

Discourses of speakerhood in Iyasa: Linguistic identity and authenticity in an endangered language

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Within most subfields of linguistics, the term “speaker” is often used in a shorthand, nonspecific way. In referring simply to “speakers” of endangered languages, the nuances of proficiency, language use, self-identification, and local language ideologies are collapsed into a binary: speaker vs. non-speaker. Despite the central role of local language ideologies in shaping patterns of language shift and maintenance, insiders’ perceptions of speaker status are not often investigated as part of language documentation projects. This paper approaches the issue of speaker status in Iyasa, a threatened Coastal Bantu language of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, through the firsthand accounts of self-identified Iyasa speakers. Using a discourse-analytic approach and the framework of identity and interaction (Bucholtz & Hall 2005), this paper examines the ways Iyasa speakers construct “speakerhood” in discourse, respond to researchers’ language ideologies, and position their own and others’ proficiency in Iyasa. Local language ideologies which equate ruralness, elderliness, and authenticity are discussed, as well as their links to similar ideologies in linguistics. Finally, the implications for language documentation and maintenance work in the Iyasa community are discussed.

1. Introduction: The notion of the “speaker” in linguistics¹ Within most subfields of linguistics, the term “speaker” is often used in a shorthand and nonspecific way: catalogues and databases estimate total speaker counts, vitality and policy reports provide generalizations about speaker attitudes, and grammatical analyses make reference to speaker intuition. In referring simply to “speakers” of a given language, the nuances of proficiency, actual language use, self-identification, language dominance, and local language ideologies are collapsed into a binary distinction: speaker vs. non-speaker. However, the concept of the speaker has been questioned in several subfields of linguistics, including documentary linguistics and sociolinguistics. The questions of who counts as a speaker of a language, who counts as a *good* or *authentic* speaker,

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and who gets to make these judgments, are particularly salient in working with endangered and understudied languages. In these cases, the number, authenticity, and proficiency of so-called speakers may guide the allocation of resources for documentation and revitalization, determine roles in language work (e.g., who is qualified to be a language teacher), impact language policy decisions, and affect language community² members' views of their language and its prospects.

While the idea of speakerhood has been more closely examined by linguists in recent years (see §1.2–1.4), views of speakerhood vary between subdisciplines and traditions – the concept of the speaker sits within many different, and sometimes clashing, ideological frameworks. A theoretical syntactician's idea of a “speaker” may be quite different than a documentary linguist's, and both of these may vary widely from the perspectives of a non-academic language worker, speaker, or heritage learner of a language. As Evans (2001:260) notes, “field linguists must always bear in mind that their own technical definitions of ‘language,’ ‘language death,’ ‘semi-speaker’ and so on may not correspond to the categorizations made by the speech community or the wider society.” And, as argued by Di Carlo (2016), Epps (forthcoming), and others, research into local language ideologies, including speaker status, is key to understanding patterns of language shift or maintenance. However, investigations of local perceptions of speakerhood generally fall outside the scope of documentary projects. To help fill this gap, this paper follows the example of Leonard & Haynes (2010) and examines how the identity of “Iyasa speaker” is constructed by Iyasa people themselves.

In the following sections, I briefly outline ideologies of speaker status and authenticity within three linguistic traditions: documentary linguistics (§1.1), sociolinguistics (§1.2), and the work of SIL Cameroon (§1.3). In §2, I provide an overview of Iyasa [yko], a threatened Coastal Bantu language spoken in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, and situate it within the framework of language endangerment. In the following section (§3), I present a study of how Iyasa speakers construct speakerhood in discourse. §3.1 discusses the methods and analytical framework used, and §3.2–3.4 describe discourses of “good” and “authentic” Iyasa speakerhood expressed by participants. §4 returns to the question of academic linguistic ideologies of authenticity and endangerment, and how the researchers' ideologies interacted with participants' during this study. Finally, §5 provides concluding remarks, and discussion of how local ideas of speakerhood may impact language documentation and conservation work.

1.1 The speaker and authenticity in documentary linguistics Within documentary linguistics, the notion of the “ancestral code” (Woodbury 2011) has been applied to describe the (imagined) language variety which is the subject of documentation projects. This idealized language is “pure,” static over time, often associated with concepts of “heritage” or “ancestors,” unaffected or only slightly affected by contact

²The definition of “community” in documentary linguistics and sociolinguistics is equally complicated (see Czaykowska-Higgins 2009), but it is used here in the broadest sense to mean “those who speak, identify with, or are otherwise invested in the use of a language.”

or mixing, and corresponding in a one-to-one fashion to a single ethnicity or “community.” Documentation projects have often been limited to the study of a single language, and especially the most “traditional” variety of said language – usually that spoken by elderly, rural speakers.

However, the notion of the ancestral code has recently been challenged as being largely fictional, and potentially damaging to the goals of thorough and representative language documentation (Childs et al. 2014; Lüpke 2013; 2015). By focusing exclusively on those considered the most authentic speakers of a given language, a number of important linguistic systems will be overlooked, such as multilingual repertoires, variation, and the effects of language contact. Indeed, the speech of the most “authentic” speakers (within the ancestral code model) may barely resemble the speech of the majority of the community: privileging their speech may produce a documentary record which has little to do with how most people speak. Instead, Childs et al. (2014) suggest that sociolinguistically informed language documentation should take into account *all* communicative practices employed by a given group of people, and not just those considered the best or most authentic speakers. For example, a linguist documenting Basque outside of the “ancestral code” model might not only record rural elders’ Basque, but youth Basque, middle-aged Basque, urban Basque, Basque speakers’ use of Spanish and French, and so on.

In addition, many documentary linguists have called for a more nuanced examination of speaker status. Evans (2001), Grinevald (2003), Vallejos (2014), Dobrin & Berson (2011), and Terhart & Danielsen (2009) all examine the meaning of “speaker” in language documentation; Grinevald & Bert (2011:49–52) even propose a seven-part typology of speakers in situations of language obsolescence, including categories such as “semi-speakers,” “ghost speakers,” and “neo-speakers.” Linguistically informed criteria for differentiating types of speakers, such as typologies based in assessments of linguistic proficiency, or phenomenological examinations of language use, are used by growing numbers of researchers in documentary linguistics (e.g., Yang et al. 2017). In short, many documentary linguists are taking increasing care to specify what they mean by “speakers,” and acknowledging the complexity of speakerhood.

1.2 The speaker and authenticity in sociolinguistics While speakerhood, variation, and notions of authenticity have been under-addressed in documentary linguistics thus far,³ they have been a major focus of sociolinguistic study. However, purist and nostalgic notions of “good” and “authentic” speakers have been present in sociolinguistic work as well. In the early traditions of dialectology, over-reliance on data from “non-mobile old rural men [NORMs]” (Chambers & Trudgill 1998:29) was common. These elderly, rural speakers were considered to be exemplars of the “purest” forms of a given variety, and windows into some past state of the language, which was the real object of sociolinguistic inquiry.

The study of “authentic” speakers of “authentic” language has also been a central concern of sociolinguistics, and authenticity has been closely tied to notions of a

³Though see notable exceptions in, e.g., Lee (2014), Nagy (1996), Stanford & Preston (2009), and Hildebrandt et al. (2017).

vanishing past. Bucholtz (2003) outlines the role of authenticity and nostalgia in traditional sociolinguistics, noting that “authenticity underwrites nearly every aspect of sociolinguistics,” but that “despite its pervasiveness in the field, this pivotal concept is rarely a topic of investigation in its own right” (Bucholtz 2003:398). Prominent ideologies of authenticity in sociolinguistics have included, like the “ancestral code” model of language, the idea that the most authentic language is the least affected by “outside” influences. Importantly, another prevalent ideology in sociolinguistics is the idea that the linguist is the ultimate arbiter of authentic speech, providing legitimate “analysis,” whereas speakers’ perceptions of authenticity are relegated to “attitudes” (Bucholtz 2003:406–407).

Much as linguistic anthropologists and documentary linguists are beginning to expand the focus of their research to include *all* speakers and varieties used in a given community, Bucholtz (*ibid.*) and Johnstone (2013) propose a rejection of the “cult of authenticity” (Childs et al. 2014:169) in favor of a more nuanced view which accounts for variation and language change as constants, which examines speakers’ own perceptions of authenticity, and which expands the focus of sociolinguistic inquiry beyond the nostalgic gaze backwards to conservative, “ancestral” language.

1.3 The speaker and authenticity in the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics

SIL Cameroon (a branch of the language development and Bible translation organization SIL International) has for the past 49 years been heavily involved in most aspects of Cameroonian linguistics, including academic linguistics, literacy and orthography development, and language planning (see Kouega 2013:99–104 for more on SIL in Cameroon). The relationship between SIL International and academic documentary linguistics is discussed by Dobrin & Good (2009), Epps & Ladley (2009), Olson (2009), and others. Here, I briefly discuss some relevant language ideologies prevalent in the work of SIL, as well as preceding mission linguistics.

