

**EMOTION, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITY:
USING LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION TECHNIQUES TO CREATE LOW-ANXIETY
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the interconnectivity of emotions, identity, and language by exploring how each of these factors contributes to language learning, and specifically endangered language learning. Based on an online survey and fieldwork in Saanich, British Columbia, and Atka, Alaska, it specifically analyzes the techniques and methods language revitalization programs use to create low-stress learning environments.

The survey, called the Endangered Language Learning Emotion Scale (ELLES), examined the wide range of emotions associated with learning an endangered language, and yielded a total of 97 responses. Its quantitative section consisted of multiple-choice statements, where respondents rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. The qualitative portion of the survey included an optional space for respondents to provide written feedback. Fieldwork took place in partnership with Where Are Your Keys (WAYK), which is an organization that helps communities develop ways to train people how to teach and learn a language. WAYK hosted a workshop in Saanich, for teachers from the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School, to cover various language teaching methods that they could apply to their language classrooms. WAYK also works with the community of Atka to help with their language revitalization program at the local school. Data was gathered in each community through participant-observation, and in Atka, through interviews.

The survey and fieldwork aspects of this research both found that isolation and lack of resources are challenges in revitalization work. However, the research results found that themes of community, positivity, and dedication were fundamental in opposing these challenges. This thesis also found that a positive language learning environment is critical for language revitalization efforts. It can result in a better sense of community, broadly, as well as an

improved sense of belonging and stronger connection to identity for individual learners. This thesis discusses how identity and emotion relate to the aforementioned themes that emerged in the research, as well as how they play an integral role in language revitalization and endangered language learning.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines how emotions, identity, and language are interconnected, and, how they influence language learning. Data was collected from an online survey, called the Endangered Language Learning Emotion Scale, and through fieldwork in Saanich, British Columbia, and Atka, Alaska. This data was used to understand how language revitalization programs create low-stress learning environments, and why these environments are important. Results found that isolation and lack of resources were limitations in revitalization work. However, when communities created a sense of belonging, with positivity and dedication, these obstacles were manageable. Overall, low-stress language learning environments are an important way to help a learner feel comfortable and valued. Using non-traditional teaching methods and promoting positive attitudes about the language someone is learning are ways to create positive environments. Since emotions are a basic part of language learning, positive beliefs and low-stress environments are an important way to support learners and revitalization efforts.

Preface

Ethics approval for this research was given by Where Are Your Keys, ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School, City of Atka and the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, all participants, and The University of British Columbia Okanagan Behavioural Research Ethics Board H16-02763.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all past, present, and future language learners.

May your experiences be fulfilling, your attempts valued, and your lives forever changed.

May you find your talk.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me”

(Joe, 1991)

Identity and language are so closely intertwined that we often do not realize how much they influence each other. Language shapes our understanding of the world around us, and our position within it. Some of the most poignant reminders of the interconnectivity of identity, language, and emotions are found within individuals’ narratives of language loss. Rita Joe, a Mi’kmaq poet and Residential School survivor, wrote extensively on language loss (Filice 2007). As she suggests in her poem, quoted above, language is crucial to not only understanding the world, but also to understanding our heritage and ultimately, ourselves. This draws our attention to the importance of relationality and suggests that we must understand ourselves in order to begin to reconcile. As a settler, this excerpt serves as a reminder for me to consider how I have come to understand my own identity, both in relation to language work and to the broader Canadian community.

Emotions have a powerful impact on identity. However, they also play a critical role in language learning. For instance, positive emotions can provide an individual with motivation for learning, confidence to practice the target language, and the desire to connect with other learners. This connection is especially critical for language learners, as it not only provides a network of peers who share the target language, it also provides a space for learners to use the language outside of the educational setting. Motivation and desire to learn and/or practice the language are crucial to the networking associated with learning, which can all boost the learner’s self-esteem.

However, negative emotions can also have a significant impact on identity and language learning. These factors can result in anxiety, which can significantly hinder the learning process. For instance, anxiety can lower self-esteem, motivation to learn, and the desire to practice the target language. If a learner is not confident in their ability to practice the language, they will not be motivated to continue learning, nor will they be motivated to communicate with peers.

The complexity of language learning, identity, and emotions will be addressed in this thesis primarily within the framework of language revitalization. Language revitalization is the effort to stop and reverse language loss, or the attempt to revive an extinct language (Grenoble & Whaley 2006).

In order to better understand the ways in which revitalization efforts can create positive learning environments, it is important to first address the significant sources of stress in high-stress language learning environments (see Section 1.1). As a result, this thesis will explore social and personal factors that contribute to both positive and negative language learning experiences, such as language/learning ideologies, socialization, and self-perception.

1.1 Background Information

Literature suggests that positive and negative emotions are strongly tied to an individual's self-perception. There are many factors that influence an individual's self-perception; however, within the context of language learning, socialization is a critical and complex factor (Aragão 2011; Barcelos 2015; Hermes et al. 2012; Sun 2014).

1.1.1 Socialization

Socialization is an important part of language learning, as it ensures the target language is being used in multiple domains. This exposes the learner to different uses for and variations of the language, such as slang used by peers. It also helps the learner ground particular concepts in reality, rather than just learning about them through lessons. Socialization is particularly important in language revitalization efforts, as it can offer the opportunity to learn from Elders, connect with friends and/or family, and help ensure transmission to future generations.

Socialization has great value to the language learning process, but it is not always a positive experience for every learner. Sometimes, it can be intimidating to use the target language in a new domain. For instance, if an individual has previously learned in a family setting, it can be intimidating to enter a classroom where more formal language use might occur. This can lead to an individual having less confidence in particular domains, which may end up discouraging them from using the language outside of their primary setting. It can also result in feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and anxiety (Cohen & Norst 1989; Gregersen & Horwitz 2002; Horwitz et al. 1986).

1.1.2 Self-Perception and Motivation

If an individual's self-perception is primarily positive, it can result in confidence and similar productive emotions. Conversely, if an individual's self-perception is primarily negative, it can result in self-doubt and other destructive emotions. Consequently, self-perception ultimately affects learner motivation (Huang 2014; Lee 2007). Scholars have described how motivation is significant to the language learning process, and correlations are often drawn between anxiety and motivation (Alrabai 2015; Charalambous 2013; Cohen & Norst 1989;

Horwitz et al. 1986). Cohen and Norst (1989) identify two types of motivation in language learning: instrumental and integral. Instrumental motivation is when an individual learns a language for reasons of advancement or achievement, such as a promotion or university degree. Cohen and Norst suggest that this form of motivation causes the most anxiety. Integral motivation is when an individual learns out of a desire to be part of or strengthen their connection with a particular language or cultural group.

The distinction between these two forms of motivation will be discussed further in Section 1.3. However, it is important to note that although integral motivation may be linked with lower anxiety in their study, it does not mean that individuals who have integral motivation do not also experience anxiety or other unwanted emotions.

Motivation can also be influenced by a number of interpersonal factors, including social interactions, language/learning ideologies, and labels (such as when a person is labeled as a “good” or “bad” student). As previously mentioned, self-perception is largely influenced by our interactions with others. When language learners have positive experiences, they are more likely to be motivated to continue learning (Bell 2013; Basham & Fathman 2008). Positive ideologies about language learning can be very constructive for students because it can create a safe space for learning, which can ultimately lower various forms of anxiety. When instructors (whether these are formal teachers or family members) have positive beliefs about the target language and/or language learning, learners often find them more approachable (Austin 2011; Effiong 2016). It creates less pressure on the student to be “perfect” in their language use, and allows for mistakes to be seen as part of the learning process rather than hindering progress.

However, when the language learning ideologies are negative, the learner can experience increased anxiety about language use, which contributes to a lower self-esteem (Barcelos 2015).

Ideologies specific to an individual's target language can influence these positive or negative experiences as well. Whether or not the language is valued within specific domains, such as the country or the individual's home, can drastically affect the motivation for learning and how a learner views themselves (Baloy 2011; Lee 2007; McCarty 2008).

Self-perception in the framework of language learning has often been cited as a source of anxiety, but a less discussed issue is that of labels assigned to students by instructors (Austin 2011; Effiong 2016; Hinton 2011; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986). Negative labels, such as "learning disabled," can be detrimental to students' success. It can impact their self-esteem and how others view/treat them, which can ultimately decrease their motivation for learning (Walther-Thomas & Brownell 1999). However, some scholars have indicated that there are also issues with assigning positive labels, such as "gifted," because it can create additional pressure for the student. They may feel the need to outperform others, and to constantly be outperforming themselves as well, which can create anxiety and stress (Thomson 2012; Walther-Thomas & Brownell 1999).

1.1.3 Language Revitalization

A number of scholars cite the importance of community in language learning as beneficial to developing a space for language use and creating an identity within the language (Charalambous 2013; Hinton 2011). Regardless of whether a community is thought of in social, cultural, or geographical terms, a strong relationship between the individual and the community positively correlate with learner success and positive experience (Brown et al. 2011).

Languages are considered endangered when there are few fluent speakers in a community and when the language is no longer being transmitted to the next generation (Hinton 2011). As a

result, language revitalization programs excel in several areas of language pedagogy that typical curriculum tends to overlook (Hale & Hinton 2001). For instance, they aim to create low-anxiety learning settings by embracing a range of learning styles and teaching methodologies.

Endangered language instructors also take into account learner background and identity, since often the teachers are learners themselves (Hinton 2011). Importantly, they are sensitive to the idea that emotions, both positive and negative, have a strong impact on learning and are inseparable from identity and cognition (Charambolous 2013; Aragão 2011; Barcelos 2015).

Many language revitalization programs not only promote positive language/learning ideologies, such as the ones mentioned above, but they also create a sense of community. This sense of community often eliminates the perceived competition of typical classroom learning, and instead creates a space to celebrate individual progress (Baloy 2011; Brown et al. 2011, Cowell 2012; Lee 2007). Although individuals may still feel like others are learning quicker, or performing a particular aspect of language better than they are, their progress and worth as learners is not determined by their performance in comparison to others.

Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) address how personality traits, such as perfectionism, can also influence someone's language learning. They use the example of perfectionism to illustrate how a seemingly positive trait can have negative effects, and consequently add to the dialogue on the effects of labeling learners. Gregersen and Horwitz provide a specific example with regard to motivation in perfectionists, noting that a perfectionist's motivation may have less to do with the pursuit of success, and more to do with the fear of failure.

This discussion of personality traits is largely underrepresented with regards to endangered languages in general, as the focus is often on emotional, historical, and political factors and their associated consequences. Specifically, in the Canadian context, the

consequences of colonialism continue to impact public systems such as politics and education. Specifically within education, colonialism continues to impact Indigenous language education opportunities. Many Indigenous students in both Canada and the United States do not have the opportunity to take classes in their traditional language at school. For instance, students may be able to take foreign languages such as Spanish, but Indigenous languages are not generally offered or taught in public schools or post-secondary institutions – or if they are, the programs are not as well-developed as they are for foreign languages.

The lack of Indigenous language courses in public and post-secondary schools is part of the reason learners have to seek out other opportunities to learn their language. A significant issue in language revitalization is the lack of funding and support from governments and educational institutions, which results in individual community members tasking themselves with establishing and/or maintaining revitalization programs on their own.

1.2 Research Questions

Originally, I was interested in focusing exclusively on anxiety within the context of language learning. However, as I began to explore existing literature, it became apparent that learners experience a wide range of emotions and these are both complex and a contributing factor to the learning process.

