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Author(s):	Eva Vetter (UNIVIE) Katharina Strasser (UNIVIE)
Contributor(s):	Stefanie Cajka (UNIVIE) Gisela Hagmair, Violeta Heinze, Marie Sauer (M&S) Maarja Veisson (UT) Julia Sallabank, Kingsley Ugwuanyi (SOAS) Eva Eppler (RU) Yash Shekhawat, Maika Casali (ESPRONCEDA) Jenny Browne (YEN)
Reviewer(s):	Julia Sallabank (SOAS) Kingsley Ugwuanyi (SOAS)
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Executive Summary

This report is concerned with good practice strategies in language revitalisation as identified within RISE UP. It builds on previous work, the collection of resources [1] and the quality criteria for revitalisation resources [2]. Resources are defined as practices, activities, tools and methods that elicit the engagement with minoritised languages and varieties [1]. The collection is listed on the RISE UP website (<https://www.riseupproject.eu/resources/>) and regularly updated by the communities. To evaluate the resources, quality criteria were developed, named “The Six A’s for Language Safeguarding and Revitalisation Resources” [2].

The present report brings the theoretical concepts identified in this previous work together and presents a coherent theoretical framework, the “Resource-Based Model for Revitalisation” to display how resources operate within and potentially shape minoritised language ecologies. In this background good practice strategies are considered as a purposeful combination of resources and hence as possible powerful drivers for revitalisation. This theoretical background together with ethnographic research and a review of current language revitalisation strategies beyond the RISE UP communities enabled the identification of concrete good practice strategies in revitalisation.

One of the report’s main contributions is the articulation of three good practice strategies. These strategies are part of the RISE UP Digital Toolkit and show strong potential to create opportunities for language use and learning. The three strategies – “Linguistic Risk-Taking”, “Mentoring Programme”, and “Language Village” – are described in terms of their origin, adaptation to different contexts, and integration into the RISE UP Digital Toolkit. Finally, they are evaluated against the quality criteria named “The Six A’s”. Although they are digitally supported, their main goal is to strengthen the use of a minoritised language or variety as part of social practice among people.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

Term	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
D	Deliverable
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
LRT	Linguistic Risk-Taking
LUI	Language Usage Index
UNIVIE	University of Vienna

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This paper reports on good-practice strategies for language revitalisation. It builds on prior work in the RISE UP project, including the collection of existing resources in the five RISE UP case-study communities and beyond [1], as well as the definition of quality criteria for practices, activities, and tools, referred to as “The Six A’s for Language Safeguarding and Revitalisation Resources” [2]. The paper also draws on survey data from the RISE UP questionnaire¹, ethnographic data from fieldwork conducted during the project period (2023-2026), and a literature review of revitalisation practices in selected minoritised language communities beyond the RISE UP project. Together with the resource collection and the quality criteria, these data form the basis for identifying and developing good-practice strategies in revitalisation.

The paper takes up the individual theoretical strands from the previous work. The key concepts of language ecology, resource, new speaker, language use/learning are linked together to build a coherent theoretical framework, referred to as “The Resource-Based Model for Revitalisation”. Its aim is to show how resources operate within language ecologies and to model how they can become drivers for revitalisation. In addition to the theoretical framework, the research has led to further ideas for academic work in the field of minoritised languages and varieties. These ideas are primarily of methodological relevance and presented in the form of principles for research.

The identification of good practice strategies is grounded in these principles and the theoretical framework, with community perspectives included throughout. Relevant further insights come from the results of the questionnaire, a literature review on minoritised language environments beyond the five RISE UP communities and ethnographic data from the Burgenland Croatian context. These sources support the definition of good practice and highlight potential limitations of certain strategies. An additional topic emerged here that could not be overlooked, although it was not part of the original plan: the functioning of Generative AI and its relevance for creating resources and developing strategies. The Guidelines for discussing minoritised languages in relation to AI attempt to capture the widely diverging opinions of communities on this topic and to create a solid basis for decision-making (see also “Guidelines for discussing Generative AI for minoritised languages²”).

A main research outcome is the presentation of three good practice strategies, „Linguistic Risk-Taking“, „Mentoring Programme“ and the “Language Village“. All strategies are digitally supported because they are part of the RISE UP Digital Toolkit. However, their main goal is to strengthen the use of a minority language or variety as part of social practice among people. The three strategies are analysed with respect to their conceptualisation, origin, deployment and relevance for the case study communities. The evaluation against the Six A’s for revitalisation is intended to improve understanding of the requirements and considerations involved when implementing these strategies.

¹ For RISE UP survey data see: <https://zenodo.org/records/18324451> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

² <https://www.riseupproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/RISE-UP-Guidelines-for-discussing-Generative-AI-for-minoritised-languages.pdf> (retrieved on January 29, 2026).

1.2 Relation to other tasks and deliverables

This deliverable is related to the following other RISE UP tasks and deliverables:

Receives inputs from:

Table 1. D4.3 Input from other tasks and deliverables

Deliverable	Due Date	Input for D4.3
D3.1	31.01.2025	Description of a European language preservation Ecosystem
D3.2	31.11.2025	Guidelines for language revitalisation
D4.1	31.01.2024	Collection of practices, activities and tools that promote minority languages
D4.2	30.04.2024	Definition of quality criteria for practices, activities and tools
D5.1	31.01.2024	Description of pilot case studies: preconditions, main stakeholder groups, special requirements, suggested methods
D6.1	31.01.2024	User engagement and gamification concept in the domain of endangered languages
D6.2	31.01.2025	Requirements, Architecture Concept, UI/UX Design of RISE UP digital toolset

Provides outputs to:

Table 2. D4.3 Output for other tasks and deliverables

Deliverable	Due Date	Output from D4.3
D2.2	31.12.2025	Report on need for further research
D3.2	31.11.2025	Guidelines for language revitalisation
D5.2	30.09.2025	Involvement of local cultural & creative sector: possible strategies and experiences
D5.3	31.01.2026	Evaluation report of methods being used
D6.3	31.01.2026	Documentation of RISE UP digital toolset

1.3 Structure of the deliverable

This report begins with a consideration of the theoretical and methodological background of the present work (Chapter 2). In a first step (Chapter 2.1), the most important theoretical and practical findings of the two previous reports ([1], [2]) are summarised, namely the collection of existing resources in the five RISE UP case study communities and beyond [1] and the definition of quality criteria for practices, activities and instruments referred to as “Six A’s for Language Safeguarding and

Revitalisation Resources” [2]. The key concepts underlying this work are then brought together in a coherent theoretical framework (Chapter 2.2.): A brief introduction to the most important theoretical components (Chapter 2.2.1) is followed by a presentation of a “Resource-based Model for Revitalisation” (Chapter 2.2.2) and research principles (Chapter 2.2.3).

The third chapter is devoted to identifying strategies for good practice in language revitalisation. The first step is a reflective discussion of what “good practice” might mean on a more theoretical level (Chapter 3.1). This is followed by the identification of challenges and limitations based on an international perspective that goes beyond the five case study communities (Chapter 3.2). Finally, the voices of the communities are included based on the survey results and ethnographic data (Chapter 3.3).

The fourth chapter focuses on identifying and developing three strategies to support language learning and use. As all strategies are part of the RISE UP Digital Toolkit, the chapter begins with a brief introduction to the Toolkit and its role in language learning (Chapter 4.1). It then presents the three strategies of “Linguistic Risk-Taking”, “Mentoring Programme” and “Language Village” (Chapter 4.2) and analyses them in terms of their theoretical background, adaptation to the specific context, implementation and evaluation according to the Six A's.

2 Background

2.1 Summarising previous work

During the first phase of RISE UP work, as represented in [1], existing practices, activities, tools, and methods for the promotion and safeguarding of the five case-study community languages – and beyond – were surveyed. In this context, the concept of a “resource” was developed to denote “practices, activities, tools and methods” that require the use of a minoritised language. Here, “use” refers to all forms of engagement with language; hence the notion of “linguaging” appears in Figure 1 (Chapter 2.2.1). The main result of this first phase is a collection of resources for the five case study communities, available at <https://www.riseupproject.eu/resources/>. All resources are categorised, analysed and compared in terms of availability. The subsequent classification alongside a micro-meso-macro scale indicates each resource’s level of impact (see [1]).

During this period of sustained engagement with available resources, ongoing exchanges with community members and researchers, together with initial results from the RISE UP survey, prompted a systematic examination of what constitutes a “good” resource for language revitalisation and safeguarding. This inquiry links with the objective of the second research phase.

The second phase of RISE UP work focused on the “Evaluation of Identified Practices.” Its report introduced six quality criteria – “The Six A’s for Language Safeguarding and Revitalisation Resources” – as a step toward evaluating resources: Availability, Accessibility, Advertisement, Actuality, Acceptance, and Activation.

- Specifically, *Availability* concerns a resource’s existence, sufficiency, and adequacy, meaning it should address the interests and needs of diverse groups.
- *Accessibility* requires that resources be physically and/or digitally reachable.
- *Advertisement* highlights the need for effective promotion within the community to ensure awareness and use.
- *Actuality* emphasises keeping resources up to date in terms of content, technology, and design.
- *Acceptance* refers to a resource’s standing within the relevant community, which is closely tied to prevailing language ideologies.
- Finally, *Activation* requires that a resource elicits engagement – creating needs, desires, or affordances that prompt users to interact with it (see [2]).

