistic features that speakers might identify as being 'wrong' and which they recognize as being negatively evaluated in public, may nonetheless be a source of affection and attachment. We take these insights as a prompt to respond to Berliner's (2016:5) call "to bring back ambivalent statements, contradictory attitudes, incompatible values, and emotional internal clashes as research objects" and, particularly, to investigate "how actors themselves live with and justify their contradictory thoughts and behaviors." Ultimately, my aim in building on Herzfeld's and Webster's insights, in light of renewed interest in the nature of contradictions, is to contribute to practical efforts aimed at language maintenance and revitalization (Hinton, Huss, and Roche 2018).

As stated above, the idea of ideological clarification is based on a mistrust of contradictions. Although never explicated in the literature, this mistrust of contradictions might originate in any number of theoretical and philosophical positions that suggest that there is something unnatural, unsustainable, and undesirable about contradictions. Berliner (2016) traces the roots of this theory to the classical Greek philosophical 'law of noncontradiction'—the proposition that two contradictory statements cannot both be true. In political philosophy, we can also look to the 'dominant ideology hypothesis,' which suggests that the dominance of ideologies and suppression of contradictions is an inevitable outcome of power struggles (Abercrombie and Turner 1978). Perhaps the most influential theory of contradictions, however, is the concept of 'cognitive dissonance,' which suggests that the need to resolve contradictions is a basic psychological drive. Although now significantly modified (Cooper 2007), the original formulation of this concept, by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter (1956) and Festinger (1957) states that attempts to maintain contradictory cognitions are a source of psychological discomfort that is directly proportional to the scale of contradiction; this discomfort must be resolved either by abandoning one of the cognitions, or by employing coping methods, such as rationalization. These theories, of noncontradiction, dominant ideologies, and cognitive dissonance, are some of the diffuse and implicit sources of a conventional wisdom that renders ideological clarification reasonable, and portrays contradictions as unnatural and undesirable.

It is, however, possible to construct an opposing common sense from alternative theories that render contradiction natural, inevitable, and non-threatening. We can turn, for example, to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia—the way in which seemingly coherent discourses are constituted by multiple, sometimes contradictory voices (Bakhtin 2010). Bakhtin insisted that heteroglossia was

ubiquitous and fundamental to the nature of communication—that any attempt to communicate necessarily conveys multiple intentions, many of which are beyond the control or awareness of the speaker or author (Renfrew 2015). Related concepts from psychology are 'discursive polyphasia' (Wagner 2007) and 'cognitive polyphasia' (Provencher 2011)—the capacity of individuals and collectives to simultaneously hold on to incompatible knowledges, sometimes based in different forms of rationality. Berliner (2016) discusses how the existence of such contradictory cognitions is facilitated, according to Bastide (1955) by a 'compartmentalization principle' (*principe de coupure*), whereby seemingly opposing ideas and frameworks can be maintained simultaneously because they are maintained separately. A similar idea was expressed by the evolutionary theorist Stephen Jay Gould in the concept of NOMA (non-overlapping magesteria), "a sort of explanatory federalism, where the scope of human experience is carved in water-tight compartments in which each type of explanation – scientific, religious, aesthetic, metaphysical – is sovereign within its own competency" (Potter 2010:25). These concepts help us challenge the underlying logic of ideological clarification, and open up space for a reconsideration of the role of contradictions in language maintenance and revitalization.

In order to examine the role that contradictions play in the revitalization paradox and in language maintenance, we explore the case of the Manegacha language, an endangered language spoken of Tibet. The language exhibits a fairly clear case of the 'revitalization paradox'—whilst over 90 per cent of households reported a desire to maintain their language, only around 70 per cent were passing it on to their children. This discussion of Manegacha speakers' language attitudes and beliefs (concepts defined below) aims to explore the extent to which this 'paradox' is actually a contributing factor to language shift.

