

## 9 Economic Benefits

### Marketing and Commercializing Language Revitalization

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One of the most frequent statements one can hear in communities experiencing shift to a dominant language is that the local language does not have any value in the modern world. One of the speakers of Nahuatl whom I met during our language revitalization activities<sup>1</sup> recounted that he could not learn the heritage language from his parents because they would tell him that it is not useful anymore:

*Neh oniczaloh nin tlahtol ihcuac nicpiyaya mahtlac huan ce xihuitl huan oniczaloh inahuac nocihtzin. Notahtzin huan nonantzin amo nechittitihqueh tlica yehhuan oquih-toayah 'yocmo, yocmo sirve, nin tlahtol yocmo sirve.'*

I learned this language when I was 11 years old. And I learned it from my grandmother. My father and my mother did not teach me because they were saying it is not useful anymore. This language is not useful anymore. (2014, Contla, Tlaxcala, male speaker in his fifties)

A somewhat similar statement comes from the writings of Florian Biesik, the famous poet from Wilamowice and the author of *Uf jer welt*, the Wymysiöeryś version of the *Divine comedy*:

I know different world languages, I have lived for half the century in exile, but the dearest to me remain the Polish and Wilamowicean tongues, although with neither of them did I earn even a piece of bread. (1924)<sup>2</sup>

The lack of economic usefulness of his native language did not stop Biesik from writing in Wymysiöeryś and creating a literary masterpiece. Moreover, he did it while living far away from his community with a profitable occupation as a railway official in Trieste, Italy. Clearly, for Biesik the importance and utility of the language was not affected by its perceived low

<sup>1</sup> Research reported in this chapter has been supported by the Project 'Language as a cure: linguistic vitality as a tool for psychological well-being, health and economic sustainability' carried out within the Team programme of the Foundation for Polish Science and cofinanced by the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund. I express my gratitude to Bartłomiej Chromik for his insightful comments on this paper.

<sup>2</sup> After T. Wicherkiewicz, *The Making of a Language. The Case of the Idiom of Wilamowice, Southern Poland* (The Gruyter Mouton, 2003), p. 48.

economic value abroad. However, the vitality of Wymysiöeryś in the community at that time was high, and it was spoken and transmitted to children. The situation changed after World War II not because of a lack of usefulness, but because of a language ban and the persecution of its speakers. Today things are different: the lack of economic value is one of the most salient arguments that the revitalizers of Wymysiöeryś have to face, even though there are other essential benefits and assets that the local language can offer the community. And numerous groups, in different geographic and cultural contexts, share this situation.

Therefore, when you engage in language revitalization you have to be prepared to face many strong counterarguments, coming both from communities themselves and from potential founders or sponsors. Unlike linguists and other academics, who usually have a stable economic situation, members of minority communities often lack job opportunities, and face highly insecure and harsh material conditions as well as a lack of prospects. For some communities at least, an important goal is not to maintain their language, which has been the source of stigmatization, shame, discrimination, and disadvantage, but to secure better living conditions. How to respond to such arguments and encourage local communities to engage in language revitalization? Furthermore, funding institutions, politicians, and state agendas – despite superficial declarations recognizing the value of linguistic-cultural diversity and minority rights – are rather unlikely to offer serious commitment to language revitalization based on arguments of the beauty of diversity, human rights, social justice, or even cognitive benefits.

The market value of learning major, dominant, and/or international languages is widely appreciated and promoted in educational and language policies. The economic value of languages is usually linked to their role as assets on the job market or as a source of added value to products or services, for instance, where languages can provide links to specific places, experiences, or a feeling of authenticity. However, the perceived and recognized economic value almost never, or rarely, extends to minority or immigrant languages and nonstandard language varieties. Economic benefits and commercialization are an often neglected dimension of language revitalization programs, despite being of key importance: many languages cease to be spoken precisely because of their perceived lack of utility and economic value.