To summarise, according to these criteria, resources should be available, accessible, advertised, up to date, accepted, and activating in order to elicit language users’ engagement and contribute to revitalisation. Achieving these is challenging given constraints typical of minoritised language work, including limited funding and staffing. The “Six A’s for Language Safeguarding and Revitalisation Resources” were discussed with community members and researchers and received considerable interest and support. Beyond serving as an evaluation framework, the Six A’s have also laid the groundwork for identifying gaps and highlighting good practice strategies in language revitalisation – concerns that guide the third phase of RISE UP work, presented below.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This chapter elaborates on the theoretical foundation underpinning the work on good practice strategies in language revitalisation. The stocktaking of already existing resources reported in [1] as well as the definition of quality criteria for resources in [2] was based on three key concepts: language ecology, new speakers and usage-based language learning. From these, three theoretical orientations for the work on language revitalisation strategies were derived and labelled as follows:

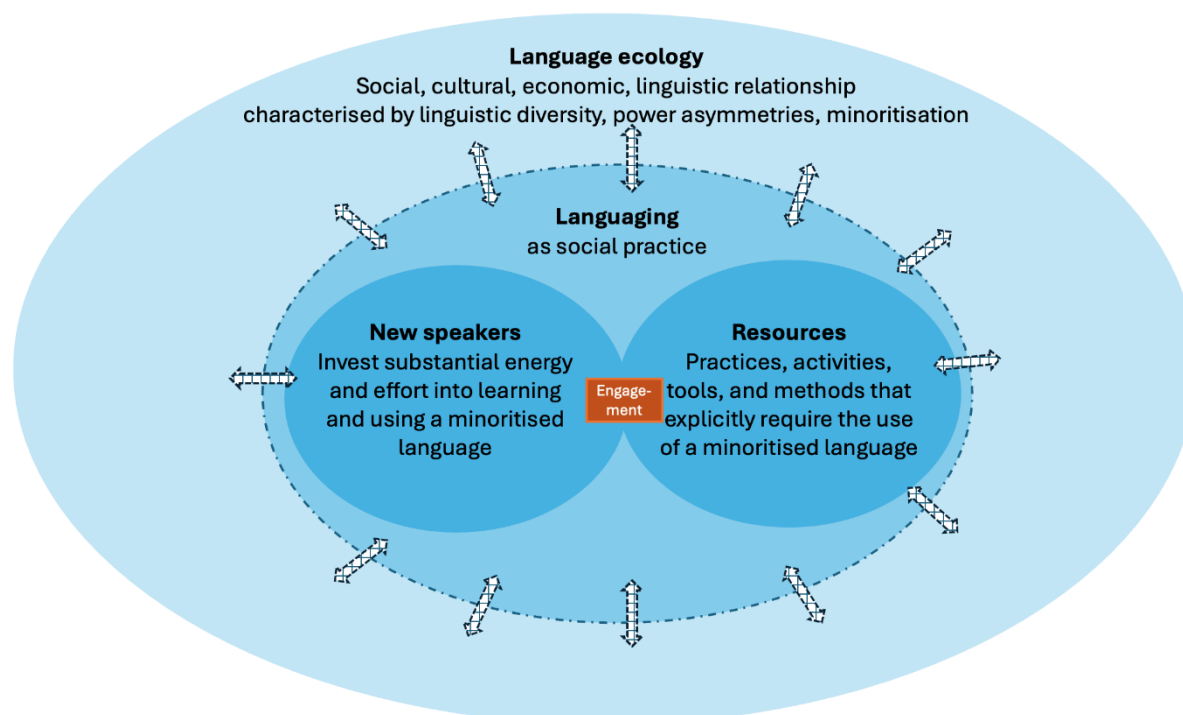
- “The danger of a single solution”, which underscores the uniqueness of the social, cultural and ecological environments in which minoritised languages are used;
- “The power of new speakers”, which signals a departure from understanding revitalisation exclusively in terms of intergenerational transmission; and
- “Use it, don’t lose it”, which highlights the interconnectedness of teaching, learning and using languages and varieties.

These three concepts remain the backbone of the theoretical framework, which has been broadened and further refined since. The key concepts were linked to one another and to the overarching concept of resources. From that, a model of revitalisation (Chapter 2.2.1) is built around an understanding of resources as “practices, activities, tools, and methods [...] that require the use of a minoritised language” [1, pp. 15]. Moreover, research principles emerged through reflexive engagement with research practice (Chapter 2.2.2).

2.2.1 A Resource-Based Model of Revitalisation

The focus on resources – in terms of practices, activities, tools, and methods that explicitly require minoritised language use – rests on the assumption that such resources play a crucial role in revitalisation. An ecological approach views languages in relation to their environments and to one another, emphasising that speaker-language relations are embedded in their full historical and contemporary ecologies [3], [4]. Given that languages and varieties coexist and interact, creating one another’s ecological context, they cannot be studied in isolation. Mühlhäusler [5] emphasises the structural diversity of language ecologies reiterating that “language is connected to the world”, i.e. embedded in cultural, economic and social environments. Therefore, revitalisation is concerned with an ecology that sustains linguistic diversity by creating and maintaining conditions that enable minoritised language use [6]. Resources help create these conditions by opening spaces and opportunities for use.

On a more practical level, it is assumed that revitalisation necessarily includes both bottom-up engagement and top-down strategies. In this sense, community perspectives such as agency, historical justice and others combine with political measures to increase the number of speakers and to expand domains of use. In line with [5, pp. 12], this understanding of revitalisation also encompasses main aspects of reclamation as defined by Leonard [8], [9]. To illustrate how resources operate for revitalisation in an ecological framework, Figure 1 links the theoretical key concepts to one another and shows their interdependencies.



In the context of revitalisation, resources arise within – and are shaped by – language ecologies characterised by highly asymmetric social, cultural, economic and linguistic relations, including power asymmetries that privilege the use of certain languages at the expense of others. Resources relevant to revitalisation require the use of a minoritised language or variety. They create opportunities for minoritised language use.

In the context of revitalisation, the so-called new speakers are an interesting group of language users. Within the RISE UP framework, they are defined broadly as individuals who invest significant energy and effort into learning and using a minoritised language, including partially competent traditional members, newcomers, and other community members [2, pp. 12]. New speakers are recognised as key drivers of revitalisation, particularly where intergenerational transmission is limited. This conceptualisation of new speakers breaks down the widely questioned dichotomy between traditional and new speakers, acknowledging the complexity of new speaker profiles [10] as well as their legitimacy.

The new speakers' engagement with a resource may range from drawing on fragments of languages or varieties and formulaic use (such as greetings in emails) to everyday practice in various domains, academic work included. It is best considered in terms of "languageing" to highlight the diversity of communicative actions performed in the respective language ecology. Another aspect is that language use in different contexts and domains and language learning are closely interrelated [3], [4] and connect with social participation [5]. And finally, language use feeds back to the ecology, informs and possibly transforms it, fostering sustainable connections between languages and the world.

The model is intended to visualise the working of resources. Resources are treated as opportunities for language use, particularly for new speakers. From a usage-based approach, language use is closely connected to language learning and vice versa. When such resources prompt new speakers to engage with a minoritised language or variety, they support the learning-use nexus central to revitalisation. By fostering engagement across different, digital, and analogous contexts, resources enhance social participation and make the language more visible in public and online spheres. Over time, this

resource-based engagement with a minoritised language or variety can help reconfigure the local ecology in which the language is embedded. Power asymmetries transform.

The schematic visualisation in Figure 1 highlights the interconnectedness and complexity of the components. For example, each resource feeds back into the linguistic ecology even when it does not elicit user engagement. In this case, however, its contribution to revitalisation is difficult to specify. For this reason, the engagement of language users is crucial in order to make a minoritised language audible and visible, transform power asymmetries and support revitalisation.

Beyond visualising the resource-based dynamics of revitalisation, a further, less explicit but nonetheless influential implication of the theoretical framework emerges: Viewing resources as embedded within specific ecologies limits their transferability. Resources arising from within ecologies are defined by particular power relations and may not elicit engagement in the same way in different contexts. Consequently, the dynamics of revitalisation can vary substantially across ecologies. These considerations call for careful, reflexive awareness when transferring resources from one ecology to another.

2.2.2 Research principles: collaboration, clarification and respect

Doing research in minoritised environments requires paying particular attention to the social, political and cultural power asymmetries, as well as the vulnerability of community members. A collaborative approach is helpful in this respect and shifts the focus from research *on* communities to research *with* community members [11]. This is a prerequisite for taking the community needs seriously and for the reciprocal exchange of expertise between researchers and community members. Following Leonard & Haynes' [12] model of "truly collaborative fieldwork", the boundaries between the research partners blur and fall away. The collaborative design of research agenda, aim and methods entails a degree of unpredictability but can also yield a result that was unforeseen at the inception of the project. Most importantly, long-term and sustainable contacts between researchers and communities need to be established.

A collaborative frame provides an appropriate basis for addressing language ideological questions. Ideological clarification is widely regarded as essential for sustainable revitalisation. Kroskrity [13] defines "language ideological clarification" as a process, in which questions, emotions and beliefs that could hinder revitalisation are identified and examined. Potential obstacles may arise both within the community and from outside it and should be thoroughly discussed. Clarification concerns key questions such as "What is the aim of the revitalisation?", "Which varieties should be promoted?" or "Who counts as a legitimate speaker of the language and why?" (see also [7]).

Another principle closely related to collaboration is mutual respect. The "Guidelines for linguists and other researchers working with minoritised language communities"³ listed on the RISE UP website, which are based on Leonard & Haynes [12] and "A Linguist's Code of Conduct: Guidelines for Engaging in Linguistic Work with Indigenous Peoples" formulated by Belew & Holmes [14]. "Say it with Respect: A Journalist's Guide" [15] may also serve as an accessible and practical guide for field research.

3 <https://www.riseupproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/RISE-UP-Guidelines-1.0.pdf> (retrieved May 6, 2026)

Although elaborated for journalistic work, it offers useful ideas for establishing a respectful relationship between researchers and community. To sum up, collaboration, mutual respect and ideological clarification have emerged as the main practical principles of our research and can be considered the methodological backbone of the work.

3 Definition and challenges of good practice strategies

3.1 Defining “good practice”

“Good practice” is a widely used label across contexts; however, the criteria that distinguish a “good” practice from a weaker one or from a “best practice” are not always explicit. The present account of good practice in language revitalisation is grounded in the theoretical framework outlined above (Chapter 2) and the evaluation criteria for resources [2]. It is further informed by the RISE UP principles, relevant scholarly work, and findings from research conducted within RISE UP: The survey captures the voices of members from the five RISE UP communities by identifying community needs. Ethnographic fieldwork – particularly sustained engagement with members of the Burgenland Croatian community – has deepened understanding of how to adapt strategies to heterogeneous expectations and conditions.

Within the resource-based framework for revitalisation, “good practice” refers to strategies that initiate or support the described dynamics of active engagement with the respective minoritised language to transforming the ecology back to broadening opportunities for use and so on. Good practice strategies rely on one or more resources and combine them in a targeted manner. In this abstract sense, a good practice strategy in language revitalisation creates social practice which – in the sense of the reinforcing dynamics – feeds and transforms the ecology. While resources represent the material basis, a strategy can combine several resources. Resources exist, can be counted and represented, and strategies are pursued. Therefore, strategies can best be described as a process.

Community involvement is essential to this process. Revitalisation strategies should be co-developed with community expertise and participation. Their legitimacy and effectiveness depend on community acceptance and support.

Another consideration concerns the target group. Revitalisation can foster empowerment, increase motivation to learn and use the minoritised language, strengthen identity, and support community well-being. To reflect community diversity, inclusivity is therefore a key criterion of good practice.

Finally, good practice also concerns the language itself. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it seeks to expand opportunities and domains of use, thereby strengthening status and prestige by positioning the language as fully usable across contexts, including digital ones. From a system-oriented perspective, revitalisation benefits from building open, well-annotated corpora aligned with contemporary communicative needs.

Sustainability is another important principle. Sustainability encompasses the ongoing availability of engaging resources, long-term relationships among key actors, and the maintenance of ecologies that offer safe spaces for communicative practice.

If good practice is defined in terms of community engagement, inclusivity, language planning (status, prestige, corpus), and sustainability, it is not enough to count the numbers of speakers and domains of use. Although increasing the number of users and expanding domains of use is a legitimate, partly measurable long-term goal of revitalisation, it is not suitable for assessing the process itself. Evaluation should instead foreground the processual features noted above and identify strategies based on community involvement, inclusivity, and sustainability, complemented by the Six A's for resource evaluation.

