Multilingualism in the Archives: the Issue of Archival Silences and Language Barriers

London Stever

Candidate for the degree

Bachelor of Arts

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

College Honors

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Multilingualism in the Archives: the Issue of

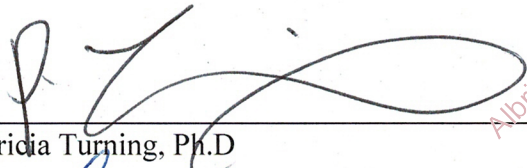# Archival Silences and Language Barriers

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The history of the United States of America was built on the tongues of millions, yet in modern day it seems the country focuses on the sanitized, English-language account of itself. The philosophies espoused by the signers of the Declaration of Independence started in France, Italy, and England. The natives who shaped these lands and influenced the American trade system spoke Mohegan, Mohawk, Seneca, and Lakota, among others. The slaves who built the economy arrived on these shores with little to call their own but their languages and their names. The United States of America is a nation of immigrants, and thus a nation of tongues. Yet, few textbooks in American public schools focus on individuals who spoke languages other than English.

Books on the history of the United States of America focus on only a subset of the people that contributed to its ongoing development. As Rudolph J. Vecoli observes, "American historiography has been almost exclusively concerned with white Anglo-Americans; its unspoken assumption has been that important things have been said and done only by members of the dominant, white, English-speaking group" (140). Other people are not deemed as "American" and they must rely on hyphens if they are to be accepted: African-American, Chinese-born-American, Asian-American, German-American. Though the term "American" could apply to any number of geographic ranges and their cultural attitudes within the western hemisphere, this paper will use it to describe peculiarities and generalizations within the United States of America unless otherwise indicated. Americans, according to some, are those who speak English and act the way the establishment – be it officially or unofficially – expects of them. Archives, however, have the ability and, some would say, obligation to protect the history of those

within the United States who do not themselves have the shelter of the dominant narrative. With a growing awareness of the ethical responsibility archivists hold towards previously underserved communities and a shift in both academia and society at large towards globalization, individual archivists, library science graduate programs, and repositories need to recognize the importance of foreign language skills in the archival field.

Following the awakening of the United States' collective national consciousness during the Civil Rights Movement, however, an evolution took place in the form of smaller intellectual shifts took place, including the creation of spaces for voices outside the dominant narrative. Women's studies and gender studies popped up the 1970s. Repositories like the Houston Metropolitan Research Center started actively collecting Hispanic materials. A decade later, archivists began addressing the social implications of their profession, and considered the impact their neglect had on certain communities. A few years after archivists applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) to their own field, among other social theories (Dunbar 110). CRT began in the legal field around the same time as the Civil Rights Movement's peak: perceiving racial bias across multiple legal fields, "founding CRT scholars developed a discourse that could bring a social consciousness to the racial conditions of minorities" (112). Awareness of these conditions includes knowledge of institutionalized biases and how preconceptions of ethnic character traits can color interactions between groups.

In archival practice, this could lead to an unconscious distaste for interacting with patrons of color or a bias for English-language materials. Prejudices particularly impact access by influencing materials, community involvement, and patron comfort. The

increased discourse in the past two decades concerning social and racial theories in the archival field impacted the way archivists viewed certain types of materials, if only because it made them aware of their actions in a broader global framework. Archivists must remain particularly aware of appraisal – the process of determining which materials should be kept based on their usefulness or historic value. Appraisal, like other aspects of the field that may lead to archival silences, relies on subjectivity and personal judgment of the archivists and their employers' standards. In turn, this makes it a difficult topic to discuss objectively (Schaeffer 610). When involving such local communities as city-based cultural organizations, this becomes especially true because outreach to these communities – a topic only recently considered – relies heavily on language and cooperation. Considering the far-reaching implications of monolingualism versus multilingualism, this paper addresses foreign language training, its variations, and its purpose in archival science.

Archival Silences

Archival silence is a term with many definitions, but the definition this paper concerns itself with is the conscious or unconscious absence of groups or events in repository holdings. For there to be silence, there has to be a potential place for the material within a collection. Few would go so far as to claim that Chicano paintings belong in a corporate archive, but certain government, university, and cultural archives could be faulted for failing to include the same. Some libraries and repositories maintained foreign language collections in the early twentieth century, but they were the exception until the latter half of the 1900s. By 1974, the library science field at large

noted the value of documents imported from other countries. As James D. Anderson noted, "potential librarians need training in handling foreign language materials, since a significant proportion of important literature is produced in languages other than English in almost every field of study" (183). David B Walch concurred, attributing the increasing numbers of significant foreign papers to widespread improvement of technology and technical research in other countries – a development that has only progressed in more recent years. Walch also agreed with EJ Reece's analysis that, "the worker who must meet a scholarly clientele or handle research materials obviously cannot tolerate serious limitations in his linguistic equipment," and noted that in recent decades this became even more necessary (167). Though none of these scholars directly mention advocacy, they concern themselves with matters of language, representation, and access – issues that were always present, but that have not received proper attention until fairly recently.

