Interview invitation – Linguistic Diversity and Digitalization

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am currently conducting a research project on **Linguistic Diversity and Digitalization** as part of my master's thesis in Digital Humanities (under the supervision of Prof. Hannes Fellner) at University of Vienna, Austria. In this context, I am extending an invitation to **participants for a short interview** under the theme of language diversity.
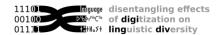
Invitation: I am hoping to engage with people living in Canada who speak multiple languages. I'm especially interested in conversing with people having a language profile including a **non-official language** (i.e. Indigenous languages or immigrant languages).

Aim: I want to gain insights on language use, particularly in digital communication. I am exploring how the linguistic diversity in Canada changed in the last 30 years and what role digitalization plays in this process.

Interview: The interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes and be in English (preferred) or French. It can be done in person (preferred) or via Zoom until May 27th. It will be a survey-structured interview with closed and open questions. The questions will cover your language profile, including your language use in digital and non-digital contexts, the topic of language shift and preservation as well as language prestige. All responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes; you will remain fully anonymous. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

Please find attached data protection information. If you are interested or have any questions, please feel free to respond to this email. I would be happy to provide further details and schedule a time that works for you.

Thank you very much for considering this invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

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Research project outline:

Linguistic diversity changes over time due to various factors. Power dynamics influence the value of individual languages and lead to language shift (Sallabank, 2024). Languages are globally endangered and at risk of being lost. According to Simons (2019), a language disappears on average every 40 days. This global trend is reflected in Canada, more than two-thirds of Indigenous languages were classified as endangered or extinct in 2018. As one of the largest countries in the world, Canada exhibits a rich diversity of languages and serves therefore as geographical research area.

Digitalization has emerged as a contemporary plausible force shaping linguistic diversity. It offers tools for documenting and revitalizing languages but also poses challenges, such as the dominance of major global languages online (Hutson et al., 2024; Borrero, 2016 and Brinklow et al., 2019).

My master's thesis is part of the research project "*Disentangling effects of digitization on linguistic diversity* "(DigiLingDiv) at the University of Vienna. In my master's thesis, I specifically examine how Canada's linguistic diversity has changed over the past 30 years and how these changes relate to digitalization. I combine quantitative and qualitative analytical methods.

A diachronic analysis of language data from Ethnologue for Canada will serve as the foundation of my study. I will measure and analyze Canada's linguistic diversity using metrics borrowed from the biodiversity research such as language richness, language evenness, the Index of Linguistic Diversity and Shannon's entropy (Harmon & Loh, 2010; Grin & Fürst, 2022).

For the complementary qualitative analysis, relying on the interviews, I want to investigate how the linguistic diversity found in the quantitative analysis manifests in reality and what role digitalization plays in language use.