It does not have to be this way, as the use of minority or local languages in business can lead to brand differentiation and more personalized, localized, and thus competitive offers, which increase the customer experience. The recognition of these benefits, in the eyes of both speakers and local entrepreneurs, is crucial for successful revitalization efforts. Responding to this need, minority language advocacy in a number of European countries has promoted the use of local languages in businesses, enterprises, and public services. Relatively recent efforts to embrace both grassroots and governmental initiatives

have been used to promote Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, and Basque/Euskara. This can start on a microscale within selected local businesses and services. Similar policies may even be adopted by larger companies. For example, the Irish railway companies Iarnród Éireann and Luas and the national airline carrier, Aer Lingus, have incorporated some announcements in Irish. However, the airline employees use just a few words in Irish and this has a decorative function rather than a communicative role, because the safety demonstration is never given in Irish.<sup>3</sup> Passengers also complain about the mistakes made in the greetings and the lack of language skills of the crew. While such steps increase language visibility, they do not necessarily have a real impact on using the language and showing its utility. In this respect, local and grassroots initiatives are of key importance. Among possible strategies is the creation of local spaces, activities, and products that are closely linked to the heritage tongue, but have some economic potential. A quite different, but equally important, option is to promote multilingual workspaces. These have the potential to generate new solutions and ideas because of the creative capacity of their multiethnic members. Opportunities will of course differ from place to place. In this chapter, I discuss some possible general paths, as well as specific (but by no means exhaustive) examples, of generating economic benefits for communities based on their local linguistic and cultural heritage. A closely related challenge is that of marketing and promoting language revitalization, with regard to both community members and external actors or institutions.

### **Use of Traditional Knowledge for Subsistence and Environmental Strategies**

An important path for generating economic benefits involves promoting the role of traditional knowledge and local languages in shaping sustainable relationships with the natural environment. It seems that biological and linguistic diversities are sometimes threatened by the same factors, such as urbanization and industrialization. Likewise, the high numbers of endangered species in these areas correlate with high levels of linguistic diversity. Some of the most evident examples of such zones are New Guinea, the Amazon rainforest, the Congo basin forests, and the North American deserts. As shrinkage of the natural landscape leads to the endangerment of certain plants and animals, it also makes it difficult for Indigenous minorities to

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, H. Kelly-Holmes, *Advertising as Multilingual Communication* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). On a similar case of the Corsica Airlines see: A. Jaffe and C. Oliva, 'Linguistic Creativity in Corsican Tourist Context', in S. Pietikäinen and H. Kelly-Holmes (eds.), *Multilingualism and the Periphery* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 102–103.

practice their traditional ways of life and, consequently, their languages. And traditional Indigenous models of managing natural resources are known to indirectly support biological diversity and balanced economic activities. However, because of policies of cultural and linguistic assimilation, Indigenous communities sometimes lose their knowledge of the environment and thus their ability to interact with it.

Such losses can be disastrous for whole ways of life, like abandoning agriculture as the subsistence base of existence or losing access to certain kinds of animals and plants (because of their extinction or due to forced resettlements, as was the case of Indigenous people in the USA, who were moved to reservations). Often, as in the case of the Nahuas in Tlaxcala, Mexico, losing the language and accepting national culture is accompanied by a switch to wage labor, usually outside the home community. At the same time, members of Nahua communities explain that increased levels of diabetes and obesity are caused by the introduction of artificial fertilizers and nontraditional foods. And the access to modern medical services does not seem to recompense the diminishing role of traditional healing. As the oldest speakers say, many of the beneficial plants that had been accessible before ceased to grow in the community, while knowledge about them that had been conveyed in the heritage language waned too. Such changes – and many others – have severe consequences, not only for local communities, but also for entire regions and so should be of interest for policy makers at regional and state levels. Therefore, language revitalization can be seen as an efficient strategy for maintaining, promoting, and exploiting local knowledge and managing the environment. Local language may become an essential ‘brick’ in a wider development strategy. A part of this should include its recognition as an important asset for both local sustainability and its attractiveness for visitors and entrepreneurs. All of these assets and arguments can be used by revitalizers to deal with institutions, politicians, entrepreneurs, and the communities where they work.