This discussion is based on research carried out in January 2016, and included both surveys and interviews. Two hundred surveys were administered at the household level by interviewing household heads. Questions focused on demographic information and language use of family members, and included yes/no questions and Likert scale items. Interviews consisted of forty semi-structured qualitative interviews aimed at investigating changing patterns of language use since the mid-twentieth century.[1]

2. Manegacha: Language Shift in Context. Manegacha[2] is one of Tibet's minority languages (Roche 2017a, Roche and Suzuki 2018).[3] These languages fall into two main categories: ethnolinguistic minorities, who inhabit Tibetan-dominated areas but are not Tibetan; and linguistic minorities, who inhabit Tibetan-dominated areas, and are officially recognized as Tibetan, but speak non-Tibetic languages.[4] Estimates of the number of these minority languages vary from as low as 14 to as high as 60 (Roche and Suzuki 2018), and undocumented languages are still being described. All of Tibet's minority languages are endangered (Roche 2014, 2018). Where they are recognized by the state, in the case of Tibet's ethnolinguistic minorities, endangerment results primarily from 'policy shortcomings' (Limusishiden and Dede 2012)—the failure of local governments to provide constitutionally guaranteed support. Most of the minority languages, however, are 'invisible', that is,

unrecognized by the state, and therefore do not receive any support (Roche and Yudru Tsomu 2018); their endangerment primarily arises from this non-recognition. In both cases, endangerment originates directly from state policy—either its inadequacy (in failing to recognize certain languages) or its inadequate implementation (in the case of recognized but unsupported languages).

Manegacha is spoken by about 8,000 people on the northeast Tibetan Plateau, in four villages—Nyantok (*gnyan thog*), Gomar (*sgo dmar*), Gasar (*rka gsar*), and Tojia Wodkor (*tho skyA bod skor*)—in contemporary Tongren County, Qinghai Province; locals call the area Rebgong (*reb gong*; see Yangdon Dhondup 2011). At least four languages are spoken in Rebgong—Amdo Tibetan, Manegacha, Ngandehua (AKA Wutun), and a local variety of Northwest Mandarin—as well as the national standard language, Putonghua. Speakers of Manegacha and Ngandehua are officially identified as Monguor (Tu) in the state's ethnic classification framework (Roche and Stuart 2015), but primarily self-identify as Tibetans; many Manegacha speakers have succeeded in having their ascribed identity changed to Tibetan. Local Tibetans, meanwhile, refer to speakers of both Manegacha and Ngandehua as Dordo (*dor do*), a term that most Manegacha speakers find derogatory, as it renders them incompletely or imperfectly Tibetan.

Household survey results indicate that language shift towards the local variety of Amdo Tibetan is underway amongst Manegacha speakers. In terms of intergenerational transmission, 22 per cent of households had a child that was unable to speak Manegacha, 31.5 per cent of households had a child who could speak Manegacha but preferred not to, and the youngest mother[5] in 29.1 per cent of households spoke a language other than Manegacha to her children. I interpret these figures as indicating a significant rupture in intergenerational language transmission. Beyond this issue, other evidence also suggests that language shift is underway: 22 per cent of households contain a member who knows, but has ceased speaking, Manegacha. Furthermore, analysis of survey questions regarding language use, capacity, and comprehension suggest that frequency of use, capacity to use, and comprehension of Manegacha all decrease as age decreases (see Figures 1-3 below). Taken together, these suggest that intergenerational transmission is being interrupted and that the number of speakers of Manegacha is declining, while the remaining speakers are using the language less often, and with reduced capacity compared to elder speakers.

[insert figure 1 here]

Figure 1. The frequency of use for Manegacha declines from older to younger users, whilst usage of Tibetan and Chinese increases. 5=all the time; 4=most of the time; 3=sometimes; 2=rarely; 1=very rarely; 0=never.

[insert figure 2 here]

Figure 2. Capacity to use Manegacha declines from older to younger users, while capacity to use Tibetan and Chinese increase. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=good; 2=somewhat poor; 1=very poor; 0=none.

