1

Should Translation Work Take Place?

Ethical Questions Concerning the
Translation of First Nations Languages

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1. Introduction

For many First Nations communities, translation represents a "sea change": while all languages are passed on through word of mouth, only a subset of languages have writing systems, and even fewer are regularly translated. Many First Nations languages (and many other languages) are primarily oral; writing and translation are recent additions. Writing, literacy, and translation work potentially leads to great changes in a language community, and their introduction raises a host of ethical questions.

This chapter outlines the potential benefits and disadvantages of translating Cayuga, an Iroquoian language. It also describes the context of translation: the people who speak Cayuga, and the community, Six Nations of the Grand River, where Cayuga is spoken. I outline the community context in section 3, and then discuss translation and knowledge transfer in sections 4 and 5. I also describe related issues, which include turning the oral tradition into a written one (section 6) and the problem of controlling access to translations (section 7). Finally, I have included many asides about the English words used in this chapter to describe language and knowledge, for the following reasons.

This chapter describes an *ethical space* that has come into being at Six Nations because of translation (see Ermine 2005 for an introduction to this concept). The potential for an ethical space is created whenever First Nations and Western cultures come into contact. Instead of just acting and reacting, participants within an ethical space purposefully examine their

underlying motives and the effects of their interactions. (My desire for this type of overt acknowledgment is the reason for section 2.) The goal of an ethical space is to create a principled research methodology. I will present some thoughts about the latter in the conclusion (section 8).

2. "We've Been Studied to Death"

Acknowledging the ethical context, I am uncomfortable with writing this chapter because it is yet another outsider's description of the Iroquois. ("We've been studied to death," is one Cayuga speaker's apt commentary about such descriptions.)

For a cross-section of the vast anthropological literature, the reader could consult Morgan (1901a, 1901b), Speck (1945), or Shimony (1994). Annotated bibliographies of the literature on the Iroquois include Murdock and O'Leary (1975) and Weinman (1969). Fenton (1951) also reviews the literature on the Iroquois up to about 1950. This information was sourced from Martin (2008).

This chapter contains statistics and facts about the Iroquois as well as anonymous paraphrases of what Cayuga speakers have said to me. However, these are meant to provide context or to bring alive otherwise abstract concepts. I report on the Iroquois because without their language and thoughts (or more accurately, my interpretation of them), this chapter would be rather tepid and uninteresting. The purpose of writing about the Iroquois, then, is to enliven this chapter in order to provide some insight into the ethical issues that arise from translation work.

3. The Community Context

Six Nations of the Grand River is situated in southern Ontario, Canada, near the city of Brantford (see map 1-1). Six Nations has approximately 22,350 members, of whom about 50 percent live on reserve (Six Nations Elected Council 2007:44). About 300 people at Six Nations speak an Iroquoian language, either Cayuga, Mohawk, or Onondaga. (The last Seneca speaker at Six Nations died in the 1990s, but there are Seneca speakers at the Tonawanda, Cattaraugus, and Allegheny reservations in western New York [Mithun 1999].)

The Northern Iroquoian languages include Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga, Mohawk, Oneida, and Tuscarora. (Cherokee is also an Iroquoian language, but it belongs to a more remotely related, southern branch of
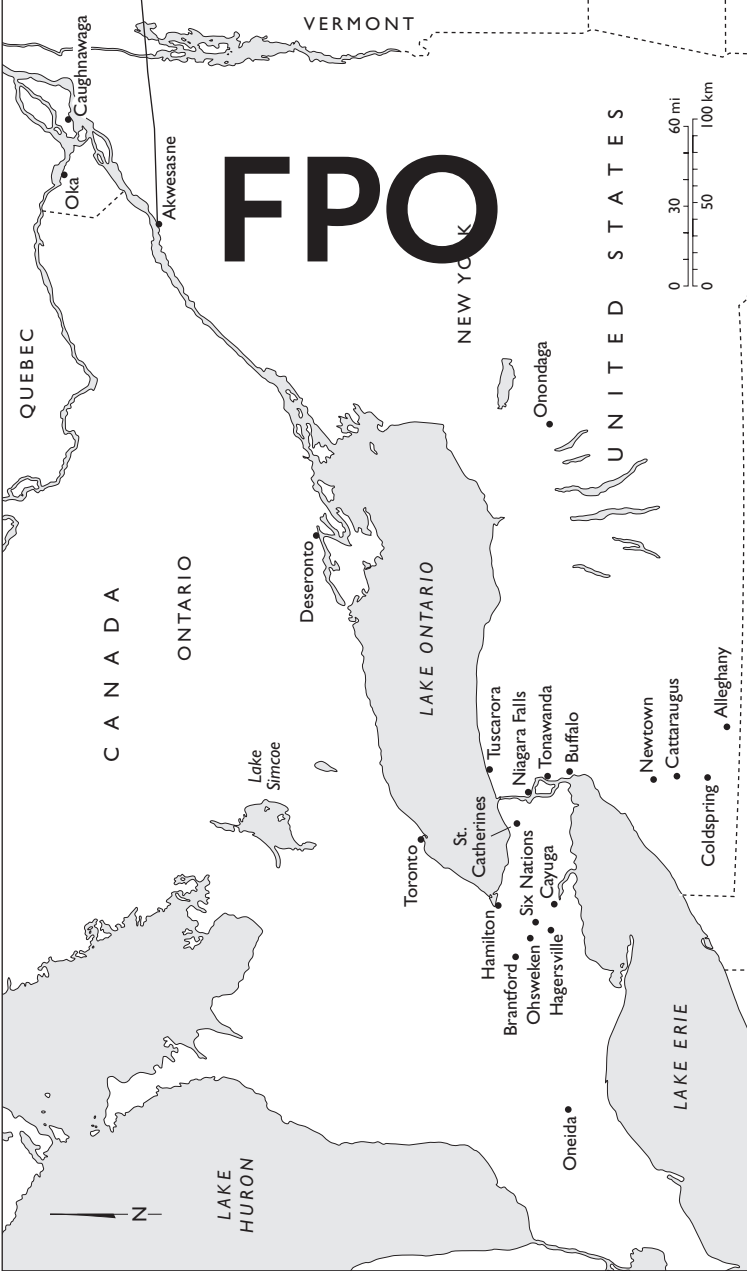
Map 1. Iroquoian communities