But what can be done in practice? It is widely documented that local languages are valuable reservoirs of environmental and practical knowledge. They are often keys to ethnobotany and ethnozoology, as well as very practical applications of local knowledge. It may refer, for example, to the use of herbs and medicinal plants, balanced management of crops and edible plants, or wise usage of animal resources with regard to their reproductive cycles. This kind of knowledge, ordered, classified, and expressed in local languages and combined with traditional practices, is often essential for maintaining sustainable relations with flora and fauna. On the other hand, cultural practices related to the environment include the ways in which natural resources are extracted and used. The study of this can be an essential part of language documentation and language revitalization projects, be they driven by the community or in partnership with external actors. This knowledge, in turn, can be recovered and reintroduced into the community, taking into account new contexts and

dynamic environmental, social and economic conditions. Its potential in fact reaches beyond one particular place and should become an important element of marketing language revitalization outside the community. Specific strategies can embrace a very broad range of activities, approaches, and economic goals, depending on the environmental and cultural context. This may include balanced approaches to agriculture and ecological crop production, fishing, herding, pasturing, harvesting, gathering, raising livestock, and combining traditional subsistence modes with small-scale production (textiles, ceramics, wood products, etc.).

A good example of such an approach is provided by the linguistic-cultural revitalization programs run by the Sámi people in Norway and Finland, for example in Kautokeino. Language instruction and academic research there are closely linked to local food production and conservation, reindeer herding, fishing, and traditional medicine. In 2005 the Norwegian Government established the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry in Kautokeino. It aims to maintain and develop sustainable reindeer husbandry in the north, to foster cooperation between the reindeer herding peoples, and to document and apply their traditional knowledge. In 2016 a calendar called 'Boazojahki', written entirely in the Sámi language, was created and launched by Karen Marie Eira Buljo. Aimed primarily at children and youth, it detailed the calendar year in terms of what it means for reindeer, reindeer herders, and the activities prescribed for each specific time of the year. Each month unveiled rich insights into the cyclical world of reindeer husbandry based on the natural environment. Importantly, theoretical and practical aspects of food production, reindeer herding, and traditional environmental strategies are an important focus of classes and seminars in Sámi Allaskuvla, or the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. Students learn the heritage language through active participation in traditional activities, such as fishing or preparing food. They also learn about subsistence strategies and the food production modes of traditional cultures in other parts of the world. This example may serve as inspiration for developing educational programs aimed at a deeper understanding of the role of the local environment (see Capsule 15.6). Ideally, as in the Sámi case, programmes should combine learning of the ancestral language with environmental studies and practical knowledge.

A useful framework for this kind of approach toward language, environment, and economic strategies is that of social economy, which addresses consumer behaviors and needs in the context of social justice, ethics, and other humanitarian values. Initiatives in social economy are run by cooperatives, NGOs (associations, foundations), social enterprises, and institutions. These groups often focus their efforts on the ideas of solidarity and responsibility, fostering socially inclusive wealth and well-being, or developing new solutions for social or environmental challenges. An important principle is that of not-for-profit aims; gains and resources are reinvested for the benefit of disadvantaged groups or

communities. Such an approach contributes to a more sustainable and inclusive society. It also perfectly fits the situation of marginalized communities struggling to preserve their languages. Thus, a possible strategy to link the improvement of environmental and/or subsistence issues with language maintenance or revitalization is through community-based cooperatives and/or associations, as well as external NGOs or institutions interested in developing partnership with local community members and activists.