As I learned more about language revitalization efforts through research and personal experience, I realized the language learning environments and ideologies were very different from any other language learning experiences I had had. My first exposure to a language revitalization program was at the Syilx Language House in Penticton, British Columbia.¹ This

¹ To learn more about the Syilx Language House, see <http://www.thelanguagehouse.ca/>

was a motivational experience for me, as I had never witnessed a language lesson run in total immersion, with students completely engaged. I saw individuals volunteering answers, speaking to each other in Nsyilxcen, and genuinely enjoying themselves. I was shocked to witness so many students interacting in an immersion setting with such confidence. This was the complete opposite of any experience I had ever had, which led me to ask what made the Language House lessons unique. I wondered if language revitalization programs were employing different strategies for language teaching that were having more positive effects on students. Ultimately, that experience shaped what I set out to explore in this thesis.

My research questions are:

1. How do positive and negative social factors influence a learner's identity as well as the learning process?
2. How do language revitalization programs create low-anxiety learning environments, and how can that be applied to other language learning contexts?

In order to answer these questions, I draw from a mixed-methods approach to research, which I detail in Chapter 2. Briefly, this includes results from an online survey, participant-observation, interview responses, and an autoethnographic analysis of my own recent experiences participating in language revitalization efforts.

1.3 Important Distinctions

In order to provide clarity moving forward, it is important to first define particular recurring terminology in this thesis. For the purpose of my research, the following terms and concepts will be addressed using background information gathered from previous literature.

1.3.1 Heritage and Endangered Languages

A heritage language is any language that is part of an individual's family and cultural background (Hinton 2011). This can be a majority language, such as Spanish, but it can also be a language seldom or never spoken within an individual's community. This means that it is not always the majority language of a particular region, even though it may be a majority language elsewhere in the world.

In contrast, a language is considered endangered when there are few fluent speakers left and when the language is no longer being transmitted to the next generation (Hinton 2011). Often they are not the majority language of any region because of their small speaker population. Endangered languages can also be quite isolated geographically, making them susceptible to endangerment due to a majority language dominating the region. When languages are isolated geographically, or heavily influenced by the region's dominant language, they are often considered at high-risk for endangerment or death (Hale 1992; Hinton 2008b). Importantly, Hinton (2011) notes that endangered languages may still be considered an important part of an individual's identity, even if they have not been exposed to the language.

Heritage and endangered languages are both considered to be part of an individual's cultural background, and may or may not be spoken by their family and/or in their home (Hinton 2011). Since these two terms are related but different, it is important to note that when discussing both terms together, I may use the term ancestral language to acknowledge the fact that a language is part of an individual's cultural background, but not to assume it is either a heritage or an endangered language.

1.3.2 Language Revitalization

Although I have briefly defined language revitalization above, it is also important to address its main methods and its significance now that I have explained the distinction between heritage and endangered languages. Given the Canadian context in which Indigenous languages are threatened and/or rapidly disappearing, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations insist that “Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society” and we must ensure they are protected and preserved (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). The Calls to Action also state that programs focused on cultural renewal, such as language revitalization programs, need federal attention and funding.

I will briefly outline and describe various language revitalization programs and their principles in the following section. These programs include: Master-Apprentice programs, Language Houses, Language Nests, and Language/Culture Camps. All of the programs discussed share one common principle: immersion. The programs advocate for creating and supporting a total immersion environment, regardless of the learners’ fluency levels. This is a way to help students rely less on their first language, and more on other learners as they try to gain fluency (Hinton 2008d).

Master-Apprentice Programs

Master-Apprentice (also referred to as Mentor-Apprentice) programs are a type of revitalization program that are intended to teach students their target language through a one-on-one relationship between the Master (teacher), who is fluent, and Apprentice (student), who is still learning. As Hinton (2008d) notes, Master-Apprentice programs are designed to, “[teach] native speakers and young adults to work together intensively so that the younger members

develop conversational proficiency in the language” (217). Master-Apprentice programs often follow general immersion guidelines, in addition to the one-on-one teaching format.

The programs rely on both participants creating and maintaining an immersion setting, where only the target language is used. This can be difficult when the Apprentice knows very little in the language, since this program emphasizes complete immersion, even when the Apprentice does not understand something. Another principle that Master-Apprentice programs rely on is the idea that learning takes place in real-life situations, which includes daily tasks and chores. For example, Master-Apprentice pairs might cook, clean, or run errands while maintaining immersion in the target language (Hinton 2008d; Olawsky 2013).

Language Houses

Language Houses are another form of non-traditional teaching/learning methods that some language revitalization efforts use. Language Houses are a space “for learners to use the target language regularly, develop greater fluency in the language, and become more familiar with the target culture and society” (Brown et al. 2011, 204). Usually, learners move into a Language House together, and stay for a predetermined period of time. There will usually be at least one individual who is more fluent than the others, so that they can act as the facilitator and help everyone stay in immersion (Schlimbach & Jordan 1936).

Language Houses rely on beginner and intermediate speakers quickly becoming teachers. This not only helps them learn quicker, but it also provides them with the skills to continue teaching the language to other community members once they leave the House (Johnson 2012). Some houses have formal language instruction periods set aside each day or week, where learners are taught a specific lesson by the facilitator. However, Language Houses are designed

to mimic daily life, in that learners are encouraged to socialize with each other, in immersion, while completing tasks such as cooking. This is intended to help create a community for learners, which can encourage them to continue learning outside of the House (Brown et al. 2011).

Language Nests

Similarly to Language Houses, the Language Nests are designed to mimic the home environment for children, where they have the opportunity to interact with fluent speakers of the target language. As the First Peoples' Cultural Council defines it, "[a] language nest is a language program for children from birth to five years old where they are immersed in their First Nations language" (FPCC 2014, 5). Language Nests also insist on full immersion in the language, and rely on the adults to help the children maintain immersion (McIvor 2006). Encouraging young children to learn is critical to the transmission of the language to current and future generations, and Language Nests offer a space for this as most other language revitalization programs are often focused on adult learners.

Language/Culture Camps

Language Camps, also referred to as Culture Camps, are programs that help individuals increase their fluency by practicing with and learning from other camp participants while immersed in the target language. Language/culture camps can be designed for specific age groups, such as youths or Elders, however, many language/culture camps encourage all generations to participate in activities (FPHLCC n.d.).

As Gascoigne (2009) notes, "[a]lthough an objective of most language camps is to motivate young learners in order to increase students' interest in future language learning

opportunities, many camps also hope to accomplish a fair amount of traditional instruction albeit in a new, casual, extracurricular format” (106). During language/culture camps, individuals participate in a number of fun activities such as crafts and games, as well as daily activities such as cooking and cleaning. Camps may also host cultural activities, such as traditional food gathering/preparing. Some camps have themes, depending on the season and the community hosting them. For instance, a winter theme may include ice fishing, while a spring theme may include cedar gathering (FPHLCC n.d.).

1.3.3 Language Anxiety

Broadly defined, language anxiety is any stress or unease resulting from language use (Alrabai 2015; Barcelos 2015; Charalambous 2013; Effiong 2016; Horwitz et al. 1986; Xiao & Wong 2014). It is important to note that anxiety is experienced in a multitude of ways, and can manifest in both emotional and somatic responses. Language anxiety, specifically, has often been described as situational anxiety (Dewaele et al. 2008; Horwitz 2010; Horwitz et al. 1986). This suggests that a particular incident or situation triggers an individual’s anxiety.

Within the learning context, a situation that may trigger language anxiety could also be related to other tensions an individual faces about learning in general, unrelated to language specifically. For instance, someone who is anxious about an oral presentation in the target language may also be anxious simply because it is a presentation. Many people experience tension or become nervous when public speaking in their primary language, so the stress of presenting in their target language can often just add to the stress they are already experiencing. Some individuals have anxiety over written exams and other forms of testing, which literature suggests is due to the fear of failure (Aragão 2011; Dewaele et al. 2008; Horwitz 2010; Horwitz

et al. 1986). This anxiety may be amplified when individuals are not as familiar with the grammar and rules of a target language, due to the fact that they have had limited exposure to it.

1.3.4 Motivation: Instrumental and Integrative

Motivation is a crucial part of learning in any capacity. Motivation can be influenced by past experiences, both positive and negative, which can play a role in shaping an individual's self-esteem. As noted earlier, Cohen and Norst (1989) suggest that there are two types of motivation people may experience for language learning: instrumental and integrative.

Instrumental motivation is defined as learning something, such as a skill or language, in order to further one's advancement in a particular domain. Integrative motivation is defined as the desire to learn something in order to integrate into a particular group. Both forms of motivation have their own benefits, and their success can be entirely dependent on the individual. Suggesting that one form is better than the other is impossible when learning of any sort is entirely dependent upon the individual's identity, past experiences, and future goals.

The distinction between each type of motivation is important to my thesis because endangered language learners often experience a strong integral motivation, wherein they wish to learn their language for affective reasons. These affective reasons may include the desire to connect with their cultural background, family members, or peers. As a result, and in contradiction to what Cohen and Norst (1989) suggest, integral motivation can also cause high levels of anxiety here due to the complexities associated with learning endangered languages. As previously mentioned, language endangerment in Canada is almost exclusively the result of colonialism, which continues to persist in many domains. This puts pressure on youth to learn

the dominant language and often results in negativity surrounding the learning of an endangered language.

1.4 Thesis Structure

In this chapter, I have discussed background information on language revitalization, identity, and the complex intrapersonal factors that influence language learning, such as motivation and socialization. In Chapter Two, I will further discuss these topics in a review of existing linguistic theories and language/learning ideologies. I will also address my research methods and methodologies. Chapter Three will be dedicated to the online survey portion of my research, in which I will discuss its origin, structure, distribution, and results. In Chapter Four, I will discuss my two-part ethnographic fieldwork and its results. Finally, in Chapter Five, I will review all of my research results and address the common themes, as well as provide comments on how much research contributes to academic knowledge and directions for future research. Each of these chapters will show how learning an endangered language in a positive environment can increase a learner's confidence and result in positive learning outcomes. This can ultimately help an individual use language to connect to their family and community, creating a sense of belonging.

Chapter 2: Theory, Methodologies, and Methods

“How odd that such a perceptive creature had imagined the death of a language would mean the death of its poetry”

(Alexis 2015, 170)

2.0 Outline

In this research project, I employed a mixed-methods approach comprised of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including: an online survey, participant-observation, autoethnography, and interviews. In the section below, I outline the theoretical frameworks that informed my research and allowed me to conduct it in an ethical and respectful way, which was particularly important during the community-engaged portion of my research. Within my research, I employed two methodologies, Appreciative Inquiry and Grounded Theory, which allowed me to easily analyze the fluid nature of my community-engaged fieldwork. It is also important to note that within my research, I used broad and interdisciplinary definitions of Appreciative Inquiry and Grounded Theory, which were not restricted to a particular discipline and could be tailored to suit the needs of this project.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

When considering how to address my research questions, I first needed to identify the framework from which they could be answered. Since identity and emotions are key components to my research on language learning, I felt it was important to also discuss how language ideologies, which address both of these issues, help provide a framework for my research.