Recent History of Language in Library Science

The End of Foreign Language Requirements

English came to dominate archival education and thought when graduate programs across many fields loosened the foreign language requirements for entrance around 1970. Library science programs may have been more open to this change due to a lack of foreign language materials and patrons. Anderson's need to assert that materials from other countries deserve collection indicates that the vast majority of libraries and archives previously had not accessioned such resources. By 1969 many academics theoretically recognized the importance of foreign language in librarianship. Nonetheless,

graduate programs were already relaxing foreign language requirements. Walch

summarized the foreign language requirements of 42 of the accredited library science

graduate schools at the time. Four did not have any foreign language requirements; three

waived the requirement for library science students in certain career tracks; and the rest

allowed students to skip foreign language classes if they passed an exam (170). Though

those numbers may seem insignificant, one must remember that they indicate the

beginning of the trend, not its peak.

Language Classes as Impractical

Understanding what caused this shift is instrumental in combating the

unquestioned dominance of English in higher education in the United States of America.

In the late 1960s, "the curriculum of library science [was] predominately practical; the

courses answer[ed] questions of how to do it, where to find it, how to choose it, to which

[were] added historical sketches of librarianship" (Mills 58). The prevailing idea was that

while some foreign language materials could be useful, special librarians would primarily

work with English-language materials produced by official sources. Thus, practical

courses largely filtered foreign languages out of the educational system. Anderson wrote

in 1974 that Spanish "is still one of the most used languages in the publication of general

literature … it is also the native tongue of many Americans" (176). Those with the

authority to alter curricula took little heed of his assessment. Four years later, only fifteen

of fifty-one schools that replied to a survey of foreign language requirements at library

schools had any foreign language requirement, and four of those offered students the

option of foregoing language classes in favor of computer science classes (Crary 112).

The ability to choose between a foreign language and a computer course bespeaks the attitudes towards foreign language among academics in reaction to technological advancements.

Computer skills replaced language skills because they were newer and seemed more important to repositories trying to remain relevant in a computerized world. Doctoral students in the 1970s and two subsequent decades still needed to meet some foreign language requirements because "the doctoral student uses the foreign language as a research tool, where the master student uses the foreign language in performance of his assigned responsibilities within the library" (Walch 174). The flip side, however, was that if research materials and library materials did not contain foreign language documents, neither doctoral nor master students exhibited a need for additional language skills. Greater access to translations and a proliferation of foreign documents written in English (largely due to educational standards that remain from colonial days) creates a world in which students seemingly have very little desire for foreign language knowledge.

Access to Archival Material

Marginalized Groups: Materials and Access

Though the Bill of Rights lacks an amendment protecting citizens' rights to information, Americans have long recognized the importance of documenting national history. The Founding Fathers expressed interest in preserving official records as early as 1791, when Thomas Jefferson lamented that "time and accident" wreak havoc on original documents (Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Ebenezer Hazard, 18 February 1791).

Institutions both great and small maintained documents in basements or private libraries, often with limited access. The idea that history should also be disseminated did not take hold of the nation until much later. Even today, as more and more institutions adopt archival practices and move towards greater transparency, there remains an unwillingness to open records to any but those hailing from the hallowed land of academia. Nonetheless, archival theorists of modern day argue in favor of increased access to a wider patron base. Archivists now tolerate students, journalists, and genealogical hobbyists in their repositories, though the archivists do not necessarily extend their arms in welcome.

Does this mean that archives in the United States now treat access to information as an unofficial addition to the First Amendment, ensuring that every citizen of the United States can interact with their history? No. Unfortunately, there are still a great many citizens not accounted for in either the registration logs or the records of a majority of American archives. Though there has been progress since 1969, in that year, "a scrutiny of Philip Hamer, *A Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States* for example, reveals very few references to ethnic collections" (Vecoli 141). For the past four decades, archivists and historians have worked to account for archival silences – gaps in the historical record that often equate to marginalized groups. Inspired in part by the Civil Rights Movement, individuals and institutions raced to collect documents about immigrants, activist groups, women, and the urban poor. The field embraced the postmodern belief that archives are a communal invention responsible for constructing society. No longer were archivists the watchful, but passive guardians of the dominant narrative; "the archivist was now the custodian not just of useful records but of historical

records, the documentary heritage of the nation now defined as a sociohistorical [sic]

concept" (Schaeffer 611). This change in ideology and self-perception among archivists

allowed them to feel that they progressed beyond the days of bias, unconsciously

perpetuating the problem of access.

By removing marginalized records from their communities without granting

access to the records for community members, archivists increased the likelihood of

document preservation at the expense of the original communities. For, as Marcus

Garvey once said, "a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and

culture is like a tree without roots," and without access to their records, many groups

have only an incomplete knowledge of their history. Cooperation between archival

institutions and marginalized communities must attain higher priority if archivists are

actually to overcome issues of access.