### **Linguistic, Cultural, and Educational Tourism**

The economic potential of linguistic-cultural heritage can be specifically oriented toward tourism. Recent processes of globalization and homogenization have created a demand for unique and original products and services. Many people are no longer interested in highly commoditized and standardized forms of experience and mass tourism. Rather, they seek uniqueness and authenticity, experiencing the history, culture, and natural environment of less explored places and their inhabitants. Research on tourism in Europe reveals that 'cultural visitors' usually have a higher level of education and professional status. Many of them look for 'authentic' cultural traditions and ways of life, which they wish to experience themselves. Such preferences are, for example, addressed through the creation of 'cultural villages' in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> Located in different environments and in the territories of ethnic groups, such 'villages' offer unique opportunities for experiencing their lifestyles, including cultural and religious activities, crafts, and food – and also for hearing different local languages. For example, DumaZulu Lodge & Traditional Village (Hluhluwe) is advertised as 'A unique cross-cultural experience in the authentic Zulu Village and Hotel. Traditional Zulu customs, tribal dancing, tales of ancient lore.' Lesedi cultural village lures visitors with an 'amazing multicultural dance show. As the sun sets over the African bush, you're escorted to the Boma for a very interactive affair of traditional singing and dancing, which depict stories dating back to the days of their ancestors'. Of course, visitors are offered comfortable lodging and exquisite restaurants that only remotely resemble traditional life, if at all. And local languages are usually presented as an exotic extra on 'polished' tourist products and services. However, this basic idea can be adapted for a community-driven or community-managed (and more economically accessible!) touristic experience, where local ways and languages are not reduced to merely decorative functions. And if the communities can be in charge of this 'offer' and play a decisive role in

<sup>4</sup> [www.places.co.za/html/cultural\\_villages.html](http://www.places.co.za/html/cultural_villages.html)

developing services, then the income generated can support language revitalization activities and the general well-being of inhabitants.<sup>5</sup>

The concept behind this type of tourism has been called the experience economy. It focuses not on offering commodities and commoditized services, but on different forms of experience, often based on ‘memorable’ events. When thinking about language revitalization and the commercialization of linguistic heritage, the experience economy can be seen as a particularly useful concept for tourism, cultural and artistic activities, or even the linguistic-cultural landscape. Products offered in the market can range from being entirely standardized and undifferentiated to being highly differentiated ‘special’ goods or services. Those related to a unique endangered heritage will definitely be at the latter end of this continuum. And because there is high interest among consumers in having ‘unique’ experiences, more and more businesses take this demand into account. Emotional responses, experiences of authenticity and uniqueness, exposure to local stories and local knowledge – all this can be brought into play when thinking about commercializing endangered linguistic and cultural heritage. Being exposed to and, ultimately, learning an endangered language is an important aspect of the experience economy. No wonder, heritage marketing has become a growing branch of the tourism industry where local and lesser-known languages are employed. However, this is often done rather superficially at the level of limited (and usually bilingual) ‘labeling’, which is an easy way of providing nostalgic or authenticity-seeking tourists with experiences of ‘traditional culture’.

The real challenge – and opportunity – is to link those experiences to genuine language revitalization and promotion efforts, without reducing them to purely symbolic or folkloric dimensions. Folklorization or ‘self-folklorization’, the marketing of one’s culture to outsiders, is characterized by some as ‘identity for sale’, the result of prolonged symbolic violence and colonization that reduces cultural differences to the level of esthetics, but replicates social inequalities and divisions.<sup>6</sup> However, it can also be understood as a strategy against social degradation and cultural annihilation. Hylton White, who did extensive anthropological research in the Republic of South Africa, relates the case of one of the groups of Bushmen, who lived in urban slums but earned their living performing the traditional skills and cultural activities of nomads in a setting arranged for tourists. Of course, this can be interpreted as gain-motivated performance designed to meet the expectations of visitors and detached from the way of life of its actors. However, the words of the leader

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, H. Kelly-Holmes and S. Pietikäinen, ‘Commodifying Sámi Culture in an Indigenous Tourism Site’, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 18/4 (2014), 518–538.