[insert figure 3 here]

Figure 3. Capacity to understand Manegacha declines from older to younger users, while capacity to use Tibetan and Chinese increase. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=good; 2=somewhat poor; 1=very poor; 0=none.

Survey results also suggest that increased mobility plays a significant role in language shift. In an era when the traditional, agricultural subsistence base of most villagers is being dismantled (Bauer et al 2011; Tashi Nyima 2011), and income-earning opportunities are proliferating outside the village (Yeh 2000; Winkler 2008; Goldstein, Childs, and Puchung Wangdui 2008; Childs, Goldstein, and Puchung Wangdui 2011; Fischer 2013), survey results show that 38.2 per cent of households had at least one member who spent most of the year undertaking migrant labor outside the village, in places where Manegacha was not spoken. Marriage, as another form of mobility, also appears to play a significant role—44.5 per cent of households reported having a member who had married out into a household where Manegacha was not spoken. Such individuals typically engage in 'life-cycle bilingualism' (Roche 2017b) adopting the language of the household and pass it on to their children, who attain only passive competence in their mother's tongue.[6]

Finally, the survey data also suggest that derogatory attitudes by local Tibetans are contributing to language shift. 33.5 per cent of households reported that at least one member of the household had been laughed at for speaking Tibetan with a 'Manegacha accent'. 32 per cent of households had a member who had been insulted for speaking Manegacha, while in 12 per cent of households, these insults had led to physical violence for at least one member. Finally, 56 per cent of respondents said that at least one person in their household had been called Dordo in a way that made them feel uncomfortable. Interview data also confirmed survey results suggesting that discrimination by other Tibetans has played a significant role in language shift. Most respondents described being laughed at, teased, and sometimes even physically assaulted for either speaking Manegacha, or speaking Tibetan with an accent. Local Tibetans often refer to Manegacha as a 'demon-talk' (*'dre skad*), an appellation which indexes it as both inauspicious and non-standard. Further evidence of negative mainstream attitudes towards the language can be seen in universal inegalitarian bilingualism (François 2002; Hagège 2009)—whereas all Manegacha speakers know Tibetan, almost no Tibetan speakers know anything more than the most rudimentary Manegacha.

Interviews on changes in language use suggest that the language has been systematically excluded from new domains that have appeared in the past fifty years, including bureaucracy, mass media, education, and the majority of salaried employment. Education, in particular, appears to be a key venue for the marginalization of the language. Although each of the villages where Manegacha is spoken has its own primary school, Tibetan is used exclusively, amounting to an informal ban of the language, even though many teachers speak Manegacha, and Manegacha-speaking students are the majority in each school. Beyond primary school, in junior and senior high school, either Tibetan or Chinese is used as the primary medium of instruction. Furthermore, since secondary education is centralized

in the county town, where Tibetan and Chinese speakers dominate, and since students all board at school, from the age of about thirteen, they cease living in an environment where Manegacha is spoken on a daily basis. Finally, in order to pursue tertiary education, Manegacha speakers must travel either to the provincial capital, Xining, or further afield—all environments where Chinese dominates.

Language shift, therefore, is clearly influenced by a great deal of external pressure on Manegacha speakers: exclusion and marginalization of the language, as well as inegalitarian bilingualism and discrimination; greater mobility, meanwhile, has led to increasing exposure to both exclusion and discrimination. In order to understand how the attitudes of Manegacha speakers might be contributing to, or resisting, the language shift brought about by this situation, the following section reports survey results on language attitudes amongst Manegacha speakers, and describes some of the attitudes and ideologies expressed by interlocutors during interviews.