Language Ideologies

Language ideologies refer to the way in which people think about and understand language. Individuals often have ideologies concerning both their own language, as well as other languages. As Field (2009) suggests, language ideologies are often “beliefs concerning the relationship between language and identity” (39). Understanding how closely ideologies and identity are tied together is crucial to understanding their significance within the context of my research.

Positive language ideologies are also a key component to the success of many language revitalization efforts. By creating a space where people are encouraged to learn, and where their language attempts are valued, a personal transformation can occur. Even if a learner may not reach their goals as quickly as they would like, having a space where their language is valued is significant motivation to continue learning (Cohen & Norst 1989; Hinton 2011; Horwitz et al. 1986; Shaul 2014; Supahan & Supahan 2008).

Language Learning Ideologies

Expanding on the idea of language ideologies, language *learning* ideologies refer to the ways in which people think about language learning. Often, this encompasses what individuals believe is the best, or worst, way to learn language. My research attempts to showcase that there are no “right” or “wrong” ways to learn, but rather that some methods and practices are more productive than others. Many scholars recognized that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be used with teaching in general, but especially when it comes to language instruction (McCarty 2008; Sun 2014; Tedick & Walker 1994).

Positive ideologies about language learning must exist in cohesion with the positive ideologies about the target language itself. Ideologies specific to language learning constitute themes such as (but not limited to) understanding how an individual learns, valuing their attempts made in the target language, and constructively correcting them. As Supahan and Supahan (2008) powerfully state, “[t]here is nothing more devastating to the learning process than being told you are wrong the first time you attempt to utter a word” (196). This reiterates the notion that individuals’ attempts at language must be valued in order to encourage them to not only continue learning, but continue attempting difficult pieces of language. If learners recognize the value of their attempts, they may be more confident in learning complex pieces of language, which ultimately helps advance fluency.

Since I have distinguished between language ideologies and language learning ideologies, further discussion on them will be with regard to how each of them similarly construct a framework for my research. As my research touched on both types of ideologies, I will use the term “language/learning ideologies” to represent both their distinction from each other and their interconnectivity.

Addressing Research Questions

My first research question – how do positive and negative social factors influence a learner’s identity as well as the learning process? – can be addressed in the above framework by providing discussion on how either positive or negative language/learning ideologies impact a learner’s identity. As previously mentioned, a positive attitude toward either a specific language or toward the learning process can be encouraging to learners. If learners feel encouraged, their motivation for learning is more likely to increase or be positively maintained (Cohen & Norst

1989). In contrast, if there are negative attitudes toward a specific language, or toward learners' language attempts, their self-esteem can be negatively affected. Since language is so closely tied to identity, stigmas surrounding a person's language or language use can not only hinder their confidence, but can also result in decreased motivation.

My second research question—how do language revitalization programs create low-anxiety learning environments, and how can that be applied to other language learning contexts?—can be addressed by considering how language/learning ideologies can have a positive influence, and by understanding how language revitalization programs implement and maintain positive ideologies. Often, learning an endangered language is motivated by the desire to better connect with one's own culture and identity. This deeply personal motivation, which Cohen and Norst (1989) label as integral, is often subject to challenges posed by negative language/learning ideologies. For this reason, language revitalization efforts often have to work to create a positive and productive space for learners. I will discuss how this is accomplished and how this affects learners at length in Chapters Four and Five.

2.2 Methodology

In considering how to approach my thesis writing and my data, I have decided to draw from two different methodologies, each of which I will specifically discuss below. These methodologies are Appreciative Inquiry and Grounded Theory. I decided on these approaches because each has something valuable to offer to both myself as a researcher and the research itself. Any methodology should demonstrate the “thinking behind the doing” (Kovach 2009) and I will address below how both Appreciative Inquiry and Grounded Theory influenced my approach to research and my analysis of its data.

2.2.1 Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a methodology that was primarily developed for business, as a tool to help assess productivity in the workplace. It has also been applied in education, generally, for the same reason. Appreciative Inquiry emphasizes a focus on the strengths of a program rather than its weaknesses (Bushe 2011; Reed 2011). Appreciative Inquiry also stresses the importance of focussing on the process rather than just the outcome of particular actions (Reed 2011). As a qualitative researcher, I think it is important to understand the processes, especially in language learning, and how they impact the results.

I felt it was important to use a methodology that focused on productive aspects of a situation because language learning can be associated with a number of negative emotions, such as anxiety. Using a methodology that allows me to emphasize what people are doing right can be most efficient when trying to assist a community in developing skills and confidence. As Reed (2011) notes, “Appreciative Inquiry research is communal, in that it involves collective interaction to share and explore experiences” (46). This focus on process and experience is crucial when helping communities develop skills for future use, such as language learning (Bushe 2011; Kovach 2009).

Larson (2017) draws attention to the parallel between Appreciative Inquiry and building trust with community members. She suggests that when researchers and community members work together to identify and celebrate strengths within the community, negative thinking and blame can be avoided. This aspect of Appreciative Inquiry is especially important for non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous communities, as it not only ensures a respectful approach to research, but also offers a way to move forward in reconciliation.

Appreciative Inquiry was helpful during my research in both overt and subtle ways. When designing my survey, I made a conscious effort to frame the majority of my questions and statements in a positive way. Since my survey was adapted from a previous study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, I strategically reworded some of the original survey statements using more optimistic language. I will further discuss the reason for this later in this chapter. My deliberate use of positive language in my survey is an example of the overt way Appreciative Inquiry was used in my methods. Upon reflecting on my ethnographic fieldwork, I found that I had applied Appreciative Inquiry to many situations without realizing it at the time. For instance, during my participant-observation, I was able to quickly build relationships with various members of each community. My conversations with community members in Saanich often focused on something fun, interesting, and/or new that we had done in the workshop.

In Atka, I had many conversations with Crystal Dushkin, who is the mayor of Atka and language teacher at the Atka School. Our conversations tended toward the benefits of WAYK, as well as discussing the success of the revitalization work they are doing. With the high school boys in Atka, my conversations were less focused on language, and more focused on their interests. For instance, I often talked with them about their favourite hobbies, movies, and video games.

Regardless of the context of our conversations, taking a positive approach to the conversations helped establish a stronger relationship with each individual, and helped build trust (Larson 2017). Establishing trust and understanding was significant to the success of my interviews in Atka. Prior to our interviews, I spent one-on-one time with each individual that I had planned to interview. This allowed me to have these types of regular conversations, which

ultimately helped guide my interview questions, and allowed for an honest space to share thoughts.

Appreciative Inquiry was also valuable to my autoethnography because it allowed me to discuss my own negative past language learning experiences, while emphasizing the positive experiences I had during my research. This was a personally rewarding part of my research because it allowed to me to reflect on my own progress as a language learner, which in itself is powerful. I was also able to comment on the broader benefits of this research, because some of the community members I talked to also experienced significant growth as language learners for the same reasons that I did.

2.2.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is a methodological process that uses data collected in the field to create a theory upon analysis of said data rather than entering the field with a theoretical framework already in mind (Corbin 2017). Grounded Theory also acknowledges that experiences in research can often change the direction of research (Charmaz 2016; Mruck & Mey 2011). In the case of community-engaged research, and specifically language revitalization, it is important to allow for a more “community-up” approach, wherein the community directly shapes the research. This idea is important to me, as a researcher, because it helps to create a more reciprocal relationship, which can transform the power dynamic between researcher and community. This is not only an important step in reciprocity, but also in ethical research practice. For example, while it is impossible to enter research from a completely objective angle, without preconceptions, I made a genuine attempt to allow the results of the survey to guide my analysis

rather than preconceived ideas, since I also anticipated that once I was analyzing the data, those preconceptions could change.

2.3 Methods

I employed four research methods, including an online survey, participant-observation, autoethnography, and interviews. When choosing my methods, I wanted to ensure that each method would adhere to my ethical considerations for this project, and I carefully planned how to conduct research using the methods listed above. I chose autoethnography as a way to write about my experiences in the communities that I visited, in addition to the findings from my participant-observation. In the early stages of thesis writing, as well as my Behavioural Ethics Board application, I specifically noted that I would only conduct interviews if it felt right to do so in the community. For this reason, I needed to ensure that my other methods would provide sufficient data to use in this thesis.

2.3.1 Participant-Observation

Participant-observation can be a broad term for a particular method of research in many disciplines. Within anthropology, it is defined as a qualitative research method where the researcher participates in the activities and lifestyle of the observed, or researched, in order to understand the culture from the perspective of the people within it (Elliot et al. 2016). For my own research, participant-observation was an important part of my fieldwork, as it allowed me to build relationships with community members and have meaningful discussion with them about language revitalization.

As previously mentioned, the fieldwork aspect of my research took place with WAYK in both a workshop in Saanich, B.C. (Figure 2.1) and a revitalization program in Atka, Alaska

(Figure 2.2). For each event, I employed participant-observation as my method. Specifically, I participated in each event and I observed my surroundings in order to write about the experience in a self-reflexive autoethnography. In this chapter, I will discuss what I did at and after each event, while the results of my fieldwork will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

The first WAYK event I went to was the weeklong workshop in Saanich, British Columbia, at the end of August 2017. Here, I learned about the techniques and methods that WAYK uses for language teaching, and in doing so, came to better understand how this teaching program fits into a language revitalization framework. Having a better understanding of the WAYK structure and methods allows for myself, and other individuals, to apply it to future revitalization work. The second WAYK event was my trip to Atka, Alaska, where I attended a portion of their language revitalization program. I visited for two week in September/October 2017. During this time, I had the chance to witness revitalization work first-hand, using the techniques and methods I learned in the workshop previous to this trip.

In both the WAYK workshop and Atka visit, I gathered information through participant-observation about the interpersonal factors that contribute to environment stress-levels, such as learning atmosphere and student relationships, as well as impacts on learner identity. Participation in the language lessons allowed me to learn as a student, build relationships with my peers, and understand the overall learning process. By observing, I gained a different perspective on the class setting, as an outsider who was focused on details about behaviour and pedagogical methods. During and after each visit, I used autoethnography to reflect on my own experiences and feelings in order to establish a connection with and better understand the experiences of community members.



Figure 2.1: Saanich, British Columbia (Photo by R. Achilles, September 01, 2017)



Figure 2.2: Atka, Alaska (Photo by R. Achilles, October 02, 2017)

Saanich

The workshop ran for a total of five days, from 9:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. I arrived one day early to help Evan and Susanna, the creators of WAYK, set up the workshop in the space provided by the ŁÁU, WELNEW_Tribal School, who was hosting the workshop. This workshop was hosted for the teachers at the ŁÁU, WELNEW_Tribal School, as a way to help them learn new language teaching methods and techniques that they could incorporate into their classrooms. The teachers already use a variety of teaching methods, but advocated for a WAYK workshop to learn some of their specific techniques.

Evan emphasized how important it was to set up a visually appealing room, noting that it helps students stay focused on lessons, as opposed to being distracted by clutter or irrelevant décor. Evan, Susanna, and I hung up multiple posters and maps, in addition to setting up specific stations where activities would be held. The posters were colourful, and sometimes had pictures that accompanied the content (see Figure 2.1). The information on them either briefly explained how to set up and conduct a particular language-related activity, provided a list of language learning resources, or provided tips for relaxing. The maps were strategically placed near the food tables in order to evoke conversation while waiting in line. This was very effective, as I found myself referring to the map and showing people where I was from, while also learning where their hometowns were. We also set up various stations where particular activities and demonstrations would be held throughout the week. The activities varied in content, but their main purpose was to demonstrate a particular teaching method.