<sup>6</sup> E. Klekot, ‘Samofolkloryzacja. Współczesna sztuka ludowa z perspektywy postkolonialnej’, *Kultura Współczesna*, 81 (2014), 86–99.

of this group, shared with the anthropologist, challenge this perspective: 'I am an animal of nature. I want people to see me and know who I am. The only way our tradition and way of life can survive is to live in the memory of the people who see us'.<sup>7</sup>

Keeping in mind tangible risks associated with the folklorization and commodification of local heritage, possible initiatives could focus on developing tourist enclaves distinguished by a unique language spoken in the area. Preserving a local tongue may be combined with creating both physical 'living' museums in the community, as well as virtual digital museums. What would distinguish such places over other local or regional museums would be the focus on an endangered language that could actually be heard in those spaces, with its speakers and their unique histories, local knowledge, and traditions expressed in the heritage tongue. Local knowledge – for example, environmental knowledge and sustainable management of natural resources – can also be useful for the present and future of visitors. Digital tools, such as interactive displays or games, will certainly be an important component of this kind of initiative, greatly enhancing the attractiveness of the language and its association with modern technology. Such places are also excellent venues for organizing regular workshops and artistic or educational activities linked to local heritage, both for the local community and for outsiders. The participation of visitors in these activities would generate an economic gain for local activists. Thus, such spaces could be used both to foster language learning and use, increase community engagement, generate funding by attracting tourists, stimulate positive language attitudes, and, finally, become an important venue for marketing language revitalization.

Of course, both the physical space and digital tools needed for these activities require substantial funding. When a community or municipality is unable to secure funds locally, they can look for them outside. Creating cultural infrastructures and digital tools is often supported by programs that are offered by regional, federal, or state agencies and institutions, or even private foundations. In the countries of the European Union it is possible to compete for funding within special programs available at both state and pan-European level. In some of them it is useful to have an academic partner to apply with: others, however, are only available for municipalities, cultural institutions, and NGOs (see Chapter 5). Initiatives linked to the creation of local language spaces are also likely to increase the sense of community and vitality of a given group, to promote local activism and language specialists, as well as to deepen the awareness of linguistic-cultural heritage in the region and beyond. Examples of linking local languages to tourism include Gaelic in

<sup>7</sup> H. White, *In the Tradition of the Forefathers: Bushman Traditionality at Kagga Kamma: The Politics and History of a Performative Identity* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995), p. 1.





Figure 9.1 The performance and agency of Indigenous communities. The group of Zohuameh Citlalimeh, San Francisco Tetlanohcan, Mexico. Photo by Justyna Olko

Scotland and Ireland, Manx on the Isle of Man, Māori in New Zealand, or Welsh in the United Kingdom. However, it is difficult to estimate to what degree touristic interest in these languages has in fact increased their vitality and use. Nevertheless, they have received more visibility and at least some of the local communities have benefitted from tourism.

No doubt, showing the usefulness and value of an endangered language is an important outcome of these initiatives and can foster actual language use. One can also hope to mobilize the community and attract new speakers. An example of one such ongoing initiative comes from Wilamowice, a small town in southern Poland preserving a unique language, *Wymysiöeryś*, which has developed and been spoken since the thirteenth century (see Capsule 6.1). Persecution and the language ban of 1945 meant that *Wymysiöeryś* almost became extinct toward the end of the past century. However, it is now the focus of vigorous revitalization efforts. Alongside other components of the revitalization program, some of its most engaged participants and researchers, Bartłomiej Chromik, along with local activists Justyna Majerska-Sznajder and Tymoteusz Król, launched the project *Creation of a tourist cluster in the Wilamowice Commune on the basis of Wymysiöeryś* in 2015 (with the support of the Foundation for Polish Science).

