The importance of linguistic diversity continues to be affirmed in the face of global language loss (Austin & Sallabank 2011: 6–11; Grondona & Thomason 2015: 73–107), but the potential importance of language-*internal* diversity receives less attention. While it is true that speakers of indigenous languages are themselves ultimately responsible for the maintenance or disappearance of their speech varieties (Bradley & Bradley 2002: 96), linguists and others are capable of encouraging indigenous communities toward maintenance of language use. In light of these circumstances, David Bradley’s recent inquiry (2010, 2011a) into the nature of language resilience provides a useful pivot in the contemporary discussion of language endangerment, moving the dialogue from a retrogressive determinism to a focus on preservation potential. Applied to linguistics, resilience inquiry asks, in short, what attributes of a language community enable its speakers to withstand the pressures of subtractive bilingualism in situations of intensive contact with second-language prestige varieties. With this question in mind, the current study presents evidence from Phuza (Tibeto-Burman > Burmic > Ngwi† > Southeastern > Riverine Phula) that suggests dialect diversity can play a crucial role in language resilience.

Since all languages are polylectal, when a language is lost so are its dialects. This state of affairs is true *ipso-facto*. But since all dialects involve identity distinctions, along with the attitude and value-based differences these necessarily entail, the dialect boundaries of a living language may

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* Fieldwork underlying the data analyzed in this paper was made possible in cooperation with the Honghe Nationalities Research Institute, Yuxi Normal University and La Trobe University. Funding was provided by a La Trobe University Postgraduate Research Scholarship, an Australia International Postgraduate Research Scholarship, and a La Trobe University Faculty Research Grant.

† See Bradley (2012, 2005) to appreciate the carefully considered analyses of historic/genetic nomenclature that underlie the selection of ‘Burmic’ and ‘Ngwi’ to replace alternates—‘Burmese-Lolo’ and ‘Loloish’ in particular.
serve as a kind of virtual firewall against the rapid loss of language use among a given linguistic population. These dynamics are vividly illustrated in the dialect geography and sociohistory of Phuza language use.

Phuza speakers inhabit 28 villages in two counties of southeastern Yunnan Province, China. The language community is undergoing dramatic attrition in half of its villages, leading to a net usage dropoff rate of 25% within the past few generations. Nevertheless, Phuza language use remains strong elsewhere, even in some villages directly adjacent to those now shifting exclusively to Chinese. This study provides an overview of Phuza language vitality with a focus on the geolinguistics and sociohistory of the speaker population. In particular, speaker distribution, language contact, dialect diversity and domains of language use are explored. Several geolinguistic anomalies that arise from this analysis can only be explained with reference to language-internal sociolinguistic diversity. The essay begins with a typological and historical introduction to Phuza structure, including various linguistic, geographic, demographic and sociolinguistic features that define the language, based on original fieldwork and analysis. A typology of threatened statuses focused on domains of language use is presented as a diagnostic metric. The study then discusses a series of geolinguistic maps and charts that illustrate overlapping dynamics of dialect diversity, contact and endangerment implicit in the speaker population. Two primary dialects are identified, along with their sub-dialects; and language vitality is shown to directly correspond with dialect boundaries based on statistical probability and qualitative evidence alike.

These results suggest that encouraging language communities to value dialect diversity may function as a mode of resilience linguistics. Conversely, efforts to encourage standardization among indigenous language communities may have the unintended consequence of introducing a less resilient linguistic community over time.

3.1 Geolinguistic and ethnolinguistic context

Phuza is an indigenous language first identified and defined in Pelkey (2011). One of many hidden ethnolinguistic groups in Southwest China, the language descends from the Ngwi-branch of Burmic and is officially classified under the Yi Nationality, along with scores of other Ngwi languages (see Bradley 2007, 2011b: 70–71). Phuza is spoken by approximately 6,000 people, out of an ethnic population of some 8,000, who inhabit 28 villages along the southern half of the Gejiu-Mengzi county border. Most of these villages are situated in the western half of Lengquan Township, Mengzi, but some are also located in southeastern