3. Contradictory language beliefs and attitudes amongst Manegacha speakers.

Survey results revealed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards the maintenance of Manegacha; 92.5 per cent of respondents said they either 'strongly wanted' (56.5 per cent) or 'wanted' (36 per cent) Manegacha to be maintained. Meanwhile, only 4.5 per cent said they 'did not want' Manegacha to be maintained, and nobody claimed to 'strongly not want' the language to be maintained. In interviews, however, local respondents expressed far more diverse and complex positions on the maintenance of Manegacha.[7]

In order to explore these views, I look at the language ideologies (Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998; Errington 2000; Woolard 2016) that appeared in interviews. Following Kroskrity (2009:72), I see language ideologies as consisting of "linguistic awareness, linguistic beliefs, feelings, and practices." In order to aid our analysis, I tease out two of these categories — 'beliefs' and 'feelings'; the latter, I term attitudes. I define language attitudes as explicit, evaluative claims about the language, for example, about whether it is good or bad, useful or useless, expressive or not, beautiful or ugly, and so on. Following the practice of Dorian (1994), Kroskrity (2009), Bell (2013), Sallabank (2014), Thomason (2015) and the like, I classify attitudes as 'negative' or 'positive'.

While attitudes express judgments about the language, beliefs express views about the *nature* of language: how it is acquired, how it changes, and its relation to identity, among others. Language beliefs are ontological, whereas attitudes are axiological. Since beliefs are truth claims rather than evaluative statements, they cannot be considered simply positive or negative. Instead, I have distinguished between supportive and unsupportive beliefs, with the former being those that are most likely to support language maintenance and revitalization. Unsupportive beliefs, meanwhile, are likely to undermine the transmission and maintenance of a language.[8]

In interviews, interlocutors expressed a variety of positive attitudes towards Manegacha, including the commonly expressed idea that it is useful for telling secrets, as outsiders do not understand it. Interviewees also claimed that the language

can create a sense of intimacy, familiarity, and closeness amongst speakers. The language was described as easy and comfortable to speak, typically explained by speakers having known it since childhood. A final positive attitude towards the language was that it is valuable because of its association with the past, with ancestors, and with tradition.

Negative attitudes towards Manegacha, however, appeared to be more numerous and more frequently expressed. The language was described as 'gross' (*skyug btsog*) and lacking in value (*jiazhi*). Interlocutors frequently explained the uselessness of the language by recourse to its being only spoken in a limited territory by a small number of people. They also often described the language itself as having limited expressive capacity. Interlocutors claimed that Manegacha could not serve certain functions or deal with certain topics; for example, people claimed that it is impossible to sing in Manegacha, and that it cannot be used to talk about Buddhism. This restricted expressive capacity was often explained by recourse to the fact that the language does not have a formally recognized orthography. Finally, some interviewees described Manegacha as being complex and difficult to learn.

These attitudes about Manegacha must be considered in the context of attitudes to other local languages. Interviewees generally expressed very positive attitudes towards Tibetan. They described the language as deep, holy, and beautiful. They claimed it was easy to learn (especially the syllabary, in contrast to Chinese characters), and praised it for being useful, not only as a local lingua franca in Rebgong, but also as a language of wider communication and even an international language. Fluent command of spoken Tibetan was often cited as evidence of a speaker's status as an educated, knowledgeable person. No interviewees expressed any negative attitudes to Tibetan. Meanwhile, only two interviewees expressed positive attitudes towards Chinese, describing it as beautiful and useful. At the same time, negative attitudes towards Chinese were never expressed explicitly, but can be deduced from statements that were primarily about Tibetan, such as, "Compared to Chinese, Tibetan is very deep," or "Compared to Chinese, Tibetan is very easy to learn" (because of the way it is written). On the whole then, we find generally positive attitudes to Tibetan, mixed attitudes to Manegacha, and mostly negative attitudes to Chinese.

