## Contents

*Preface*  
ix

**1 Introduction**  
1.1 How can we tell when a language is endangered?  
1.2 Where are all the endangered languages?  
1.3 A precondition for language endangerment: language contact  
1.4 Summary and outline of the book’s contents  
1.5 Sources and further readings

**2 Why and how languages become endangered**  
2.1 Conquest  
2.2 Economic pressures  
2.3 Melting pots  
2.4 Language politics  
2.5 Attitudes  
2.6 Loss of linguistic diversity via standardization  
2.7 What doesn’t promote endangerment?  
2.8 Summary  
2.9 Sources and further readings

**3 Sliding into dormancy: Social processes and linguistic effects**  
3.1 Five case studies  
3.1.1 Case study #1: Eyak  
3.1.2 Case study #2: Cornish  
3.1.3 Case study #3: Egyptian  
3.1.4 Case study #4: Yaaku  
3.1.5 Case study #5: Mednyj Aleut  
3.2 What do these case studies tell us?  
3.3 Tip  
3.4 Semi-speakers and rememberers  
3.5 Attrition  
3.6 An alternative route to language death: grammatical (and lexical) replacement  
3.7 Summary and commentary  
3.8 Sources and further readings
4 What a community loses: Language loss as cultural loss
  4.1 Heritage languages and cultural identity 74
  4.2 Language loss as loss of artistic expression 79
  4.3 Loss of a language, loss of cultural knowledge 82
  4.4 Would the world be better off without linguistic diversity? 85
  4.5 Sources and further readings 89

5 What science loses: Language loss as a threat to our understanding of human history, human cognition, and the natural world
  5.1 Endangered languages and human history 94
  5.2 Endangered languages and human cognition 100
  5.3 Endangered languages and knowledge of the natural world 105
  5.4 Sources and further readings 107

6 Field research on endangered languages
  6.1 Descriptive linguistics and documentary linguistics 112
  6.2 On linguistic fieldwork in general (not just on endangered languages)
    6.2.1 What is fieldwork? 117
    6.2.2 What is a reasonable time span for a fieldwork project? 120
    6.2.3 Dealing with psychological stress in the field 122
  6.3 Investigating gravely endangered languages in the field
    6.3.1 Working with consultants: access, collaboration, communication, selection, and data-collection techniques 126
    6.3.2 Field sessions 135
    6.3.3 Individual variation 141
    6.3.4 An extended example: dictionary-making 142
  6.4 Summary and commentary 145
  6.5 Sources and further readings 146

7 Revitalizing endangered languages
  7.1 Factors that contribute to successful revitalization efforts 155
  7.2 Some types of revitalization programs 163
  7.3 From the past to the future 167
    7.3.1 Language revitalization in the digital age 167
    7.3.2 The value of unsuccessful revitalization efforts 170
  7.4 Sources and further readings 171

Glossary – languages and terms 175
Bibliography 199
Language index 214
Names index 219
Subject index 223