This project was undertaken due to concerns that positive language attitudes and practices in Wilamowice may reverse when new users of *Wymysiöeryś*

move out of the town after completing their education. With the aim of preventing or limiting this situation, project members designed a strategy for creating workplaces that would stimulate the usage of Wymysiöeryś through the development of tourism. The basic assumption was that the creation of a tourism cluster embracing the whole municipality (both Wilamowice and surrounding villages) would not only bring economic impact to language revitalization activities, but also help to create a more sustainable, long-term strategy for the community. Young Polish designers, ethnographers, and an IT specialist were invited to collaborate on this initiative. Together with local activists, they designed and created prototype souvenirs inspired by the culture of Wilamowice, as well as board and computer games and a system of plaques with tourist information.<sup>8</sup> These products are being sold at all events focusing on Wymysiöeryś and organized by the local NGO. They will also be available for sale in the future museum of local linguistic-cultural heritage. The concept of this museum was in fact developed during a collaborative international field school of the Engaged Humanities project of the University of Warsaw, SOAS, University of London, and Leiden University in 2016 held in Wilamowice. After the field school had finished local authorities decided to support the idea of a 'living museum' that would serve both as the focus of the tourist cluster and as an artistic and educational space linked to the revitalization of Wymysiöeryś. The selected architectural design of the museum envisions a large space for the local amateur theater group performing in Wymysiöeryś and for educational workshops that will be offered for local and external participants.

Developing linguistic tourism can be enhanced by commercializing handicrafts and ethno-design products, especially when they can be explicitly linked to the local language. In Wilamowice these products embrace T-shirts, mugs, badges, and bags with word plays in Wymysiöeryś, a wide range of woven products (a traditional industry in the town) including items of clothing and accessories, and a language game (see Figure 9.2). On the Isle of Man, widely distributed products include T-shirts, home textiles, and coasters for cups and glasses with texts in Manx. All traditional communities have their own craftwork, be it ceramics, basketry, wood carvings, or textiles, and these can be linked to the heritage language in numerous ways, as can their distribution, marketing, and sale.

The activities in Wilamowice also involved marking out tourist paths and preparing plaques in Wymysiöeryś, Polish, and English about spots of historical and present-day importance. These plaques provide rich information about the town and its heritage. In addition, they form important components of the local linguistic landscape and this has a strong positive impact, improving previously negative attitudes toward Wymysiöeryś, and giving more visibility

<sup>8</sup> <http://etnoprojekt.pl/2.0>



Figure 9.2 Local products sold during the Mother Tongue Day in Wilamowice. Photo by Piotr Strojnowski, © Engaged Humanities Project, University of Warsaw



Figure 9.3 A local store with some names and announcements in Nahuatl, San Miguel Tenango, Mexico. Photo by Justyna Olko

to ongoing revitalization activities. The project also created a tourist guide that is available in Polish and English. It is downloadable from a special webpage focusing on tourism in Willamowice.<sup>9</sup> This website serves as a virtual substitute for the traditional tourist information point and it can encourage visitors to come to the town. To make city tours even more attractive, the team created and tested a quest game based on the topography of Wilamowice. It was developed together with local teenagers who learn the language and wanted to be involved in the development of tourism. The description of questing is available on the website, which also provides information about activities and workshops that can be of interest for both community members and visitors. In fact, scenarios of workshops focusing on the local language, traditions, and handicrafts (costume, weaving, dances, etc.) were also developed during the same project. Additionally, young new speakers of the language were trained to serve as guides in the town for tours based on linguistic-cultural heritage.

Taken together, these initiatives and activities are expected to create permanent jobs associated with language revitalization, as well as stable forms of social and community engagement. This includes language classes in the local school (initiated in 2013 as a result of collaborative efforts of local activists and engaged researchers from the University of Warsaw and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), the production of local souvenirs and ethno-design merchandize, a soon-to-be-opened living museum, the creation of a new infrastructure for touristic groups, as well as workshops and artistic activities with a strong potential for commercialization. Artistic activities include a local theater group operating under the patronage of the Polish Theatre in Warsaw, which also hosts special plays in *Wymysiöeryś* performed by Wilamovian youths. Such events (along with media campaigns launched in all our collaborative projects) are essential for the positive marketing of minority languages in Poland. They increase awareness of linguistic diversity in the country (despite postwar homogenization and dominant national ideology) and create more supportive attitudes within broader society.