As with the mixed attitudes described above, interviewees expressed both supportive and unsupportive beliefs. Beliefs that support the maintenance of Manegacha include the following. First, several interviewees valorized Dordo identity, claiming that Dordo people are guardians of high culture in Rebgong.[9] By extension, we assume that this positive appraisal of Dordo identity would facilitate language maintenance, as social marginalization and stigmatization have been consistently associated with language shift (Gal 1979; Dorian 1981; Hill and Hill 1986). Secondly, respondents also commonly communicated a sense of authenticity that tied specific languages to particular people and places (Gal and Woolard 2001): Tibetan is spoken to Tibetans, Chinese to Chinese, and Manegacha to people from the four villages of Gomar, Gasar, Nyantok, and Tojia. Indeed, this sense of authenticity is reflected in the name used for the language—Manegacha translates literally as 'our language'. In a similar vein, we find beliefs that support multilingualism in general,

and specifically valorize Manegacha speakers for their broad repertoire—they are praised for speaking Tibetan and Chinese as well as their own language. Finally, we may note that some interlocutors expressed outrage and a sense of injustice at the discrimination that Manegacha speakers face from mainstream Tibetans, demonstrating a capacity and willingness to resist mainstream assimilatory pressures.

At the same time, we also encountered expressions of beliefs that do not support language maintenance. We can begin with the widespread assumption that language is acquired spontaneously through a mixture of inheritance and proximity. People are thought to 'naturally' learn the language of their ancestors and to automatically acquire the language of people around them, without any need for deliberate effort or active input. The first assumption has been labeled the 'genetic fallacy' (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998; Walsh 2006); the latter, I term the 'proximity fallacy'. Such beliefs work against language maintenance in that they fail to recognize the need for active participation in intergenerational language transmission (Bunte 2009; Kulick 1992; England 1998). A second, related ideology that undermines language maintenance is the tendency to view the language as primarily a lexicon (Dixon 1997). This leads people to think of language endangerment as a process of lexical erosion and borrowing, rather than the interruption of intergenerational transmission, thus prompting efforts at language maintenance focused on linguistic purism (Thomas 1991; Dorian 1994; Sallabank 2014). Interviewees repeatedly expressed anxiety about the influx of Tibetan and Chinese loanwords into Manegacha, and saw this as the primary threat to the language, rather than decline in intergenerational transmission, the language's social and political marginalization, and the widespread discrimination faced by speakers.

Another ideology that undermines the maintenance of Manegacha is the idea that competence in a second and third language equates not to communicative competence, but to 'accuracy'. Particularly in regards to Tibetan, Manegacha speakers are judged both by mainstream Tibetans and other Manegacha speakers on their ability to speak Tibetan without any hint of accent. Importantly, students are said to need to speak 'accurate' Tibetan to succeed at school, and this leads children to spend more time studying and speaking Tibetan than Manegacha (England 1998 describes a similar case with speakers of Mayan languages being encouraged to study Spanish).

Related to the negative attitude towards Manegacha that sees it as a useless, restricted language because it cannot be written, is the ideology that the language cannot and should not be written. Some people expressed the idea that it was impossible to write Manegacha (despite the fact that these same people also often admitted to writing the language informally, using Chinese characters or Tibetan script); others stated the language should not be written because it does not have its own script, and it would be inappropriate to modify the script of another language, and inauthentic to invent one. Although the impact of orthography on language vitality is controversial (Grenoble and Whaley 1998; Heinrich 2011), being an unwritten language in a context where scripts have high cultural value only furthers the language's stigmatization.

Furthermore, in contrast to the ideology of outrage mentioned above, a far more commonly expressed response to discrimination against Manegacha speakers is trivialization—to minimize taunts and insults as 'just jokes,' that is, to overlook their systemic, structural nature and emphasize their interpersonal dimension (Lippi-Green 1997). Finally, we can also note that one of the positive attitudes listed above, namely, the valorization of the language as ancestral, might also be considered an unsupportive ideology, in that it relegates the language to the past and restricts it to contexts associated with custom and tradition in a social environment that praises modernity, progress, and development; ancestral languages associated with tradition become stigmatized by association (Meek 2007; Sallabank 2014).