Cameroon’s modern-day South Region was a site of early missionization by American churches: a Presbyterian mission station was opened at Grand Batanga, about 11 miles north of today’s Iyasa territory, in 1885, with constant missionary presence in the area since then. Missionary linguistic ideologies, such as the importance of codifying a standard language variety and reducing it to writing, have been present in the area for more than a century. Like most other missionary linguistics initiatives, SIL Cameroon’s work necessarily focuses on codifying a standard variety of each “mother tongue” in order to produce texts. The choice of variety to be codified is driven in part by an “ancestral code” ideology: “As George Cowan, former president of [SIL sister organization] Wycliffe USA wrote, mother tongue identification ‘gives continuity to life, linking the present generation to past generations from whom the language was learned and with future generations now acquiring it’” (Handman 2009:637). Similarly, SIL Cameroon’s website prominently features the quotation: “Your Language is the most precious element in life that still includes all major values of your ancestors. What does that mean for your children, and your grandchildren and their future?”⁴

⁴<http://www.silcam.org/folder010200/page.php>

This focus on historical continuity often guides SIL's choices for language development. A SIL linguistic consultant for the South Region confirms that when multiple varieties or registers need to be codified into a single set of standardized texts, it is common for SIL Cameroon projects to choose the most linguistically conservative and archaic forms of a language, since these are seen as both the most authentic, and the most appropriate to imbue a biblical text with a sense of historical, ritual, and spiritual power. In some cases, these forms of language are known only to a handful of elders, making the resulting translation difficult or inaccessible for younger speakers (Daniel Duke p.c.). In short, the ideologies prevalent within SIL Cameroon mirror the nostalgic tradition in language documentation and sociolinguistics.

2. Iyasa: context and current study

2.1 History and context Iyasa [ISO 639-3 yko], also called Yasa or Yassa, is a Coastal Bantu (A.30) language (Dieu & Renaud 1983) spoken along a stretch of coast which straddles the border between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.⁵ Iyasa is both a glossonym and ethnonym: Iyasa people identify themselves as being Iyasa and speaking Iyasa.⁶ Iyasa is to some degree endangered: the *Catalogue of Endangered Languages* (2016) classifies it as “Threatened,” with approximately 3,000 speakers, though some Iyasa people consider this an overestimation. Iyasa's status as an endangered language is discussed in §2.2.

Iyasa speakers in Cameroon are concentrated in Campo Sub-Division, Ocean Division, South Region, as outlined in Table 1. In addition, there are Iyasa diaspora populations in Yaoundé and Douala (Cameroon's two largest cities), as well as Kribi (the largest city in the South Region), and a handful living overseas. Iyasa people living outside the Campo area are estimated at a few hundred. Speakers report that it is rare for those who emigrate to cities to return to Campo Sub-Division, though I did encounter a small number of Iyasa individuals who had returned to the area to retire after a career in the city.

Most Iyasa speakers consider four languages indigenous to Campo Sub-Division: Iyasa, Mvae (a Fang variety), Mabea (a Kwasio variety), and “pygmy”.⁷ Campo Ville was inhabited mostly by speakers of Iyasa and Mvae during the first half of the 20th century (see Ardener 1956), after Mvae speakers reportedly settled near the coast in the late 19th century (Board of Foreign Missions 1899). Development of Campo Ville and Campo Beach within the past two decades, such as the opening of military bases for the Cameroon Navy and BIR (Rapid Intervention Brigade), and the founding of the Campo-Ma'an National Park, have attracted a large number of “foreigners” (in the sense of people from outside the Campo area) working and

⁵Due to visa and border issues, I have not yet attempted the crossing to Equatorial Guinea; this study pertains only to Iyasa in Cameroon.

⁶The relationship between language and ethnic or tribal identity is often complicated (see e.g., Lüpke 2010), but almost all participants in this study named both their ethnicity and language “Iyasa”.

⁷The Bagyele and Bakola groups of so-called “pygmies” speak several varieties of neighboring languages (see Ngué Um 2015), but Iyasa speakers generally refer to “pygmy” as both a language and ethnic group.

settling in Campo. Iyasa people report that foreigners now outnumber Iyasa and Mvae in Campo Ville. The most-represented languages among foreign residents of Campo include Fulfulde, Hausa, Bamileke varieties, and Beti-Fang varieties other than Mvae, which are languages associated with large, economically and politically powerful ethnic groups. By contrast, many Iyasa “are themselves very conscious of their status as a minority” (Lonfo 2009, translation mine).

Table 1. Iyasa population centers in Cameroon

Town ⁸	Population Size ⁹	Demographics
Móhombo (Campo Beach)	~300	Small majority of Iyasa residents; immigrants working at military and customs; traffic for border crossing
Bokómbɛ (Campo Ville)	~7,000	Very mixed: Iyasa, Mvae, Mabea, Fulbe, Bamileke, Hausa, other Cameroonian and Nigerian groups
Ipenyenje	~10	Iyasa; nearly abandoned
Bouanjo	~200	Iyasa and Mvae
Itonde Mer	~15	Iyasa, Mvae, Nigerian (formerly, largest Iyasa village; now a small fishing camp)
Béyɔ (Rocher du Loup)	~15	Iyasa; nearly abandoned
Mbenji	~5	Iyasa; nearly abandoned
Eboje (Ebodjé)	~700	Iyasa
Lolabe	~200	Iyasa

The loss of traditional livelihoods and economic opportunities is another notable change in Iyasa territory. The primary Iyasa economic activity is deepwater fishing, and in the past, the majority of Iyasa families are reported to have made their living from fishing. In recent decades, a growing number of fishermen from other areas of Cameroon and Nigeria have settled in the Campo area. More fishermen, coupled with declining fisheries, have made fishing an increasingly difficult livelihood, though many Iyasa fishermen still make a good living. The construction of a deepwater shipping port at Lolabe (opened in April 2018), as well as the effects of climate change, will likely continue to damage fisheries in the area. Similarly, trade with Equatorial Guinea, which in past decades formed a major component of Campo’s economy, has seen a sharp decline since 2014 due to an economic downturn in Equatorial Guinea. In short, the economic climate in the Campo area is difficult and worsening; some speakers describe Campo as growing in population, but declining in infrastructure and development. For this reason, many Iyasa speakers are joining the “rural exodus” to larger cities seeking work, and most young people I spoke to expressed a desire to leave the Campo area if they could find a job elsewhere.

⁸Iyasa names for each village are presented first, with any differing official/popular names in parentheses.

⁹Population estimates are drawn from the Cameroon national census, conversations with local officials and Iyasa speakers, and personal observation, and should be considered only estimates.

Another change occurred in 2014, when SIL Cameroon began work in the Iyasa area. There had been SIL members working on the neighboring Batanga language and residing near Lolabe in the early 2000s, but none stationed in the Campo area. In 2014, however, a new SIL team took up residence in Campo Beach and began working on language description, orthography development, and Bible translation work. In late 2015, an office was opened in Campo Ville to house language development and translation project work, with a language committee working to finalize a standard orthography, develop literacy materials, and translate Bible sections. A number of workshops on literacy, computer skills, and translation have been conducted at the SIL project's new office (called "Centre d'Alphabetisation de la Langue Iyasa," reinforcing its focus on codifying a written version of the language) since its opening in 2015. Community awareness of the SIL project (and its associated ideologies, as discussed in §1.3) has increased noticeably between 2015 and present.

2.2 Iyasa as an endangered language While Iyasa has a relatively small speaker population, this is not necessarily a cause of language endangerment, particularly in areas of high linguistic diversity such as Cameroon (see Lüpke forthcoming). However, small-population languages can be particularly vulnerable to demographic threats and socioeconomic pressures, and disruption of intergenerational transmission and usage patterns are always cause for concern in language maintenance.

First, socioeconomic pressures such as declining fisheries and economic stagnation in Campo Sub-Division are causing many Iyasa speakers to move to larger cities, consistent with the "rural exodus" occurring in many parts of the world. Speakers who have spent much of their lives in cities like Douala rarely report using Iyasa there (though there are always notable exceptions), and most Iyasa people living outside the Campo area report that their children do not speak it at all. Dispersal of a formerly concentrated speaker population is often a serious threat to a language's continued use, especially in cases where speakers go from a rural "homeland," where they have daily opportunities for language use, to an urban area where other speakers are few and far between.

Second, the disruption of intergenerational transmission is an unarguable cause of language endangerment. While Iyasa still has many speakers in their 20s, most young Iyasa-speaking parents in the Campo area report that their children have only a passive command of Iyasa. Children in Ebodje generally have active command of Iyasa, but are observed speaking mostly French in daily life. Young parents today report speaking predominantly or exclusively French with their children, whereas *their* parents spoke mostly Iyasa in the home.

Finally, young people who still have proficiency in Iyasa self-report increasing use of French in all domains, typical of a generational shift in progress. Note that I am not referring to code-switching (as described by Robert in Excerpt 3 below) as a symptom of shift, as this can and does occur in stable multilingual repertoires. However, use of French is increasing in domains previously occupied by Iyasa, such as the home and community associations, and this kind of "domain creep" can be indicative of ongoing shift rather than stable multilingualism.

While a full examination of the degree and causes of Iyasa's endangerment are beyond the scope of this study, the language is threatened to some degree, and the concepts of speakerhood and authenticity will be examined in this paper with an eye to their potential interactions with language shift and endangerment.

2.3 Current study: data and methods Given the ongoing transformations in Iyasa's social, economic, and linguistic context, the study from which this data is drawn investigated Iyasa speakers' perceptions of their local linguistic ecology and the changes occurring in it. During the summer of 2016, I conducted sociolinguistic interviews with 31 self-identified Iyasa speakers in Campo Ville, Campo Beach, Ebodjé, and Mbenji. Interviews consisted of questions about self-reported language proficiency and use, geographic mobility, linguistic ecology of the region, language attitudes, and linguistic vitality. Each interview generally lasted 30–90 minutes. Interviews were conducted in French by myself and one of two Cameroonian research assistants, Hawaou (no surname) and Judith Christelle Koague Nkamsuh, both of whom were master's students in linguistics at the University of Yaoundé I.