The example of Wilamowice shows that such strategies have made a difference in one relatively small community. However, they can also be applied on a larger scale for languages with more speakers. For example, in Wales, and especially in its northern part, proficiency in Welsh is seen as a valuable asset in the labor market, especially in the domains of local and national governments, administration, education, tourism, and media. Creating work opportunities for Welsh speakers in their communities has shown the economic potential of the language and has contributed to its growth. The language is also seen as an

<sup>9</sup> [www.turystyka.wilamowice.pl](http://www.turystyka.wilamowice.pl)

opportunity for manufacturers and retailers, and is one of the driving forces for the economic growth in Wales. Also in the case of Irish, local organizations promote the value of incorporating the language visually into businesses, with product labels, signage, menus, or stationery. Here the Irish language is used as a resource for business, a domain that has, until now, been reserved for English. They also encourage nonfluent new speakers of Irish to engage in such initiatives. More fluent entrepreneurs and shopkeepers go beyond bilingual signage, as they create an Irish-language experience for their customers, encouraging them to develop their language skills and use.<sup>10</sup> An important impact of such initiatives is to link the minority language to practical day-to-day life, including economic and social activities.

### **Marketing and Promoting Language Revitalization**

Both linguistic tourism and management of environment should become essential elements of marketing and promoting language revitalization. This, in turn, is essential for improving language attitudes, language use, and levels of activism or support both inside and outside a specific community. Marketing a minority language is needed to increase its social status and to encourage a higher level of commitment from native speakers, language learners, potential new speakers, as well as broader society. The awareness of this necessity is growing. Over two decades ago it was pointed out that although the New Zealand government had started to spend large sums of money on preschool language nests, immersion primary schools as well as other initiatives, its language policies were not accompanied by marketing a sufficiently positive image of the language. This lack of marketing hindered some of the investments in language revitalization, even though promoting the Māori language has been one of the major tasks of the Māori Language Commission, established in 1987. The target audience of Māori campaigns has become the wider population of New Zealand. Also marketing intergenerational transmission among Māori families and learners of the language has been seen as another key necessity.<sup>11</sup>

Marketing language revitalization is also crucial for generating funding for revitalization activities. What kind of solid arguments can you give to skeptical community members, parents, or grandparents, who remember

<sup>10</sup> S. Brennan and B. O'Rourke, 'Commercialising the cúpla focal: New speakers, language ownership, and the promotion of Irish as a business resource', *Language in Society* 48 (2018), 125–45. doi: 10.1017/S0047404518001148.

<sup>11</sup> R. Nicholson, 'Marketing the Māori Language', in J. Reyhner (ed.), *Teaching Indigenous Languages* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University, 1997), pp. 206–13.

language discrimination and violence, or to policy makers, academics, and sponsors? Connecting language revitalization to local tourism and to sound environmental knowledge is not the only possible advantage: there are also other benefits with significant economic impact. As we learned in Chapter 1, multilingual individuals have increased intellectual potential, reflected in greater flexibility and capacity for task solving as well as higher social skills. This applies to children, adults, and the elderly – for the latter the usage of more than one language can hinder cognitive decline and possibly delay the onset of symptoms of dementia. Research also shows that language revitalization and the use of the mother tongue throughout the stages of an individual's development are not only closely linked to improvements in self-esteem, but also to better health. Moreover, we know that a strong correlation exists between language loss and deterioration in Indigenous health (e.g. the presence of diabetes), with symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress, elevated suicide rates, and alcoholism.<sup>12</sup>

Preserving the heritage language simply helps to prevent these problems and to deal with them if they are present. As numerous studies and testimonies have shown, speaking a heritage or ancestral language or going back to it in the process of 'individual revitalization' in connection to ancestral roots and ethnic identity, greatly improves psychological well-being. As psychological and medical studies have revealed it also allows us to deal better with stress, illness, and experienced trauma or discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Thus, if the negative forces of language loss are reversed, we can expect beneficial results: not only better health, but also better functioning in society and in the job market. And this, in turn, has impact for the cost of medical healthcare and the general economy. Indeed, language revitalizers could argue that a relatively modest investment in an endangered language (in the scale of a state's expenditures!) can substantially lower the costs of healthcare and social services. And, as argued before, it can generate economic assets for marginalized, often poor communities, reducing the need for the state's help. Put in economic jargon, language revitalization has the