On the first day of the workshop, everybody sat in a circle after they arrived and we all introduced ourselves. We each spent about five minutes sharing where we were from and why we were at the workshop. This was a really nice way to get acquainted before activities, and also

provided us with information to chat about during breaks. Evan and Susanna gave a brief overview of different WAYK techniques and terms, and explained some of the basic ones we would be using throughout the week. We were supposed to try and use these techniques as often as possible in the workshop, so that the teachers could get comfortable with them and apply them to their own classrooms.

The remainder of the workshop days were structured in a similar way. Each day we would learn about new techniques and teaching methods in the morning, break for lunch, and then participate in demo lessons using what we had learned that morning. During lunch breaks, I had the opportunity to talk with various community members in a casual way, which turned out to be one of my favourite aspects of my participant-observation. I enjoyed getting to know the workshop participants better, and often we would share interesting stories that were not related to language in any way. For example, one Elder shared a story with me about some adventures she had at the beach as a teenager. This was not relevant to anything we had learned in the workshop, but it was an interesting and funny conversation that left me feeling like I knew her better than I did before lunch. In this moment, I finally experienced why participant-observation was a great research method. It allows researchers to have these types of “everyday” conversations just for the sake of building relationships, as opposed to having conversations solely focused on an individual’s research interests.



Figure 2.3: Saanich Language Classroom (Photo by R. Achilles, August 30, 2017)

Atka

As mentioned previously, I visited Atka with WAYK for two weeks in the fall of 2017. Atka is a small island in the Aleutian/Pribilof Island chain, where they speak the Western dialect of Unangam Tunuu, called Niigûgîm Tunuu. The individuals who live on the Aleutian Islands and speak Unangam Tunuu are known as the Unangax̂ people. Atka has an estimated population of 70 people. I spoke to a number of individuals during my stay, and found it difficult to gather an estimate of how many fluent speakers of Niigûgîm Tunuu were left on the island. When I asked, some individuals estimated there could be as few as ten fluent speakers, while others

estimated closer to twenty speakers. I will address this variation and its potential causes later in Chapter Four.

During my time in Atka, Evan, Susanna, and I spent weekdays at the school helping Crystal. We helped her reassess her language program goals in order to help get her re-situated after a late start to the school year. We also helped her strategize ways to keep the high school boys involved in language revitalization after they graduate high school.² I also participated in language classes and I will discuss how a typical language class ran in Chapter Four. In the evenings, and on weekends, Evan, Susanna, and I would often visit with community members in their homes, or attend an event we had been invited to. For example, on my first night in Atka, we went to a community potluck, where I had a chance to meet many individuals I would see again over the duration of my stay.

2.3.2 Autoethnography

As a method, autoethnography entails reflecting on one's own experience, often through some form of writing. Broadly, autoethnography as a research method demands that researchers reflect on their own experiences within a specific research context (Botha 2011; Grenier 2015). In doing so, researchers often compare their experiences to those of others, or, to the perceived experience of others. Within the context of my research, wherein I participated in various language learning and teaching events, I was reminded of my background with language learning and therefore entered the new situation with a particular ideal in mind.

Autoethnography also serves as a writing strategy in which individuals can reflect on their experiences post-fieldwork. As Grenier and Collins (2016) suggest, "autoethnography is

² All of the high school boys are expected to have graduated by the end of the 2019 school year.

unique in that it embraces a subjective lens, and the subject of knowledge and observation are one and the same, allowing for the researcher to be both subject and object” (363). This recognizes that the researcher is tasked with gaining critical insight, which hopefully also results in transformative self-reflection.

As fairly standard practice for fieldwork, I kept notes during my time with both WAYK events. During the day, I kept notes on interesting things I learned and observed. For example, I often wrote down new techniques that WAYK taught us. I also kept a daily journal, which I usually wrote in at night, after I had a chance to process the day’s events. This was a personal account of my experiences, including how I felt upon reflecting on the day. This was the more self-reflexive aspect to my writing in the field. I wrote about exciting moments, which included learning new words, such as *kuusxiḵ* (cat) in *Niigûgĩm Tunuu*. I also noted particularly moving moments, such as when an individual shared a personal traumatic experience with me.

Both my daily note taking and journal writing helped me formulate discussion for various chapters in this thesis. They also helped me to better understand the experiences of others once I reached the data analysis stage of my research, which Chapters Four and Five will address.

2.3.3 Survey

Survey Development

In order to understand a broader range of perspectives on language learning environments and their effect on individuals, I created an online survey called the Endangered Language Learning Emotion Scale (ELLES). It was based on an earlier survey called the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), created as part of Horwitz et al.’s research on language anxiety in a specific classroom setting (Horwitz et al. 1986) (see Appendix A). FLCAS was

distributed to a Spanish language class, in order to help determine the levels of language anxiety amongst students, as well as some of the causes of their language anxiety. In FLCAS, participants had the option to respond to statements with Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. They answered based on how much they agreed with a particular statement.

Their article and survey piqued my interest because I felt a personal connection to their findings. They specifically discussed aspects of language anxiety that I have experienced, such as anxiety about speaking a target language. This article was empowering to read, because I realized language anxiety is something that other students experience, too.

Additionally, I liked the themes that their survey statements explored, such as performance anxiety and the comparison of self to others. I wanted to create a survey that explored these themes, as well as others, within an endangered language context, and felt it would be beneficial to mimic the concept of FLCAS while altering the content to suit my own research. Since my research examines the wide range of emotions associated with language learning and revitalization, I wanted the statements in the survey to reflect these broader emotions, rather than focusing exclusively on anxiety.

In order to adapt FLCAS to my own research, I also needed to change the wording of the statements for two reasons. First, the wording needed to be more inclusive of various learning contexts. For example, FLCAS was predominately focused on classroom learning, so the statements reflected that. But, for ELLES, I chose to use the term “learning environment” to reflect that language revitalization often occurs outside of traditional Western classrooms.

Second, I wanted to create statements that reflected the positive approach of one of my methodologies, Appreciative Inquiry. As previously noted, this methodology focuses on the

positive aspects of how something functions, rather than on the negative aspects, in order to continue productivity. The statements ultimately explore themes such as identity, motivation to learn their target language, domains of use of the language, and their confidence in language use. Therefore, ELLES consists of forty questions, which aim to understand the emotions associated with learning an endangered language. Similar to FLCAS, the answers that respondents can choose are primarily on a Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree scale. Two questions ask respondents to rate their own introversion or extroversion on a scale from 1 to 10. There is also one question that allows for a written response, which will be addressed later.

Establishing Anxiety Baseline

Although my research is not specifically focused on anxiety within language learning, it was important to establish a baseline to assess an individual's general level of comfort or anxiety in daily life. This was significant because as previous literature has noted, language learners often have situational anxiety, meaning a specific situation causes distress or unease. For example, it is often noted that language learners may be anxious to speak in their target language, but, they may also have performance anxiety in their first language as well, since public speaking can be uncomfortable for certain individuals (Dewaele et al. 2008; MacIntyre 2007). This information further encouraged me to include questions that establish an anxiety baseline in order to understand what sorts of emotions are typical in a respondent's daily life (see Appendix B).

As well, it should be noted that I have specifically used the word "statements" when referring to the survey because of the nature of its structure. The survey does not have traditional

questions, aside from the demographic questions previously noted, but rather statements for which respondents can select how strongly they agree or disagree.

Potential Limitations

I have identified two possible limitations to this survey. The first is a potential limitation regarding the form of the survey. For instance, since the survey is both online and multiple-choice, respondents do not have the ability to elaborate on every question. This can result in a lack of understanding behind particular responses. In order to address this, I created a space at the end of the survey where participants can elaborate on a particular answer or provide additional feedback if they feel it is necessary. Having a space for an individual to express their voice was important because the issues regarding language endangerment are complex, and therefore comments on these issues may be too.

The second potential limitation is concerned with some of the wording within the survey. Since I adapted it from FLCAS, I kept some of their original questions in the original wording. However, I changed the wording of other questions, or added my own new questions to better reflect my research goals and methodologies. Since FLCAS used terms specific to the types of language use, such as speaking or writing, I decided to keep a majority of that wording because initially I felt it was still applicable to endangered language learning. However, upon analysis of the written responses, I realized that “use” was a more inclusive term for broadly referencing aspects of language such as reading, writing, and speaking. For example, I could have phrased a statement as:

“I feel comfortable when I *use* the language with my family”

In this example, “use” replaces the term “speak” and allows for a general acknowledgement of various types of language use, rather than solely emphasizing speaking. In the next chapter, I will discuss specific responses that ultimately brought me to this conclusion.

Coding

In order to analyze my survey results, I decided on two separate coding systems: one for the multiple-choice statements and one for written portion. Since I acquired a large amount of primarily quantitative data (97 total survey responses), I felt it was important to conduct a separate analysis for the written responses. As written responses allow individuals to share personal opinions, they are more qualitative than answers that generate strictly numeric responses, and, therefore, require an analytical approach better suited to qualitative data.

Coding Multiple-Choice Responses

Since my survey had several sections, including demographics, language learning, intro- and extroversion, and an anxiety baseline, I had to analyze my data using multiple approaches. For the demographics questions, I calculated basic statistics that showed the distribution of age, gender, and Indigenous or non-Indigenous self-identification. The statements that established an anxiety baseline shared an identical structure to the language learning statements, in that a respondent rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. To code these, I assigned numbers (codes) to each response option:

Strongly Agree = 1
Agree = 2
Neutral = 3
Disagree = 4
Strongly Disagree = 5

Then, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, I ran a statistical analysis on the data, which provided me with the mean values of each response. This provided the data that I will discuss in Chapter Three.

Coding Written Responses

In order to analyze written responses, which all varied in length, I began highlighting specific phrases that indicated keywords or themes, such as identity or past experiences with language learning. I will discuss these findings in Chapter Three. In order to code the written responses, I used the qualitative analysis software NVivo, which helped me code themes in the written responses, to see how many responses shared a theme. This also allowed me to easily extract quotes on topics related to my research questions, which are also discussed in Chapter Three.

Surveys as Research Method

Surveys as a data collection method have advantages for a number of reasons. First, they are a convenient way to collect a larger amount of responses than other methods allow. Respondents to my survey were located all over the world. This provided insight on international language revitalization that complemented my ethnographic fieldwork, which was focused in a North American context. Second, this survey was online and anonymous, which meant that there was no personal interaction between participants and myself. Since the questions were multiple-choice, they did not require participants to share complex personal experiences. The participants were only asked to rank how they felt during certain experiences. This, paired with the

anonymity, created a lower-risk environment for participants, and allowed for more comfort in contributing.

2.3.4 Interviews

For part of my fieldwork in Atka, I chose to gather more qualitative data through personal interviews. When I was planning my fieldwork, I had not yet met any of the WAYK learners in Atka. I had been in contact with the facilitators, Evan Gardner and Susanna Ciotti, who were eager to have me join them for two WAYK events. Being mindful of ethical community-engaged research, I prepared interview questions for both language learners and facilitators partaking in WAYK. However, I decided to approach individuals for an interview only once I got to know them, if it felt appropriate and if they seemed eager to participate.