The attitudes and beliefs expressed by our interviewees provide numerous examples of contradictions. First of all, we see at least one example of an *idea* which, in itself, has contradictory outcomes for language maintenance—when people valorize the language as ancestral patrimony, they both ascribe it positive value, which supports maintenance, and enclose its significance in the past, bind it to tradition, and confine the language to a natural association with older members of the community, which undermines the crucial task of fostering the language amongst youths. Secondly, we see individuals expressing contradictory attitudes, such as a thirty-nine-year-old woman in Tojia who claimed that Manegacha has no value, but also that it is a good language and that it would be sad to lose it. More common, however, are what we might call systemic or public contradictions, which are expressed by different people within the same community. In the discussion of attitudes we see, for example, that amongst Manegacha speakers, the language is considered useful for some purposes (telling secrets), but generally useless. It is praised for its sense of intimacy and comfort but also derided as gross, lacking in value, and having limited expressive capacity. Perhaps the most glaring and intriguing contradictions of this sort involve the widespread stated aim of Manegacha speakers to maintain their language with beliefs that do not support language maintenance. Therefore, although people express the aim of maintaining Manegacha, their underlying beliefs about the nature of language undermine this goal, when, for example, they police loanwords rather than ensuring intergenerational transmission, when they rely on ancestry and proximity to ensure the continuation of their heritage language while promoting other languages in the household, and when they internalize and trivialize discrimination. The manifestations of systemic contradictions in individual behavior can be seen in one thirty-six-year-old man who spoke proudly of his Dordo identity, and described having argued and fought with other Tibetans to defend it in the past, but who was now speaking to his children exclusively in Tibetan.

Clearly, then, contradictions are prevalent in language attitudes and beliefs among Manegacha speakers. But does the existence of these contradictions necessarily undermine Manegacha?

4. Discussion: Contradictory Attitudes in Two Communities. In order to explore this issue, here, I look at two Manegacha-speaking communities—Gomar and Tojia.

In Gomar village Manegacha is relatively well-maintained: it is still spoken across all generations; only 2 per cent of households have a member who cannot speak Manegacha; a language other than Manegacha is being taught to children in only 10 per cent of households; and only 4 per cent of households have a child that cannot speak the language. Meanwhile, in nearby Tojia village, language shift is well underway: all but two families in the village ceased speaking Manegacha to their children, starting from around 2005, with the result being that children under the age of about ten can understand but not speak the language. To what extent are these differing degrees of language shift associated with different attitudes and beliefs, and with differing types and degrees of contradictions?

First, we can note that in each community, interviewees expressed certain attitudes and beliefs that were absent from interviews in the other community. In Tojia, interviewees commonly referred to Manegacha's value as being linked to ancestral identity—people claimed that they should learn the language because it had been passed down to them by their ancestors. Meanwhile in Gomar, no interviewees made this claim. Secondly, in Tojia, whereas several interviewees attempted to trivialize discrimination they had faced by mainstream Tibetans, nobody in Gomar did so; instead, they expressed offense at such incidents (interestingly, Tojia interviewees also expressed offense in addition to attempting to trivialize discrimination). Finally, in Gomar, we find expressions of positive attitudes towards multilingualism that are absent from Tojia; interviewees in Gomar explained that it was good to know several languages including Manegacha. Interviewees in Tojia, meanwhile, emphasized the need to speak 'accurate' Tibetan and the barriers that other languages posed for doing so.