3.2 Challenges of strategies regarding digital & offline spheres

In ethnographic research, scholars encounter a wide range of revitalisation strategies. Many of them appear promising, although it is difficult to predict how successful they prove to be over time. Highly visible initiatives – such as language races (e.g., “Korrika” in the Basque Country⁴; “Ar Redadeg” in Brittany⁵) – are heavily promoted and difficult to overlook. Others are quieter but not necessarily less effective, including language cafés and informal meetups advertised online (e.g. “Trouver une rencontre”⁶ for Breton learners, discussion groups for Occitan (“Parladissas”⁷) and Catalan⁸ and “Yeth an Werin”⁹ in Cornwall). Some are online, such as the website “ARBRES” for Breton¹⁰, while others are based on human encounters. Very similar formats are emerging, which can be attributed to networking and mutual support between minoritised communities. Successful projects are also being transferred, such as the “1000 Families’ project”¹¹ which aims to revive the intergenerational transmission of Breton based on the Māori example. Outcomes are always, to some extent, unpredictable, though this risk can be mitigated through careful, holistic monitoring of the process and the thorough consideration of the ecologies.

Among the identified strategies, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has emerged as a contentious issue. It presents both a significant risk and a potential opportunity for revitalisation, and positions within and across communities range from techno-optimistic (“GenAI will save our language”) to outright rejection (“Call for Cornish language orgs to reject GenAI - Pysi orth kowethyansow Kernewek a dhenagha SKDin”¹²). Scholarly consensus holds that GenAI will not, by itself, save or revitalise languages; human agency and community action remain pivotal. When grounded in collaborative partnerships, a commitment to FAIR data principles (“Findable”, “Accessible”, “Interoperable” and “Reusable”), and a community-centred approach, GenAI can serve as a powerful resource for creating opportunities to use and learn the language. Conversely, opting

⁴ <https://www.korrika.eus/en/homepage> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

⁵ <https://www.ar-redadeg.bzh/?lang=en> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

⁶ <https://www.bev.bzh/br/trouver-une-rencontre> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

⁷ <https://mediatheque.moissac.fr/node/content/nid/453339> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

⁸ <https://www.cal.cat/projecte/xerrem/> (retrieved May 6, 2026)

⁹ <https://www.cornwallheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Klew-34-Q1-2022.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

¹⁰ <https://arbres.iker.cnrs.fr/> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

¹¹ <https://1000familh.bzh> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

¹² <https://openletter.earth/call-for-cornish-language-orgs-to-reject-genai-pysi-orth-kowethyansow-kernekek-a-dhenagha-skdin-6f1d4850> (retrieved January 29, 2025)

out of GenAI-enabled developments risks deeper exclusion from a fast-evolving digital domain that has rapidly reshaped communicative practice in recent years.

The “digital divide” is a matter of concern: A survival guide for minoritised languages – treated as low-resource in GenAI contexts – highlights equity concerns in access to data, tools, and infrastructure [16]. Policy discussions similarly emphasise digital language planning to prevent further marginalisation and to ensure usability and appeal in digital environments. Within RISE UP, the Guidelines for discussing GenAI in minoritised language contexts are designed to inform debate rather than pre-empt decisions. Ultimately, whether and how GenAI should be used in revitalisation is a sensitive choice that ought to rest with the language community, consistent with bottom-up, community-led approaches to language work.

3.3 Community perspectives as components of ecologies

While identified good practice strategies in language revitalisation and safeguarding provide valuable insights into effective community-driven, educational and/ or institutional endeavours, they cannot be implemented in the same way across all language communities. Community perspectives are a crucial component of the ecology, and it can be assumed that they have an influence on the success of revitalisation.

The RISE UP survey provides insight into how members of the community view the future of the minoritised language. The answers to question 65 (“What do you think will be the future of language X?”), were coded into the five categories [17] optimistic, somewhat optimistic, neutral, somewhat pessimistic, and pessimistic (see Table 3).

Table 3. Categories of future assessment in question 65 (“What do you think will be the future of language X?”) of RISE UP questionnaire

Category	Definition	Examples
optimistic	exclusively optimistic, no restrictions	„The language will continue to grow“
somewhat optimistic	optimistic assessment with restrictions/conditions „if XY“, „in case of XY“	„It will be good if XY happens“
neutral	no clear positive/negative trend	“I don’t know“
somewhat pessimistic	pessimistic assessment with restrictions optimistic and pessimistic forecasts, with focus on pessimistic	„If XY doesn’t happen, it will be bad“
pessimistic	exclusively pessimistic, no restrictions	„The language will die out“

Furthermore, four items indicating language use were analysed. Item means were used to calculate a Language Usage Index (LUI), see Figure 2:

- Question 6 (self-assessed language competence),
- Question 7 (language use with different interlocutors),
- Question 12 (language use across domains), and
- Question 44 (consumption of music in the minoritised language).

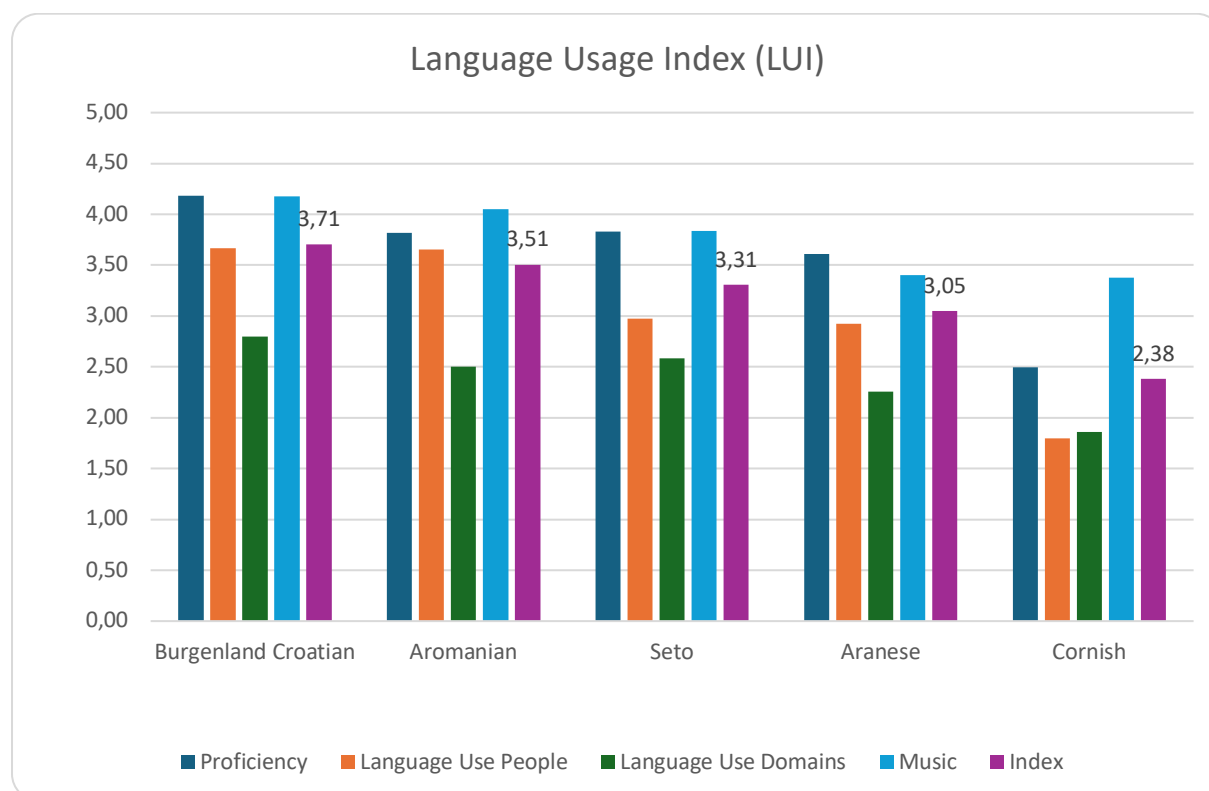


Figure 2. Language Usage Index (LUI) for RISE UP case-study communities

The results show that respondents in the Cornish community were the most optimistic about the language's future: 25% reported being "optimistic" and 43% "somewhat optimistic." This community also had the smallest share of pessimistic assessments (8% "pessimistic," 11% "somewhat pessimistic"). Notably, however, the Cornish community recorded the lowest Language Usage Index (LUI = 2.37 on a 1-5 scale).

For the Cornish community, several contextual factors may be relevant. Firstly, respondent motivation may be higher due to the historical extinction of the language, with all current speakers having acquired Cornish as a second language. However, this interpretation carries limited weight, as the sample likely overrepresents highly motivated and active community members in all communities. Secondly, despite high motivation, a low LUI may persist due to the very small speaker base (in the 2011 UK Census, 557 declared Cornish their "main language" [18]), which limits the number of domains and opportunities for language use. The high optimism might also be related to the growing recognition of Cornish in the UK and the EU legal frameworks.

Conversely, the Burgenland Croatian language community, who recorded the highest Language Usage Index LUI = 3.68 reported the least optimistic (3% "optimistic" & 10% "somewhat optimistic") and most pessimistic outlook on the future of the language (37% "pessimistic" & 20% "somewhat pessimistic"). The Burgenland Croatian respondents have the highest self-assessed language proficiency, the highest

language use with various people and domains and the highest score on the question of music consumption.

We can't explain the pessimistic outlook on the future in the Burgenland Croatian community, the largest (unofficial numbers estimated of around 50 000) [19] and most active language use among the RISE UP communities. In the ethnographic interviews conducted with 13 Burgenland Croatian speakers, the surprise at the results was great, discussing the following factors:

Respondents noted a pronounced decline in Burgenland Croatian proficiency, particularly among children. The limited digital presence, especially on social media, was highlighted as a recurrent concern. Increasing out-migration from the autochthonous areas was discussed as speakers leave the language ecology and use the language less frequently. One participant described a collective dynamic in which pessimism is "socially contagious", suggesting that such narratives should be actively countered. Another participant attributed pessimistic attitudes to a stereotypical feature of Austrian culture, namely the persistent complaining.

Aromanian reported the second-highest Language Usage Index LUI = 3.49 and nearly half of the respondents see the future "pessimistic" (30%) or "somewhat pessimistic" (17%). Roughly a quarter assessed the future of Aromanian "optimistic" (13%) or "somewhat optimistic" (13%). One can criticise that the summarisation of the Aromanian language community as one community, given that the respondents live territorially scattered in at least six different countries in various language islands with very differing circumstances and realities.