the language family.) The underlying unity of the Northern Iroquoian languages is recognized by speakers, who use phrases like "speaking Indian" or Cayuga words like *Ǫgwehǫwéhnęha:* [7] 'the Indian way or language' to describe it.[1] There are also specific words for each language: the Cayuga word for the Cayuga language is *Gayogoho:nǫhnéha:* [7] 'the way or language of the people of the pipe.' Finally, the Cayuga word for a female translator is *deyewęnádenye* [7]*s*, which literally means 'she changes words'; a male translator is *dęhawęnádenye* [7]*s*.

3.1. Language Status

The Iroquoian languages spoken at Six Nations can be classified as endangered: there were approximately seventy-five fluent Cayuga speakers as of 2009. Cayuga is spoken mainly in Longhouse contexts and in the immersion school setting. However, in response to fears about the state of the language, people make deliberate efforts to speak Cayuga outside these contexts.

The shift away from speaking Cayuga at home took place within living memory: for example, in one family, where the siblings are now all over fifty years of age, the older siblings grew up speaking an Iroquoian language at home, but the younger ones did not have the same exposure to the language. According to the children, the parents deliberately spoke the language at home with the older siblings because they lived in the United States at the time and were worried about language retention. However, once they moved to Six Nations the parents were less worried about language retention and did not speak the language in the home as vigilantly as in the past. To give another example, in a younger family, one woman in her early fifties spoke Cayuga at home with her mother well into her thirties, until her mother died; after that, she "didn't have anyone to talk to." In contrast, several families headed by language activists and with younger children between the ages of ten and twenty-five still make a point of speaking the language at home.

3.2. The Longhouse Religion

Many Cayuga speakers are followers of the Iroquoian Longhouse religion, founded in 1799 by the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake (Sganyadáiyo:). (The word *Ontario* appears to be a related word borrowed from an Iroquoian language into English; the *-rio* part of the word corresponds to Cayuga *-iyo:* 'beautiful' or 'great.')

Cayuga speakers express the opinion that the English words *religion* and *ceremonies* are inaccurate and that the Longhouse "religion" is more encompassing than the term *religion* implies. The word *ceremonies* is also considered somewhat objectionable; Cayuga speakers consider the word *doings* to be more appropriate, perhaps because the doings are not seen as being much different from the realm of everyday life. However, the Longhouse way is a traditional way of life, with special events and ceremonies centered around the agricultural calendar, and whose main purpose is to acknowledge and give thanks to the Creator.

At Six Nations, the oral tradition associated with the Longhouse religion is transmitted through Cayuga, Onondaga, and (more recently) English. The oral tradition is extensive; for example, the Code of Handsome Lake takes about four days to recite. This body of teachings describes how people should live simply and traditionally (some examples are provided later), and it is preached at special times of the year to promote cleansing and renewal.

3.3. Types of Oral Tradition

In addition to the Code of Handsome Lake, there are three other kinds of speeches in the oral tradition (Foster 1974:7–8): hierarchically structured speech events such as the Thanksgiving Address; political oratory, including the Great Law; and speeches associated with herbalism and private curing ceremonies. The latter will not be further discussed due to their sensitive nature (see section 7 for a few additional comments). The Thanksgiving Address is discussed in section 5.2. A few more details about the Great Law are provided below.

The Great Law (Gayane̱hsra⁷gó:wah) tells the story of the founding of the League or Confederacy of the Iroquois, prior to the 1500s. It lays out the laws and rituals associated with the League. One example of the Great Law is the Condolence Ceremony, during which the passing of an hereditary chief is mourned and a successor is installed.

The Confederacy of the Iroquois consists of the Three Brothers (the Onondaga, Mohawk, and Seneca) and the Four Brothers (Cayuga, Oneida, and the adopted Tuscarora and Delaware; the Delaware are Algonquian). It is also called the Five Nations (for the original member nations, the Onondaga, Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, and Oneida), the Six Nations (add Tuscarora), and the Haudenosaunee (Hodiṇǫhsó:nih, the People of the Longhouse; literally, 'they (males) make the house').

The Confederate Council consists of fifty hereditary chiefs. Although it was replaced by an elected council in 1924, both councils continue to operate today, and their relative authority is a topic of long-standing dispute. (The lack of a clearly recognized central authority has an impact on access to translations, as discussed in section 7.)

Although the Great Law is a monumental body of knowledge, no Iroquoian-language version existed in print until 1992; only translations existed. (For a state-of-the-art English synopsis of the Great Law, see Fenton 1998; for a fuller description of the 1992 Iroquoian version, see section 6.1.) The 1992 monograph, consisting of Onondaga with English translation, is 755 pages long, which hints at the extent of this particular type of oral literature.

Although the type of knowledge embodied in the vast Iroquoian oral tradition can be labeled as *culture*, some speakers believe that a term like *civilization* is more accurate because it implies a more systematic, higher-status, and longer-lasting body of knowledge. When talking in English about language or knowledge, Cayuga speakers are on a constant search for more accurate or non-pejorative English labels. The Cayuga phrase that expresses a concept similar to civilization is *tsęh niyǫgwaihóʼdę:* ‘our ways or beliefs’).

In summary, the great and ancient Iroquoian heritage is embodied in a few languages that now have very few speakers. This creates an urgent context for language-preservation efforts, including translation.