§3 and §4 present excerpts from these interviews. Space constraints make it impossible to include data from all speakers, but the excerpts selected are representative of ideas and viewpoints that many speakers expressed. All of these interviews were conducted in the speakers' homes during July and August 2016. All but the interview with Mary and Paul were individual (not group) interviews – the interview with Mary was not planned, but she joined the interview I was conducting with her father Paul in his home. All names given are pseudonyms.

3. Authorization and authentication of “speakers” in Iyasa The present study aimed to investigate language attitudes and use among *all* self-identified Iyasa people in Cameroon. To that end, I specifically sought to conduct interviews with people of varying ages, genders, geographic locations, degrees of mobility, and language proficiency. However, many younger people – and some older people as well – were reluctant to work with me, as they did not consider themselves “master” speakers of Iyasa (“je ne maîtrise pas,” or “I’m no expert,” was a common statement when people were approached for interviews). Before I explained that I would specifically like to talk to people of their age and gender, they would often try to steer me to an elderly male relative who spoke “better.” Even one of my primary consultants, with whom I had repeatedly discussed the aims of my research and my need to talk to *all* kinds of Iyasa speakers, frequently ignored my requests to speak with e.g., young women and instead brought me to see elderly men, whom he described as “the real doyens” who could teach me *real* Iyasa. Clearly, my ideologies regarding the imaginary nature of “authentic” language and the delimitation of its speakers (elderly, male) were not shared, and my desire to document all varieties of Iyasa did not match speakers' expectations of my work.

I realized that in order to understand Iyasa's current sociolinguistic context, I needed to investigate of local perceptions of the identity of “Iyasa speaker,” and what it means to speak “good” or “authentic” Iyasa. This question falls in line with a major

focus of third-wave variationist sociolinguistics, the relationships between speakers' language use and the construction of their social identities (see Eckert 2012). Guided by this research paradigm, this study examines Iyasa speakers' strategies to construct speaker identity within Bucholtz & Hall (2005)'s framework of identity and interaction. Within this framework, identities are not static, fixed entities which speakers inhabit at all times, but rather positions in which speakers place themselves and others *in relation to* other people within specific discursive contexts. That is, "speaker of X language" is not a fixed and static personal attribute, nor does this category exist in a vacuum unrelated to other social identities. Rather, the identity of "speaker" is created within talk, and in relation to other people and identities: for example, an individual may be positioned as "language X speaker, not X learner" or "X and Z speaker, not Y speaker," among other distinctions, depending on the interaction. Relational tactics employed by speakers in the construction of identity, within Bucholtz & Hall's framework, are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of relational tactics (adapted from Bucholtz & Hall 2005:599–605)

Tactic	Inverse Tactic
<i>Authorization</i> : "the affirmation or imposition of an identity through structures of institutionalized power and ideology"	<i>Illegitimation</i> : "the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by these same structures"
<i>Authentication</i> : "the process by which speakers make claims to realness"	<i>Denaturalization</i> : "calling attention to the ways in which identity is crafted, fragmented, or false"
<i>Adequation</i> : positioning groups or individuals as sufficiently alike for the purpose of the interaction	<i>Distinction</i> : processes of social differentiation

By examining the relational tactics employed by Iyasa speakers, as well as those employed by the researchers gathering the data, this study aims to shed light on how the identity of "Iyasa speaker" is constructed, both *within* local ideologies and in response to outside ideologies. Who is frequently authorized as a speaker of "good" language, and whose authority over the language is illegitimated by interviewees? Which groups or individuals are equated (see Table 2) in terms of their status as speakers of Iyasa, and which differences between speakers are highlighted? What characteristics and identities accompany the status of speaking Iyasa "well" or "poorly?" And what claims of authenticity do speakers make, whether regarding their own speech or others'?

For the purposes of this study, it is important to highlight that "[missionary linguists] are an important factor in changing language ecologies" (Dobrin & Good 2009:622). The presence of SIL in the South Region over the past several decades has undoubtedly influenced local perceptions and ideologies of language. Secular aca-

demic linguists, though fewer in number, have also surely had an impact. It should be noted that I was frequently mistaken for a SIL linguist, since I was lodging with the SIL team and was often seen with them. I generally corrected this assumption by saying I was a university student and not a SIL member, but I am not sure that this distinction was meaningful to most people, since in the South Region, foreigners conducting linguistic research are almost synonymous with SIL. It is entirely possible that this pattern – being referred to work with older, rural men who possess community authority – was partly due to expectations based on previous interactions with SIL members. In short, more than a century of contact with missionary and academic language ideologies have almost certainly shaped views of speakerhood in the Iyasa area.

For this reason, when using the term “local ideologies” throughout this paper, I do not mean in the “traditional,” “ancestral,” “original,” or any other nostalgic sense – simply that these positions are commonly expressed by people *geographically* local to the Campo Sub-Division. In many cases, these bear striking resemblances to the language ideologies of academic linguistics and/or SIL. Whatever their origins, the ideologies outlined below are prevalent today among self-identified Iyasa people, and should be taken into account when considering options for language documentation and maintenance.

3.1 The old and the young: the “ancestral” code rears its head It is not uncommon in scenarios of language endangerment and language shift for the speech of elders to be privileged over the speech of younger people, by virtue of its being more “traditional,” “pure,” “like the ancestors,” or similar characteristics (e.g., Dorian 1994; Sallabank 2017; Florey 2004; Riessler & Karvovskaya 2013). This is quite in line with nostalgic ideologies in documentary linguistics and sociolinguistics’ NORM tradition, as discussed above. In discourses of who speaks Iyasa “well,” many similar authorization strategies were employed by Iyasa speakers: nearly everyone positioned elderly people as the most authentic, legitimate, and competent speakers of Iyasa. In the excerpt below, Louise is describing the community’s reluctance to correct speech errors in young people’s Iyasa:¹⁰

Excerpt 1: Louise, 67

1 HAWAOU; Et lorsqu'ils parlent ce mauvais yasa, est-ce que la
communauté les excuse pour ça?
*And when they speak this bad Yasa, does the community
excuse them for that?*

¹⁰For the most part, I here follow the conventions of Discourse Transcription 2 (Du Bois et al. 1992); however, for the sake of space, I have condensed sequential IUs into single lines. For readers unfamiliar with Discourse Transcription symbols, @ represents a pulse of laughter, ((double parentheses)) enclose author comments, times in parentheses (0.7) indicate a pause in seconds, # indicates an uncertain word, and speech overlaps are enclosed in [square brackets].

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- 2 Est-ce qu'on ne cherche pas les;
Doesn't one seek to_ them;
- 3 (1.1)
- 4 LOUISE; Les-les mettre,
Them-to put them,
- 5 HAWAOU; Oui.
Yes.
- 6 LOUISE; Non @puisque, @ mm-mm mm-mm. Ah sauf qu-qu'on est,
No @since, @ mm-mm ((no)) mm-mm. Ah unless that-that one is,
- 7 (0.7)
- 8 uh, face aux personnes âgées.
uh, in front of older people.
- 9 HAWAOU; Mm-[.hm.].
- 10 LOUISE; [.Qui.] peuvent dire que:, bon ce que tu viens de dire là, se dit comme ça. En vrai i-le bon yasa. Mais entre nous là non. Tu as parlé, tu as parlé mm-hm, [.laisse la seule.]
[Who] can say that:, well what you just said there, is said like this. In real I- good Yasa. (H) But between us there no. You spoke, you spoke, mm-hm, [.leave it alone.].
- 11 HAWAOU; [2On excuse?2]
[One excuses it?]
- 12 LOUISE; Oui. On laisse passer. @@
Yes. We let it pass. @@
- 13 HAWAOU; Et ce comportement d'excuser, uh le mauvais yasa, ne pas faire un préjudice a la langue?
And this behavior of excusing, uh bad Yasa, not to create a prejudice against the language?
- 14 LOUISE; Mais-
- 15 HAWAOU; [À #honte-]

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- [To #shame-]
- 16 LOUISE; [C'est pas que] nous on–c'est pas l'histoire d'excuser. C'est parce que, nous-mêmes comme on ne sait pas grand-chose, *[It's not that] us we—it's not a story of excusing. It's because, we ourselves as we don't know a lot,*
- 17 (0.9)
- 18 on ne peut pas dire à l'autre que “tu n'as pas bien parlé” si on ne peut pas lui dire, exactement ce qu'il f–il faut, il faut dire. *we can't say to the other that “you didn't speak well” if we can't tell him, exactly what it's nec—it's necessary, it's necessary to say.*
- 19 (0.6)
- 20 Et c'est nous tous nous baragouinons là, *and it's all of us we're speaking gibberish there,*
- 21 (0.3)
- 22 eh? Si on on on n'a pas le, le, le vrai mot, ou la bonne phrase, *eh? if we we we don't have the, the, the real word, or the right sentence,*
- 23 HAWAOU; Ah.
- 24 (0.4)
- 25 LOUISE; et lui il a, tapé ça comme ça, on sait que, mm. (TSK) *and him he has, slapped ((idiom, roughly “spit it out”)) like that, we know that, mm. (TSK)*
- 26 (0.7)
- 27 C'est pas ce qu'il fallait dire, mais on ne dit rien parce qu'on a compris ce qu'il dit, c'est c'est tout. *It's not what it was necessary to say, but we say nothing because we understood what he says, that's that's all.*

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- 28 HAWAOU; Donc selon vous vous ne parlez pas bien yasa,
correctement?
So according to you you don't speak Yasa well, correctly?
- 29 (1.2)
- 30 LOUISE; Je peux pas dire qu'on parle le yasa profond.
I can't say that we speak deep Yasa.
-

Louise initially invokes the idea in line 8 that correction of “bad” Iyasa¹¹ can only be done by “older people” – despite being 67 and of high standing in the community, she does not consider herself to be among the older people who speak well, and later, she referred me to several of her male neighbors who are more than 70 years old. Delimitations of age categories and generations vary across cultures (Suslak 2009), and in the Iyasa context, may not be determined entirely by chronological age. Rather than simply being people of advanced age, “older people” are positioned as those authorized to provide “real” or “good” Iyasa words and phrases (line 22), and to correct the speech of younger people, as discussed in line 10. Conversely, in line 20, Louise illegitimizes the speech of non-elderly people quite forcefully – “all of us we’re speaking gibberish there,” with herself included in the category of non-elderly people by virtue of the first-person plural pronoun *nous*.