Aranese respondents showed significant variation in their assessments of the language's future. 35% reported being "pessimistic", 25% "somewhat pessimistic", 15% "optimistic" (the second-highest proportion across communities, after the Cornish community) and 15% "somewhat optimistic". Further analysis of additional questionnaire items would be valuable in identifying factors associated with these response patterns. The community recorded the second-lowest Language Usage Index at LUI = 3.03. Due to project-internal constraints, only $n = 20$ individuals completed the Aranese survey, which limits the representativeness of the findings relative to the size of the broader community. Given that the Aranese community comprises approximately 2,600 L1 and 2,100 L2-speakers (Conselh Generau d'Aran 2001), a next step would be to ask whether the "split" in future assessment is associated with speaker profile.

The results of the Seto questionnaire report a variation too: 16% reported being "optimistic" and 11% "somewhat optimistic", whereas 21% reported being "pessimistic" and 10% "somewhat pessimistic". The Seto respondents recorded LUI = 3.28, which lies in the middle of all communities.

A high percentage of questionnaire participants did not give an answer to question 65 ("What do you think will be the future of language X?"): Aranese = 5%, Aromanian = 18%, Burgenland Croatian = 26%, Cornish = 9%, Seto = 30%. A likely explanation is the combined effect of questionnaire length and question type: question 65 was a qualitative, open-ended question.

The available data indicates that a more optimistic outlook on the language's future is therefore not associated with a higher Language Usage Index (LUI): no positive association between future optimism and LUI was observed. A notable limitation of the survey is the significant variation in sample sizes across communities: Aranese ($n = 20$), Aromanian ($n = 267$), Burgenland Croatian ($n = 121$), Cornish ($n = 53$), and Seto ($n = 67$)¹³. Such discrepancies may impact the comparability of results across groups.

¹³ The number of Aromanian/Vlach responses to the questionnaire differs from the number reported in later research and publications by 18. Due to a procedural mistake, Aromanian/Vlach files which included responses

From both a sociolinguistic perspective and a resource-based framework, attitudes and ideologies are integral to the language ecology. Pessimism can dampen users' engagement with resources and thereby constrain revitalisation, whereas socially contagious optimism may have the opposite effect. Accordingly, community assumptions about a language's future constitute valuable information for revitalisation planning.

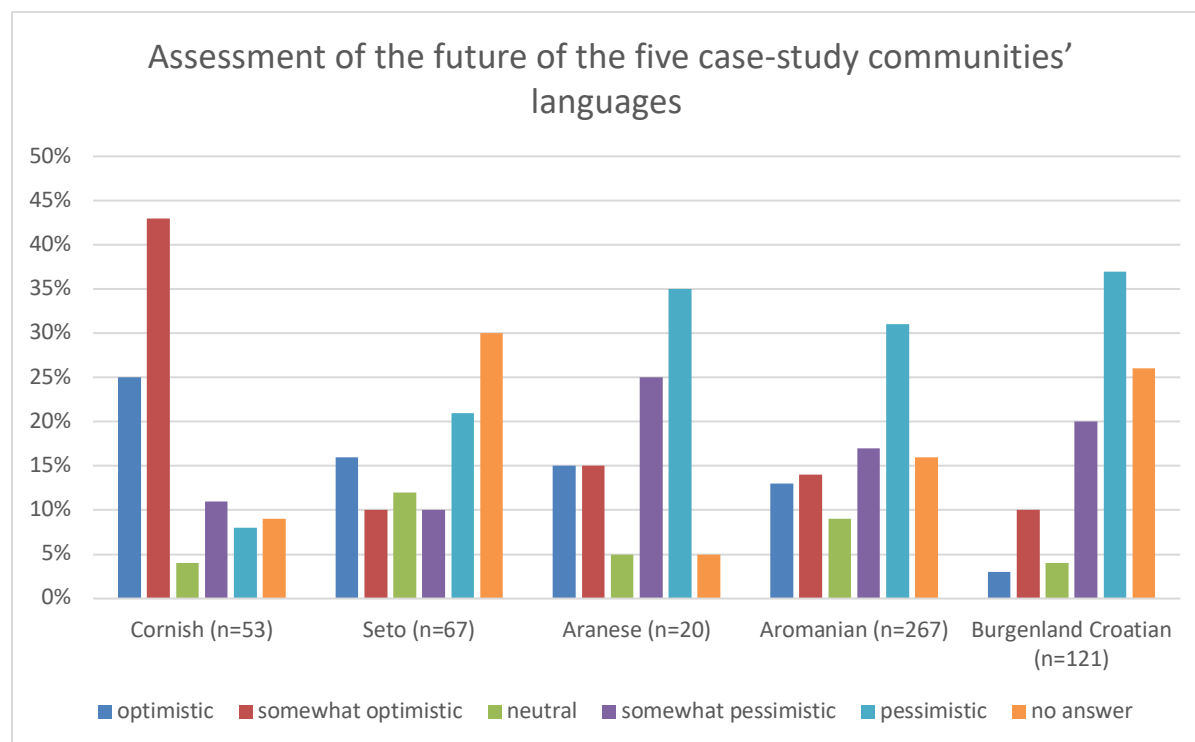


Figure 3. Future assessment of case study communities' languages

in Aromanian/Vlach were conflated with those which did not. This led to an accidental omission of 18 Aromanian/Vlach responses, which has since been noticed and rectified.

4 Good practice strategies

4.1 The Digital Toolkit

4.1.1 Overview

Looking at the collected resources as well as the RISE UP survey, all case-study communities report an underrepresentation of their language in the digital sphere: In the Aranese questionnaire 70% of the respondents identified digital services as an area where resources in Aranese are lacking most. In the Aromanian questionnaire 65,2%, in the Cornish questionnaire 50,9%, in the Burgenland Croatian one 35,4% and in the Seto questionnaire 26,9% of the respondents reported a lack of digital services (see Figure 4). In response, RISE UP developed a Digital Toolkit that offers services in the community languages. The survey results in Figure 4 underscore the demand for this provision.

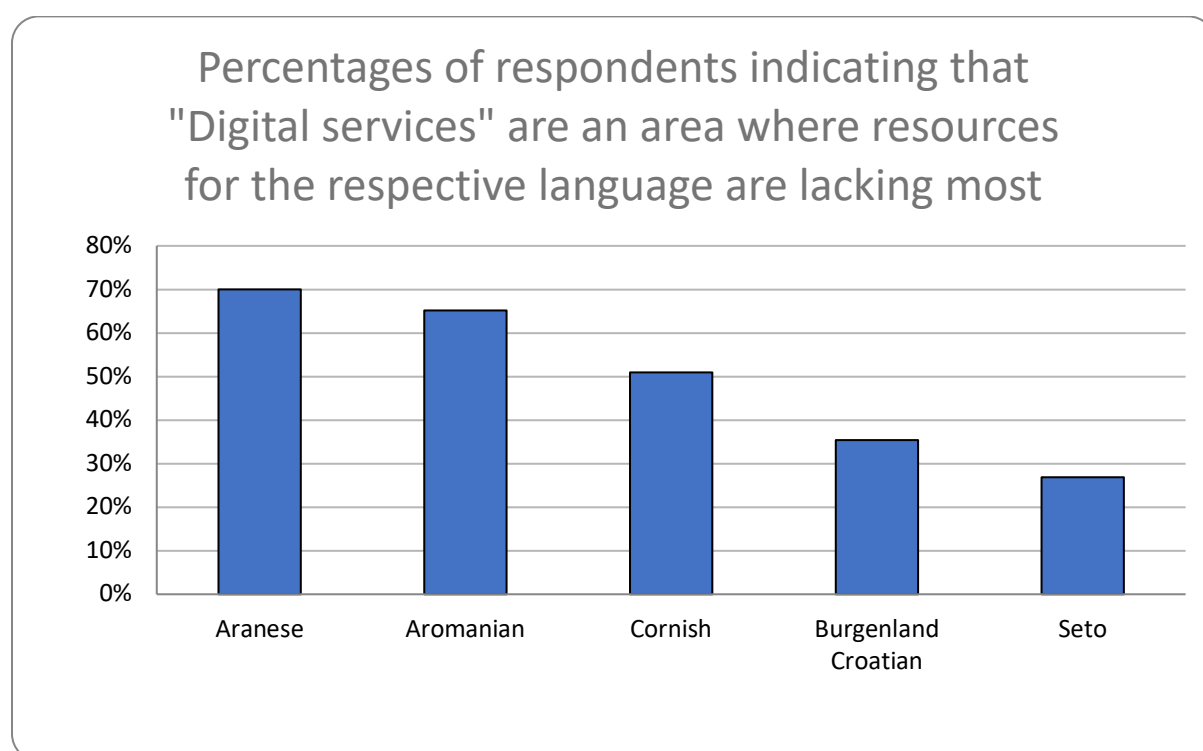


Figure 4. Lack of digital services in all five RISE UP communities

Grounded in the resource-based framework for revitalisation and research findings (fieldwork, interviews, RISE UP survey and literature review), three strategies were identified as good practice against the evaluation criteria: (1) an adapted Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative, (2) a Mentoring Programme, and (3) an adapted Icelandic Village model. All three are implemented in the Digital Toolkit. There is no single strategy that works for all five case-study communities [20], and this also applies to the Digital Toolkit.

- The Aranese, Aromanian and Cornish community have already existing language learning applications (see <https://www.riseupproject.eu/resources/?categories=5&paged=3>). Despite this, the Aromanian and Cornish communities wanted to be included in the Language Learning Section of the Digital Toolkit, while Aranese does not require one.

- The Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative necessitates adaptation to the specific language ecological context of the community in which it is employed.
- The adaptation of “The Icelandic Village” requires in-depth ethnographic research beforehand, which was only possible for the Burgenland Croatian community due to its geographical proximity to the research team. Moreover, the Burgenland Croatian community was the only community to report a demand for “informal meetings to talk in Burgenland Croatian”. In the Aranese, Aromanian and Cornish questionnaire, 100% of the respondents answered that “Informal meetings to talk” in the respective language “already exist”. 82% of the respondents in the Seto questionnaire answered that this would be “not at all desirable”.

Adopting an inclusive approach requires paying attention to the diversity of language skills, attitudes, and emotions within the community. The Digital Toolkit creates opportunities to use and learn the language, linking learners with those who can support them or who primarily seek spaces for active use. In this sense, it is designed to foster language learning as “linguistic collective action” [14].

For the Digital Toolkit, a Language Learning Part was developed for all communities except for Aranese. This functions as a basis for the three strategies, Linguistic Risk-Taking, the Mentoring Programme and the Language Village. Linguistic Risk-Taking and the Mentoring Programme is available for all RISE UP communities, whereas the Language Village is only available for Burgenland Croatian. Nevertheless, all five communities have a collaborative Language Map included in the Digital Toolkit, in which places of language learning and use can be entered by users. The RISE UP Digital Toolkit is downloadable in the app store and free of charge.

