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The genesis of Israeli: Language reclamation and cross-fertilization

Language reclamation (e.g. Hebrew, Barnjarla, Kurna and Sanskrit), revitalization (e.g. Hawai'i and Māori) and reinvigoration (e.g. Welsh) are becoming increasingly relevant as more and more people seek to reconnect with their ancestors, recover their cultural autonomy, empower their spiritual and intellectual sovereignty, and improve their wellbeing and mental health. There is an urgent need to offer perspicacious comparative insights, for example from the Hebrew revival, which is so far the most successful known linguistic reclamation.

This keynote address will demonstrate that – due to the ubiquitous multiple causation and horizontal gene/feature transfer – linguistic reclamation (the revival of a no-longer spoken language) is unlikely without cross-fertilization from the revivalists' mother tongues. Given universal constraints, one should expect reclamation efforts to result in a language with a hybridic genetic and typological character.

The keynote will highlight salient grammatical constructions and categories, illustrating the difficulty in determining a single source for the grammar of Israeli, the emerging fused language resulting from the Hebrew revival. The European, e.g. Yiddish, impact in these features is apparent inter alia in structure, semantics or productivity. Multiple causation is manifested in the Congruence Principle, according to which the more contributing languages a linguistic feature exists in, the more likely it is to persist in the emerging language. Consequently, the reality of linguistic genesis (as opposed to organic evolution) is statistical rather than binary, and far more complex than a *Stammbaum* model allows. Successful reclaimed languages are hybridic.

If time allows, the keynote will provide evidence not only from Israeli but also from the revival of Barnjarla, Kurna, Ngarrindjeri (all Aboriginal Australian), Hawai'i and Māori.