3.4. Fear of Language Loss and Language-Preservation Efforts

Among Longhouse followers (Hadinǫhs_e_sgehó:nǫʼ or Gaenǫhsesgehó:nǫʼ People of the Longhouse) there is a sense of obligation to pass on the Creator’s gift of language: one speaker described to me a compelling dream in which she was held to account for passing along the traditional ways (including language) as a condition of being allowed to enter into the Sky World after death. While it is not my place to describe further details of the dream, I describe some aspects of its context below before returning to the topic of language preservation.

The Sky World (the realm above the sky) is in contrast with the middle realm (below or in the sky) and the earth (which rests on the Turtle’s back). It is said that the earth was formed when Sky Woman fell through the hole in the sky dome that was created when the Great Tree of Light was uprooted. At that time there was no land, and so to help support her,

Muskrat dove to the bottom of the sea and brought up a lump of earth, which he placed on the Turtle's back. The earth then expanded to its present size. (For a synopsis of this body of knowledge see Herrick 1995:5–6.)

Regarding language preservation, the Six Nations community has responded to fears about the state of the language in many ways. Within the education system, Cayuga and Mohawk immersion programs for grades 1–12 were established in the 1980s and continue today. (Starting these programs was difficult: the first classes were offered by a Mohawk and a Cayuga woman who gave up their regular, better-paying jobs, cleaned out the Legion Hall in Ohsweken—the main town at Six Nations—so that it could be used as a classroom, and started preparing curriculum material to teach.)

Today, Cayuga and Mohawk adult immersion programs and adult night courses are offered at nearby postsecondary institutions and cultural centers. (Such is their dedication to preserving the language that students who enroll in the adult immersion programs typically give up better-paying jobs in return for a living stipend which is inadequate for a single person, let alone a family.)

Finally, an ongoing Cayuga and Mohawk curriculum development program, the Kawenní:io/Gawę̨ní:yo: Language Preservation Project, is associated with the Kawenní:io/Gawę̨ní:yo: immersion high school. This project has a coordinator and is informed by a Mohawk and a Cayuga speaker. (These are the same two women who started the original immersion school; both still work tirelessly, despite being past retirement age and in poor health.)

Although the educational programs just described aim to teach everyday language, other programs, such as the Haudenosaunee Resource Centre (HRC), aspire to preserve the oral tradition described in section 3.3. This project follows in the footsteps of the late Jacob Thomas and the late Reginald Henry (both noted ritualists and language activists, who in the 1980s each founded learning centers aimed at preserving the oral tradition). The HRC is situated in an old school building at Six Nations. All the project members except for the coordinator are men of various ages: younger learners in their twenties or thirties undertake to learn ritual speeches and are guided by older fluent speakers in their fifties. Everyone, in turn, takes direction from a handful of elders approximately in their seventies, who are called upon to explain "high language" (special ceremonial terms whose meaning is figurative and often opaque). The

project mirrors in design the traditional means of training new ritualists in the oral tradition, except that the training is not done in private. (This training is described at the end of section 3.4.)

Finally, the HRC has a very popular outreach component. Members of the project make presentations (in English) to school and community groups about topics such as the Green Corn ceremony, which is a set of rituals to thank the Creator for another successful growing season and harvest (Shimony 1994:166). Project members report that the level of detail and the type of information in the presentations depended on the type of audience. This is an example of a kind of control over access to information, a topic to be further discussed in section 7. It is also an example of the strong demand for knowledge of Iroquoian civilization in translation.

The Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC; http://www.woodland-centre .on.ca/index.php) in Brantford, Ontario, under the direction of Amos Key Jr., has engaged in many language-preservation projects. Key has worked with noted ritualists and speakers to make recordings of conversational language and ceremonial speeches. As a result of the latter initiative, the WCC has archived fifteen reel-to-reel recordings of conversations, as well as Mohawk, Cayuga, and Onondaga versions of the Great Law. (Interestingly, the recordings of the Great Law were made by a single ritualist, the late Huron Miller. It was common in the past for speakers to be familiar with several Iroquoian languages, often as a result of having had parents who spoke different languages in the home.)

The WCC has fostered a tradition of engaging in research projects with both Iroquoian language speakers and academics. Some of the Iroquoian-led projects were described above, and some are described below. To give an example of the academic research, two projects funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education resulted in a Cayuga dictionary (Froman et al. 2003) and an Onondaga dictionary (Woodbury 2003). Other dictionaries funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, but not in conjunction with the WCC, include a dictionary of Tuscarora (Rudes 1999) and of Oneida (Michelson and Doxtator 2002).

While a handful of linguists work on Cayuga, it is Longhouse followers who are in large part responsible for the preservation efforts just described. What is interesting is that they may have undertaken these initiatives in spite of Handsome Lake's prohibitions against the use of technologies such as writing and recording. As Shimony observed, "There is a conscious effort to perpetuate the Longhouse way of life precisely by sev-

eral members who are most knowledgeable, and the fact that they utilize some previously disfavored means [such as writing and recording] in no way indicates any diminution of their religious convictions. To them, the means justify the ends" (1994:xx).

Writing, recording, translating, reading anthropological literature about the Iroquois, taking language courses, and obtaining postsecondary degrees are all examples of activities that I have been told run counter to the teachings of Handsome Lake, but which speakers have adopted in order to meet higher goals.

There is, however, an alternative interpretation of speakers' use of nontraditional means of preserving the language. To illustrate, one speaker asked me, "[Are] not writing systems just mnemonic devices/systems anyway?" The Iroquois traditionally used wampum belts (and other objects) as prompts for remembering significant treaties and past events. It could be, then, that some speakers see writing systems as a continuation of this tradition. Indeed, speakers learning speeches appear to use written transcripts as prompts for remembering a model speech upon which they can base their own oral compositions. (See section 5.2 for more on the process of oral composition.) If such is the case, then the use of writing, translating, and so forth can be seen as the continuation of a traditional practice that does not run counter the spirit of Handsome Lake's teachings. Similar logic could underlie the adoption of other "nontraditional" means of preserving the language.