4.1.2 The Language Learning Part of the RISE UP Digital Toolkit

The Language Learning Part functions as a basis for the three strategies to support language learning and use (see Figure 5). It is aligned with the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (CEFR) [21] and an understanding of language as an accessible everyday practice (“linguaging”). Following a usage-based approach, that focuses on realistic everyday interactions, the Language Learning Part is designed to take the learners up to level A1. The skills reading, writing and listening are trained in the Language Learning Part while the skill of speaking is promoted through the three strategies (see below). For the technical deployment of the Digital Toolkit, see Shekhawat [22].

Each language course contains modules, which form the main chapters and set the topic. Every module contains four lessons that start with a dialogue. The dialogue contains a realistic conversation between two people using vocabulary and grammar relevant to language level A1. Every lesson contains exercises based on the grammar and vocabulary found in the dialogue. The following five exercise types were used: Multiple choice, fill in the gaps, matching, ordering words, ordering phrases, connecting target & base languages.

Language and community experts were recruited to translate and adapt the content into their languages, using relevant grammar and vocabulary. The base language (English) of the Language Learning Part was chosen in consultation with language experts. The base language English makes it suitable for younger learners with diverse first-language backgrounds but potentially less accessible to older generations. Going forward, members of the community are expected to contribute additional content via the Administrative Portal, through which they can add new modules, lessons, and exercises. Given basic language skills, the three strategies outlined in the following chapters will help learners use the language in context.

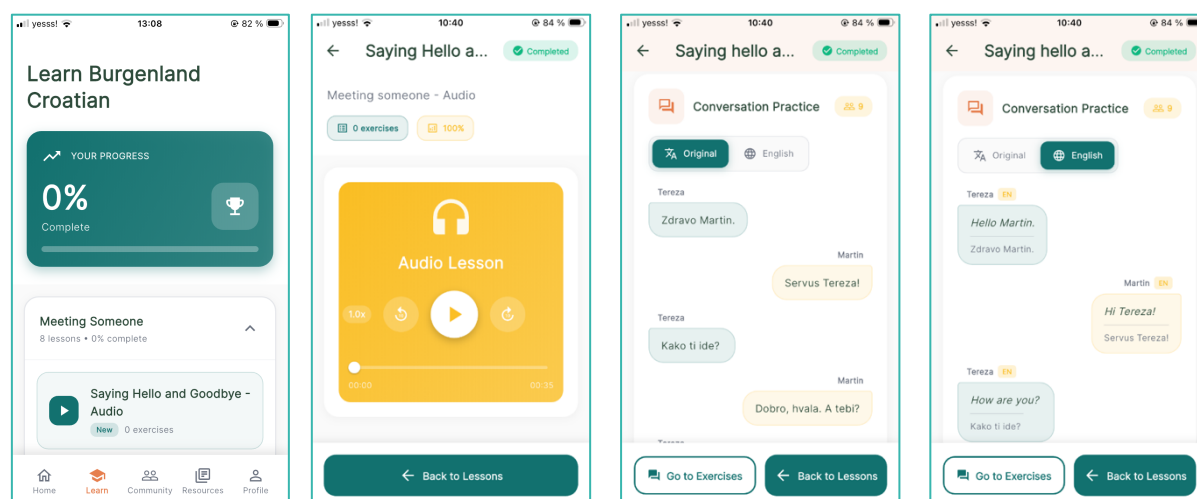


Figure 5. Language Learning Part in RISE UP Digital Toolkit

4.2 Three good practice strategies

4.2.1 Linguistic Risk-Taking

4.2.1.1 Theoretical framework and existing Linguistic Risk-Taking strategies

The Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative was first developed at the University of Ottawa, a bilingual French-English institution in Canada [23], [24], [25]. Its key objective is to motivate students to engage with their bilingual surroundings in order to practice their second official language and to promote social integration into the target language community [15, pp. 259]. Furthermore, highlighting the informal language learning practice outside the classroom is another main goal of the initiative [24].

Linguistic risks are described as “[...] authentic everyday communicative acts that take place outside of the language classroom and involve spontaneous and meaningful second language use” [15, pp. 259]. They include leisure activities like ordering a drink, reading a book or watching a video in the target language. Taking a linguistic risk involves nervousness or anxiety caused by the usage of the target language as well as a feeling of pride or achievement from overcoming the challenging situation [24]. A Linguistic Risk-Taking passport lists risks that can be taken by the users. To give an example, the Canadian passport exists in English and French and lists 89 risks. There is also a linguistic risk-taking app, with some more features like user statistics or progression through different levels [26].

The Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative has been adapted to various language learning settings: MacDonald and Thomson [27] adapted the initiative for students learning English in a Japanese university. Cajka [28], [29] made an adaptation for German learners in the context of an Austrian university. Windisch [30], [31] transferred the concept of the Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative to the setting of a study trip, applying it to German language students from Spain who spent a week in Vienna for cultural activities. At the University of Cologne, Linguistic Risk-Taking has recently become a central focus as well seeking to explore further possibilities for adapting the concept [32], [33]. The Council of Europe transformed

the concept into a multilingual gamified instrument, for which two tools are developed, “The Secret Agent's Handbook of Language Challenges¹⁴” and an app.

Others have adapted it to minoritised language learning and created similar booklets to the Linguistic Risk-Taking passport: For Galego, a booklet called “Retos lingüísticos para estudantes de galego en Galicia¹⁵” was developed. Also, for Occitan, a booklet called “GAUSAR LA LENGA: Initiative de prise de risques linguistiques” (Institut d’Estudis Occitans, n.d.) was devised [33].

This shows that the Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative is also developing into a tool for new speakers of minoritised languages. However, developing a Linguistic Risk-Taking concept for minoritised language contexts requires a variety of aspects to be considered: The selection of appropriate risks and the design of a suitable tool (booklet, app, etc.) is needed in any new context. Moreover, the language ecology of the respective language must be analysed. Before implementation, it is important to analyse where to find enough proficient speakers of the language. In addition, it must be asked whether everyday situations and opportunities where spoken interactions in the respective language can occur, are possible [33].

A sensitive approach is required and the actual risks for using the respective language need to be taken into account. A minoritised language is by definition not the most prestigious language in the respective environment, so potential risks like discrimination and being othered may occur. Attitudes and ideologies towards the respective minoritised language need to be assessed and incorporated in the concept [33].

4.2.1.2 Adaptation and further development of Linguistic Risk-Taking

Minoritised language ecologies are highly asymmetric, and risks may be very real. For that reason, it was decided to change the label of risk into challenge and hence follow the approach adopted by the Council of Europe.

Since personal and spoken interactions can be rare or difficult to organise in minoritised language contexts, the consideration of resources available and listed on the RISE UP website were central. Connecting resources and Linguistic Risk-Taking raises awareness of the already existing resources and familiarizes them with potential users.

The adaptation draws on the available resources of the five case-study communities [1]. Moreover, gaining a deeper understanding of the language ecologies of the respective minoritised language communities was necessary: Ethnographic fieldwork, the RISE UP survey as well as results from Sallabank & Ugwuanyi [4] helped gaining insight.

¹⁴ <https://edl.ecml.at/Portals/33/documents/language-challenge/EDL-language-challenge-handbook-EN.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2026)

¹⁵ https://lehrerinnenbildung.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_lehrerinnenbildung/SLLF/GAL_Probersion.pdf (retrieved January 23, 2026)

4.2.1.3 Implementation of the Linguistic Risk-Taking initiative and inclusion into the Digital Toolkit

The Linguistic Challenges, as the section is called in the Digital Toolkit, are incorporated in the RISE UP Digital Toolkit (see Figure 6). Therefore, at least 15 challenges for every case-study community are listed as a starting point. The challenges were developed by the project partners in RISE UP, who were working closely together with the case-study communities. Users can enter the list and check off the challenges once they are taken. In the community section, users can discuss and share their experiences and suggest new challenges. Ideally the Challenges tracker can be used as a fun and engaging side quest to the language learning section to enhance and promote informal language use in real-life situations and confidence. Tracking and rewarding the users for taking linguistic challenges should motivate them to step out of their comfort zones.

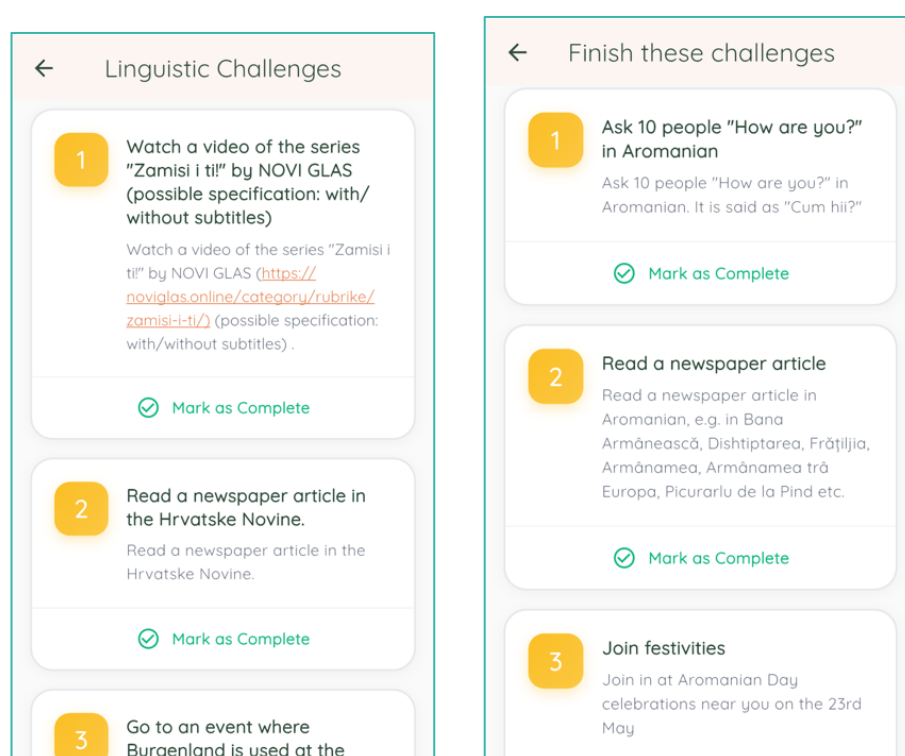


Figure 6. Examples of Linguistic Challenges for Burgenland Croatian and Aromanian in RISE UP Digital Toolkit

4.2.1.4 Evaluation against the Six A's

The Linguistic Challenges were assessed with reference to the quality criteria for language safeguarding and revitalisation resources:

The quality criterion “Availability” concerns the existence, sufficiency and adequacy of resources. The list of linguistic risks is provided in digital form, while the associated challenges are offered either online or in non-digital formats. To ensure sufficiency and adequacy, each language includes at least 15 risks, enabling all learners interested in experimenting with risk-taking to find challenges aligned with their areas of interest with a linkage to already existing resources. Conversely, 15 risks may be quickly exhausted by motivated users. Ideally, users can expand the number of challenges over time. The risks encompass a spectrum from online activities (e.g., watching a video from channel XY) to

offline events, and collectively address all four language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The risks may not be adequate for all age groups.