Designing Interview Questions

When considering the types of questions I wanted to ask potential interviewees, I was mindful of two factors. First, I wanted the interview questions to fit with the broader themes that ELLES responses elicited. For instance, I designed questions that explored themes of identity, motivation for language learning, and domains of language use. In doing so, I asked some of the same questions that appeared in the survey that I wanted to know more about. By having recurring themes and questions in both the survey and interviews, I was able to make a stronger connection between each part of my research.

Second, I tried to create questions that allowed for room to elaborate so that interviewees could share their own experiences and thoughts. Sometimes, this meant simply asking “why” after they provided a short response, but other times it meant framing the question in a way that

allowed for the individual to share an experience. For example, this question was designed to elicit more of a narrative response:

“Could you describe a really positive language learning experience you had?”

By asking the individual to describe an event, it allowed them to better express their thoughts and emotions as compared to answering a fact-based question. This strategy not only maintained the qualitative nature of interviews, but also valued individual narrative as a form of data collection.

Conducting Interviews

Upon gaining informed consent, I recorded the interviews so that I could later transcribe them for future reference. I chose to use audio recording rather than video for two main reasons. First, I wanted to help my interviewees feel as comfortable as possible, and second, I wanted to create a comfortable atmosphere to allow for more natural conversation to occur during the interviews. By setting up a small audio recording device, and using my iPhone’s recording app for backup, it was easy to create a space in which a normal conversation would occur. I felt that having a video camera or intrusive recording devices would feel unnatural, as those objects are not normally present in the spaces where I conducted my interviews.

While conducting interviews for information was important, I also wanted to make sure the questions allowed for emotional responses since this was the focus of the research. Even though I put a great deal of effort into structuring the interview questions, they were ultimately designed as a guide rather than a specific script to follow. I initially anticipated that this would create a more relaxed interview for both the interviewee and myself, which I hoped would feel more like a conversation than an actual interview. Using questions as a guide also allowed for a

potential interviewee to expand more on a topic or tangent, and gave them the choice to skip particular questions or topics.

Transcriptions & Coding

I conducted six interviews during my time in Alaska. In Atka, I interviewed three high school students, Timothy Zaochney, Nate Williams, and Junior Golodoff, three of four students attending high school in Atka, as well as the high school language teacher Crystal Dushkin. In Dutch Harbour, I interviewed Evan Gardner and Susanna Ciotti from WAYK. Their interview was joint, and it was the first one I did before we arrived in Atka.

I transcribed all of my interviews while I was still in the field. It was convenient to transcribe immediately when the interview was still fresh in my mind. This allowed me to make notes as I went along about aspects that the audio recording did not capture, such as gestures and facial expressions. In my interview with Nate, for example, he pointed to several posters around the room, but that is not explicitly said in the recording. So, I made note of things like this to provide context when referring back to my transcriptions at a later date.

As I transcribed, I also made note of patterns I noticed in people's responses to my questions. The themes I ultimately decided to code for were: 1) Motivation for language revitalization work, 2) Stressful aspects to revitalization work, and 3) How WAYK has helped with language learning and/or revitalization. This eventually formed my discussion in Chapter Four, and helped answer my research questions, which is addressed in Chapter Five.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of this project extend beyond the protocols outlined by the University of British Columbia's Research Ethics Board. I was committed to providing not only ethical, but also reciprocal research practices to each community and individual I worked with. I wanted to ensure that this research was fulfilling to the communities as well as the survey respondents, and not only to me as a researcher.

Since I could not establish personal rapport with individuals who completed my online survey, I provided a consent form at the beginning of it that outlined my research focus, stated how this information would be used, and acknowledged their right to remain anonymous, or provide a name to attach to the information they provided. All survey participants chose to remain anonymous.

In both Saanich and Atka, I clearly explained to the community members that I worked with the method of data collection I would be using and offered them the opportunity to view any notes I took, including copies of interview transcripts. I also explained that I would like to use this data for my thesis research, future publications, and conference presentations, which people were excited to hear. A number of individuals in both communities expressed their hope that my contributions to research in this field would help continue the conversation on language revitalization. Ultimately, their hope is that future generations will have ample resources and funding to continue revitalization work.

The process to obtain permission for my survey differed from the process for my ethnographic fieldwork. For the survey, I obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Research Board, and then included a consent form at the beginning of the online survey for potential respondents to read. At the end of the consent form, I asked if the individual agreed (consented)

to the above information. If they selected “yes” they were brought to the first page of the survey, but if they selected “no” then the survey was terminated.

For my ethnographic fieldwork, first I contacted WAYK to establish whether or not a partnership with them would be beneficial to them, and/or possible given their busy schedule. After WAYK and I discussed our course of action, I obtained permission to conduct this portion of research from the Ethics Review Board. Third, I wrote a letter outlining my research goals, potential benefits and risks to community members, and academic uses of this research. I sent this letter to WAYK, which they provided to the director of the language program at the ŁÁU, WELNEW_Tribal School (for permission to visit Saanich), and to the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association (APIA) and the City of Atka (for permission to visit Atka).

Once I was at the ŁÁU, WELNEW_Tribal School, I introduced myself to the group attending the workshop, and explained what my participant-observation entailed, and how I would be using the experiences in my research. People were intrigued, and many individuals asked me to elaborate on my project more during our breaks.

Upon approval from APIA to visit and conduct research in Atka, I was in contact Crystal, the mayor and language teacher (as mentioned above). We had a video call, where we discussed more about what I planned to do during my visit, what my research was, and what would be going on at the school during the time of my visit. When I arrived in Atka, I told various individuals throughout my stay who I was, where I was from, and why I was there.

When conducting my interviews in Atka, I asked everyone if they were comfortable with having their names identified in my thesis. When everyone agreed, they signed consent forms to acknowledge this. Before I interviewed anyone, I gave each person a chance to review the consent form and the list of questions I might ask. I made sure that everyone knew they could

stop the interview at any time, and that they could chose not to talk about a particular question or topic. I also stressed that they were in no jeopardy if they changed their mind about doing an interview, being included in the thesis, or having their identity disclosed.

I provided honorariums for each individual I interviewed. I gave the high school boys a Canadian themed keepsake, as well as maple candies. I was informed before I left Canada that the boys enjoyed gifts like that, so I made sure to bring some. For Crystal, I was advised by WAYK that providing money in the form of a gift card or cheque would not be appropriate in this situation, as it may place Crystal in a bad position since she occupies multiple roles in Atka. They wanted to ensure that other community members would not mistake an honorarium as a form of income, and consequently become upset with Crystal for not setting them up for interviews with me.

With this consideration in mind, WAYK and I decided to donate some fresh groceries, such as eggs, fruits, and veggies, to Crystal and her family. Due to the island's isolated nature, individuals do not get a chance to grocery shop on a regular basis, so fresh produce is always highly valued. Since I had also spent time with Crystal's daughters, I made them each a string bracelet to match the ones they gave me on my first day in Atka. For Evan and Susanna, I gave them each a leather-cover notebook, since they always carry one notebook with them wherever they go. I noticed this when we met in Saanich, and thought it would be a useful and sentimental gift.

I donated some classroom supplies such as notebooks, pens, and pencils to the school. I also donated some tea to the language classroom, as teatime was not only a central part to my time there, but is a core part of their language curriculum. I also provided \$250 for our housing

accommodations in Atka, to an Elder who let us use her house while she was in Anchorage for the winter.

2.5 Summary

The methods I chose proved to be complimentary to my research, which I will elaborate on in the coming chapters. My survey generated a significant number of responses worldwide, which provided interesting data that helped inform my ethnographic fieldwork both broadly, and with specific regard to interview questions. Appreciative Inquiry informed my actions in each community, but also allowed me to focus on the progress I have made as a language learner, while still discussing my past negative experiences in my autoethnography. Grounded Theory helped me keep an open mind and embrace the unpredictable nature of community-engaged research. After completing my research, I found it easy to draw conclusions from and formulate theories about my data using Grounded Theory. I believe these methodologies allowed me to conduct research that was informed, reciprocal, and most importantly, respectful (Kirkness & Barnhardt 1999; Kovach 2009).

Chapter 3: Survey Results

“Although I'm not Indigenous, my partner is and him and his mother were speakers. He lost it after being adopted and his mother has since passed, and we're slowly learning in her honour as well as for his nephew and any future children we have”

(ELLES Respondent #1)

3.0 Outline

As previously mentioned, the Endangered Language Learning Emotion Scale (ELLES) is an online survey aimed at better understanding the wide-range of emotions an individual may experience when learning an endangered language. The survey was open for responses for four months, from the beginning of May 2017 until the end of August 2017. Its results wildly exceeded my expectations in both content and quantity. These results also provided an abundance of data that helped inform my fieldwork in Atka, Alaska.

3.1 General Results

ELLES reached twenty countries, and five inhabited continents (see Figure 3.1), with a total of 67 reported languages (see Appendix C). There were a total of 97 individual responses to this survey, but the total number of applicable responses was 89. Eight responses were not included in the final statistical analysis due to a lack of usable data. This was determined by two factors: the level of completion and the category of language. If approximately half of the survey's multiple-choice questions were completed, I determined the survey's level of completion to be adequate for use. In a few instances, only the demographic section of the survey questions were completed, and I therefore deemed the response to be unusable.

In regards to the “category of language,” I decided not to include languages that were not widely considered to be endangered. In three instances, respondents reported that they were

learning majority languages (two instances of French and one of English), which made the data unusable since the survey was specifically designed for endangered language learning.

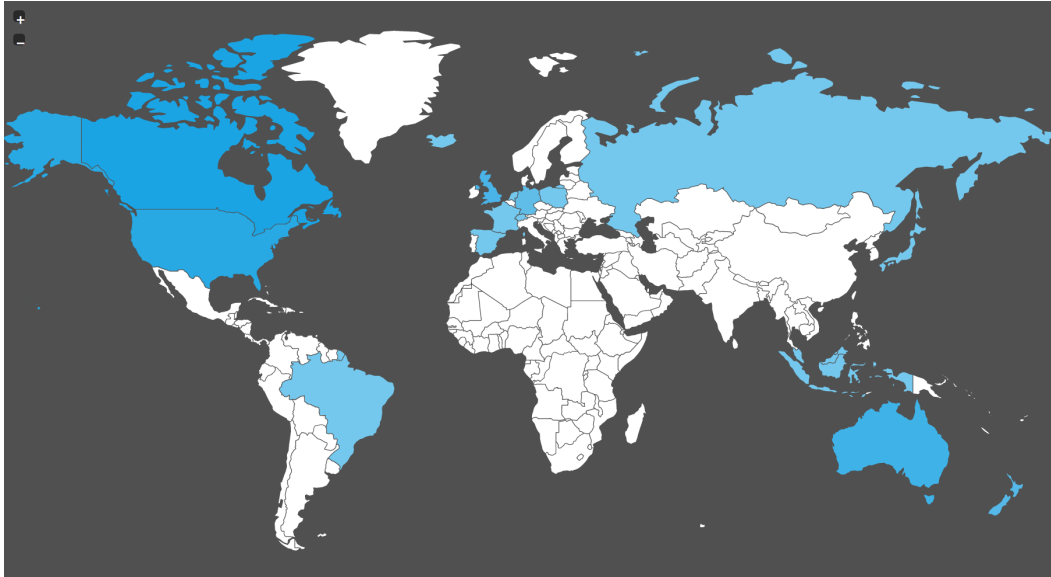


Figure 3.1: Usable Survey Response Distribution Map

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the sections of the survey included: demographics, statements about how people feel while learning a language, and statements to establish an anxiety baseline. In addition to the ELLES Questions on the survey, I included sections labeled: Demographics, Language, and Self-Evaluation. I also included six un-labeled questions at the end of the survey, which were designed to help establish an anxiety baseline.