<sup>12</sup> E.g. J. Ball and K. Moselle, *Contributions of Culture and Language in Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities to Children's Health Outcomes: A Review of Theory and Research* (Division of Children, Seniors & Healthy Development, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013); O. McIvor, A. Napoleon, and K. Dickie, 'Language and culture as protective factors for at-risk communities', *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 5/1 (2009), 6–25.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. C. Haslam, J. Jetten, and S. A. Haslam, 'Advancing the social cure. Implications for theory, practice and policy', in J. Jetten, C. Haslam, and S. A. Haslam (eds.), *The Social Cure: Identity, Health and Well-Being* (London: Psychology Press, 2011), pp. 319–44; M. Skrodzka, K. Hansen, J. Olko, M. Bilewicz, 'The twofold role of a minority language in historical trauma: The case of Lemko minority in Poland', *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 39/4 (2020), 551–566.

potential to contribute to a reduction in the direct and indirect costs of many diseases, improving the human capital (the knowledge, skills, and habits crucial for the ability to work and create economic value) of a given region.

Speakers of minority languages can also positively influence the labor market. We already know that multilingual individuals, including users of nondominant languages, are important assets for employers because they represent an investment in the diversity of the creative potential of a company. Individuals with high esteem who are proud of their ethnic origin will perform much better than those who are ashamed of their identity and no longer communicate in their heritage languages. The promotion of multilingualism may also help to reduce poor labor choices driven by racism and dominant linguistic ideologies. Persons with lower self-esteem are often underemployed in positions below their actual potential. This may also happen if employers are driven by prejudice based on the origin or ethnic affiliation of potential workers, so it is essential to raise their awareness about the benefits of multi-ethnic labor force. Thus, the efficient marketing of minority languages can bring economic benefits not only to their speakers, but also to other sectors or groups in wider society.

The positive image and recognition of a minority language can sometimes do more good for language use than concrete revitalization or teaching activities. And, conversely, the absence of positive marketing in prestigious spaces may effectively hinder the use of the language. To give an example of such a situation I will quote the words of one of the young speakers of Nahuatl in the Mexican state of Puebla:

*Quemman, quemman polihuiz nahuatlahtolli naltepeuh, tleca tlacameh ihuan cihuameh amo quimatih ihuipan sirve para qué, para qué sirve, tleca, tlen ipatiuh. Nochtin tlacameh ihuan cihuameh amo tlahtoah ipan iyolloco centro, ipan Ayuntamiento [...] Porque tleca personas amo tlahtoah nahuatlahtolli, entonces amo patiyoh. Amo patiyoh quimatih nahuatlahtolli.*

Yes, yes Nahuatl will perish in my town because the men and the women do not know what it can be used for, what it can be used for, why, what is its value. All the men and the women, they don't speak [Nahuatl] in the town center, in the municipality. Because those people do not speak Nahuatl, so it has no value. They know that Nahuatl has no value. (Cuertlaxcoapan, Puebla, 2015, speaker in his late twenties)

The absence of the language in municipal offices and local businesses is a powerful negative sign for speakers, signifying denial of the value and utility of the local language. However, even a small investment in visual recognition in the public sphere ('linguistic landscape') or the presence of the language in public services not only creates jobs for speakers and gives their language some prestige, but also conveys a message to the community that the language actually *is* useful. For this reason, some of the stores in Wilamowice and the local vicinity, as part of an initiative with local entrepreneurs, plan to adopt

bilingual marking of their products. At the same time, our more recent step in Wilamowice, accomplished in collaboration with the local NGO and the municipal authorities, was to hang a huge banner on the municipal building located in the main square in the town. It announced to the inhabitants and visitors that *S'Wymysiöeryśy stej uf*, 'Wymysiöeryś rises to its feet'.