Language as a Barrier to Access

Archival theory in recent years has become increasingly concerned with

accessibility, as if to make up for earlier oversight. Archivists and repositories debate the

best ways to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since the introduction of

the World Wide Web to the wider world, archivists argued over the merits of placing

records, collections, or even just finding aids online. Online access can increase the

number of patrons reached, but might conflict with copyright laws or institute guidelines.

It also reveals the potential limitations and unconscious bias of archival description – a

topic steadily rising to the foreground of access discussion. As more people with diverse

backgrounds attempt to use online portals, archivists must recognize that English-language academic keywords may not suffice:

> "language is at the same time: (a) a communication coding system
>
> that can be taught as a school subject; (b) an integral part of the
>
> individual's identity involved in almost all mental activities; and
>
> also (c) the most important channel of social organisation
>
> embedded in the culture of the community where it is used"
>
> (Dörnyei 118).

In spite of the field's heightened attention to issues of accessibility and pluralism, there remains a prominent obstacle to admission to the vast majority of materials: language. Language barriers are not only about difficulty in reading manuscripts.They are about comfort in approaching archives at all, for "the identity of the researcher (or more accurately the way they are perceived and perceive themselves in archives) matters greatly and cannot be written out of scholarly texts" (Davis 20). If one feels unwelcome due to an inability to or difficulty with speaking English, then one is far less likely to use the archives or cooperate with the archives to ensure the chronicling of one's community.

English-Hindu Case Study

  Increased access globally, perhaps paradoxically, also means increased difficulty in accessing materials due to a language barrier. Australian historian Alexander E. Davis offered a personal view into the mind of a researcher struggling with such communication problems in his paper "An Archival Turn for International Relations: Interrogating India's Diplomatic History from the Postcolonial Archive." He experienced

growing frustration at the Indian archivists' claims of limited research materials.

Doubting the effort of the National Archives of India record managers, he voiced his

irritation that "most North Indian researchers would have been able to challenge these

non-findings, but there existed a language barrier between myself and the archivists,

making it difficult to complain" (10). His distrust of the Indian archivists stemmed

largely from his inability to communicate with them. This, he believed, placed him in the

role of an outsider – someone not worthy of the archivists' full effort. While complaining

of his difficulty obtaining documents in the NAI, Davis mentions, "an archivist speaks to

me each day and answers my questions as briefly as she can, and does so in Hindi (a

language I sadly have not yet had time to study)." It may seem superfluous to point out

that answers in a language the querier does not understand are not useful at all, and can

hardly be called answers, but this situation likely occurs more often than archivists would

like to admit.

Archivists and historians can pay lip-service to pluralism and accessibility without

actively working to ensure the success of these ideals. They may work to ensure that

those with physical disabilities can enter the repository or use online finding aids, but

other barriers are ignored. Not all researchers are fluent in English, particularly students

from other countries, but they are increasingly seeking materials from repositories in the

United States. Just like Davis, they experience difficulty in navigating the archival

process, not necessarily for lack of effort or due to rude record managers, but because

language plays an important role in many steps of the research process. In the interview,

the request, subsequent queries, and understanding of usage policies, the ability to

communicate is critical. Even repositories with limited a limited patron base struggle to completely ignore foreign languages because holdings may contain a manuscript or two in a language other than English. Arguably, repositories in major metropolises should due to the proliferation of fraternal organizations.

Globalization and Marginalized Groups

The Broad Reach of Globalization

With the onset of the World Wide Web, cellular devices, and now technologies such as instant video conferences, individuals had more connection to other nations and cultures than previously possible. Globalization arguably began in the eighteenth century with European colonization efforts that connected the hemispheres, whether inhabitants of the effected localities were prepared or not. But, globalization spiked and became much more dynamic after the digital revolution. Videos, online journals, computer games, and social media all provided glimpses at realities unlike our own. Obvious examples of globalization in recent decades include: greater international mobility, global trade markets and corporations, and loan words both from the English language and into American parlance (Duszak 36).

Globalization led to awareness of other cultures both abroad and in the immediate vicinity. As people grew more aware of other cultures in their daily lives, "it became the responsibility of archivists to extend the scope of governmental archives or to encourage the establishment of private archives or collecting bodies" because records creators often failed to maintain and organize the essential materials that reflected this shift in

perspective (Schaeffer 612). Archivists could not remain passive, stone guards of the old ways against the changes surrounding them and knocking on their door in the form of user inquiries and cries for greater advocacy from different corners of the globe. With varying levels of passion, they began collecting materials to represent what was not really a new world, but simply the same world viewed through a wider lens. These materials often came from local sources such as fraternal organizations and global sources like foreign universities.