The lexical choice of *baragouin*, or “gibberish,” also invokes intelligibility as an authorization tactic. If a prerequisite of legitimate speakerhood is the power to be understood, Louise dismisses the speech of non-elderly people on the fundamental level of communicative competence. However, in line 27, she softens this assessment of unintelligible speech a bit, saying that younger people can understand what one another are saying, even if it’s not “what was necessary to say” – that is, authorized or “correct” speech. Intelligibility is then positioned as sufficient for the purposes of younger speakers amongst themselves – “we understood what he says, that’s all” – if not sufficient for the purposes of older speakers, who know the “right” way to speak.

The power to correct others’ speech surfaces frequently in these interviews as an authorization tactic, where reprimanding positions the speaker as a linguistic authority in relation to their interlocutor. However, tactics of authorization may be resisted in creative ways. In the excerpt below, Thomas (age 76) echoes the sentiment that “real” Iyasa is not spoken by young people, and describes a power struggle between youth and elders over who has the authority to determine how Iyasa should be spoken:

¹¹Note that Hawaou’s use of “bad Iyasa” in line 1 is a mirroring of a previous statement by Louise, rather than her own formulation.

Excerpt 2: Thomas, 76

-
- 1 ANNA; Ici a Mbendji, est-ce que tout les petits enfants ils parlent bien yasa?
Here in Mbendji, do all the small children they speak Yasa well?
- 2 THOMAS; <growl>Ah:: oh #</growl> (RASPBERRY). Ils veulent #sait pourquoi donc, nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec—quand ils parlent yasa, le yasa ne—c'est changé—ils veulent changer yasa. Leur patois—leur yasa (TSK), n'est pas correcte aux oreilles...(RASPBERRY) Non non non.
<growl>Ah:: oh #.</growl> (RASPBERRY). *They want to #know why therefore, we aren't okay with— when they speak Yasa, Yasa isn't— it's changed— they want to change Yasa. Their patois—their Yasa (TSK), isn't correct to the ears. (RASPBERRY) No no no.*
- 3 ANNA; Quand vous dites que c'est pas correcte,
When you say that it isn't correct,
- 4 THOMAS; C'est pas correcte.
It isn't correct.
- 5 ANNA; ils font des erreurs?
they make mistakes?
- 6 THOMAS; #Pas #ça #n'est— ils ne, oui, ils veulent créer eh, “je VEUX dire ça.” Ils veulent créer LEUR yasa. Pas le vrai yasa que moi je parle que les hommes font la part, non mais, (RASPBERRY) non.
#Not #that #isn't— they don't, yes, they want to create eh, “I WANT to say that.” They want to create THEIR Yasa. Not the real Yasa that me I speak that men share, no but, (RASPBERRY) no.
-

Above, Thomas strongly positions himself as authorized to judge “correct” Iyasa. He repeats twice that youths’ speech is *not* correct, and illegitimizes it further with a dismissive raspberry.¹² He draws a clear line between “real” authentic Iyasa and the Iyasa spoken by youth. Here, he does not portray himself as the sole disapproving authority, but positions others as sharing his evaluation in line 2 – he claims that “we aren’t okay with” youth Iyasa, invoking solidarity with other (possibly older) speakers, and constructing an “us vs. them” dynamic.

¹²I thank a reviewer for pointing out that this term for the derisive noise is not familiar in all contexts; it may also be called a Bronx cheer, a razz, or a voiceless linguolabial trill.

Thomas does not portray young speakers as accepting older speakers' authority over the language, nor accepting that they speak "incorrectly". Instead, he positions them as resisting elders' illegitimation of their speech and attempting to authorize their *own* language use. In contrast to Louise, who in Excerpt 1 attributes younger speakers' "incorrect" Iyasa to a lack of knowledge or ability ("we don't have the real word or the right phrase"), Thomas positions young speakers' use of incorrect language as intentional, and assigns them motives of deliberate language change. In other words, Thomas is claiming that youth not only reject the Iyasa spoken by elders – "I WANT to say that," as opposed to wanting to speak in a way authorized by existing power structures as "correct" – they are attempting to create "their" own Iyasa. The idea of youth choosing to create their own Iyasa is echoed by Paul and a handful of other older speakers in other interviews. By doing so, youth would become the authorities over the new language variety – a prospect which could be threatening to those invested in their own authority over the language, or even in the survival of the language itself (if they do not consider the "changed" variety to be the same as the "real" language).

However, not all young speakers shared Thomas' stance on their rejection of "correct," authorized Iyasa. When asked to assess the Iyasa spoken by youth in Campo Ville, Nina, 24, stated that they "express themselves very well": while she does create a distinction between the "depth"¹³ of younger and older speakers' language, she maintains that youth speak well (see Excerpt 8 below). Robert, 19, aligns with older speakers in conceding that most youth have somewhat limited language proficiency. However, he does not seem to reject older speakers' corrections, as in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 3: Robert, 19

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- | | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 1 | ANNA; | Et est-ce que tu trouves que les jeunes à Campo, les gens de je ne sais pas vingt ans, est-ce qu'ils parlent souvent yasa?
<i>And do you find that the youth in Campo, people of I don't know twenty years, do they often speak Yasa?</i> |
| 2 | ROBERT; | O:oui, mais c'est pas:, bon de nos jours c'est aussi difficile de trouver un gars parler le yasa couramment. Bon ils ont un peu des petits problèmes. S'ils sortent deux mots en yasa ils vont sortir le troisième, en français.
<i>Yes, but it's not:, well nowadays it's also difficult to find a dude speaking Yasa fluently. Well they have a bit of little problems. If they put out two words in Yasa they will put out the third, in French.</i> |

¹³"Deep" language is not a concept unique to the Iyasa context, and has been described in studies of language ideologies in a number of African languages, including Wolof (Mc Laughlin 2017), Swahili (Beck 2015), Zulu (Magagula 2009), and Xhosa (Wright 2002); "deep" language is often associated with rural speakers in these cases as well.

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-
- 3 ANNA; Mm.
- 4 HAWAOU; Et #elle ## te demande de juger un peu ton niveau de langue dans yasa, tu vas dire quoi? C'est bonne;, mauvaise;, ou ceci,
And #she ((Anna)) ## asks you to judge a bit your level of language in Yasa, you'll say what? It's good:, bad:, or this,
- 5 ROBERT; Mm:;, non elle et franchement bonne parce que j'ai grandi avec ma mère, et dans la maison parlé seulement le yasa.
Mm:;, no it's frankly good because I grew up with my mother, and in the house spoke only Yasa.
- 6 HAWAOU; Mm.
- 7 ANNA; Et, est-ce qu'il y a quelquefois des, peut-être des vieux messieurs, qui corrigent ton yasa?
And are there sometimes some, perhaps some old gentlemen, who correct your Yasa?
- 8 ROBERT; Bon:;, d'habitude oui. Mais une seule– une seule fois. Parce que j'ai essayé de, je veux dire d'argumenter, en yasa. Mais il m'a dit que “non c'est pas comme ça.” Je d– je devais sortir ça simplement. Bon j'ai compris qu'il a corrigé, mon erreur.
Well:;, usually yes. But only one–only one time. Because I tried to, I want to say to argue, in Yasa. But he told me that “no it's not like that.” I sh–I should have put it simply. Well I understood that he had corrected, my error.
-

Rather than rejecting the correction offered by the older speaker, Robert seems to accept the older man's authority to correct him – calling his own speech an “error”, and describing his speech act as “trying” to argue (rather than doing so successfully). There seems to be no hint of the defiance attributed to youth by Thomas. However, it should be noted that Robert creates a distinction between his *own* speech and that of other youth in line 5. While he says that it is “difficult to find a dude speaking Yasa fluently” (line 2), he goes on to assess his own level of competence as “frankly good”. Notably, he attributes his language proficiency to having grown up with his mother – it is the influence of a member of an older generation which authenticates his status as a “good” speaker. Interestingly, no young people positioned their own language as distinct from, but equally as authentic as, the language of older speakers

(as Thomas claimed). Rather, younger speakers either denaturalized their own speech to some degree, saying that it isn't "deep" like that of old people, as Louise and Nina describe, or it isn't "fluent", in Robert's words, or they assessed themselves as simply being good speakers.

