Creating an orthography is often seen as a key component of language revitalization. Encoding an endangered variety can enhance its status and prestige. In speech communities that are fragmented dialectally or geographically, a common writing system may help create a sense of unified identity or help keep a language alive by facilitating teaching and learning. Despite clear advantages, creating an orthography for an endangered language can also bring challenges, and this volume debates critical questions arising from these. Whose task should this be – that of the linguist or the speech community? Should an orthography be maximally distanced from that of the language of wider communication for ideological reasons, or should its main principles coincide for reasons of learnability? Which local variety should be selected as the basis of a common script? Is a multilectal script preferable to a standardized orthography? Can creating an orthography create problems for existing native speakers?


Dr Damien Mooney’s research focuses on contact-induced transfer in bilingual speech, language death theory, and the role of language and dialect contact in the loss or retention of pronunciation and grammatical features in regional varieties of French and the regional languages of France. Major publications include his monograph Southern Regional French: A Linguistic Analysis of Language and Dialect Contact (2016).
Creating Orthographies for Endangered Languages

Edited by
Mari C. Jones and Damien Mooney
Philip Griffith Jones (1937–2015)

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Mari’s beloved father, Philip Griffith Jones, who encouraged her, inspired her and gave her a sense of wonder. He taught her how precious a gift it is to speak an endangered language, and how important it is to ensure that these languages are kept alive.
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