Globalization on the Local Level

Though ethnic fraternal organizations and individuals often work to preserve history outside the dominant narrative of American history, proper care of – and research into – Native, immigrant, and so-named "minority" community materials often depends upon cooperation between those organizations and archivists. Tracy Grimm and Chon Noriega analyzed two examples of such cooperation: the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies. Noriega was director of the Chicano Studies Research Center at the time they published their study, and Grimm had recently left the Institute for Latino Studies. They worked with fraternal organizations that already had their own collections documenting the migration of Latino communities and the cross-cultural interactions between those communities and their Anglo-American surroundings, providing the organizations with tools for better preservation in some cases, and acquiring part or all of their collections in others. Managers of small, ethnic repositories often lacked training and thus "spending two hours discussing the types, functions, and origins of the materials

and helping to group them into labeled folders (exhibition files, correspondence, lectures, etc.) helped the participant manage his or her records better and establish better control over new materials going forward" (Grimm 103). Inter-organizational efforts between "official" archives, like the Research Center and Institute, and fraternal organizations fosters trust within the respective communities and ensures the preservation of marginal cultures.

Recalling the lessons learned from these collaborative efforts, the archivists wrote, "our experience suggests that strengthening the capacity of community organizations and individuals to care for their private archives is a critical component of any effort to advance preservation and access to Latino archives, or any underrepresented community's archives" (107). Other disenfranchised groups are no different. Their collections' existence depends upon their ability to protect their materials, an effort which can be aided by archivists only if the two groups can communicate with one another. Rather than compete with one another for materials, or having one group dismiss the other's repository as unsuitable or amateur, the associations that share language – and at least one bilingual archivist – can overcome bias to preserve America's history. Archives are more than just the preservation of the materials held within their repositories, however; these agencies are also concerned with the dissemination of information and the use of those materials.

Outreach

In modern day, people who may want access to records held in collections within the United States of America include foreign researchers, genealogists, teachers,

community event coordinators, journalists, writers, artists, and various sorts of businesses, so following old authorization guidelines based on the premise that only academics utilize archives will no longer suffice. Not all patrons will have university or government credentials. Few will understand how archives operate on their first visit. Davis' experience in the National Archives of India may well indicate how the uninitiated feel when archivists are not welcoming towards them: "In this sense, the culture of the NAI reflects Indian society: a faint veneer of chaos hides from the untrained eye strict rules and hierarchies, in which those far enough up the hierarchy can transgress" (10). The sense of chaos may have been cultural, as most American institutions prefer giving off the (sometimes false) impression that they are paragons of order. Yet, Davis' experience at the NAI reflects the feeling of alienation instilled in some patrons by uncompromising archivists. He was a doctoral student at the time, but a scruffy-looking one by his own admission, and a foreigner who did not speak the language. If he did not feel comfortable, in spite of his experience in other archives and his status as a somewhat-official researcher, then the archival field should improve its outreach efforts.

The Society of American Archivists, which sets the standards for archival accreditation and practice in North America, defines "outreach" as: "the process of identifying and providing services to constituencies with needs relevant to the repository's mission, especially underserved groups, and tailoring services to meet those needs" (Pearce-Moses "Outreach"). PhD students are one constituency, historians are another, but in modern day the list of potential constituencies has expanded greatly. At

the same time that the definition of who could be a patron expanded, the field's understanding of archivists' role in society also underwent a significant change.

Archivists are no longer only vigilant guardians, protecting anything entrusted in their care, because they have evolved into active participants in the creation of social consciousness. They must now be aware of how their appraisal and descriptions color the narrative of their institution and the wider world. The records they preserve influence research, which in turn supports or challenges popular beliefs about the country. Ethnic fraternal materials in English and other languages are important for documenting American history because they often contain the only accounts of their respective communities to be found in any physical location.

Nonetheless, multilingualism in archives should not be about materials only. Evidence that archivists tend to focus on the collections over their patrons can be found in a survey of necessary job skills where, "although librarians' skills in foreign languages include reading, aural, speaking, and writing abilities, reading knowledge of one or more foreign languages was the most prevalent" (Crary 115). Reading foreign language materials is incredibly important to properly cataloging them, but the ability to hold a conversation with users who do not speak English is also important. This fact is sadly overlooked by educators and employers, and even the archivists themselves. Though Walch believed with linguistics training "the library school graduate could handle the innumerable problems that require only a little language skill and leave, for the language specialist, those problems requiring oral-aural or reading proficiency," his attitude creates an air of complacency (173). With that opinion, record managers could justify their

limited foreign language ability by saying that a specialist could take care of any complications that may arise, but translators are not always on hand to assist with users. Archivists working in outreach in diverse communities especially should try to avoid relying on language specialists when interacting with patrons because that demonstrates a disregard for the very communities they are trying to reach.