Returning to the main topic, language-preservation efforts also take place despite an undercurrent of alarm that language loss, the loss of the traditional ways, and environmental degradation are inevitable and foretold. Michael Foster summarizes a similar viewpoint: "The story is told that there will come a time when there is only one Iroquois left who will know the ceremonies. On the last day before the calamity this lone Indian will enter the longhouse for the last time and recite the entire set of speeches and songs, and recite them perfectly. Then he will leave the longhouse and die, and that will be the end of everything" (1974:129 n. 9).

According to Foster, the traditional method of preserving the Longhouse oral tradition could account for this type of attitude: typically, the death of a ritualist triggers a crisis, which is resolved when a young man, who has discreetly undergone a private training process, steps in to perform the former ritualist's duties. In Foster's view, "The notion of 'crisis' in the taking up of ritual roles tends to engender a pessimistic view. But

despite the enormous loss to the Longhouse community in the death of many key ritualists in recent years, the remarkable process of succession—of young men stepping forward at the right moment—goes on. I have seen it happen at Six Nations over the last three years, even though unhappily most of the speakers who contributed to this study have died during the same period" (1974:252).

This process of succession was also the basic model for the Haudenosaunee Resource Centre. Young men working for the project used more traditional means of learning the speeches, such as talking with knowledgeable older male speakers. However, they also analyzed unfamiliar vocabulary on a blackboard, and transcribed and translated recordings of speeches.

In summary, although translation and other preservation efforts are controversial means of preserving the Longhouse way of life, speakers still use many different tools in their desire to maintain the oral tradition. (See section 6 for further discussion of why translation is controversial.) The remainder of this chapter describes the consequences and impact of translation on the language and the community of speakers, beginning with a discussion of language and knowledge.

4. Translation and Knowledge Transfer

Translation can be viewed as a means of transferring knowledge from one group of speakers to another. The question is, how effective is translation for knowledge transfer? In order to discuss the topic, it is necessary to say a few words about the relationship between language and knowledge.

In one extreme view, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Sapir 1983; Whorf 1956), language strictly determines how we perceive and think about the world: metaphorically speaking, translation as a process is as doomed as trying to change silver into gold. In reality, however, the categories of our native languages merely predispose us to think about or perceive the world in certain ways. A classic example comes from infant sound discrimination experiments: early on, infants distinguish sounds like [t] and [d] from one another, regardless of whether such sounds are found in the surrounding adult language. (For example, Gikuyu, a language spoken in Kenya, has a [t] sound but no [d] sound.) However, if the distinction between [t] and [d] is not present in the adult language, then infants lose the ability to perceive the difference between such sounds by about the age of one year (Werker and Tees 1984). Nevertheless, adults are able to

relearn the distinction when they learn a second language (such as English) in which the difference between [t] and [d] is important. ("Ten" is different from "den.")

This example shows that language colors perception but is not a perceptual straitjacket: infants and adults can unlearn and relearn the ability to perceive the difference between [t] and [d]. Given that language only colors perception, then, translation is possible; however, contextualization is needed in order to promote the ability to learn novel cultural concepts or unlearn old ones. (Contextualization is further discussed below.)

Cayuga speakers recognize that language is separate from knowledge and point out that there is more to being a Longhouse follower than speaking the language: the belief systems, attitudes, and way of life are also passed down through upbringing. While, ideally, belief systems and teachings should be transmitted through the language, some people are said to have the "attitude and essence of traditional belief" even though they cannot speak the language.

This observation raises a controversial question: Can Iroquoian culture be transmitted without the medium of an Iroquoian language? To address this question, it is necessary to distinguish between concepts that are lexical (concepts conveyed through words) and those that are grammaticalized (or obligatorily expressed through grammatical categories).

Concepts conveyed through words consist of denotations (dictionary meanings) and connotations. Connotations are emotional associations (personal or societal) that are suggested by, or form part of, the meaning of a word. For example, January is the first month of the year (its denotation); in contrast, January can have negative connotations like "bad weather" and "seasonal affective disorder," or positive connotations like "New Year's." Both denotations and connotations can be translated with relative precision, although, for significant concepts, it might take a book-length work to convey the actual meaning.

To show that denotations can be translated, I could state that the Cayuga word *desda⁷n* means both 'stand up!' and 'stop!'; for illustration, I could add that *desda⁷n* is even the punch line of a joke that the late Reginald Henry told me: "A husband is driving with his wife in a truck; the wife asks the husband to *stop* so that she can investigate a yard sale. In response, the husband leans forward over the wheel, *stands up*, and drives on past." The humor of this joke can be conveyed even to people who do not know Cayuga, although it takes some explaining. Similarly, lexical

meanings in one language can be described to speakers of another language, with some contextualization.

In contrast, grammaticalized concepts are more fundamental, and arguably do not translate as well. For example, Cayuga verbs obligatorily mark the difference between "we two" (or "the two of us") and "we all": when I once asked for the Cayuga equivalent of "we are fat" (a sentence in English, but a verb in Cayuga), two Cayuga women humorously supplied the word *ǫgyáhsę:* 'we two are fat' rather than the word *ǫgwáhsę:* 'we all are fat.' In Cayuga, one is forced to choose which "we" to use, allowing for the possibility of a pun. While this particular example translates well enough, the *preoccupation* with choosing between the prefixes *ǫgy-* 'we two' and *ǫgw-* 'we all' is arguably lost in translation, as are most other grammatical preoccupations.