Furthermore, in addition to these differences in terms of the presence or absence of certain beliefs and attitudes in the two communities, we find some attitudes and beliefs which are present in both communities but are emphasized differently. For example, although both generic positive and negative attitudes were expressed in both villages, Gomar residents more often expressed positive attitudes, while in Tojia they more often expressed negative attitudes. In Gomar, people more frequently talked about the 'automatic' acquisition of their own language, while in Tojia, interviewees more often referred to their acquisition of Chinese and Tibetan by their proximity to speakers of those languages. And although interviewees in both villages emphasized the language's (lack of) expressive capacity, and the deterioration of its vocabulary to roughly the same extent, respondents in Gomar were more likely to mention intergenerational changes in competence, and to talk about linguistic competence more generally (framed, always, as 'accuracy' rather than fluency). Meanwhile, Gomar speakers were also more likely to emphasize the uselessness of Manegacha, while Tojia interviewees were more likely to emphasize the comfort of speaking it.

Further looking at the communities in terms of their contradictions, one difference immediately stands out. Whereas residents of Gomar most often expressed outrage in response to discrimination, interviewees in Tojia both expressed outrage *and* attempted to trivialize the discrimination they experienced. This seems to be typical of a greater degree of contradictoriness in the community more generally.

Interviewees emphasized the spontaneous learning of other languages through proximity, whilst also repeatedly emphasizing the need to study Tibetan in order to speak it accurately, and the fact that speaking Manegacha was a barrier to full acquisition. Language learning is construed as both spontaneous and active—inevitable and difficult. Meanwhile, the strong attachment to the language as a source of identity (of comfort and connection to ancestry) is contradicted by indifference to its future, and negative assessment of its current value.

We therefore see that the profile of attitudes and beliefs expressed by members of the two communities differ somewhat, and in ways that seem coherent with the language shift profile: Gomar residents value multilingualism, express outrage at discrimination, and do not associate their language with the past and ancestry; they are also maintaining the language. Tojia villagers, meanwhile, seem to not value multilingualism, more frequently trivialize discrimination, and associate their language with the past; they are not maintaining their language. The different emphasis on certain beliefs and attitudes in the two communities is also likely significant. In Gomar, where the language is being maintained, interviewees spoke positively about the language, talked about how it was acquired 'automatically', were sensitive to intergenerational differences in competence, were more likely to describe the language as useless, but to also identify more strongly with it. Meanwhile, in Tojia, where the language is being lost, interviewees were likely to express negative attitudes about the language and to talk about spontaneous acquisition of other languages, but also to emphasize the comfort of speaking Manegacha. In Gomar, although mixed attitudes were reported, these seem to be offset by beliefs that support multilingualism in general, as well as the language in particular. In Tojia, meanwhile, attitudes were predominantly negative, and although beliefs were both supportive and unsupportive, there were none that positively evaluated multilingualism or expressed any sense of identity commitment to Manegacha.

5. Conclusion. I began by drawing attention to what has been called the 'revitalization paradox'—the common situation when a community expresses positive attitudes towards a language and states a desire to maintain or revitalize it, but behaves otherwise. I looked at how most attempts to explain this paradox see positive attitudes as being contradicted by other, stronger attitudes and beliefs. Proposed methods for resolving the revitalization paradox typically focus on what Fishman called 'prior ideological clarification'—when a community collectively examines competing attitudes and beliefs and resolves any contradictions either in favor of revitalizing the language or otherwise.

In order to more closely examine the assumptions implicit in the notion of 'prior ideological clarification,' I then drew attention to a variety of theoretical models that might underlie this idea, and which suggest that contradictions are unnatural and unsustainable, and must be resolved, including ideas from philosophy (the law of non-contradiction), psychology (cognitive dissonance), and politics (the dominant ideology hypothesis). I then compared these with another set of theories that are less often drawn on in studies of language attitudes and beliefs, which suggest

that sustaining contradiction is not only possible, but perfectly normal: heteroglossia, discursive polyphasia, cognitive polyphasia, the compartmentalization principle, and non-overlapping magesteria. These theories were introduced as a way of unsettling the assumption that contradictions are necessarily something that must be resolved in order for language maintenance and revitalization to succeed.