While generational struggles over linguistic authority and language change are ubiquitous (see e.g., Suslak 2009; Abtahian & Quinn 2017), and elders' complaints of youth wanting to "create their [own] language" are found the world over, contexts of language endangerment and death can produce processes of language change which are radically different than changes found in non-moribund languages (see e.g., Campbell & Muntzel 1989). If language shift away from Iyasa and limited proficiency among younger speakers is indeed fostering some type of rapid and dramatic language change, a sociolinguistically informed documentation project would be well served to dig deeper into discourses like Thomas': what specific speech patterns does he identify as "youth" Iyasa? Are these structures indicative of language attrition or incomplete acquisition, or are they the type of change found in vital languages with full intergenerational transmission? Do youth themselves identify specific linguistic structures as being "deep" or "fluent" language, and if so, what are they? Follow-up studies pursuing these and similar questions could be of use in many other language contexts, for purposes of identifying patterns and causes of language shift, and for devising more effective strategies for language documentation, maintenance, and revitalization.

3.2 Urban vs. rural: putting the "R" in NORM Another clear trend emerged in speakers' juxtaposition of urban and rural language. Almost all interviewees positioned the Iyasa of rural speakers as more authentic, correct, and legitimate than the speech of those who lived in cities, or who had spent significant time in urban environments. In the excerpt below, Louise discusses village vs. city speech, making a comparison with the use of Alsatian in Strasbourg, France (where she lived for many years):

Excerpt 4: Louise, 67

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- | | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 1 | ANNA; | Est-ce que les jeunes parlent yasa bien?
<i>Do the youth speak Yasa well?</i> |
| 2 | | (1.5) |
| 3 | LOUISE; | Ah! Non je peux pas dire si le yasa actuelle, c'est: encore: un yasa bien. C'est le yasa des, comme les, les gens de @ville @ils @parlent, ah je vois ça là-bas:, à Strasbourg avec l'alsacien, l'alsacien, en ville, parle-s'il parle l'alsacien, il n'est pas aussi uh, vrai que celui d'un paysan, d'un village, de la côté. Parce que dans les villages on parle mieux avec (H) le vrai-les vrais mots authentiques. |

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Ah! No I can't say if the current Yasa, it's: still: a good Yasa. It's the Yasa of, like the, the @city people @they @talk, ah I see that over there:, in Strasbourg with Alsatian, the Alsatian, in the city, speaks—if he speaks Alsatian, it's not as uh, real as that of a peasant, from a village, on the side. Because in the villages one speaks better with, the real—the real authentic words.

Here, Louise equates the situation of Iyasa and Alsatian, a minority language of France: both are positioned as having at least two kinds of speaker, the urban (“city people”) and the rural (“peasant”). She differentiates “good” Iyasa from the Iyasa of “city people,” creating an implied connection between rurality and authenticity. She then introduces the case of Alsatian as a similar situation, where there is “real authentic” language spoken in villages, while in cities Alsatian is spoken in a less “real” way (if at all). Interestingly, Louise does not here *directly* describe rural Iyasa as more authentic. Instead, she evaluates it indirectly via Alsatian. It is possible that, as she has already illegitimated her own ability to judge “good” Iyasa (see discussion of Excerpt 1 in §3.1), she feels she lacks the authority to directly assess urban vs. rural speech. Here, she may see herself (the only resident of Campo Beach who has lived in Strasbourg) as the sole local authority on Alsatian, and uses the case of Alsatian as a way to avoid making an unauthorized claim about authentic Iyasa. However, other speakers make more direct assessments of the authenticity of rural speech. Below, Paul discusses the Iyasa of young people who spend time in cities:

Excerpt 5: Paul, 71

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- | | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| 1 | PAUL; | Ils vont en ville la, comme beaucoup des enfants, au lieu de parler la langue maternelle, ils sont habitués avec les camarades, ils commencent a parler fran[çais],
<i>They go to the city there, like a lot of children, instead of speaking the mother tongue, they're accustomed with their friends, they start to speak Fren[ch],</i> |
| 2 | CHRISTELLE; | [-çais],
[-ch], |
| 3 | PAUL; | arriver même a la maison des parents, la phrase est mau-est mal construite. #Puisque #il #est déshabitué en ville.
<i>even arriving at their parents' house, the sentence is bad-is badly constructed. #Since #he #is unaccustomed in the city ((to speaking Iyasa)).</i> |
-

Here, Paul denaturalizes the speech of young people who spend time in cities¹⁴ – it is “badly constructed” – and positions other youth, and their use of French, as the cause of this “bad” language (it should be noted that *camarades*, which I have translated as “friends,” has the specific connotation of same-age friends or classmates). In addition, Paul’s differentiation of urban areas and the “parents’ house” draws an implied connection between ruralness and older generations: by positioning “parents’ house” and “city” as necessarily separate locations (regardless of any older Iyasa speakers actually living in cities), he reinforces the idea that there is a physical place (*not* the city) and a specific demographic (parents, *not* youth) which are associated with speaking good Iyasa.

In Excerpt 6 below, Elise denaturalizes the speech of urban-dwelling youth in a similar way, while also authenticating the speakerhood of the elderly:

Excerpt 6: Elise, 58

-
- | | | |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | ANNA; | Et est-ce qu’il y a des jeunes ici qui ne parlent pas bien le yasa? Qui sont yasa?
<i>And are there youth here who don’t speak Yasa well? Who are Yasa?</i> |
| 2 | ELISE; | Oui.
Yes. |
| 3 | ANNA; | Ah. |
| 4 | ELISE; | Mm-hm. |
| 5 | | (0.5) |
| 7 | | Comme beaucoup de les enfants qui fréquentent en ville la.
Leur– # l’école seulement français, rien que.
<i>Like a lot of the children who go to school in the city there.</i>
Their– # the school only French, nothing but. |
| 8 | | (1.2) |
| 9 | | Ils ne savent pas parler yasa. Comme nous sommes les les mamans comme ça, les vieilles mamans comme ça, quand ils viennent en vacances, ils n’arrivent pas à parler notre langue. |

¹⁴It is common in Cameroon for children to be sent to urban areas for better access to schools, either accompanied by their parents or fostered by other relatives, and to spend school holidays (e.g., summer vacation) with relatives, often parents or grandparents, in the village. Paul and Elise are referring to this practice in Excerpts 5 and 6 when they talk about children going to the city.

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They don't know how to speak Yasa. Like we're the the mothers like that, the old mothers like that, when they come on holidays, they don't manage to speak our language.

Elise again identifies urban schooling as the culprit for children's lack of proficiency in Iyasa. However, while Paul assesses urban-schooled children as speaking "badly constructed" Iyasa, Elise positions them as non-speakers altogether ("they don't know how to speak Yasa", "don't manage to speak our language"), and aligns herself with other older speakers ("we're the mothers, the old mothers"), creating a distinction between herself and her peers versus "children" who don't speak "our language".

Given the urbanization occurring in the Iyasa-speaking area of Cameroon (see §2), and the abandonment of many rural Iyasa villages in favor of the growing cities, the perception of city dwellers as inauthentic Iyasa speakers is particularly relevant to speakers' perceptions of the language's future prospects, and could play a key role in language maintenance efforts. To seek maximal participation and support of language development/revitalization projects by older community leaders, it might be necessary to give special preference to forms of language found in rural speakers, or to select more rural speakers as leaders in language projects. If urban Iyasa speakers (regardless of their proficiency or other qualifications) are likely to be denaturalized and illegitimated by many members of the community, relying heavily on these speakers within a language maintenance project might be a major obstacle to the project's efficacy. As always, local language ideologies regarding speaker status cannot be ignored for the purposes of language documentation, revitalization, and planning.

3.3 Men's vs. women's speech: "not the real Yasa which men share" As illustrated above, the notion of the NORM as ideal speaker seems to be alive and well within the Iyasa-speaking world: speakers position the old and the rural as being the best, most correct, and "deepest" speakers of Iyasa. But what about the M ("male")? Is gender a salient aspect of how interviewees construct the identity of "speaker"? As discussed in §2, my experience in conducting the research certainly led me to believe so – in seeking interviewees, I was most often encouraged to talk to elderly men, not women. Had I not insisted that I needed to speak to women, and left the selection of respondents to my contacts within the community, I would likely have spoken only to men over 60. But was this equation of maleness and "good" speakerhood shared by other members of the community, rather than a personal stance of the young men who were my main consultants? And to what degree were speakers' discussions of gender influenced by speaking with female researchers?

Interestingly, very few speakers overtly raised the issue of gender and speakerhood, and I did not directly ask whether men or women were better speakers for fear of

imposing an outside distinction which was not relevant at the local level (see §4 below). While I did ask about the language use of non-Iyasa spouses who had married in to the community, it was framed as a question about in-marrying men *and* women, and most respondents did not draw strong distinctions between the speaker status of in-marrying men vs. women.¹⁵ However, there were a handful of instances where speakers brought gender into their evaluations of speakerhood and Iyasa identity. Below, Thomas positions women (rather like youth) as rejecting Iyasa traditions and culture:

Excerpt 7: Thomas, 76

-
- | | | |
|---|---------|---|
| 1 | ANNA; | Et en général est-ce que vous trouvez que le plupart des yasa sont fiers d'être yasa?
<i>And in general do you find that most Yasa are proud of being Yasa?</i> |
| 2 | THOMAS; | Tout le monde. Tout le monde est fier d'être iyasa.
<i>Everyone. Everyone is proud of being Iyasa.</i> |
| 3 | ANNA; | Mm. |
| 4 | THOMAS; | Mm-hm. Tout le monde.
<i>Mm-hm. Everyone.</i> |
| 5 | ANNA; | Ah c'est bon.
<i>Ah that's good.</i> |
| 6 | THOMAS; | Oui. Mais je vais dire moins les femmes parce que, .. moins les femmes, parce que les femmes:, dans leur manière vous voyez, veulent, laisser la coutume. Et employer, la coutume qui, qu'elle voyait ailleurs. En arrivant rentrant chez elle.
<i>Yes. But I will say less the women because, less the women, because the women:, in their way you see, want, to leave the customs. And to use, the customs which, which she saw elsewhere. When she arrives coming back to her home.</i> |
| 7 | ANNA; | Hm. |

¹⁵Reportedly, it is increasingly common for both men and women in the Iyasa community to marry non-Iyasa speakers; most community members positioned this as a somewhat new phenomenon, due to both cultural shifts and a small and decreasing speaker population ("if you meet three Iyasa girls, two are going to be related to you," said one young man). A full description of marriage patterns is outside the scope of this paper, but in the Campo Sub-Division I encountered many Iyasa-Iyasa couples in their forties and older, and very few younger Iyasa-Iyasa couples.