It is even more difficult to translate the meaning conveyed by grammatical categories such as tense and aspect. (Tense distinctions convey the time in which an action takes place, while aspect distinctions describe the manner in which an action takes place.) English is preoccupied with verb tense distinctions (such as present-tense "they work" versus past-tense "they worked"). Cayuga is preoccupied with verb aspect distinctions. English also makes a few aspectual distinctions, such as "they work (all the time or habitually)" versus "they are working (an observation about a current state of affairs)." In contrast, the Cayuga verb system is all about aspect: for example, the verb *ǫgí:da^7* can be translated either as 'I slept' or 'I am sleeping' (the latter could be said by someone who was trying to nap and wanted to be left alone). However, what the English translations do not convey, without further explanation, is that the word *ǫgí:da^7* means something more like 'my sleeping is a fact': in Cayuga, it is more important to express whether the action is factual than to indicate the time of its occurrence. (There are ways to convey a time line in Cayuga, however.) In English, the best way to convey factuality in verbs is to use a past-tense form ('I slept'), which express an activity that actually happened; alternatively, English speakers could use a present progressive form ('I am sleeping') to make an observation about something that is actually happening as one speaks. This example shows that the English way of translating Cayuga factual verb forms is inadequate: the preoccupations of the source language cannot be conveyed in the English translation, or more precisely, Cayuga aspectual distinctions have, for the most part, no direct equivalent in English.

Returning to the main question of this section, some aspects of the Iroquoian way can be transmitted without the medium of an Iroquoian language. However, something is lost when we translate concepts without an in-depth knowledge of and empathy for the ways of First Peoples (context); it is also extremely difficult to translate the way in which First Peoples express themselves (their linguistic preoccupations or habits, their eloquence or skill, etc.). (See section 5.2 for further discussion of Dell Hymes's viewpoints on eloquence and skill.)

5. Translation in Cayuga

So far I have talked about the community context within which translation work takes place, and about the knowledge expressed in the Cayuga language. In this section I turn to describing translation proper.

5.1. Previous Translation Work

Until recently, little of the oral tradition described in section 3.3 had been written down, and little information about Cayuga existed in print. Notable transcripts and translations include Foster (1974) (described below) and Mithun and Woodbury (1980); the latter contains two short stories (one about rabbit hunting, for example) narrated by the late Reginald Henry. (Reg Henry was a gifted ritualist and linguist who spoke fluent Cayuga, Onondaga, and English and was well versed in other Iroquoian languages. His efforts to preserve the Cayuga language and Longhouse traditions are almost unparalleled. See section 6.1 for an example of his many contributions.)

Linguistic knowledge of the language is available in the Cayuga dictionary (Froman et al. 2003), a monograph about Iroquoian accent (Michelson 1988), a Cayuga teaching grammar (Mithun and Henry 1982), an unpublished description of Cayuga verb conjugations (Sasse and Keye 1998), and various journal articles and theses.

In English, knowledge of the Iroquois Longhouse tradition can be found in Foster (1974), Shimony (1994), and many other anthropological sources (some were overviewed in section 2).

The Haudenosaunee Resource Centre has produced unpublished transcripts and translations of Longhouse speeches. Similarly, linguist Michael Foster is working on transcripts and translations of the Condolence Ceremony. (The Condolence Ceremony, part of the Great Law, is a set of rituals for mourning the death of a hereditary chief and for installing a

successor.) The Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy (COOL) project has also produced unpublished transcripts and translations of conversational recordings (see http://www.mun.ca/cayuga/cayuga_language.php for some examples).

Finally, dedicated community language activists have produced transcripts and translations of, for example, the large complex of speeches associated with funerals, as well as the Code of Handsome Lake. Interestingly, the Woodland Cultural Centre (which sponsored the latter project) has decided for the moment not to release the transcript and translation of the Code of Handsome Lake for fear that it will get into the wrong (outsiders') hands.

5.2. An Example of Translation: The Thanksgiving Address

One of the first and best examples of a published Cayuga transcript and translation is Foster's (1974) translation of the Thanksgiving Address. (For a shorter and more recent English translation, see Foster 1994.) The Thanksgiving Address is a speech in which the performer and audience thank the spirit forces on the earth, in the sky, and beyond the sky (this division of spirit forces was described in the second paragraph of section 3.4). Foster describes three levels of translation: a morpheme-by-morpheme level of translation showing word composition (1.b; in the interests of publishing the monograph in a timely fashion, Foster omitted this level of translation from his monograph, except in the example reproduced below); a lexical level (1.c), showing English translations of whole words; and a free translation (1.d) "in which lines are translated into idiomatic English" (1974:255–56).

1. Example from Foster (1974:255) (example numbering and orthography have been modified)

    a. *hędá:*   *o:nę́h,*   *to*   *niyó:wéʔ,*   *nigahá:wíʔ*
    b. and   now   that   how-it-far-   how-it-carry-
                                perfective   perfective
    c. and   now   that   is how far   it is carried
    d. And now the time has come.

(One unusual feature of example 1 is that the morphemes or meaningful word-parts which are shown and translated in 1.b, are not indicated in 1.a.

Typically, for example, the fourth word in 1.a would be shown as *ni-* 'how' *-yó:-* 'it' *-wé-* 'far' *-ʔ* 'perfective'; Foster's representation is more readable.)

The morpheme-by-morpheme level of translation preserves some of the original meaning of the language because, as speakers often observe, Cayuga words "mean more than English words do." I will second-guess two interpretations of this observation, one having to do with overall word complexity (polysynthesis), and one having to do with how words are related to one another meaningfully (derivational relationships).

In general, Cayuga words are more complex in structure and in meaning than English ones. (This is a partial definition of polysynthesis.) First, most words that name objects (i.e., nouns) are actually verb forms, and verbs, in turn, convey much the same meaning as an entire English sentence. For example, the Cayuga word *ga̱hnyaʔsesgó:wah* 'giraffe,' which functions as a noun, is a verb with the sentence-like meaning 'it has a really long neck': *ga̱ -it, -hnyaʔs-* 'neck' *-es-* 'is long' *-gó:wah* 'great big.' Even actual nouns (as opposed to verbs functioning as nouns) can be complex in structure, with a corresponding increase in the level of meaning conveyed: for example, the Cayuga word for Caughnawaga or Kahnawake, Quebec, is Gahnáwa̱ʔgeh, literally, 'on the rapids.' (The English words Caughnawaga and Kahnawake were borrowed from the Mohawk counterparts of the Cayuga word.)

