

Call for Papers

The 2019 iteration of the Dene Languages Conference will be hosted at the University of California, Davis on July 6-7, in conjunction with the Linguistic Society of America's Summer Institute (<http://lsa2019.ucdavis.edu>). The main conference will feature general sessions and two special themed sessions: "Dene Epistemologies: Linguistic Stability and Adaptation" focused on issues related to the dynamics of linguistic and cultural contact, and "The Language of Music, Dance, and Performance," which will feature papers related to manifestations of spoken language in various genres of performance. In addition, a pre-conference workshop focused on the Pacific Coast Dene languages of California and Oregon will take place on July 5, hosted by the Native American Language Center.

Invited Keynote Speakers:

- Siri Tuttle (University of Alaska, Fairbanks)
- Wesley Thomas (Navajo Technical University)

The conference invites papers for the general sessions and for the two special themed sessions: "Dene Epistemologies: Linguistic Stability and Adaptation" and "The Language of Music, Dance, and Performance." Papers from both academic researchers and tribal/community-based programs and organizations are welcome.

General Sessions

General session papers can address any topic related to Dene languages (or Eyak and Tlingit, their Na-Dene congeners), including but not limited to theoretical or descriptive linguistics, language maintenance and revitalization, language teaching, linguistic anthropology, and sociolinguistics.

Special Session: "Dene Epistemologies: Linguistic Stability and Adaptation"

This session invites papers that explore connections between Dene languages and Dene peoples' ways of knowing, value systems, and worldviews, considering especially ways that these connections have remained constant or changed over time (hence "stability and adaptation"). This might be over relatively long time spans as Dene-speaking peoples have interacted with other Indigenous groups in North America over many centuries, or relatively recently as many Dene languages have reached a point of critical endangerment due to the persistent encroachments and violence of colonization. Papers can consider not only how the languages and the epistemologies they encode came to be how they are today, but also their prospects and enduring value moving forward.

Special Session: "The Language of Music, Dance, and Performance"

Music, dance, and genres that can be broadly considered “performance” are important components of Dene peoples’ ceremonial life and modes of cultural expression. Dene languages play a central role in defining these genres (e.g., the deployment or absence of lyrics in different song types), and they also provide a powerful means of understanding their cultural value through analysis of vocabulary and idioms typically used to describe them. This session will bring together papers on more strictly linguistic aspects of the language deployed in these genres (such as issues pertaining to lexical tone and prosody in song or poetry), as well as their pedagogical applications in language maintenance/revitalization settings (using music and dance in language teaching), their role as a stimulus for language documentation work, and their value as reflections of Dene peoples’ understanding of their cultural significance.

How to Submit

Anonymous 1-page abstracts (12-point Times New Roman, single spaced, 1" margins) should be submitted in pdf format. References and examples may appear on a second page. Submit via email to dene2019@ucdavis.edu.

The deadline for submissions is February 22, 2019. Notification of acceptance will be made by approximately March 10, 2019.