Additionally, I grouped the statements about how people feel while learning into their own categories, such as 1) Domains of Use, 2) Language Learning, and 3) Identity. This seemed like a convenient way to organize the survey for future data analysis. However, I worried that if I did so, I might get some question categories consistently completed and others not. For instance, if I had arranged the questions to be in three categories, and someone only filled out the first twelve questions, then their results would only provide data within the first category. While my

questions could still be placed into the aforementioned categories, I decided to place the questions in a random order throughout the survey. This structure helped ensure that even if only half of the survey was completed, participants were responding to questions that covered each category. In hindsight, this proved to be an advantageous strategy since 18 of respondents did not complete all of the survey questions. These categories eventually became the codes I used when analyzing my data, which I will address below.

3.1.1 Demographics

There were eight questions to determine the basic demographics of respondents and their language history (see Appendix B). I gathered demographic information to help establish a basic understanding of the survey participants. This demographic information was also useful in my analysis of the rest of the survey data because it provided a reference point for comparing data. For instance, as gender became a focus for the survey results, having the demographic information on this category and others, such as age range, helped me establish patterns in the rest of the survey results.

The majority of respondents (40.4%) were between 18 and 30 years of age, while only (22.5%) were over the age of 55. The high number of young participants could be due to the fact that I promoted my survey on two forms of social media (Facebook and Twitter), as well as through various university departments via email.

3.1.2 Gender Analysis of Multiple-Choice Responses

Some literature suggests that women tend to play a more active role in language revitalization (Cotter 1999; Hinton & Hale 2001; Kroskrity 1993; Meek 2014). As Meek (2014)

suggests, in some cultures, women's roles in language transmission (and revitalization) have generally been restricted to private spaces, such as the home. Meanwhile, men have occupied the more public spaces of linguistic practice, as they tended to deal with more political and bureaucratic domains. Importantly, she states, "[t]his pattern, though, does not necessarily place the future of endangered languages and the success of language revitalization on the shoulders, or in the mouths, of women" (550-551). This acknowledges that language transmission and revitalization are not responsibilities exclusive to women, and encourages participation of all ages and genders. Language revitalization is a community effort, and should be carried out as such.

As I began collecting survey responses, I noticed an immediate trend in the written responses. Women exclusively provided positive feedback, praised the survey, or provided a personal anecdote, while men exclusively critiqued an aspect of the survey. I had already expected women to be more likely to praise the survey or revitalization work, based on the previously mentioned literature that suggests women have more active positions in revitalization work. This, coupled with the trend I noticed in written responses led me to anticipate that females would respond more positively than males in the multiple-choice section. More importantly, I hypothesized that there would be a significant statistical difference in their responses. A series of independent sample t-tests were conducted to investigate this hypothesis. Statistical analyses revealed that the multiple-choice responses demonstrated almost no difference in data based on the respondent's identified gender (see Table 3.1). There were three statements that provided responses that were the exception to this, seen in Table 3.2

Table 3.1: Means for Multiple-Choice Statement Responses

Category for Multiple-Choice Statements	Gender	Mean	p-value
Language Learning	M	3.02	>.05
	F	2.90	
Identity	M	2.56	>.05
	F	2.39	
Domains of Use	M	2.31	>.05
	F	2.38	

*Responses were made on an integer scale from 1-5 where 1 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Neutral, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

The data in Table 3.1 shows the mean values for all multiple-choice responses to the ELLES Questions portion of the survey.³ The Language Learning category contains all multiple-choice questions that are exclusively about some aspect of language learning, such as the following statements:

3. I get nervous when I know that I'm going to be called on during the lesson.

6. I keep thinking that the other students are learning the language quicker than I am.

8. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation during the language lessons.

I found that the responses in this category for men were slightly more neutral (3.02) than they were for women (2.90). This is not a statistically significant difference, and in fact demonstrates that both men and women tended to select Neutral (3) to statements in this category more often than they did for statements in the other categories.

The Identity category contains statements that investigate the connection between identity and language learning in some way, such as these statements:

³ These mean values do not include the demographic questions, anxiety baseline, or introversion/extroversion scale.

9. I worry about the consequences of not learning this language.

10. Learning this language is important to me.

Responses from both men and women average between Agree (2) and Neutral (3), but still, men's responses were slightly more neutral with a mean of 2.56, as compared to the women's mean of 2.39. There were no significant difference between Identity ratings for men and women. These results suggest that men and women tended to agree, or select neutral, to statements in this category.

Finally, the Domains of Use category contains all statements related to where an individual might use language, such as:

12. I enjoy speaking the language with others during the lessons.

25. I use the language outside of the learning environment.

27. I feel comfortable speaking the language with my family.

This category demonstrates the importance of using a target language across multiple domains. For instance, statement 27 (above) examined whether or not individuals are using their target language at home, as opposed to solely using the language in their learning environment.

This category yielded the most positive mean values for both men and women. The mean for men's responses was 2.31, which is slightly more positive than the women's mean, which was 2.38. Again, these do not represent a statistically significant difference. This data suggests that men and women tended to agree with statements in this category as compared to the other two categories.

As noted above, statements in these categories did not produce a statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference, with the exception of those mentioned in Table 3.2 (below).

Table 3.2: Exceptions to Gender Differences in Responses

Statement from Survey	Gender	Mean	t-value	p-value
5. I was excited to start these language lessons. (Category: Language Learning)	M	1.68	2.38	.03
	F	1.29		
10. Learning this language is important to me. (Category: Identity)	M	1.44	2.14	.04
	F	1.18		
11. During language lessons, sometimes I forget things I know when I'm nervous. (Category: Language Learning)	M	2.6	2.11	.04
	F	2.1		

*Responses were made on a integer scale from 1-5 where 1 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Neutral, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 3.2 shows the three statements that elicited a statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference between men's and women's responses. In all three statements, women responded more positively than men did. For statement 5, 91% of respondents chose either Agree or Strongly Agree as a response. Meanwhile, for statement 10, 96% of respondents selected either Agree or Strongly Agree for the statement.

For statement 11, men tended to select Neutral as compared to women, who tended to select Agree. This statement refers to language lessons, which I believe caused some confusion. Language lessons, for the purpose of the entire survey, referred to any instance in which language instruction occurred. This includes non-traditional teaching/learning methods, such as mentor-apprentice programs, language immersion camps, and language immersion houses. However, in the written section of the survey, some respondents (all of which were men) commented that they understood language lessons to mean traditional classroom style teaching and learning. Perhaps this misunderstanding resulted in men selecting Neutral, as they may have felt that classroom-style learning did not apply to their experiences.

I have discussed one potential factor that produced a statistically significant difference between men and women with regard to some statements that included the term “lesson.” There may be other unknown factors that influenced how an individual answered. For instance, some individuals may be more conservative in their responses, in general. This means that some people may tend not to select either extremes of Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree, but rather they tend toward the more conservative Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. This is just one example of an alternative factor that may have influenced how people answered this survey, and why there may (or may not) be significant difference between men’s and women’s answers. For this reason, I cannot say with certainty that any of these factors were an absolute cause of the statistical difference I observed.

3.2 Additional Survey Questions

In the beginning of my research, I was still interested in exploring how anxiety affected individual’s experiences with language. However, once I decided to analyze gender in relation to the survey responses, using information from the Self-Assessment and the anxiety baseline were ultimately outside of the scope of this thesis. For this reason, these questions appear in the survey, but are not discussed further in this thesis.

The Demographics and Language categories were important in establishing basic information about who was answering the survey. The Demographics section asked for information such as an individual’s age range and their gender, while the Language section asked for information about the specific endangered language they were learning (or had previously learned). While this information has not been discussed at length, it is both interesting and important to understand who the respondents were. As noted in earlier in this Chapter, some

responses were not used based solely on the fact that the language name provided by the individual was not actually endangered. Information like this was extremely important in my data analysis because it provided insight into multiple parts of an individual's responses. For example, data such as the age of respondents can show which generations are involved in language revitalization, generally, as well as the revitalization efforts for a specific language. Age can also provide some context for other parts of the response, such as the written comments or methods of language learning.

3.3 Written Responses

As mentioned above, the survey had one question that allowed respondents to add a written comment. This question was designed to encourage feedback and/or allow individuals to elaborate on particular questions, since the rest of the survey was multiple-choice. I wanted to have a qualitative component to the survey for multiple reasons, but above all else, I wanted to provide a space for individual opinions. In my own personal experience responding to surveys with primarily multiple-choice questions, I have always appreciated the opportunity to provide additional comments. I felt it was especially important to provide this option in my survey because endangered languages and language revitalization can be emotional topics, and this allowed for the respondents to explain their feelings about their language in a more in-depth way.

When I initially released the survey, I thought people would use this space to briefly comment on some aspect of the survey, as noted above. I never imagined that this space would be used to share such intimate and personal stories. Some of these written responses were a poignant reminder of why language revitalization is critical in the Canadian context. Other

responses were profound revelations of individuals' journeys and struggles. I was deeply moved reading these, and am grateful to all those who shared with me.

3.3.1 Gender Analysis

Immediately after I began distributing the survey, I noticed a trend in the written responses between male and female respondents. Female responses generally consisted of insight into personal experience with language, praise of the survey and/or revitalization work, or justification for responses. Meanwhile, the male responses fell solely into providing critical feedback about some aspect of the survey. For example, some male feedback included criticism of myself, as a researcher, which is not important to their understanding of endangered languages or language revitalization. These critical male responses were surprising in relation to the female responses, as one woman went as far as to thank me for conducting this research in her comment. This stark contrast led me to anticipate that men would be far more likely select Disagree or Strongly Disagree for the ELLES Questions portion of the survey, but as noted above, this was not the case.

3.3.2 Coding & Themes

There were 32 written responses out of 71 completed responses, thus 45% of the total completed responses had a written comment. I have specifically noted 71 completed responses rather than the 89 total responses because 18 individuals did not complete the entire survey. These individuals completed enough of the survey for their responses to be considered usable, as outlined above, and were therefore still included in the total number of responses. Additionally, it is important to state that I deemed the written response as optional, so if the written response was the only answer left blank, the response was still considered completed. Out of 89 total

respondents, 64% identified as female (57) and 36% identified as male (32). For the optional written response, 21 females contributed while 11 males did. I will discuss the variance in their responses later in this chapter.

Since I had a large number of text responses, I decided to code them (looking for themes in the answers) using NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative analysis software that enables users to find themes in word documents, audio, and video files. The themes I coded for my survey written responses were: 1) identity, 2) effects of language learning, 3) family, 4) past experiences, 5) learning methods, 6) justification for responses, and 7) critiques of survey. These categories were selected based on the patterns I observed while the survey was still open. Every few days I read through new responses, and looked for themes specifically in the written portion. By uploading the text responses to NVivo, I was easily able to view patterns as I gathered more responses. Once the survey was closed, I decided on these seven codes because they all occurred multiple times, and were directly related to both emotion and identity.