I examined these issues in the light of Manegacha, a language of the northeast Tibetan Plateau, which exemplifies the revitalization paradox, with a vast majority of speakers expressing a desire to maintain the language, but far fewer actively doing so. Interview data provided numerous examples of contradictory attitudes and beliefs, expressed by both individuals and the community as a whole. In order to explore how these contradictory attitudes and beliefs might impact language behavior, and therefore to what extent ideological clarification might help support the language, I compared two communities that were maintaining the language to different extents. Contradictory attitudes and beliefs were found in both communities, despite the fact that one community is maintaining the language while another is shifting.

If contradictions are found both in communities where the language is being maintained and where it is not, this suggests that there is no necessary link between contradictory attitudes and beliefs and language shift. I therefore argue that contradictions are normal and unproblematic, and thus find in favor of heteroglossia rather than cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, I also suggest that ideological clarification is not always necessary in efforts to support endangered languages. Instead, it might be more productive to examine the ways in which axiological and ontological contradictions contribute differently to language shift. Herzfeld's and Webster's work demonstrate that negative attitudes can sometimes foster group solidarity and affective attachment to a language. By contrast, ontological contradictions seem to have a much more significant role to play in language maintenance and shift. We can imagine that a community might maintain a language they consider ugly or useless if it is imbued with a sense of authenticity that makes it foundational to their sense of self. However, it is harder to see how they would do so if they assumed that a language can be maintained spontaneously without active intergenerational transmission.

A focus on ontological contradictions, and how they frustrate the achievement of stated aims and goals in relationship to language maintenance, also provides useful insights that could scaffold future research into the relationship between language ideologies and political, social, and economic power. Rather than viewing the persistence of ontological contradictions as somehow indicative of community deficits, we might examine how the persistence of these contradictions is produced and maintained by the same systemic factors that produce the stigmatization, exclusion, and marginalization that often accompany language endangerment, and certainly do so in the case of Manegacha. A useful concept in this regard is that of hermeneutic injustice (Fricker 2007), which describes how members of certain social groups are excluded from knowledge production through their lack of access to key hermeneutical resources. Examining the persistence of ontological contradictions in beliefs about language as products of hermeneutical injustice, and thus additional

symptoms of broader patterns of oppression, may prove to be a fruitful line of inquiry for future research.

Notes

1 Data on language attitudes was collected incidentally as part of these interviews. See note 7 for details of how interview data was analyzed. All research was undertaken as part of the ARC-funded DECRA project 'Ethnicity and Assimilation in China: The case of the Monguor in Tibet' (DE150100388).

2 The language is more often described in the literature as Bonan or Bao'an. Manegacha, the name used by the speakers in reference to their language, also denotes a specific sub-population of Bao'an speakers, namely, those living in Rebgong.

3 Roche and Suzuki (2018) provide a precise definition of 'Tibet' in relation to Tibet's minority languages.

4 I follow a broad linguistic consensus that recognizes 'Tibetan' as multiple languages rather than a single language (Zeisler 2004; Hyslop 2014; Tournadre 2014).

5 Manegacha households are extended, rather than nuclear families, containing an average of around 5 people and three generations.

6 It is important to note that whilst other cases of linguistic exogamy have led to language shift (Hindley 1990, Holloway 1997), linguistic exogamy does not necessarily always lead to language shift (Aikenvald 2002).

7 This section is based on a grounded analysis of interview transcripts. All quotes from the interviews that contained statements of language attitudes and ideologies were extracted, and then coded and sorted through an iterative process.

8 Particular statements and sentiments could not always unambiguously be classified as positive/negative or supportive/unsupportive—we see, for example, at least one case where a positive attitude towards the language is interpreted as unsupportive of its maintenance.

9 Manegacha speakers have played a prominent role in locally valued cultural activities, mostly related to Tibetan Buddhism. Each of the four villages has a large monastery with several temples (most villages in Rebgong do not), and villagers, particularly males, are locally well-known for painting *tangka* – Tibetan Buddhist icons painted on cloth.

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