To ensure accessibility, the challenges are easily accessible within the app. The risks feature is fully accessible in digital form and provides links to relevant online challenges as well as to offline events and locations. However, the app-based format may inadvertently exclude older generations and other groups of people as it presupposes a certain level of digital literacy and technical proficiency. A functioning connectivity to the internet is needed. Moreover, the Digital Toolkit is primarily offered in English across most language versions, which may make it suitable for younger learners with diverse first-language backgrounds but potentially less accessible to older generations. Diaspora users of the app are unfortunately excluded from the on-site challenges, therefore challenges, that can be done online were added.

Through word-of-mouth advocacy, targeted email outreach to stakeholders, and direct communication with language learning institutions, we have promoted both the app and its Linguistic Risk-Taking component. The Toolkit is linked on the RISE UP website, and an informational event online was organised. In addition, young community members, language teachers, and language activists were actively involved in content co-creation. Speakers and learners not very active in community structures might be unaware of the Toolkit.

The “Actuality” criterion requires that the linguistic risks remain updated in terms of content, technical performance, and graphic design. A key challenge is sustainability beyond the project’s duration, particularly given that RISE UP will monitor the app for only five years after project completion. In order to address this issue, language administrators and course creators (defined by RISE UP consortium) can do maintenance work having access to the RISE UP admin portal. Since online sources may become outdated and public venues may close or new spaces open, we hope for community-based monitoring by course creators and language administrators.

The Linguistic Challenges were collected in co-creation and/ or checked with community members to ensure the “Acceptance” quality criterion is satisfied. Furthermore, the RISE UP survey delivered relevant insights in the popularity of resources. Divergent views on what constitutes “right” varieties may discourage participation, as users fear correction or stigma when using the language publicly. Users may hesitate to share experiences or location-specific attempts due to concerns about personal exposure, data security, or unwanted attention.

Through Linguistic Risk-Taking, learners are encouraged to engage actively with language resources available in the communities (quality criterion “Activation”) via gamification and social features in the offline world. RISE UP communities have reported a high proportion of individuals with passive language skills or language-related insecurities. LRT may function as an activation mechanism to address this gap. By participating, learners can discover new resources and opportunities of language use from which they can benefit, thereby strengthening their confidence, and involvement in the language ecology. Fear of speaking or anxiety could potentially hinder.

4.2.2 Mentoring Programme

The RISE UP survey results point to a high demand for mentoring programmes. In response to the question, “In other minoritised language communities, the following offerings exist. How desirable would you find these offerings for *language*?”, mentoring programmes ranked consistently among the top three options in all five case-study communities. Specifically, 80% of respondents to the Aranese questionnaire indicated that “mentoring programmes, in which a proficient speaker interacts with a learner of *language*,” were “extremely desirable.” Corresponding figures were 70% in the Cornish questionnaire, 59% in the Aromanian questionnaire, 57% in the Burgenland Croatian questionnaire, and 55% in the Seto questionnaire (see Figure 7).

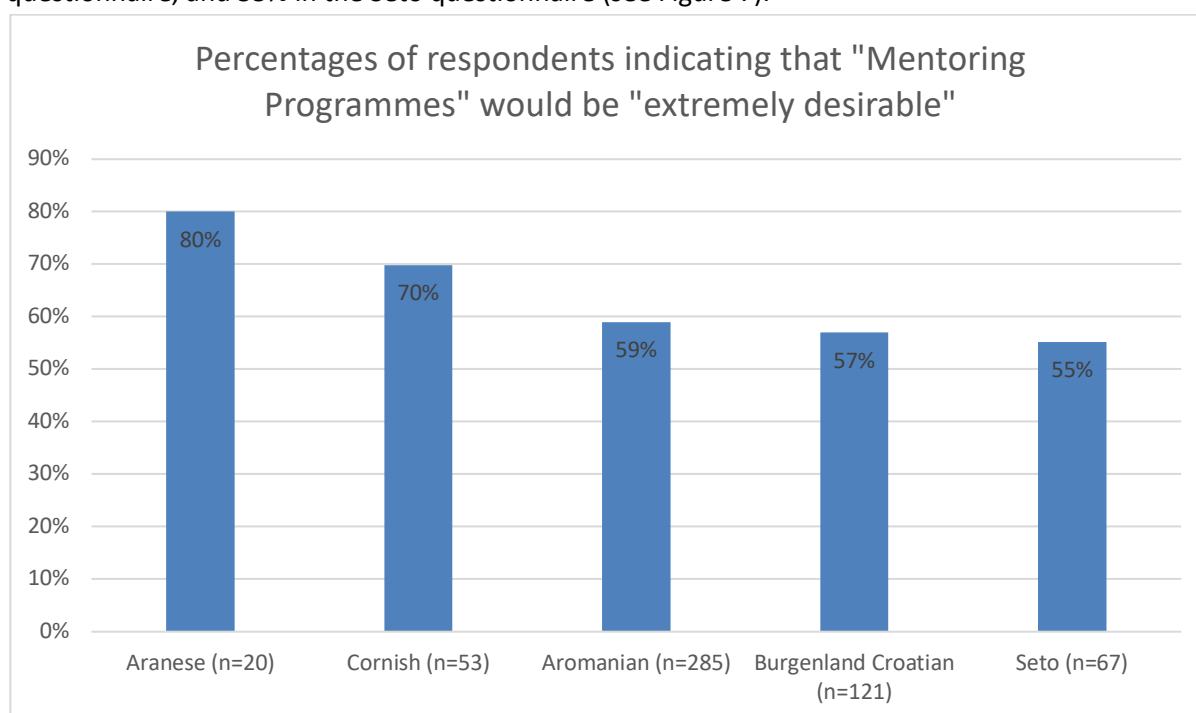


Figure 7. Mentoring Programmes were among the first top three (of five) desired offerings in all five case-study communities

4.2.2.1 Theoretical framework and existing Mentoring Programmes

The concept of mentoring in the context of language revitalisation first appeared in California in 1992, when a group of California Indian language speakers and activists of the Native California Network (NCN) gathered to discuss the steady decline of speakers in their communities [34], [35], [36]. They were faced with one key problem: The lack of adult speakers, a “missing generation”, that are not past retirement age and who could pass on the language to future generations in school. But they were not fluent enough to teach the language. To work against that, a “Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program”, also called “Mentor-Apprentice Language Learning Program” was developed [35], [37].

The strategy encompasses a proficient speaker (“master”) who teaches a language learner (“apprentice”) through language immersion. They spend time together (at least 10-15 hours a week; ideally 20h a week) with the goal of increasing the fluency in speaking and understanding the target language [37]. As the apprentice becomes more fluent, a ripple effect will start in the community [34].

The program follows a usage-based approach (“orally based language teaching”), uses immersion strategies in daily life and is based on the “10 points of language learning” [26, pp. 222]. These points include many aspects of what we summarise under the header “Use it, don’t lose it!” (see [1]).

The programme has been adapted to several indigenous contexts and communities [35]. In the European context, the “Zorja” project of the Lower Sorbian community implemented a mentoring scheme modelled on the “Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program”. Adult participants of the ten months full-time immersive language-learning program are paired with an individual mentor (Sorbian: “kmótš”) [38]. Alternatively, those with existing community ties may self-organize a suitable mentor. The program formally allocates approximately 2-3 hours per week for mentoring activities [39].

Mentors work on a voluntary basis and receive a small expense allowance. Many mentors were identified and recruited during the project planning phase; some were recruited in the course of the project. Scheduling and content are determined autonomously by each mentor/mentee pair, with the project providing the necessary organisational framework. Matching prioritised alignment of interest and professional domains, thereby adjusting the relevance of language use to learners’ thematic and occupational contexts [39].

The program follows a communicative approach, emphasising oral interaction, comprehensible input, situated language use and social integration into the Lower Sorbian language community. The main objective is sustained, long-term acquisition and use of the Sorbian language, including the maintenance of community ties beyond the project’s completion. Land- and culture-based learning is incorporated, drawing on practices established in Indigenous language programs [39], [40].

Each mentoring pair can decide on the modalities of mentoring (time, place, format). The project provides a curated list of activity proposals following the concept of “Ekskursija”, Land- and culture-based learning. Mentors receive preparatory information and over the course of the project, two to four networking events are organised to facilitate exchange among the mentoring pairs [39].

Given the small size of the Lower Sorbian community, informal peer exchange among mentors is assumed. A growing demand for mentoring beyond the Zorja project is reported, particularly among staff in Sorbian institutions seeking opportunities for exchange and informal language learning [39].

4.2.2.2 Adaptation and further development of the Mentoring Programme

The idea of the Mentoring Programme included in the RISE UP Digital Toolkit is to connect a more proficient speaker of the language with a learner of the respective language. This is supposed to function as a breathing space for minoritised language use. Talking and discussions about linguistic aspects should be the content of the exchange. Furthermore, community integration of new speakers is one main goal: Following a usage-based approach to language learning, social integration is a big part of language learning and therefore the Mentoring Programme is also a way of fostering social connection between proficient and new speakers. The mentor can be seen as a gatekeeper to the community, while gaining confidence of teaching the language and actively engaging with the language rules. Mentoring therefore has a two-sided effect.

The learners are deliberately entering a hierarchical position in order to learn. The meetings should be organised among themselves after connecting in the community section of the Digital Toolkit. The meetings and contact can take place synchronously, while mentor and mentee meet up or asynchronously, which means mentor and mentee can text, send emails, use the chat function in the RISE UP Digital Toolkit, etc.

4.2.2.3 Implementation of the Mentoring Programme and inclusion into the Digital Toolkit

Mentors and mentees will be able to connect in the community section of the RISE UP Digital Toolkit (see Figure 8). The mentor and mentee are responsible for the establishment of the first contact over the chat. In order to become a mentor, community members need to contact the administrator of the app and fill out a brief questionnaire.

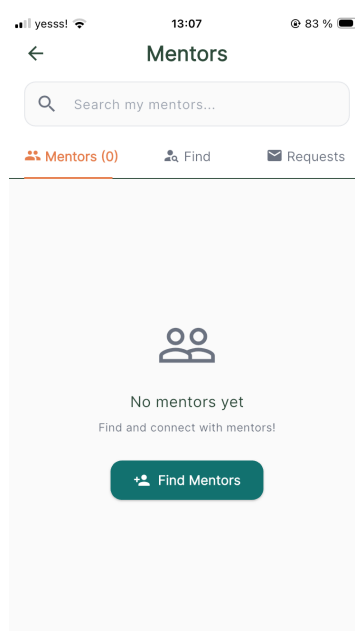


Figure 8. Mentoring Programme in RISE UP Digital Toolkit

4.2.2.4 Evaluation against the Six A's

Regarding the quality criterion of “Availability”, the community section ensures the existence of the Mentoring Programme, where mentor and mentee can connect. The sufficiency of the programme is dependent on the number of active mentors who are available. Mentor scarcity is a potential risk, since the programme is voluntarily. The need for adequacy calls for diversity of mentors and mentees across varieties, age groups, proficiency levels, which the RISE UP project cannot influence. Diaspora users may meet their mentors/mentees online.