During this process of collecting responses and analyzing them with NVivo, I had “emotions” as a code. However, I ultimately chose not to include emotions as a theme or code for two reasons. First, I found that emotions were so closely tied to every other code I had, including the ones listed above, that it was difficult to find a clear distinction between emotion and other codes. Eventually, I created two codes labeled “positive emotions” and “negative emotions,” because I thought these themes were quite obvious in some of the responses. However, this distinction brought me to the second reason for ultimately deciding against “emotions” as a code.

While going through this process, I realized that I was assuming too much by trying to specifically code emotions. For instance, in responses that I felt were more positive, such as

those expressing something they enjoy about language learning, I coded for “positive emotions,” as that seemed fairly obvious. But when I started receiving responses that were a little less clear, such as critiques of the survey, I struggled with categorizing them. Initially, I thought the critiques represented negative emotions. Although some certainly might have, I had to try to take a more objective look at these kinds of responses, and consider that maybe some of these critiques were meant as a genuine suggestion rather than an angry comment.

This issue I was facing is similar to misunderstanding the tone of a text message from someone. For instance, I often put periods at the ends of my sentences in a text message, and have had several friends comment that it makes me seem mad, even when they know I am not. As Collister (2017) notes, periods in text messages may appear aggressive because text messaging is commonly seen as a casual form of communication. In an email, periods and other proper punctuation are appropriate, but in text messages, they may not seem necessary. Some individuals may actually change aspects like this to better suit whomever they are texting.

As I thought more about this, I realized it was too subjective for me to essentially guess whether someone’s response fell into the positive or negative emotions codes. I did not want to misrepresent a response by coding it wrong, and so I decided to eliminate emotions as a code altogether. Referring back to my first point on this, I think eliminating emotions as a theme was ultimately a good decision because it is nearly impossible to have themes that were not connected to emotions.

Each theme mentioned above appeared in more than one written answer. This was a determining factor in whether to consider a particular category as a theme. I will discuss each theme in greater detail, but first I will address some important notes about themes and coding.

Although there are seven different themes listed, many of the responses embodied more than one theme. Often, when a response was coded for ‘family,’ it was also coded for ‘identity’ because of their close relationship. If someone specifically mentioned more than one theme, their response was coded accordingly.

Identity

Many of the responses had hints of emotions and/or identity in them, often accompanied by a glimpse into the individual’s personal life and experiences. For instance:

My father’s family is Cherokee (we are all registered citizens of the Cherokee Nation and they live on tribal lands, where I was born), but my white mother raised me, so I did not identify as indigenous. However, I strongly identify as Cherokee, like the rest of my father’s family (ELLES Respondent #44).⁴

There is often an assumption from older native speakers that younger people who are members of the community will automatically be able to learn the language better just because they have that heritage. And when learners in the situation actually experience the language learning process as extremely difficult this can be very distressing. It can be harmful to a person sense of identity even (ELLES Respondent #69).⁵

These comments are an emotional reminder of the importance and urgency of language revitalization work. Responses like these served a critical part in framing my interview questions for the fieldwork portion of my research, which I will address in Chapter Four.

Effects of Language Learning

The effects of language learning are highly varied and unique to the individual. Some individuals shared strictly positive effects of language learning, but no individuals shared strictly

⁴ All responses cited in this thesis are based on the total number of survey responses. This total includes responses that were deemed not usable in this research, as I initially numbered responses based on when I received them. This was done in order to keep track of the total number of responses for the survey.

⁵ Responses have been edited for spelling and clarity.

negative effects. Even if an individual mentioned a negative effect of language learning, he or she also included a positive effect in their response. For this reason, I labeled this theme as general effects, rather than specifically positive or negative ones.

Learning this language has been a life changing event for me, it opened up a whole new world of linguistic, cultural, literary and musical richness and beauty for me (ELLES Respondent #52)

Regarding the question 'I feel pressured to learn quickly if my language teacher is a fluent speaker.' I would not say the pressure is a result of the teacher's fluency, but a pressure experienced everyday. Thank you for conducting this survey, it is motivating to be reminded others are working towards the revitalization of languages (ELLES Respondent #8)

I learned Ojibwe under the wing of Professor Maya Chacaby at Glendon College. Her non-eurocentric ways of teaching her language made the experience fun and enriching. She created an RPG game for us to learn the verb tenses and is more happy with you trying and failing than not trying at all (Respondent #62).

These particular responses were encouraging to read because they highlight the intensity of emotions in an endangered language framework. Although individuals may experience constant pressure, they reported an overall feeling of gratitude for the opportunity to learn their language. The last comment, from Respondent #62, is an example of a positive language learning ideology that can make an incredible difference for learners. When instructors and peers value someone's attempt at using language, regardless of their fluency level, learners are encouraged to continue making these attempts in language (Supahan & Supahan 2008).

Family

Several individuals shared how learning their language was helping them honour family that has passed away, bridge gaps between generations, or create a bilingual future for children. For example:

My parents spoke the language at home when I was a child, so I still have a good passive understanding of the language - but was almost unable to actively speak. I wondered what I would do if my children (I am pregnant) wanted me to pass on this aspect of my culture, since we are living abroad. So this was the trigger for me to learn (ELLES Respondent #48).

Although I'm not Indigenous, my partner is and him and his mother were speakers. He lost it after being adopted and his mother has since passed, and we're slowly learning in her honour as well as for his nephew and any future children we have (ELLES Respondent #1).

The second response that I have shared, from Respondent #1, is also quoted at the beginning of this chapter. When I first read this response, I was moved. The response encompassed many aspects I hoped to learn about through my research. It demonstrated the desire to connect with past, present, and future generations through language, and also demonstrated how the process of learning can create a bond (Hinton 2011; see also Johnson 2017). As she notes, although she is not Indigenous, she is learning the language with her partner as to help create a meaningful connection to Indigenous identity and language for not only him, but also for their shared future together. This was the best first response to read, as it reminded me why this research, and revitalization work, is important. For this reason, I chose to draw attention to it at the beginning of the chapter.

The Family theme is particularly significant because it showcases the desire to connect with family through language. In the Canadian context, this is often complicated by the consequences of colonialism. These consequences include direct personal trauma, as well as intergenerational trauma, each of which can affect family relationships and language transmission. This is a key example of what makes language revitalization about more than just

learning the language. Often, it is also about creating relationships with and connections to others in order to maintain the language, and, identity.

Past Experiences

This theme refers to the individual's previous experiences with endangered language learning, which encompasses both positive and negative experiences. Many individuals commented on the various ways they had been taught, the relationship between their family and language, as well as the ways in which their communities affected them. One individual wrote about his preferred language learning setting, demonstrating how an online community has been more encouraging for him than a traditional classroom setting:

I prefer practicing with friends that I have made online. There is less pressure to perform and the environment is more casual and less artificial. They correct me when I make mistakes, but it feels less like competition than it sometimes feels in the classroom (ELLES Respondent #68).

Another individual shared why she has been learning Ojibwe from CD's:

Many of the questions didn't really apply to my learning situation as I am doing them alone with a CD at this point. I do hope that I can find someone who could give me lessons, but there are not many Ojibwe speakers in my area (ELLES Respondent #38).

Meanwhile, one respondent wrote about the negative impact her community had on her self-esteem, motivation, and identity. She stated:

Speaking in my community was discouraging because fluent speakers would focus only on mistakes and lament that the language was dying. I was too young and unconfident to keep trying. I felt like I had failed them. I stopped trying and just stuck to singing. I didn't believe I could learn on my own because they said I couldn't. It wouldn't be the same. They were sad I had to learn at college, but they didn't teach me when I was growing up. I felt so, so sad, and now that I'm an adult, I feel ashamed for not trying harder. But it is good to see that it's not like this anymore. Now, elders encourage young people who are learning. And the young people criticize my generation for almost letting our language die, but they don't know what it was like. It would be impossible to explain it because it would sound like we were criticizing our elders. I still feel sad for myself, but I'm happy for the language and our young people (ELLES Respondent #74).

This was perhaps the most difficult response to read because I felt a personal connection to it. Although my own language learning experience did not involve an endangered language, I experienced the feelings of failure, embarrassment, and shame. This response was powerful for a number of reasons, regardless of a personal connection. This respondent notes that she sees a change in the way endangered languages are being taught, and that she is happy for current and future learners. Being able to work through one's own negative emotions or history is incredibly difficult. But recognizing the efforts and progress others are making is profound.

This response speaks to the nature of language learning, being that there is no universal way to teach or learn language. It is not enough to learn from mistakes, because first, we must recognize when a mistake has been made.

Learning Methods

This theme was created last as I realized there were some responses that did not quite fit into the other categories. These seemingly miscellaneous responses shared a pattern, however. They all commented on the methods by which individuals had learned their language. For example:

I'm self-taught don't really do language lessons, just spend as much time as possible going around talking to people. Some people lose patience more quickly than others...it can be a bit nerve-wracking due to the cultural differences and cultural kurnta (shame), but it's rewarding when you're able to chat to people (ELLES Respondent #46).

Another individual shared a brief statement on how she learns:

I like to listen to others speaking in language and I think it helps me learn (ELLES Respondent #47).

This last response was incredible for two reasons. First, it showed the significance of listening to language. This is something that became very prominent in my fieldwork, and has been widely discussed in literature on language learning (Hinton 2008c). Second, this demonstrated the autonomy over language learning that every individual should have. Although I do not know if this individual participated in other forms of language learning, this does show that she has identified a method that works for her.

Sometimes individuals place too much emphasis on methods and techniques for teaching/learning, rather than focusing on what specifically works for them. On the surface, this comment might seem very simple, but once unpacked it holds a great deal of significance. The ideas of autonomy and auditory learning will be further explored in Chapter Four.

Justification for Multiple Choice Answers

I found that there were two instances in which people would comment to justify their responses. The first instance was to justify a particular aspect of their responses. For example, some individuals commented on why they may have selected “neutral” for particular questions:

I've answered 'neutral' to all the questions concerning lessons, as I have never had any lessons. All my learning has been informal through talking to elders. I also have a mentor that I stay with and we use the language all the time with each other (ELLES Respondent #60).

The second instance was to justify their participation in the survey. For example, some individuals noted that they were glad to participate even if they were not sure that their answers were valuable:

I do not have the usual learning experience so my responses may not be comparable with others (ELLES Respondent #22).

Many of the questions didn't really apply to my learning situation as I am doing them alone with a CD at this point. I do hope that I can find someone who could give me lessons, but there are not many Ojibwe speakers in my area (ELLES Respondent #38).

I thought this category was significant to include because it signified solidarity. Some respondents in this category stated that they felt some of the questions did not apply to their situation. However, they still participated and noted that they hoped their responses helped. From a research standpoint, all responses are valuable. But the concept of participating in something, even if you are unsure of whether or not your participation matters, is a tremendous sign of belief in the issue being explored. I am very grateful people took the time to finish the survey, not only because their information was statistically valuable, but also because their input provided me with greater understanding of solidarity in revitalization work.

Critiques of Survey

Some responses critiqued aspects of the survey, or the survey as a whole. This theme is unique in its function because it offers a space for improvement on my part, but also offers a space for unconstructive criticism. Some of these critical responses provided useful tips for future research involving surveys. In fact, as one respondent pointed out, I could have used a more general term when referring to the different ways in which language is used, rather than stating specific practices such as speaking. However, for some of my statements where I referred to a specific practice, like speaking, I was intentionally specific. As noted in Chapter Two, I wanted to relate those answers to broader literature on things such as performance anxiety. In future surveys, I could include more statements that have broader wording in order to make the statements more inclusive to the various ways in which language is used, while still connecting to literature through specific statements. Another individual noted:

These questions assume that participants are undergoing a course of formal instruction in the language. This is not the case for me. That explains, I hope, why I have answered 'neutral for so many items. I suggest that the research should consider the role of informal 'naturalistic' learning of endangered languages in family and friendship domains as well as those of formal instruction... (ELLES Respondent #23).