Archival Power and Foreign Language Materials

Language Barring Attention

Controlling who has access to records, and therefore denying some the right to access their history and culture, is one way archivists shape social consciousness, and one method of exerting power over the disenfranchised that, previously, many archivists passively accepted – if they were aware of their domination in the first place. Archival power "consists of highlighting certain narratives and of including certain types of records created by certain groups" in addition to limiting who has access to the archives (Carter 216). Sometimes this is done through the appraisal process, when archivists choose not to accept foreign language materials. Other times the materials exist within the repository's holding and there is an audience for them but archivists' bias or lack of language education prevents the researchers from accessing such materials. English-only finding aids are of little help to non-English users. Leaving foreign language materials in the backlog of unprocessed record groups because they are deemed less essential is another method of exercising archival power to silence marginalized voice. While reviewing the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*, "Paul Conway described what he believed was 'an apparent strong regional bias for the

eastern United States and a deficiency in coverage for some types of repositories" that influenced professional perception of what archives were supposed to be, excluding smaller repositories and those focusing on materials outside the dominant narrative (Gabehart 424). By only recognizing archives that preserved material matching America's perception of itself, the field exercised its power over the disenfranchised on a much larger scale, removing potential archival allies from their positions of authority. If archivists in all types of repositories, in all sections of the country, promote multilingualism and advocate for diversity of materials and patrons, then the divide created between communities and the archival profession by the *Directory of Archives* can be bridged again.

Hawai'i: Archival Power in Practice

One example of the way in which archives exercise control over history and culture through language is the Archives of Hawai'i. Jason Horn outlined a history of the archives, which are now known as the Hawai'i State Archives under the Department of Accounting and General Services, in 1953 from its conception to its then-current state. The Hawai'ian archives first came into being as such in March 1847, when at the suggestion of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Crichton Wyllie, the Privy Council passed a resolution ordering that "all the chiefs collect the papers they may possess and send them in for examination to the minister of foreign affairs" (Horn 103). The repository's start as an order from an invading and oppressive government did not prevent later archivists from working towards usefulness for the native community. However, that transition took time. Much of the effort of Robert Colfax Lydecker (the first archivist

to work with the records collections) "had also been expended in copying fading records and in translating records from Hawaiian to English" and in creating usable finding aids for English-speaking officials (Horn 110). As an appointee by the government officials representing the United States of America in the Territory of Hawaii, Lydecker did not concern himself greatly with the ability of natives to use the archives, though they were technically open to the public within a year of his appointment. Lydecker's successor, Albert Pierce Taylor, who was an avid historian of Captain Cook, "placed increased emphasis on the translation of Hawaiian-language documents into English on the grounds that many of the Hawaiian words and phrases of 75 and more years earlier were becoming unintelligible to the new generation of Hawaiians" (Horn 111). He worked closely with the Historical Commission of the Territory of Hawaii, which was responsible for rewriting the official history of the islands for the benefit of politicians in Washington, DC.

Shortly before Taylor ascended to the position of head archivist, however, "responsibility for compiling and publishing a new Hawaiian dictionary was placed under the Board of Commissioners of Public Archives by Act 18, Session Laws of 1913," indicating that there was still interest in the native language (Horn 111). Nevertheless, English-speaking officials continued to question the usefulness of the Hawaiian language, even as archivists and Hawai'ian administrators began recognizing its permanence. By 1953, the collection included English, Hawaiian, and various Asian-language newspapers dating from 1834 onward (109). The preservation of records in multiple languages, and the official policy indicating their importance suggests a slow change in the repository's

values. This shift follows the pattern indicated earlier: the collection of foreign language materials usually precedes efforts to read the materials, which in turn precedes bilingual archivists interacting with members of the communities the collected materials represent. By the time Horn wrote his overview, the archives' staff expanded beyond four individuals to eleven, including one translator who worked on making Hawaiian-language documents available to English-language government workers and as a general translator for members of the public at the service desk (112).

Unfortunately, the modern iteration of the archives followed the archival field in focusing on English, and thus no longer offers translation services from English, only translation of documents into English. Their online catalogs and descriptions are in English. The newspapers, both non-English and English, are now available through the Hawaiian Historical Society, which does not appear to offer translation services to the public, as per their website, but does offer a few modern books translated into Hawaiian. The Hawaiian Historical Society concerns itself with the inequality of the past, with the way in which the Territory of Hawaii attempted to exterminate Hawaiian, Japanese, and, to a lesser extent, other foreign languages, but the Society fails to recognize that by focusing on English-language patrons they propagate the tendency to demote non-English-speaking citizens to a secondary position.

Changing the Field

Why Promote Multilingualism?

If archivists are to advocate for the marginalized and for diverse materials, they must take it upon themselves to promote multilingualism within the field. Speaking of the

application of dictionaries and transliteration materials provided by the Library of Congress, Mills concludes it is likely "the existence of these tools and the unstated assumption that librarians will always use them that partially explains the meager amount of interest paid to the language problem" (Mills 53). Fifty years from when she penned that concern, nearly every upcoming archivist in the United States of America has Google Translate at their fingertips. They similarly assume that they will be able to use it in most situations. Such tools are imperfect, with a tendency towards literal translation that can lead to misunderstandings. Translation tools also create another barrier between the archivist and the patron. The archivist indicates some interest in the researcher by attempting to communicate in their language, but places a screen or a book between them. This is particularly jarring when the archivist does not try speaking the translated words and simply hands the device to the patron.