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- 8 THOMAS; C'est un- il y a un cha- un grand changement. Oui. Tu ne fais plus ce que ta maman faisait ta grand-mère faisait, ton grand-père faisait, jamais, je parle- les femmes eh? Pas les garçons pas les hommes non. Les femmes, les femmes. Comme:, vous vous #étiez autrement, ce que vous voyez #aller vous- ailleurs vous amenez ça chez vous, vous devenez, vous n'êtes plus yasa.
.. @@@
It's a- there's a cha- a big change. Yes. You no longer do what your mother did your grandmother did, your grandfather did, never, I'm talking- the women eh? Not the boys not the men no. The women, the women. Like:, you you were otherwise, you see #to go you- elsewhere you bring that to your home, you become, you're no longer Yasa. @@@
- 9 HAWAOU; @
- 10 ANNA; @Hm.
- 11 THOMAS; Peut-être ils deviennent blanches ou:, uh je ne sais comment.
Maybe they become white women or:, uh I don't know how.
-

Thomas is quite explicit in creating a distinction between men and women's likelihood to shift away from Iyasa culture – “the women eh? Not the boys not the men no. The women, the women” – and in forcefully denaturalizing the Iyasa identity of those women who attempt to incorporate elements of outside cultures (“you're no longer Yasa ... Maybe they become white women”). He attributes to women a stance of *wanting* to deliberately abandon Iyasa customs and create new cultural practices influenced by outside customs, much as he attributes to youth a conscious desire to abandon the Iyasa spoken by older people and to create “their” Iyasa – of all interviewees, Thomas most frequently authorizes himself not only to report on others' behavior, but to speak for their internal motives, particularly the motives of others whose behavior he evaluates negatively. He also reinforces the notion of authenticity as tied to older speakers and the past in line 8, creating a distinction between being Iyasa – doing what one's mother, grandmother, and grandfather did – and the “big change” of bringing in outside customs, which are linked to denaturalized Iyasa identity (and even whiteness). While Thomas is speaking generally about customs and cultural continuity here, rather than language proficiency specifically, he does also

equate maleness and authentic language in Excerpt 2, line 6 above: “not the real Yasa which me I speak which men share,” creating an adequation between men and “real” language, shared among males.

It seems that discourses of men as the best Iyasa speakers do exist to some degree within the Iyasa community. This is underlined by the fact that all members of the Iyasa language committee working with SIL (as discussed in §2) are men over 40, and that a number of female interviewees tried to steer me towards older men in lieu of working with them. However, these discourses of gender are difficult to untangle from other social factors, such as the generally patriarchal culture of southern Cameroon. The fact that few interviewees brought up gender in discussing speakerhood may also reflect the fact that the researchers conducting the interviews were all female, as were the two outside SIL members working in the community, and people may have felt it was impolite to disparage women’s language use to “foreign” female researchers. Conversely, it may be possible that while most positions of community leadership (such as the SIL language committee) are occupied by men, there may be no strong discourses of men’s speech as “better.” Indeed, Elise positions “old mothers” as authentic speakers in Excerpt 6, line 9, though she is referring to herself and her neighbors rather than making a generalization about old women in general. Further investigation into the specifics of gender and speakerhood would be useful to shed light on the roles which men and women might play in language shift, maintenance, and revitalization.

4. “Brought along” vs. “brought about”: researchers’ role in constructing speakerhood The above discussion has focused on the relational tactics employed by *speakers* in constructing the identity of “Iyasa speaker.” However, it is impossible to ignore that these discourses did not occur in isolation – they were not spontaneous conversations between people from similar backgrounds, but research interviews designed and conducted by outside linguists with quite different ideologies and experiences.

As discussed in §3, linguistic researchers’ attitudes and ideologies regarding language, especially the delimitation of “authentic” or “good” language, may bear little resemblance to the attitudes and ideologies found among speakers themselves. While sociolinguistic researchers may consciously attempt to minimize the influence of their own attitudes during research interviews, and not to “steer” respondents’ answers, it would be myopic to think that a researcher’s own attitudes can ever be removed from the interview context. Not only is the subject matter of the interview largely pre-determined by the researcher, steered by the researcher’s views on language, and informed by a highly specialized theoretical background – the things “brought along” (cf. Gumperz 1982) to the discourse by the researcher – but within the interview itself, the notion of speakerhood is co-constructed (or “brought about”, *ibid.*) by the researcher(s) and the subject(s). The questions posed by a language researcher, no matter how neutrally framed they are designed to be, will necessarily shape the responses given. As described by Cameron et al. (1992:5), “researchers cannot help being socially located persons. We inevitably bring our biographies and our subject-

tivities to every stage of the research process, and this influences the questions we ask and the ways we try to find answers.”

Approaching interview data without accounting for the subjectivity of the people asking the questions, as well as the people answering them, necessarily limits one’s ability to make sense of these interactions. For this reason, I will here provide a brief description of the backgrounds and orientations brought along to these interviews by the researchers, and then examine some of the ways the assumptions, ideologies, and backgrounds of researchers and subjects interacted (and clashed) during these interviews.

4.1 The researchers As discussed in §3, the author comes from an academic background in documentary linguistics and sociolinguistics. More specifically, my training is in the study of language endangerment, documentation, and conservation, as well as sociolinguistics. My own language ideologies, as shaped by a decade spent in academic linguistics, are largely in line with discourses prevalent in contemporary language documentation and sociolinguistics. These ideologies include a belief in the inherent linguistic validity of all speech varieties; the value of documenting and researching linguistic variation and its social functions; and the goal to “provide a comprehensive record of the linguistic practices characteristic of a given speech community” (Himmelman 1998), rather than to describe a specific lexico-grammatical code in isolation.

Within the typology of language documentation proposed by Woodbury (2011), I intended my research to fall somewhere in the less-nostalgic categories of “documentation of contemporary linguistic ecology,” which “would aim in some sense at the ‘real’ or immanent as opposed to the nostalgic” (much like the “sociolinguistic documentation” called for by Childs et al. 2014), and “documentation of an emergent code,” with special focus on what Woodbury highlights as “the study of so-called semi-speakers, and of the variation in communities undergoing rapid language shift” (2011:179–180). But as Woodbury also notes, “[documentation of an emergent code] may go against the grain of anyone, academic or not, with a strong sense of nostalgia” (ibid.). Unsurprisingly, conflicts between my research goals and a nostalgic, NORM-oriented model of authentic speakerhood did arise during this work, as discussed below in §4.2.

However, the endangerment perspective in which I am trained is also inherently nostalgic to some degree, in that it focuses on what is being lost today in comparison with a (real or imagined) linguistic past. My training has focused on the processes and causes of language death, and one of the reasons I chose to pursue research on Iyasa was its (reported) status as an endangered language. A fundamental assumption in designing and conducting this research was that processes of language shift (particularly disrupted intergenerational transmission) and shift-induced language change are underway, and that something is being “lost” as a result. This undercurrent of nostalgic thinking certainly influenced the questions I asked, and the ways I asked them.

My research assistants, Hawaou and Judith Christelle Koague Nkamsuh, were both master's students in linguistics at the University of Yaoundé I, and had taken courses in sociolinguistics and linguistic description. While I cannot speak for their language ideologies with the same certainty as my own, I can say from our conversations that we all shared the basic positions that endangered languages should be documented, and their speakers empowered to maintain their language if they so choose; that languages generally die because young people shift away from using them in favor of a majority language; and that language, identity, and culture are linked in some fashion. Before they began assisting me with interviews, I explained the aims and theoretical framework of my research to them as framed in global patterns of language endangerment, and the sociolinguistic research into the causes and mechanisms of language shift. My goal, as I explained it, was to understand how *all* speakers' attitudes, biographies, and patterns of language use could help linguists understand how languages die, and how we could help communities maintain or revitalize them.

In brief, I and my research assistants all “brought along” our own language ideologies and backgrounds. Together, we “brought about” a shared understanding of the purpose of the interview project, shaped by the idea that Iyasa was endangered and that its endangerment hinged on the language practices of younger people. Below, I examine some of the ways that the researchers' shared and separate ideologies about language and speakerhood interacted with those of the Iyasa speakers we interviewed, and how the notion of the speaker was negotiated by researchers and interviewees.

