



Title of Project:

Yurok Language Revitalization: Affective Stance and Language Learning

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated:

Research on Revitalization of Endangered Indigenous Languages

Project Summary:

This project will examine how Yurok second language learners' attitudes and emotions influence their engagement with, and outcomes of, the language learning experience. Yurok [yur] is an Algic language traditionally spoken in northwest California. Although the last elder first-language speaker of Yurok died in 2013, the Yurok Tribe Language Program has spent decades intensively training second language speaker/teachers and establishing school and community language classes. I take Krashen's (1982) concept of the 'affective filter' and its influence on language learning outcomes as a point of departure. I seek to understand the role of affective stance, particularly the sources and manifestations of anxiety, in language learning within an indigenous language revitalization and reclamation (LRR) context. While affective stance is a prominent area of research and concern for the teaching of English and other major world languages of foreign or second languages, there is a notable absence of any research within indigenous communities outside of a European minoritized language context, and this project will help to fill that gap. In doing so, it will contribute to a more well-informed theoretical understanding of the topic. It will also lead to improved language education practices within indigenous language revitalization. A better understanding of exactly how learners' conscious and unconscious attitudes and emotions influence their learning behavior and practices has the potential to support LRR efforts everywhere. It will support improved pedagogical models, teacher training, and classroom practices, and guide engagement with learners and their communities outside of the classroom.