Those who do not interact with foreign language users should still put forth an effort to learn another language and encourage others to do so as well. Multilingualism assists in cataloging the stories of the truly disenfranchised – the individuals who never make the headlines but nonetheless are participants in the manifold creation of American reality. If archivists can read the materials their institutions task them with appraising, they are much more likely to recognize the potential usefulness of those records to researchers. Foreign language records maintained outside of archival repositories are often at greater risk of deterioration due to environmental conditions, even if an ethnic fraternal organization or similar institution takes care of them. Without the protection and stability of authority granted to government and university archives, these records find

themselves subject to dismissal. One such case was that of the collection of Casa de Unidad – an organization in Detroit that supported artistic efforts by Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Chicano individuals and performance groups. The materials were nearly lost when the repository's landlord demanded the materials be removed in forty-eight hours after the organization dissolved, but archivists reached out to Hispanic community members and succeeded in saving the materials (Grimm 105). If not for the efforts of bilingual archivists working closely and quickly with former Casa de Unidad members, decades of Latino art – of Detroit history – would likely have ended up scattered across various basements in a best case scenario, in the trash in the worst. Valuable cultural history throughout the United States of America exists in similarly unstable situations, and an inability to communicate with its current creators and guardians means it will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Motivation and Foreign Language Learning

Personal motivation, be it extrinsic or intrinsic, drastically improves one's ability to learn a foreign language. Foreign language experts debate several theories of motivation, but most balance positive and negative factors against internal and external forces. The value aspect of the expectancy-value theory as outlined by Eccles and Wigfield, explains that "the overall achievement value of a task, then, will be made up of the interplay of these four components [attainment value, intrinsic interest value, extrinsic utility value, and negative task valence], and this value is believed to determine the strength or intensity of the behaviour" (Dörnyei 120). Attainment value ties into one's sense of self, so archivists of color learning their community's language or records

managers who pride themselves on their willingness to learn possess a higher success rate in learning new languages when balanced against negative factors like the time and effort it takes to master foreign languages.

Archivists who identify with non-English-speaking communities demonstrate this, with individuals such as Christopher Dunbar and Chon Noriega actively promoting multilingualism both in scholarship and action. Dunbar, an archivist interested in CRT, particularly focuses on this idea, arguing, "there should be opportunities for members of other (and in some cases individuals who identify themselves within multiple) underrepresented and disenfranchised populations to critique how their identities are developed within institutional and collective memories" (111). Archivists and researchers who speak languages other than English deserve to work with materials in their native tongues and ensure visibility and accurate representation of their respective communities.

Record managers are in prime position to critique memories through their control of documents and their ability to actively seek out new documents that reflect the marginalized, thus providing a source of motivation for those concerned with social justice. The archivist's personal motivation is also key to their success with other languages because, "learning the language of another community simply cannot be separated from the learners' social dispositions towards the speech community in question" (Dörnyei 122). Thus, if an archivist holds disdain for a particular community, he or she will have more difficulty learning the language of the community. In turn, they will have even greater difficulty communicating with the community and appreciating the resources it produces. Grimm and Noriega noticed this as well during their respective

efforts at cooperating with various Hispanic organizations, that "while cultural competency and understanding are obviously required when working with ethnic archives, ultimately, a willingness to seek community members' active input on legacy and historical significance alongside that of subject experts may be even more important" (Grimm 106-7). Without a common language, obtaining input from the represented community becomes a difficult task for archivists, which can dishearten those working to bring attention to underrepresented groups in a thoughtful and non-imperialist way. There exist many reasons for archivists to seek bilingual or multilingual status, but they only matter as far as the individual archivist is willing to accept them as motivation and thus apply his or her effort more fully.

Educators and Foreign Language Training

Changing the American approach to foreign languages in the archival field cannot be solely an individual effort, however, and educators – who ultimately guide the future of theory, if not of practice – must take a firmer stance on the importance of multilingualism. As mentioned earlier, a learner's interest in the language community greatly improves his or her chances of success in learning a language, but "in certain educational contexts this dimension may not be the only important one and may not even be the most important one" (Dörnyei 124). Students can succeed without any contact to or personal connection with the culture if given motivation in an education setting. This leads to the unavoidable question Walch brought up in his paper on library education: "if foreign languages are important and so recognized by the vast majority of accredited library schools why are they not considered as part of the criteria in accrediting library

schools?" (171). Students may not be motivated to learn outside school if there are no classes offered to them and if the standard for library success, the American Library Association, does not see enough need of them to make them a curriculum requirement. Regardless of the ALA's criteria, the absence of language classes for archivists does not come from a disregard for their usefulness, as evinced by the fact that in 1974 the awareness of the need for language training for library science students was considered an old one (Anderson 175). That need has, if anything, increased over recent years, with many recently employed archivists feeling "that a 'Language for Librarians' course in graduate school would have been most useful in preparing them for professional positions by developing a working knowledge of numerous languages" (Crary 110). Educators, archival theorists, students, and practicing archivists all acknowledge the importance of multilingualism, or at least of language training.