4.2 Researchers' and interviewees' language ideologies: Conflicts and negotiations

The idea that young people have reduced proficiency in Iyasa, as brought along by the researchers, was sometimes challenged by interviewees. In Excerpt 8 below, I question Nina about the language proficiency of young people in Campo Ville, where she is a lifelong resident:

Excerpt 8: Nina, 24

1	ANNA;	Est-ce que les jeunes yasa ici à Campo, est-ce que, tous les jeunes ici parlent le yasa? <i>Do the Yasa youth here in Campo, do, all the youth here speak Yasa?</i>
2	NINA;	Non. <i>No.</i>
3	ANNA;	Tous les jeunes qui sont yasa? <i>All the youth who are Yasa?</i>
4	NINA;	Les jeunes qui sont yasa? <i>The youth who are Yasa?</i>

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-
- 5 ANNA; Mm.
- 6 NINA; Oui tous les jeunes qui sont yasa parlent yasa.
Yes all the youth who are Yasa speak Yasa.
- 7 ANNA; Et selon toi est-ce qu'ils parlent bien le yasa?
And according to you do they speak Yasa well?
- 8 NINA; Bon ceux qui ont mis du temps ailleurs, il y a
certains mots qui se manquent.
*Well those who have spent time elsewhere, there
are certain words which are missing.*
- 9 ANNA; Mm.
- 10 NINA; Mais ceux qui sont des natifs ici là, s'expriment
très bien.
*But those who are natives here, express
themselves very well.*
- 11 ANNA; Et, les enfants ici à Campo qui sont yasa, est-ce
que, tous les enfants qui sont yasa parlent yasa
ici?
*And, the children here in Campo who are Yasa,
do, all the children who are Yasa speak Yasa
here?*
- 12 NINA; Oui.
Yes.
- 13 ANNA; Et est-ce que les enfants ici à Campo, est-ce
qu'ils parlent bien le yasa?
*And do the children here in Campo, do they
speak Yasa well?*
- 14 NINA; Bon pas approfondi comme des parents eh? Ou
des agés mais ils parlent, parlent bien.
*Well not deep like parents eh? Or the old but
they speak, speak well.*
- 15 CHRISTELLE; Et #est-ce #que tu penses #que c'est la faute de
qui s'ils ne parlent pas @bien?

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*And #do you think #that it's the fault of whom
if they don't speak @well?*

16 NINA; #c'est que les mots– les mots des #ailleurs là
parfois c'est, c'est dur à entendre eh? @@@@
*#It's that the words–the words from #elsewhere
there sometimes it's, it's hard to hear eh? @@@@*

As noted above, a researcher's subjectivity shapes the questions we ask and how we ask them. Here, I begin by posing a question framed in the assumption that young people in particular may not speak Iyasa well. This is an assumption which has both been brought along from my academic training – language shift almost always occurs on a generational basis – as well as from previous interviews where youth were positioned as poor speakers (Nina was the final person I interviewed during that trip). I also draw an implicit link between Iyasa ethnicity and speakerhood – when Nina replies that not all youth in Campo speak Iyasa, I re-emphasize that I am asking specifically about those who “are” Yasa. Despite the fact that the essentialist notion of an inflexible link between language and ethnicity has been fiercely challenged within the Africanist language documentation literature I am most familiar with (e.g., Lüpke 2016), it is a prevalent enough discourse within linguistics as a whole, among speakers of endangered languages, and among Iyasa speakers themselves (see Excerpt 9 below), that I find myself drawing upon it during interviews despite my own conflicting ideologies.

Another “brought along” notion, that Iyasa is endangered due to limited proficiency among young speakers, is imposed by Christelle in line 15. Nina has just stated that young people “express themselves very well”. While she denaturalizes their speech as compared to that of older people or “parents”, she softens this evaluation by repeating that they “speak well”. Immediately afterwards, Christelle poses a question which rests on them *not* speaking well, asking whose fault it is. However, Nina does not pick up Christelle's positioning of youth as bad speakers. Instead, she returns to the notion of some people (those who have spent time elsewhere) having a slightly limited vocabulary, as she described in line 8: “the words from #elsewhere there sometimes it's hard to hear”, and further softens this assessment with laughter.

While Christelle attempted to steer the conversation towards why youth speak badly, Nina maintained that they in fact do not. This is not the only instance where interviewees resist the notions of speakerhood which researchers bring to the discourse. In Excerpt 1, when Louise describes not correcting young people's speech errors, Hawaou repeatedly describes this reluctance as “excusing” – a phrasing which implies that Louise and other older people are in a position of *authority* to correct speech errors, but are choosing not to exercise that authority for fear of creating linguistic shame in the youth. In line 16, Louise rejects this positioning – “it's not a

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- 10 MARY; ou bien basaa, je vais citer et cetera n'est-ce
[pas],
or even Basaa, I'll list et cetera, right,
- 11 PAUL; [Mm-hm.]
- 12 MARY; Même s'il ne parle pas il ne peut pas rester sans
parler son- sa langue.
*Even if he doesn't speak he can't stay without
speaking his-his language.*
- 13 PAUL; Sa langue [mater]nelle.
His mother tongue.
- 14 MARY; [Non.]
No.
- 15 L'autre la c'est faux.
The other one there it's false.
- 16 ANNA; Ah. Donc quelqu'un qui est yasa mais ne parle
pas yasa, est-ce qu'il est vraiment yasa?
*Ah. So someone who is Yasa but doesn't speak
Yasa, is he really Yasa?*
- 17 MARY; (0.5)
- 18 Pourquoi pas?
Why not?
- 19 ANNA; Mm.
- 20 MARY; Il n'est pas yasa pourquoi?
He isn't Yasa why?
- 21 ANNA; Ah non, @c'est un question.
Ah no, @it's a question.
- 22 MARY; Il est yasa.
He is Yasa.
- 23 ANNA; Mm.

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24	MARY;	Donc est-ce que être yasa veut dire parler yasa? <i>So does being Yasa mean speaking Yasa?</i>
25	ANNA;	Oh je ne sais pas. <i>Oh I don't know.</i>
26	MARY;	[Non.] <i>No.</i>
27	CHRISTELLE;	[Peut-être] en par<HIGH>ti</HIGH>? <i>[Maybe] in part?</i>
28	MARY;	Non. <i>No.</i>
29	PAUL;	@
28	MARY;	Être yasa ne veut pas forcément dire parler yasa. Tu peux être yasa mais tu ne parles pas. <i>Being Yasa doesn't necessarily mean speaking Yasa. You can be Yasa but you don't speak.</i>
29	ANNA;	Mm.
30	PAUL;	Tu ne connais pas bien construire les phrases yasa, mais tu es yasa non? [Ah bon.] <i>You don't know how to construct Yasa sentences well, but you're Yasa no? Right.</i>
31	MARY;	[Mm-hm.]

The first point of conflict between different ideas of speakerhood arises in line 2, when Mary interrupts to object to the premise of my question. Immediately before this excerpt, Mary had been describing her indifference towards Iyasa culture and her perception of Iyasa's lack of value for education or employment, and remarked that she would be perfectly happy if her children didn't speak Iyasa, only French. I constructed a hypothetical scenario in which Mary's children ceased using Iyasa altogether, based on her positioning of herself as apathetic towards her children's acquisition of the language, and my exposure to case studies of children who cease using their minority language and experience rapid language attrition. However, she immediately rejected this hypothetical scenario – “No. That's false” – on the grounds

of her own language ideology: that it is impossible for a person to *not* speak the language which corresponds to his or her ethnicity, listing a number of ethnic groups present in Campo Ville. She elaborates that even someone who isn't a speaker cannot possibly remain that way. This is in grave contrast to the general view of academic linguistics that it is exceedingly common for children *not* to acquire their parents' language in situations of language shift, and equally easy for language attrition to occur with disuse.

Interestingly, Mary also takes this opportunity to illegitimate SIL's role in language learning ("even if you don't do SIL ... he can't stay without speaking his language"). While this may seem unprompted, it appears that Mary's "brought along" language ideologies include a strong resistance to SIL as a seat of authority over the language. Later in the interview, she spends several minutes strongly disparaging SIL's orthography and literacy classes. At the conclusion of the interview, when I sought her consent to archive the recording, she defied me to take the recording "even to your boss at SIL – let him hear what I said!" At that point, it became clear that she had mistaken me for a member of SIL, not having been present for the beginning of the interview when I introduced myself to her father as a university student. Her illegitimation of SIL becomes all the more forceful when viewed as being said directly to a SIL member: it is a direct challenge to the institutional authority of SIL over the language, which is echoed later in the interview when she complains that SIL "has come to teach us to write our own Yasa". Clearly, Mary does not authorize outsiders to make decisions regarding the language, nor to decide who counts as a "speaker".

This resistance to outside influence emerges again in line 18: after Mary equates ethnicity and speakerhood in lines 4-15, I ask directly whether an inability to speak the language negates someone's identity as an Iyasa person. Rather than responding as if it were a question, Mary positions me as having made a *claim* about Iyasa identity – a claim which I am not authorized to make. She challenges this claim, asking me why that's the case; I attempt to re-position myself as *not* making a claim, but simply asking a question. Mary then answers the question in the negative – this hypothetical person is Yasa – but returns immediately to challenging my authority to make claims about the language in line 24: "so does being Yasa mean speaking Yasa?" By framing this as a question, she is positioning me as having some epistemic authority in the matter – authority which I had just attempted to reject, and reject again in line 25 ("I don't know"). However, Christelle here enters to accept some measure of epistemic authority, providing another possible answer to the question ("maybe in part?"). The extreme high pitch on the end of her question may be intended to minimize the force of her contribution, or to defer to Mary and Paul's authority on the matter. However, Mary rejects the idea immediately with a simple "no", and states that there is not necessarily any correlation between ethnicity and speakerhood. This seems to be in direct contrast to her claims in lines 4-15 that there *is* a direct link between ethnicity and speakerhood.