Speaking of “Accessibility”, the community section allows digital access, which may exclude older generations, not tech-savvy people (“digital divide”) or people who are less comfortable online. This is particularly problematic in the case of mentoring, since we believe older community members (especially those who are retired) might be especially suitable as mentors with a high language proficiency and plenty of time resources. The base language of English includes and excludes groups of people, as already stated above. However, since mentor and mentee can connect over the chat, they can choose the working language best suitable for both. Diaspora users profit from the fact, that they can chat and text with mentors/mentees online.

There is a strong demand for mentoring reported across all communities (as indicated by the RISE UP survey results). Promotion currently occurs primarily through word-of-mouth and outreach to relevant stakeholders. Because the mentoring function within the Digital Toolkit is not highly salient, it should be more actively advertised, explicitly foregrounding the survey-based evidence of demand to satisfy the “Advertisement” quality criterion.

To meet the quality criterion of “Actuality”, the forum needs maintenance and monitoring. Language administrators should monitor the community section and should delete inactive mentor profiles and posts.

The Mentoring Programme was wished for in all five RISE UP communities, which gives it legitimacy and an important starting point regarding the “Acceptance” criterion. Since one key aspect of the programme is community integration, we hope for a high demand for mentoring and acceptance in various domains. Finally, the amount of matched mentor/mentee pairs will provide an indication of the acceptance of the programme. A potential risk is of ideological nature, who counts as a proficient speaker and mentor and which varieties are being accepted as legitimate. Mentors and mentees may fear judgment as new speakers.

Regarding the quality criterion of “Activation”, following a usage-based approach, the Mentoring Programme should activate learners to actively engage with community members and speakers of the minoritised language community. The one-to-one format and personalised, flexible modalities (synchronous/ asynchronous) should be particularly motivating. Potential risks include unstructured process and expectations, personal mismatch or late replies.

4.2.3 The Language Village & Language Map

The RISE UP study, which surveyed 121 Burgenland Croatian speakers, revealed a desire for informal Burgenland Croatian speaking meetings within the community: More than 65% of all respondents answered that “informal meetings to talk in Burgenland Croatian” are “extremely desirable” (see Figure 9). The subsequent research process focused on creating breathing spaces for the Burgenland Croatian community. To provide a digital tool capable of navigating offline communication in informal spaces and helping bring together speakers and learners of Burgenland Croatian, an adaptation of the conceptual framework of “The Icelandic Village” to the Burgenland Croatian context proved to be interesting. The Burgenland Croatian community was the only community to report a clear demand for “informal meetings to talk in Burgenland Croatian.” Therefore, for both practical and economic reasons, including geographical proximity and the already established contacts between UNIVIE and the Burgenland Croatian community, the focus of this strategy is on the Burgenland Croatian community.

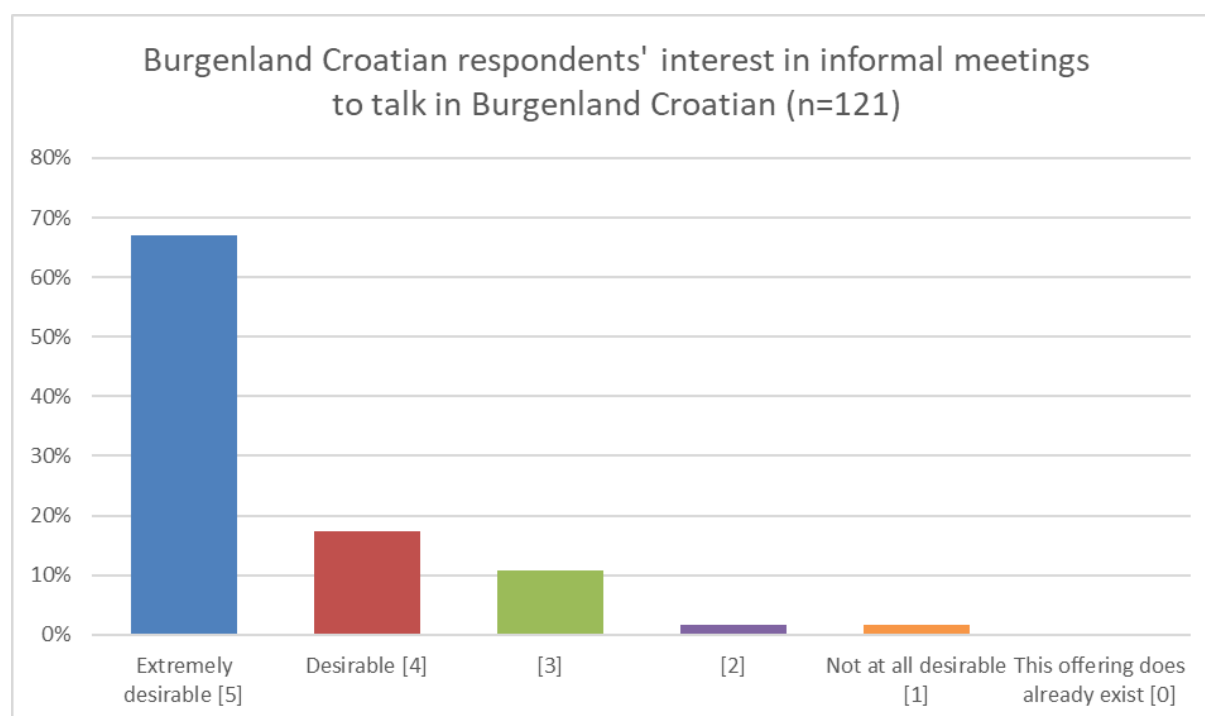


Figure 9. Burgenland Croatian respondents indicating that informal meetings to talk in Burgenland Croatian are extremely desirable

4.2.3.1 Theoretical framework of “The Icelandic Village” and similar initiatives

The EU-funded project, entitled “The Icelandic Village”, was conducted at the University of Iceland from 2010 to 2013. The objective of the programme was to establish spaces of informal language use for Icelandic students to participate in everyday communication in Icelandic from the very beginning, building a bridge between the classroom and everyday life outside the classroom [41].

The initiative “Språkskap: Swedish as a Social Language,” which is part of the “Language Learning in the Wild” programme, aimed to integrate learners into Swedish society from the outset. Designed as a design research program, it explored new forms of language learning through targeted interventions and employed scaffolding, namely temporary supports, tools, and strategies that are gradually withdrawn as learners develop linguistic competence [42].

The implementation centred on three initiatives: learners engaged in Swedish interactions with trained staff at a café near the language school; they participated in a “Twitter Day” during which they produced posts in Swedish; and they visited a furniture store to converse with employees based on pre-defined linguistic goals, followed by structured reflection before and after the interactions. As in “The Icelandic Village,” staff and businesses were actively involved to provide authentic opportunities for language use [42].

Another example is “Ya d’ar brezhoneg” (“Yes to the Breton language”), a campaign led by the „Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg“ („Office Public de la Langue Bretonne¹⁶“) to promote the reclamation and public presence of Breton across various domains. It mobilises businesses through a structured checklist of

¹⁶ <https://www.fr.brezhoneg.bzh> (retrieved January 23, 2026)

“simple actions” and awards tiered labels reflecting the degree of bilingual practice within the organisation. Measures include staff-worn badges indicating Breton proficiency, bilingual email signatures, Breton-language voicemail, and bilingual internal signage.

The initiative also supports youth engagement by designating leisure venues where activities are conducted in Breton, complemented by training for facilitators to scaffold language use. Both participating businesses and Breton-language leisure offerings are documented on publicly accessible online maps, enhancing visibility and uptake¹⁷.

4.2.3.2 Adaptation of “The Icelandic Village” and further development

The adaptation of “The Icelandic Village” to the Burgenland Croatian context was guided by three questions[43]:

- 1) How do community experts envision a Language Village (ideological clarification)?
- 2) Which companies and institutions are potential language partners?
- 3) How should the framework and appearance be designed in the Burgenland Croatian context?

Research was grounded in a collaborative approach to ensure that the communities' needs are taken up. Within the nine months of ethnographic fieldwork, various research techniques (from observation to interviews, see Annex) were used. The outcome of this work is presented according to the three questions.

1) Ideological clarification: The vision of a Language Village for Burgenland Croatian

The Language Village aims to enhance the prestige of Burgenland Croatian by increasing its visibility, particularly through signage and labelling in collaboration with language partners. It seeks to raise community and societal awareness of the language’s everyday relevance and value, supporting its use in daily life. These measures aim to motivate language learners and users, reduce insecurities in language use, and provide extracurricular learning spaces that complement minoritised language education.

Regarding the language varieties used in the Language Village, the standard variety of Burgenland Croatian can be used as a starting point for the teaching and learning of local and regional varieties, due to the fact that most teaching materials are written in the Burgenland Croatian standard.

During the research process, a very heterogeneous target group that could benefit from a Burgenland Croatian Language Village was identified: Both new speaker and all other speakers are likely to benefit from such initiatives: In particular, individuals with primarily passive competence who feel insecure about active use may gain confidence and fluency. Furthermore, students enrolled in minority-language school systems can extend their learning beyond the classroom, while residents of bilingual villages can contribute to and benefit from a vibrant ecology of linguistic diversity.

The diversity of the target group is also reflected in age and language proficiency. Therefore, Burgenland Croatian learners and speakers can be informed about the Language Village by

¹⁷ <https://www.fr.brezhoneg.bzh/149-des-actions-simples.htm> (retrieved January 23, 2026)

associations, schools, language centres as well as via social media. They can be supported through a variety of material like a language learning app, social media or learning offers on-site, through signage and product labels, a menu or advertisement bills in Burgenland Croatian. For the preparation of the material, the PPH Burgenland (Austrian university college for teacher education), Burgenland Croatian teachers and proficient speakers of the language are relevant contacts. If the Language Village is part of the bilingual school system, it is of high importance to incorporate the Language Village into the lesson plans.

2) Potential language partners – companies and institutions

When searching for suitable language partners, it is helpful to consider various factors: There might be regional and local differences concerning language proficiency and use. Furthermore, consulting regional associations as well as bilingual municipalities can be a further step, since they are mostly well connected in the area. To mobilise language partners, holding an information event could be a helpful first step. An entire business or one single Burgenland Croatian speaking employee can count as a language partner. Companies and institutions requiring a high level of communication between employees and trainees are particularly suitable. The selection of language partners should meet the requirements of the heterogeneous target group of learners.

A booklet on best practices for communicating with customers and learners of Burgenland Croatian was considered as highly important. Age-sensitive communication towards the language partners and the possibility of low-threshold participation in this regard was frequently highlighted.