However, library science programs do not exist in a vacuum and thus were affected by the nation's collective decision to reduce or remove language requirements at the graduate level. Here it is important to stop and note that research into this topic largely discusses library science programs and not specifically archival programs because although "some argue that, because of the origin and character of archives, the principles and techniques governing their arrangement and description necessarily differ from those generally employed in the classification and cataloging of library materials, yet the requirement of a master's degree in library science frequently appears as a qualification in advertisements for archivist positions" (Gabehart 421). It is important to note here that most schools offer archival classes only as a part of a library and information science

(LIS) degrees so an analysis of LIS graduate requirements will provide the educational baseline from which to proceed.

    Deficiencies in language requirements. Graduate schools had many practical reasons for reducing their foreign language requirements, but some of these rest on inaccurate presuppositions and American arrogance. From 1890 through to 1970, most graduate library schools required some education in foreign languages prior to admittance, though others allowed students to prove mastery of a second language before obtaining a master's degree (Walch 170). This aligns with undergraduate foreign language requirements, which serve now not to meet graduate expectations but to expand students' horizons. Foreign language requirements have been relaxed even for doctoral students, who previously needed to be fluent at least three languages and who now can receive their degree without knowing any but their native tongue. This could well be because graduate students might not have time to commit to achieving conversational status (let alone fluency) in a foreign language while completing a two year master's program or an intense doctoral program. Educators prefer students expend their energy on their focus, rather than on a wide variety of skills, such as multingualism. It is also possible that the individuals who design curricula for library science programs still expect students to be bilingual prior to entering graduate school.

However, superficial language learning is detrimental to all involved – the educational institutions, the students and future archivists, and the eventual employers of the latter – because the language is quickly forgotten or consumed by the unprepared student's self-doubt, rendering the initial instruction a waste of time and resources and

possibly even creating a false representation of the capabilities of the staff at certain

repositories that lead only to frustration among patrons and colleagues. The problem with

foreign language requirements in library science graduate programs comes from the

reality of the unlikeliness that "the typical library student who meets the minimum

foreign language requirement of library schools will come close to meeting a good oral,

aural, and reading proficiency in a foreign language" (Walch 172). Minimal foreign

language requirements met by an exam or undergraduate credit hours may demonstrate at

least the ability to read materials, but not sufficient oral and aural skills to communicate

with patrons and other professionals. Some could argue that meeting the minimum

requirements might not be enough on its own. They claim that with some well-

implemented dictionaries the archivist will succeed in translating records and even in

interacting with non-English patrons. However, dictionaries and translators quickly

become crutches that actually cause deterioration of language skills and "even with

awareness of this reference material, the librarian may not be able to use it to the best

advantage for lack of some general knowledge of languages, how they may be structured,

how they have been analyzed, and how they have developed" (Mills 54).

General knowledge of languages differs from minimal language requirements in

that the former suggests an understanding of linguistics, while the latter implies a

memorization of the most useful terms in a single language. In some cases, not even

memorization is needed, because a few schools that still have token language

requirements allow students to pass the exam through the use of a dictionary which, as

noted before, does not aid in developing bilingualism. Short of in-depth courses in

individual languages, which would promote multilingual archivists, linguistic classes could provide the foundation necessary to at least help archivists without frequent direct contact to foreign language communities to successfully handle foreign language materials and interact briefly with English as a second language patrons (as it would foster understanding for the mistakes or quirks ESL patrons may exhibit).

Linguistics as an alternative. Linguistics courses are a less costly alternative to furnish students with foreign language understanding because they require fewer professors and can be tailored to the fields of library and information sciences. Because linguistics teach the basics of language development and structure across regions (Indo-European, Asian, etc), this could suffice for graduate programs trying to prepare students for a wide variety of potential patrons and foreign language materials. In a library science language class at Pittsburgh University in 1965, **"s**tudents gained a working knowledge of numerous languages by developing a familiarity with foreign alphabets, grammar, and word structure, necessary to ascertian [sic] readily meanings of titles, reviews, and annotations, and to use outstanding foreign language reference work" (Crary 11). A class focusing on such skills married the 1960s ideal of practical library science education with foreign languages. Just a few years later, Anderson proposed a course which combined an overview of language with specific implementation in library settings alongside discussion of the benefits and shortcomings of machine translation in order to prepare librarians for work in the major world languages (177). Rather than champion fluency in a single language, he suggested that a foundation in linguistics and basic understanding of popular word-syllabic, syllabic, and alphabetic languages would sufficient for

bibliographic work. His proposal demonstrates a problem with promoting linguistics over multilingualism: written materials once again take precedence over patrons in the archivist's mind. Nonetheless, linguistic courses could help archivists because, "the determination of the morphemes of a given language reveals much of the grammar of that language, and the concept of the morpheme permits the analysis of any language pattern no matter how strange the language may be" (Mills 56). Thus, linguistics courses that every library science student takes could prepare them for their own individual language study. Educators that believe students should specialize in a single language could still benefit from linguistics courses because a foundation in structure allows students to create stronger connections when studying a language, picking out roots or patterns of conjugation that they are familiar with and building from there.