Cayuga words are also more "meaningful" because they are related to one another derivationally, or by virtue of sharing meaningful parts, in a way that is transparent to the speakers. Example 2 illustrates how some of the words introduced previously are meaningfully related. (The meaningfully related parts are capitalized in example 2.) A basic assumption is that when two or more words share a part that is spelled (nearly) the same, they share the same meaning. For example, comparing the words in 2.c, which share *-iyo:* 'to be beautiful, good,' and the words in 2.d, containing *-węn-*, the reader can observe that the name of the Gawę:ní:yo: school means something like 'beautiful word(s).' Similarly, both of the words in 2.f share a part, *-es*, which means 'long.'

2. Example of meaningful relationships between words
   a. *-NEHA:ʔ*
      Ǫgweh ǫwéhNE̱HA:ʔ the Indian WAY OR LANGUAGE
      Gayogo̱ho:no̱hNÉHA:ʔ the WAY OR LANGUAGE of the people of the pipe

b. *-HO:NǪ-*

  GayogoHO:NǪHnéha:ˀ the way or language of the PEOPLE
  OF THE pipe
  HadinǫhsesgeHÓ:NǪˀ or *GaenǫhsesgeHÓ:NǪˀ* PEOPLE OF THE
  Longhouse

c. *-IYO:*

  SganyadáIYO: HANDSOME Lake
  GaihwÍ:YO: Code of Handsome Lake (literally: BEAUTIFUL
  words or matters)

d. *-WĘN-*

  OWĘ́:Naˀ WORD, voice, speech
  GaWĘ:Ní:yo: (name of a school)

e. *-NǪHS-*

  HodiNǪHSǫǫ́:nih People of the LongHOUSE
  HadiNǪHSesgehó:n ǫˀ or *GaeNǪHSesgehó:n ǫˀ* People of the
  LongHOUSE
  gaNǪ́HSaˀ HOUSE

f. *-ES-*

  HadinǫhsESgehó:nǫˀ or *GaenǫhsESgehó:nǫˀ* People of the
  LONGhouse
  gahnyaˀsESgó:wah giraffe (literally: it has a very LONG neck)

For the most part, the relationships between Cayuga words can be viewed
as more "meaningful" than the relationships between English words be-
cause the former are more transparent and accessible to the speaker. In
contrast, for example, English speakers must look up words like *receive*,
deceive, and *conceive* in order to discover that they all share a part, *-ceive*,
which comes from the Latin *capio* 'to take'; the derivational relationships
are often not immediately obvious or accessible to English speakers.

Returning to example 1, the lexical level of translation (1.c) makes the
morpheme-by-morpheme translations somewhat more accessible to the
English speaker: 'is how far' is easier to understand than 'how-it-far-
perfective.' However, the lexical level of translation also unavoidably ob-
scures some of the meaning conveyed in Cayuga. For example, the first
group of words in 3.a is translated as 'now' in 3.b; however, the individ-
ual words literally mean something like *ó:nęh* 'now' *giˀ* 'really' *gyę́:ˀ* 'just'
nę́:gyęh 'this one.' Meanwhile, although the phrase in 3.a is characteristic

of how an eloquent Cayuga speaker would say things, translating each individual word would not have the same effect in English writing: 'now really just this one' does not sound eloquent in English.

3. Translation of particle groups (Foster 1974:353) (example numbering and orthography have been modified)
   a. *o:nę́h, gi gyę́:ˀ, nę:gyę́h,   ˀǫgwaya̱ˀdayeí:ˀ*
   b. Now   we are gathered

Foster also feels that the level of free translation (1.c; defined as a translation into idiomatic English) has inadequacies:

> The free translation has proved to have special problems of its own, and I am far from happy with it. In a sense, the entire study has as its purpose the explication of the Cayuga texts. But there are many fine points of meaning that are only very inadequately rendered in English, and one approaches the whole task with some trepidation as a non-native speaker of the language. Moreover, there is the question of style. The translation should attempt to capture something of the character of oral performance beyond the literal meaning of the words. This is no easy matter, but an attempt has been made to reflect the qualities of formal oratory, particularly repetition and parallelism—those features that most define the rhythmical periodicity of the speeches. (Foster 1974:255–56)

In common with both Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock (see Swann 1992), Foster chooses to represent the translated text in line format or measured verse (rather than in paragraph form, for instance). (The properties of the line are discussed below.) Foster otherwise adopts Hymes's approach, describing the dynamics of the performance in the monograph, but without reflecting them explicitly in the text; that is, in contrast with the Tedlock approach, the translation is not meant to be "performable."

Like Hymes, Foster determines line breaks according to linguistic criteria, including formal markers and intonational markers (Foster 1974:188–97). Formal markers include words (technically, syntactic particles) like *negwato(h)* or *né:gwato(h)* 'and, also, moreover' and *da(h)* or *dá:(h)* 'and'; the latter word is often prefixed by a meaningless syllable *hę:*, which does not occur in conversational speech; an example is shown in 1.a. (The

parentheses around the h's in the above examples signify that the "h" sound is sometimes deleted in speech.)