3) Framework and appearance in the Burgenland Croatian context

Depending on the nature of the company and the prevailing conditions at the site, the implementation of the Language Village by language partners could be approached in various ways. Communication in Burgenland Croatian should be practised everywhere on site. A collaborative Language Map, in which places of language use can be entered collaboratively by users, is already available in the Digital Toolkit.

4.2.3.3 Implementation of the Language Village and inclusion into the Digital Toolkit

Together with stakeholders, associations, representatives of Volksgruppen¹⁸ and a language centre, an application for a language awareness campaign was submitted to the Federal Chancellery, Department for Volksgruppen Affairs of the State of Austria¹⁹ for the promotion of the Burgenland Croat Volksgruppe. The Language Village is part of this campaign.

The Language Village consists of several sites. These sites are shown on a digital map, the Language Map, which is included in the Digital Toolkit (see **Figure 10. Screenshots of deployment in Digital Toolkit**). The Language Map exists for all five RISE UP communities, the Language Village only for Burgenland Croatian. The Language Map is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of language partner locations, facilitating offline communication and interaction in informal, non-digital contexts via the Digital Toolkit. Furthermore, users will be empowered to contribute by adding new locations to the Language Map, thereby promoting active participation. By incorporating gamification elements,

¹⁸ „Volksgruppe“ is the official term for autochthonous minoritised groups living in Austria.

¹⁹ <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen.html> (retrieved January 23, 2026)

the Language Map aims to enhance user engagement and motivation, creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

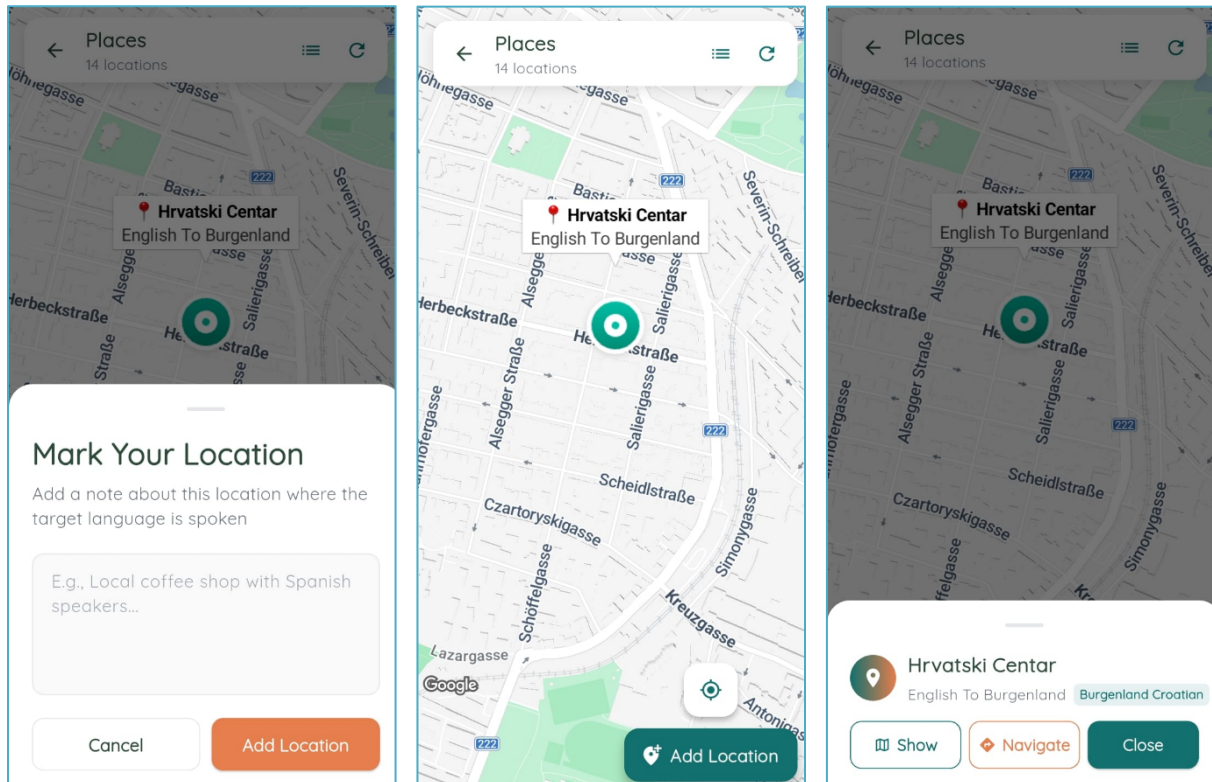


Figure 10. Screenshots of deployment in Digital Toolkit

4.2.3.4 Evaluation against the Six A's

Speaking of the “Availability” quality criterion, the Language Map is available and accessible within the Digital Toolkit. The Language Village concept will be disseminated over the course of the awareness campaign and is designed to encompass multiple learning environments, accommodating a diverse range of learners with varying needs and interests and multiple mentors of contact and practice. Scale and coverage are still uncertain (how many language partners, across which regions, diversity of language partners).

Concerning “Accessibility”, the Language Village provides both physical and digital accessibility by combining on-site communication, signage, product labels, menus and advertisement materials in Burgenland Croatian with a digital collaborative Language Map integrated into the RISE UP Digital Toolkit. Language learners and speakers are informed through associations, schools, language centres, and social media. The Language Map facilitates offline communication in non-digital contexts, while operating through a digital interface. Users of the toolkit are empowered to add new locations, encouraging accessible participation across various settings and language proficiency levels. Diaspora users of the Toolkit and people who are not mobile are unfortunately excluded from on-site participation.

When evaluating the Language Village based on the quality criterion “Advertisement”, the following can be stated: The awareness campaign is structured to reach as many people in Austria as possible, with particular emphasis on Vienna and Burgenland, regardless of whether they belong to the Volksgruppe or not. Furthermore, promotion is addressed through multiple channels and activities:

associations, language centres, schools, social media as well as informational events. Connecting with bilingual municipalities and regional associations will spread information and increase the initiative's visibility. One potential risk is that some groups might not be reached; this needs to be assessed in a subsequent project evaluation.

Keeping the Language Village up-to-date is part of the awareness campaign, which recognises long-term sustainability. Outdated partner entries must be deleted, and the on-site situation monitored to ensure, that the "Actuality" criterion is met.

The concept of the Language Village is a result of a collaborative process with the Burgenland Croatian community, associations, Volksgruppen representatives and minoritised language teachers and is therefore enjoying acceptance from many people ("Acceptance" quality criterion). Furthermore, it promotes lesser-used varieties and addresses language prestige and insecurities.

Speaking of "Activation", the Language Village has a clear activation intent: Informal meetings among community members and learners, on-site practice in a safer spaces, gamification and Language Map participation. Furthermore, extracurricular activities for students and kids in kindergarten should activate them to experience the existing language ecology. Possible risks are fear of judgment and speaking anxiety.

5 Conclusions

This paper has presented good practice strategies for language revitalisation and, equally importantly, the pathway by which they were identified. It builds on prior RISE UP work: the collection of existing resources in the five case-study communities and beyond [1], and the development of quality criteria known as "The Six A's for Language Safeguarding and Revitalisation Resources" [2]. Drawing on survey findings, ethnographic fieldwork conducted during 2023–2026, and a literature review of revitalisation practices beyond the RISE UP communities, the key concepts of ecology, new speakers, language use, and resources were linked into a coherent theoretical framework: the Resource-Based Model for Revitalisation.

In this model, resources - defined as practices, activities, tools, and methods mobilised within communities to encourage the use of endangered languages - are central drivers that open opportunities for language use and learning. Resources target all language users, with particular attention to "new speakers," understood broadly as those who invest energy and effort in learning and using a minoritised language, whether labelled "traditional" with partial competence, newcomers, or other community members.

A core dynamic in the model is that language use feeds back into and reshapes the wider language ecology. Consequently, resources function as levers to transform linguistic diversity into ecologies that sustain minoritised languages and provide the material basis for revitalisation strategies, which typically combine multiple resources.

Against this backdrop, three strategies were identified and elaborated: the Mentoring Programme, Linguistic Risk-Taking, and the Language Village. They qualify as good practice through community engagement, inclusivity, language planning, and sustainability, and through their alignment with the Six A's quality criteria. All strategies include a digital component, since they are part of the RISE UP

Digital Toolkit, while remaining human-centred; their aim is to bring minoritised languages to people and vice versa, thereby fostering linguistic diversity.

The research has limitations. Revitalisation dynamics vary across ecologies, requiring careful, reflexive attention when adapting resources and strategies from one context to another - there is no single solution. The Six A's offer practical instruments to identify gaps and highlight good practice, even where considerable overlap exists among criteria.

Two priorities for future research emerge. First, communities and researchers need to examine the role of AI in revitalisation, given both opportunities and risks associated with the rapidly evolving digital environment and the potential for digital exclusion of low-resource languages. Second, the proposed strategies should be accompanied in implementation to support context-sensitive adaptation across communities within a bottom-up, community-led approach.

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Annex: Ethnographic fieldwork for the Burgenland Croatian Language Village

Ethnographic technique	Data collection procedure	Date/ Time period	Place of data collection	Data analysis procedure
Conversations with various members of the Burgenland Croatian community; Burgenland Croatian learners; people with various connections to the Burgenland Croatian community	Field notes	September 2024-May 2025	Vienna, Burgenland	Analysis of field notes
Document and text research	Field notes	September 2024-May 2024	Vienna, Burgenland	Analysis of field notes
Observation during “Dan Mladine”	Field notes	September 7, 2024	Kleinwarasdorf	Analysis of field notes
Observation during two visits at “KUGA”	Field notes	September 7, 2024; May 9, 2025	Großwarasdorf	Analysis of field notes
Observation during a Burgenland Croatian language course	Field notes	September 2024-January 2025	Croatian center/ Hrvatski Centar Vienna	Analysis of field notes
Observation in the course of “Forum Minderheitenschulwesen 2024”	Field notes	November 27, 2025	Neufeld an der Leitha	Analysis of field notes
Observation in the course of a concert of “Kolo Slavuj”	Field notes	December 10, 2025	Vienna	Analysis of field notes
Group discussion	Audio recording	March, 24 2025	Burgenland	Content analysis of the transcribed audio recording & conversation analysis
Ethnographic interview with Burgenland Croatian teacher	Field notes	April 4, 2025	Vienna	Analysis of field notes
Observation in the course of “Forum4Burgenland”	Field notes	April 10, 2025	Eisenstadt	Analysis of field notes
Classroom observation at a bilingual middle school Großwarasdorf/ Dvojezična sridnja škola Veliki Borištof	Field notes	May 9, 2025	Großwarasdorf	Analysis of field notes
Observation during 2 visits to a restaurant with Burgenland Croatian speaking owners	Field notes	May 9/10, 2025	Großwarasdorf	Analysis of field notes
Presentation and discussion at the „Language in Society“ seminar	Field notes	May 16, 2025	Dubrovnik, Croatia	Analysis of field notes