Encouraging multilingual students. In spite of all the apparent obstacles to foreign language learning in graduate schools, library science programs – especially those catering to the archival field – should promote the acquisition of at least a second language by their students through rewards systems, even if they are not willing to offer or require the courses themselves. Openly demonstrating a preference for bilingual and multilingual students in the admission process provides undergraduate students with a source of extrinsic motivation to learn additional languages. Scholarships for multilingual students can also promote foreign language learning, particularly in schools that already have scholarships for students demonstrating interest in community outreach.

Employers Promoting Foreign Language Skills

For there to be a complete shift in practice within the archival field, including among students and educators, repositories need to demonstrate a significant concern with foreign language ability, particularly through the hiring process. Alan Gabehart's 1992 study on requirements for entry-level archival positions indicates that "the most frequent choice of a majority of the nineteen categories of respondents was that certification probably will not have any effect on their hiring practices regarding all archivist positions in general," and this has not changed much in modern day so the fact that certification by the Society of American Archivists does not require proficiency in a foreign language has little effect on hiring practices (434). Therefore, employers are not bound by field standards to ignore foreign languages.

Institutions that believe their collections do not require bilingual or multilingual attention because they only focus on American materials also have no excuse. Foreign language materials exist in the United States, because, contrary to a long-held belief, many immigrants throughout America's history were not illiterate and they wrote (journals, receipts, contracts, memoirs, manuscripts, etc) in their native language. Even if large numbers of immigrants were illiterate when they first reached American shores, "they soon learned to read the tens of thousands of newspapers that were published in the United States and Canada in their languages; they also organized thousands of churches and schools and established an untold number of political, labor, dramatic, literary, professional, welfare, business, and religious associations" (Vecoli 142). American history, and oftentimes local history, encompasses the materials these establishments create.

The effects of hiring practices. These materials require language training, particularly when repositories have large foreign language collections. Employers should not expect archivists to rely on transliterations and pronunciation guides because "each of these schemes differs in varying degrees, and their multiplicity creates a great deal of confusion for bibliographers, librarians, and researchers, to say nothing of the general public" (Anderson 180). It is unfair to the archivists and to the patrons to avoid a request for foreign language proficiency (presumably with the hope of avoiding paying higher salaries) because directors believe translation tools replace education. It is clear, however, that employers are unsure how to balance the hiring process against foreign language needs because, "when asked which foreign languages were *preferred* for employment as an entry level professional archivist/manuscript curator, 43.2 percent of the respondents (205)," as opposed to the 83.6 percent (397) responding to required languages, "still indicated that no foreign language ability was preferred" [emphasis in original] (Gabehart 432). These numbers imply two characteristics of the archival field: a majority of repositories want employees with foreign language skills, but their desire or the supply is not high enough to justify reducing the number of potential applicants. It creates a catch-22 situation where archivists do not learn languages because educators do not feel the need to teach them because employers do not emphasize language skills because there are not enough bilingual archivists.

Language preference. Modern European languages are often given preference by educators, but that does not mean only these tongues should be considered by repositories: their needs will vary depending on the collections they house. Though Crary's survey

indicates that "French, German, and Spanish were cited most often as languages of which librarians have some knowledge (generally reading knowledge)," they were closely "followed by Latin, Italian, Russian, Greek, and Hebrew" (Crary 115). For archivists, the order of these languages might differ slightly from librarians, relating to geographic location and repository purpose. For example, an archivist working at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center will likely have more need of Spanish than French, even if they are not working with the Chicano collection. Theodora Mills, a cataloger of Slavic materials at the University of Rochester emphasized that "in universities where book collections in exotic languages are customary, it may even be necessary to waive the requirements in library education in order to find somebody who can at least read the title pages" (Mills 52). If more archivists studied languages and came to the field with bilingual skills then there would be no need to hire people without sufficient archival knowledge just to meet the needs of non-English collections and patrons.

Conclusion

In the modern globalized world, language skills are important in almost any field. People and records move across international lines in very short time. New voices emerge in academia and social change every day. Many of these voices never make it to American archives, however, due to their language. They believe they have no place in institutions that only welcome English-language materials and English-language researchers and so silence themselves by not attempting to approach archives. These are known as "perfect" silences because there is no open oppression on the part of the archives, but "in addition to the creation of these 'perfect' silences, silencing also occurs

when an individual speaks but they have no authority behind them" (Carter 218). Whether they want to recognize it or not, archivists have authority and they grant authority to those voices which they choose to preserve and disseminate. Due to this reality, archivists cannot continue the tradition that began in the 1970s. Just as they opened the field to Critical Race Theory and issues of accessibility, they closed it to foreign language education. It is now the time to merge the theories with the practice and promote multilingual archives.

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