Intonational markers include pause, pitch (for example, musically high-toned or low-toned vowels), and stress (a stressed vowel is louder, and can be longer than an unstressed vowel). Foster notes that the intonational features used in the Thanksgiving Address are unique to the address and that different intonation and discourse features characterize, for example, the preaching style used in the Code of Handsome Lake (Foster 1974:197 n. 8). The overall characteristic of the intonation used in the Thanksgiving Address is of an almost "monotonous regularity" of features imposed on the lines: there is less intonational variation than in conversational speech, and the main distinction in the Thanksgiving Address is a two-way contrast between final and non-final tone units (or intonational groups). Non-final tone units are characterized by a pitch rise and stress on the final vowel of the line: for example, a word such as *ʔǫgwayaʔda-yeíːⁿ* in 3.a displays non-final intonation. (The acute accent in this case signals the highest-pitched and loudest vowel in this tone group.) In final tone units, there is a pitch rise and stress on a non-final vowel (typically, the second- or third-to-last vowel) and a pitch fall and stress on the final vowel in the unit: for example, a word such as *nigaháːwíⁿ* in 1.a displays final intonation: the second-last vowel is high-pitched and loud; the last vowel is low-pitched and loud. (In this case, the two acute accents signify special pitches, one higher and one lower than the average pitch of one's voice.)

Although Foster had included a two-level translation and a 283-page explanation of the Thanksgiving Address, he still felt that many subtleties had not been conveyed in the monograph. For example, much of his monograph is about major differences between written texts and oral speeches. Foster shares Hymes's conviction that to convey the genuine depth of Native American verbal art, one should describe three dimensions: the language and sociolinguistic context (the medium for the message), the text or performance itself (the message), and the performer. Hymes, in turn, emphasizes that the depth or artistry of the performance only shows through when the performer is given his or her due (Hymes 1981:9–10).

Foster dedicates much of his monograph to describing the life histories and individual stylistic differences of the performers whose recordings formed the basis for his work. He also describes speech-making as a creative process of "oral composition" (described in the next paragraph).

Similarly, Cayuga speakers view ritualists as being endowed with a special gift of eloquence from the Creator. "Speakers are proud of their ability to perform without the aid of a written text as the 'church people' do" (Foster 1974:33).

Through examining the variation and commonalities in how speeches are produced by individual ritualists, Foster discovers that the speeches have an underlying well-defined logic and order. (Speakers, of course, already know this.) For example, all ritualists first invoke thanks for the spirit forces on the earth, in the sky, and beyond the sky (the same division described in section 3.4). As a result, Longhouse followers can view both a five-minute version and a half-hour version of the Thanksgiving Address as being "the same" (Foster 1974:3–4, 43–89).

A main goal of Foster's (1974) monograph was to record several performances of the Thanksgiving Address and provide a translation. In doing so, Foster took great pains to sensitize the reader to the distinction between fluid, living, oral composition and the more "frozen" written form that he was producing. This point is significant, because turning an oral tradition into a written one represents a "sea change," with many implications and consequences to the community. This topic is discussed next.

6. Turning the Oral Tradition into a Written One

At Six Nations, translation is typically one step in the process of writing down the oral tradition. Creating a written form, in turn, has the potential to turn the oral tradition into an object or cultural artifact—a significant change: for example, while the oral tradition is lived as part of daily life, a written tradition is more removed or objectified.

However, speakers recognize that changing the oral tradition into a written one does not necessarily result in the death of the oral tradition: as one speaker put it, "The oral tradition dies out because people don't learn it, not because it is written down."

Potential advantages and disadvantages of writing down the oral tradition are described in the following sections. I equate writing with translation, since the end result (a written product) is similar.

6.1. Advantages of Turning the Oral Tradition into a Written One

Turning the oral tradition into a written one has practical advantages. For example, adult learners can gain access to a more permanent form of language for learning and memorization purposes. Some speakers consider

written translation to be an essential bootstrapping tool for learning the language. For example, one learner described translation as useful for interpreting novel utterances, or words that one has not previously heard. (See the discussion of example 2 for an illustration of how this approach can be used.) Another speaker pointed out that translation would be the only way to make the language accessible if all the fluent speakers were to pass away.

In addition, outsiders can learn to value the culture and ideals represented in the writing. To paraphrase Marcia Haag (personal communication), "ironically enough" the translation takes on a life of its own, becoming part of the literature of the hegemonic language. The translation becomes different in nature from the oral tradition; it is a "work" that exists alongside other world literatures as an object of study.

Not only outsiders but also community members can learn to value their culture and ideals through a translation. For example, Amos Key Jr. related his experience of using translation to motivate young men to learn speeches for the Midwinter Ceremony, a seven-day event that takes place in January, and the most important Longhouse event of the year. Key and his brother played Cayuga recordings of speeches and stopped periodically to provide a verbal English summary of the content of the speeches. The young men grew very appreciative of the message and requested more information sessions. As this example shows, the speakers were able to communicate the values of the message to community members through a translation. (But see section 4 for discussion of why values, etc., cannot be divorced from the language.)

Translating and writing down the oral tradition can aid in language preservation in other interesting and unexpected ways. For example, the monograph *Concerning the League* "recounts the story of the founding of the League of the Iroquois . . . and it describes the laws and rituals connected with its operation and continuance" (Gibson 1992:xi). The original version was dictated in Onondaga by Chief John A. Gibson to the anthropologist Alexander A. Goldenweiser in 1912 (Gibson 1992:xi). Because the original transcription was difficult to read and understand, linguist Hanni Woodbury re-elicited the text, using "a process of reconstituting an imperfectly transcribed text by retranscribing each word of the text as it is repronounced from the imperfectly transcribed manuscript by a native speaker" (Gibson 1992:xiii n. 6) The original Onondaga transcript was repronounced by the late Reginald Henry.

Because the original transcript still existed, it was possible to reconstitute this valuable resource provided by Gibson and Goldenweiser. Interestingly, while there are many English versions (as well as a sizable anthropological industry) based on translations of this body of knowledge, *Concerning the League* is the only complete version published in an Iroquoian language. This version is *by* the Iroquois, rather than being *about* them.

6.2. Disadvantages of Turning the Oral Tradition into a Written One

Translating the oral tradition into a written one has potential disadvantages. For example, learners (and outsiders) can gain a false or surface impression of the nature of speeches (see section 5.2 for further examples): to use a categorization like Hymes's, they might pay attention to the translation without knowing the depth of meaning in the original language; they might think of the text as fixed, because it is written down; they might ignore the social and cultural concerns which gave rise to the performance; and they might fail to appreciate the artistry of the performer. Such concerns arise when an oral tradition becomes accessible in print, because it is possible to pick and choose what one reads. In response to such concerns, speakers object to perceived reinterpretations of their values and lifeways by "new agers" or people who promote versions of a pan–Native American spiritualism that does not do justice to the original sources.