It is possible that the stances she is taking here are less a reflection of a static set of ideologies, and more a result of the specific discourse context which is taking place (a structured interview with a foreign researcher) – each of these stances is expressed in

opposition to a question or hypothetical scenario I had posed. This meshes with her continual illegitimation of outsiders as authorities on Iyasa. Throughout, Paul aligns with his daughter, contributing backchannel agreement (“mm-hm”) and restating her points: it seems that he simply aligns with her regardless of the claims she is making, as some of her statements are in direct opposition to stances Paul takes earlier and later in the interview (importantly, he is a member of the SIL language committee and firmly in favor of their literacy project). Not only do the language ideologies of researchers and subjects come into conflict in the above excerpt – interviewees’ overtly expressed ideologies come into conflict with *themselves* for the discursive purpose of claiming and rejecting authority over the meaning of speakerhood, and over the language itself.

This interaction illustrates why it is crucial for researchers to examine their own ideologies, and the social relations between themselves and their subjects, in order to understand what is actually being said. Taken at face value, Mary’s statements could be misconstrued as simply the absence of a coherent set of attitudes towards language and identity. Instead, the attitude she is expressing is a resistance to outsiders’ authority to make claims about her language – an attitude which, if prevalent in the community, could have an enormous impact on any documentation or revitalization project which involved outside “experts”.

5. Conclusions: local ideologies, imported ideologies, and recommendations for language documentation and maintenance

While the nostalgic notion of the NORM as “ideal speaker” may be falling out of favor within sociolinguistics and language documentation, it appears to be closely mirrored in Iyasa speakers’ discourses around language use – at the very least, the characteristics of “old” and “rural” are equated with the identity of “good” speaker. Both older and younger participants identified “real”, or highly proficient, Iyasa as being spoken by old people (such as “parents” or “old mothers”), generally people older than themselves, and denaturalized the non-“deep” speech of younger speakers. Young people were positioned as being deficient speakers in some way, in relation to older people, by all participants: it seems that “young” is an identity category that only emerges in relation to the category of “old”, and is not necessarily delimited by age (for example, Louise, despite being 67 and one of the oldest people in her town, drew a distinction between “older people” versus herself and other younger people: she positioned herself as a young person who could not speak “deep” Iyasa).

However, the force of these negative evaluations varied. Nina’s denaturalization of youth speech was fairly mild, with young people described as simply missing some vocabulary, but generally able to “speak well”. Robert, while claiming good speakerhood for himself (authenticated by having learned from his mother, an older person), differentiated himself from other youth, who do not speak “fluently.” Thomas and Paul positioned young people as speakers to some degree, but speakers of “incorrect” or “badly constructed” Iyasa – not only is their speech not “deep”, or fully authentic, but *bad*. At the most extreme end, Elise positioned some youth (those educated

in cities) as lacking speakerhood altogether – “they don’t manage to speak our language”.

Similarly, ruralness was equated with authentic language, as in Louise’s comparison with “real” village Alsatian. The city was positioned as a place where the status of “speaker” is degraded (resulting in “badly constructed” sentences) or lost altogether, replaced by French. Often, ruralness and elderliness were equated in some way: for example, Elise’s description of the language of “old mothers” in the villages not being spoken by children on holiday from urban schools. Similar ideas are seen in Paul’s adequation of “camarades” (classmates/same-age friends), French, bad Iyasa, and the city, in contrast to the “parents’ house” (implied to be rural) and proper Iyasa. The O(ld) and R(ural) elements of the NORM model seem to be highly relevant to Iyasa speakers’ ideologies about “good” language.

However, the salience of the N(on-mobile) and M(ale) criteria are less clear. It could be argued that, as much mobility in contemporary Cameroon involves movement between a city and a rural area, and those who are non-mobile tend to live in rural areas, ruralness and non-mobility are treated as one and the same. Indeed, most mentions of mobility as relates to speakerhood are in discussions of children who are sent to school in urban areas, and the focus falls on the city rather than mobility itself. It is also possible that non-mobility is so rare in modern Cameroon that it is not a salient category at all. Further investigation into the mobility patterns of Iyasa people is needed to clarify this.

The relationship between gender and speaker status is also less than clear: while some speakers made implications relating maleness and “good” Iyasa, gender as related to speakerhood arose fairly infrequently during the interviews – certainly not as often nor as strongly as age and ruralness. While Thomas denaturalized women’s status as both speakers and members of Iyasa culture, and authenticated “real” Yasa as being that which “men share”, he was the only person to position gender in this way. Similarly, when asked about youth’s language use, Robert responds specifically in terms of young *men’s* language proficiency (“difficult to find a dude who speaks Yasa fluently”). However, whether he deliberately omitted young women from his assessment, or was cued by my use of the pronoun “ils” (which is masculine, but is also the pronoun used for groups of mixed gender) to speak about men, is unclear. On the other hand, Elise authenticates older women, including herself, as Iyasa speakers: she specifically refers to “old mothers” rather than “old people” or “grandparents” as possessors of “our language” (Iyasa). It is possible, then, that men and women each see their own gender as more authorized and authentic speakers; it is also possible that gender is simply a less salient component in constructing the identity of Iyasa speaker.

However, as we have seen, the idea of the speaker was not constructed by Iyasa interviewees and their language ideologies alone: these discourses were also shaped by researchers with differing language ideologies, agendas, and understandings of language shift. As discussed in §4, these interviews were only occurring because of an outside researcher’s perception of the language’s endangerment, and assumption that language shift was occurring in younger generations. In many instances, inter-

viewees' positioning of young people as poor speakers may have been influenced by the questions they were asked: for example, Elise's discussion of urban-schooled children who don't speak was prompted by my asking if there were children who *don't* speak well. Had I framed the question more neutrally, such as "what do you think about how children speak Iyasa?", her answer may have been considerably different. Similarly, in Excerpt 8, Christelle presses ahead with questions resting on the assumption that youth are poor speakers, even after Nina has positioned them as sufficiently good speakers; and Hawaou, in Excerpt 1, is challenged by Louise after miscategorizing Louise as having the authority of a "good" elderly speaker, when Louise in fact positions herself as one of the younger speakers who doesn't have access to "real" language. A better understanding of how Iyasa speakerhood is constructed would have allowed me and my research assistants to ask more relevant questions, tailored more specifically to the Iyasa context, and gain deeper insight into local language use and attitudes.

5.1 Implications for language research and development Outside of the interviews themselves, in the larger context of the research project, conflicts arose between local expectations of my work (encouraging me to talk to old men, "the real doyens", in order to get the "best" information), and my research agenda, informed by my own background and language ideologies (sociolinguistic and documentary work should incorporate *everyone's* language use, and no individual's speech is inherently better or more valid than others'). Had I not been forceful in insisting that I needed to speak to younger people and women, I would likely have been introduced only to older male interviewees – the "ideal" speaker in the nostalgic NORM past of linguistics, as well as the present context of Iyasa. Investigating the language ideologies which position NORMs as the most authentic speakers of Iyasa should be viewed as an essential part of any Iyasa documentation or maintenance project: for one, documentation of language ideologies necessarily a component of a "comprehensive record of the communicative practices of a given community" (Himmelman 1998). No documentary record which overlooks language ideologies can be considered "comprehensive", and language ideologies have a central role in shaping the communicative practices of a given community. Thus, gathering information on at least *overtly* expressed language ideologies via structured interviews, participant observation, or naturally-occurring discourse is crucially important to the aims of language documentation. Conducting exploratory interviews about language ideologies, perceptions of proficiency, and attitudes towards variation may be of immense use to outside researchers who are beginning language documentation or sociolinguistic research projects in a given community.

For the pragmatic purposes of language work, such as maintenance or revitalization efforts, development of literacy and new media, or mother-tongue education, understanding local ideologies about speakerhood can be key to the relative success of these initiatives. As discussed above, for example, SIL's Iyasa literacy classes may face low participation from the community if many speakers share Mary's resistance to outsiders' authority over the language. If literacy classes are conducted or publicized

by foreigners, even if they are relatively proficient in the language, their authority to “teach us to write our own Yasa”, as Mary said, may be so widely illegitimated that it harms the project’s chances of success. Similarly, if community goals for language maintenance and revitalization center around transmitting the Iyasa varieties of older and “deep” speakers to younger speakers, and younger speakers share this desire to learn language forms they view as more authentic, a language maintenance project informed by academic linguistic ideologies which attempted to valorize youth Iyasa or promote acceptance of linguistic variation and change might not be welcome. Efforts to maintain, revitalize, or develop endangered languages already face enough obstacles when they do not clash with local ideas about who is a “good” or “real” speaker – another reason it is crucial for those working in language documentation and revitalization to work within the parameters of local language ideologies.

In conclusion, language researchers would be well served to dig deeper into the notion of speakerhood, and related language ideologies, not only for the sake of a rigorous scientific product and improved contribution to sociolinguistic theory, but to help the chances of any future work to strengthen or develop the language. Working *with* local ideas of speaker status, and paying close attention to how one’s own notions of speaker status interact with local ones, can help researchers and language workers produce better documentation, improve prospects for revitalization, and enhance language development efforts.

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