In contrast, when the oral tradition is not written down, there are many safeguards to ensure the full appreciation of its depth. For example, one must at least be accepted into a community, live there for an extended period, and learn the language in order to gain any real appreciation.

Returning to potential disadvantages, linguists use written texts as objects of study, describing the language in a way that speakers may find unsettling, inaccurate, or somehow missing the essence of the language. For example, many linguists focus on the formal structure of a text more than on the meaning: a phonologist (a linguist who studies sound patterns) might describe the rules of pitch placement or measure the length of pauses; meanwhile, speakers might find such descriptions to be self-evident, beside the point, or somehow jarring. Similarly, speakers have often commented that terminology (or jargon) like "the perfective" (see 1.b) seems deliberately obscure and unhelpful for language learners. (First-year university students taking linguistics courses express a similar sentiment.)

While there are both advantages and disadvantages to having written

translations, perhaps the most potentially harmful issue is the perceived lack of control caused by writing and translating First Nations oral traditions. This topic is discussed in the following section.

7. Issues of Access and Control Raised by Writing and Translating

At Six Nations there is no central authority responsible for deciding who has access to recordings, texts, and translations. The lack of a central authority is partly due to divisions like the one described in section 3.3 between traditionalists who support the Confederate Council, and those who support the Elected Band Council. In addition, the need for access restrictions was not as urgent in the past: the current loss of speakers makes language and knowledge a valuable commodity indeed.

Instead of a central authority, access and control typically grow out of individual relationships. For example, Amos Key Jr. made agreements with the people he recorded about what would happen to their recordings. Access, in this case, was controlled by someone who in turn was constrained by kinship, friendship, and community ties. Key also has a certain level of trust with the community, because he belongs to it, because he is a recognized language activist, and because he has a track record of not violating anyone's trust.

In contrast, individual linguists gain access to Cayuga language and knowledge through developing (paid) working and friendship relationships with speakers. While their degree of access can depend on many factors, perhaps the most important are the degree of perceived trustworthiness of the linguist and the speaker's sense that no opportunity to preserve the language should be wasted. To give an example of the latter, the late Reginald Henry asked to work with linguist(s) in 1998, and ended up with the author of this chapter. He explained that he was "getting on in age" and had a lot of linguistic knowledge of the language to pass on.

Linguists are not typically constrained by kinship or community ties, but they do have obligations to their host institutions and granting agencies. Such obligations create pressure to produce scholarly publications containing "data" (typically, written linguistic material). This factor can lead to loss of control if, for example, material is published, potentially violating obligations to the community, because of overriding obligations to be academically productive. It is easy to gather stories about researchers who took data or took control of data in a perceived unethical way. Remarkably (and pragmatically), many members of the Six Nations com-

munity still practice an attitude of forgiveness and tolerance toward researchers.

While formal mechanisms for access and control are in their infancy at Six Nations, the community concern is immediate; for example, speakers making anonymous comments on a questionnaire said such things as "We need to keep what we have; it is ours; it's what keeps us who we are" and "I believe we have to be careful who gets hold of [language materials]; because this is what makes us Longhouse people." Such comments might help the reader understand that translation is powerful, and possibly dangerous; the stakes are high.

Counterbalancing the above viewpoint, however, Jahner reports on a situation where Lakota elders were persuaded to allow their knowledge to be written down because "the fear of being forgotten proved great enough to justify the risks of breaking taboos against telling privileged information to outsiders" (1994:153).

Although there is no central authority controlling access to written and translated work, language activists have nuanced opinions about access and control. For example, one speaker argued that, on one hand, having non-Cayuga people learn everyday language would make a positive political statement about the importance of the language; on the other hand, however, some kinds of language materials should be accessible only to a select group: for example, some restricted ceremonies (such as individual curing rites) are seen as dangerous to a person's health if not handled carefully.

In summary, to paraphrase Bill Jancewicz (personal communication), translation (and writing) may be ethically defensible for certain genres, with the consent of the speakers of the source language. Nevertheless, in my experience, obtaining the consent of the speakers can still be problematic, particularly in a large community like Six Nations where there are diverse opinions and no central authority over language matters.

8. Translation: A Simple Matter?

This chapter illustrates that translation is not just a simple matter of *DEye-WĘNÁDENYEˀS* 'changing words.' The urgency and potential for harm are greater when the translated language has few speakers or when the language and knowledge are recognized as valuable resources. In addition, solutions to the moral questions raised by translation are not straightforward. For example, deciding if a translation should be made public depends

on the nature of the translated ideas. Finally, such decisions also depend on the participants, who are not always *sga⁷nígǫha:t* 'of one mind'—a central concept in Iroquoian thinking).

The process of translation raises fears and generates controversies, giving rise to changes that can only be addressed by creating an ethical space (that is, a deliberate, honest dialogue) on a case-by-case basis. Paradoxically, while there isn't much time, time is needed in order for such negotiations to take place.

Notes

1. The vowels < ę > and < ǫ > sound like the nasalized vowels in French *frein* ("brake") and *on* ("someone"). The glottal stop < ⁷ > is a consonant sound, which can also be heard in place of the [t] in the Cockney pronunciation of words like "bottle." For the most part, the remaining consonants sound similar to their English counterparts. The acute accent denotes higher pitch or tone: for example, the vowel < á > has higher pitch than the vowel < a >. The colon denotes a long vowel: for example, < a: > is twice as long as < a >. Finally, underlined vowels are pronounced as whispered when an < h > follows, and as creaky-voiced when a glottal stop < ⁷ > follows.

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