This particular response initially caught me off guard. In my social media posts, promoting the survey, I made sure to specifically mention the fact that this survey aimed to understand learning outside of a traditional Western context: the classroom. I also structured the questions in a way to be more inclusive for teaching/learning outside of a classroom setting, which I could emphasize more in future surveys.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have addressed the strategic choices I made when designing my survey, and how these choices impacted the survey results. By analyzing my survey data from both quantitative and qualitative frameworks, I have demonstrated the value of this data on its own while also drawing parallels to how it is situated in existing literature. In Chapters Four and Five, I will further illustrate how the themes in my survey data complement the themes in my fieldwork.

Chapter 4: Ethnographic Fieldwork Results

“[We] let them visit with each other in Unangam Tunuu and then we just listen for a while. And I think that’s really good for the guys because they don’t get to hear it a whole lot at home”

(Dushkin 2017)

4.0 Outline

My ethnographic fieldwork took part in two locations. First, I visited a Where Are Your Keys (WAYK) workshop in Saanich, B.C. Then, I visited Atka, Alaska, where WAYK has been working with the community on their language revitalization efforts for several years. WAYK is a language revitalization organization originally created by Evan Gardner, and now run with help from Susanna Ciotti. According to Evan:

WAYK is a system of techniques or tricks to teach people how to learn or teach a language quickly. So, there are tricks to other professions, like if you’re in the construction profession something like ‘measure twice cut once’ is a trick people have so that they can save a lot of time and money and agony (Gardner in Gardner & Ciotti 2017).

They work with communities, training people to not only learn their language, but also to teach it and create more fluent speakers. It is important to note that WAYK’s purpose is not to teach language itself, but rather to specifically train people in language pedagogical practices. WAYK has worked with many communities in the Pacific Northwest, and have also worked closely with many Alaskan communities.

Saanich, British Columbia

In August 2017, I participated in a weeklong workshop in Saanich, B.C., which was hosted by WAYK. As noted earlier, they worked in partnership with the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal

School, which is part of the WSÁNEĆ School Board in British Columbia. The workshop helped train teachers at the school to develop language-teaching curriculum for their language, called SENĆOTEN. There are eight reported communities where SENĆOTEN is spoken, with a total population of approximately 3,064 people in 2014. However, only 8.2% of that population are learners, with 3.4% as semi-fluent speakers, and 0.2% as fluent speakers (FPCC 2014).

Approximately fifteen teachers participated in the workshop. The School already has a successful language program in place, but they were seeking help from WAYK to train their teachers in different methods so that they could have a more diverse approach to language teaching.

WAYK is well known for its use of techniques, which are designed to help learners ease common stresses involved with language learning, such as pronunciation. A technique we commonly used was called Mumble, which can take pressure off the learner with regards to pronunciation. For example, if the student has just learned a new word and has difficulty pronouncing it, they can choose to Mumble it. This is a way for the learner to acknowledge that they may be mispronouncing a word, but will work on correcting it. I found this technique very helpful, as one of my biggest anxieties with language learning is mispronunciation. This technique allowed me to continue listening to others pronounce the words I had trouble with, which eventually gave me the confidence to say them as well.

After Evan and Susanna reviewed some additional techniques, we moved into activities, which Evan and Susanna led. As mentioned above, these activities were demo lessons, which allowed Evan and Susanna to showcase particular methods and techniques. These demo lessons also allowed us to place ourselves in the students' role, which was especially important for the teachers who planned to use these lessons in their own classrooms.

The next four days were structured very similarly. We participated in a variety of demo lessons, learned new techniques and methods, and I got to learn pieces of SENĆOTEN and Unangam Tunuu in the process. Unangam Tunuu was the demo language for the first half of the workshop; the reason for this is addressed later in this Chapter.

Over the course of the workshop, the teachers shared their ideas on how they would apply a particular method or technique in their classroom, and adapt it to their students' language needs. It was evident that many of the teachers were not only teaching different age groups, but they were also already using various teaching methods and techniques. For instance, some of the teachers were developing a language nest, while others were running a mentor-apprentice program with high school aged students.

Atka, Alaska

As mentioned, in the fall of 2017, I visited Atka, which is a small island in the Aleutian Island chain. I accompanied WAYK on one of their visits. They were returning to Atka to check in on the progress the community had made with their revitalization program since the summer of 2017, and to help them with the next phase of their program, which was to address the upcoming high school boys' graduations. WAYK tries to visit both Atka and St. Paul, another Aleutian community they work with, a few times per year to assist with their language revitalization programs.

The language program in the Atka School consists of an immersion program, where the high school students participate in language immersion every day, and the elementary-aged children participate a few times a week. There are approximately thirteen students, eight elementary and five high school. Only three of the high school students participate in language

curriculum, while all of the elementary students do. As mentioned previously, Crystal is the language teacher at the school, as well as the Mayor of Atka. She has been a learner for many years, as she grew up taking Niigugim Tunuu in school herself. As I will address, her mother is a fluent speaker, but never passed the language on to Crystal. Recently, Crystal has become the school's language teacher in order to ensure the revitalization program continues to move forward and exist for future learners.

4.1 Autoethnography & Participant-Observation

I conducted autoethnography and participant-observation in both communities – Saanich and Atka. In addition to better understanding WAYK as a language revitalization method, I was able to gain unique insight as both a language learner and teacher. Both of these roles are critical to the success of a language program, as it ensures that not only is the language is being taught, but also that someone is there to learn it.

Individuals who occupy the teacher/instructor position play a particularly important role in language revitalization. They are often charged with not only teaching, but also with creating and maintaining a community of practice (Hinton 2011). A significant part of maintaining this community is consistently checking in with learners. These check-ins are less about evaluating individual progress or fluency, and more about understanding the wellbeing of learners (Evan Gardner, personal communication, October 2017).

Throughout my education in anthropology, I felt as though I had a general understanding of what autoethnography and participant-observation meant. I have typically understood autoethnography to be defined as a way to share one's own experiences alongside the experiences of a community (Grenier & Collins 2016). However, thinking about how this would take form in the field was both exciting and intimidating. As my fieldwork approached, I began

to realize that I would soon be part of intense language learning settings, in both a workshop and community revitalization effort, which was a bit intimidating.

Saanich

The workshop was the first instance where I was challenged to confront some of my language anxiety. Since the workshop was focused on training teachers in various language pedagogical methods and techniques, we were often asked to participate in mock lessons. These lessons demonstrated the specific methods and techniques WAYK was teaching us, and we all took turns being the students and the teachers.

In these lessons, we began by using Unangam Tunuu as the demonstration language. Unangam Tunuu is the language spoken on many of the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, where WAYK also works. With the permission of the St. Paul, AK community, WAYK used Unangam Tunuu as a demo language for two reasons. First, it has a well-developed curriculum, which allows WAYK to showcase what a community can achieve and to provide well-developed examples. Second, it was a language unfamiliar to all of us at the workshop, with the exception of Evan and Susanna. This was particularly important because it ensured that our focus was on understanding the methods and techniques rather than on language transmission (for the sake of the workshop).

Atka

In Atka, my time was divided between the school and community activities. At the school, I had the chance to help Evan, Susanna, and Crystal with planning future activities and language lessons. During the school days, we spent time in the mornings preparing for language

class that afternoon, which often involved some long-term planning for curriculum as well. For example, if we determined a daily or weekly language goal, Evan and Susanna encouraged Crystal to think of a related goal for the month, or maybe even for the whole school year. They encouraged her to think of how her short-term goals could match these long-term goals. They noted how important it was to set both long-term and short-term goals with curriculum, in order to keep learners and teachers encouraged throughout the process.

Actual language lessons lasted approximately two hours, and the content often varied, though the structure was relatively consistent. We usually started the class by briefly discussing each person's class goal, then going outside to practice talking about daily events, such as the weather and if the plane had arrived from the mainland or not. A plane is only scheduled to come to Atka three times a week, and carries all of their mail, sometimes groceries, and takes community members to and from the island. Since the plane, which is dependent on weather, is a big part of everyone's lives in the community, this was an easy conversational topic with which to practice using the language.

When we returned inside, we would spend the class in immersion, and individuals usually spent time working on their regalia. Community members in Atka, including Crystal and the high school students, had a dance competition immediately following my visit, and were busy sewing their regalia⁶ for it. One of the key aspects of their language program, then, is to integrate cultural activities into their daily language time. As noted above, Crystal often brings the boys to visit Elders in their homes, while they speak to each other in Niiġuġim Tunuu and drink tea. Additionally, Crystal invites the Elders to visit their language class at the school once a

⁶ Regalia is distinctive clothing that is often worn to cultural events, and is often made from materials that are specific to the cultural group making/wearing it. The Atka regalia was for the Aleut Corporation's 45th Annual Meeting. Crystal had been helping the boys make their regalia all year, and they were putting the final touches on the outfits when I was there. They used coloured deer leather for the main panels of the regalia, and added otter fur as trim and tassels, sewing it to the leather with sinew.

week. Usually, one or two Elders visit, and either chat amongst themselves while the students listen, or the Elders and students have a conversation in Niigûgĩm Tunuu. Crystal noted that when the boys only listen to Elders speak with each other, she still feels that the boys are learning something. Since some of the boys do not get to hear the language outside of school or visits with Elders, simply hearing the language is still a productive use of their time (Dushkin 2017). While participating in a conversation provides the opportunity to practice speaking the language, listening to a language being spoken is important too (Hinton 2008c).

In each community, I gained significant insight from participating in daily activities and having regular conversations with people. In Saanich, during meal times I often had a chance to chat with the various people who shared more about their own language experiences, or wanted to know more about my research. In Atka, I often helped with errands or participated in out-of-school events where I had similar conversations with people. Participating in activities like fishing and community potlucks allowed me to better direct my interviews with people, especially with the high school students who were a bit shy at first.

4.1.1 Language Learner Perspective

Throughout my time in each community, I was able to gain unique perspectives as both a language learner and language teacher. This learner/teacher dynamic was the result of the WAYK method, where they encourage learners to be teachers, and teachers to continue learning. In this section, I will discuss my experiences as a language learner, and in the next section I will discuss my experiences using the WAYK method to assume the perspective of language teacher. WAYK stresses that learners should be teachers as soon as possible, which is a common practice in language revitalization (Johnson 2013). This practice encourages learners to teach other

individuals any piece of language they feel confident using, which helps develop teaching skills in learners. WAYK also emphasizes that teachers need to continue developing their fluency, which is especially important in revitalization. It can be easy to focus one's efforts solely on helping others gain fluency, which in turn halts their own progress.

Saanich

In the workshop, we primarily used the demo language (Unangam Tunuu) for reasons I mentioned above. During those days, I felt relaxed and excited to learn specifics about the WAYK methods. I noticed others were patient, encouraging, and also excited, especially when they started thinking about how to apply what we learned in their own classrooms. Even when we were practicing games where I had to almost immediately teach someone a phrase I had only learned that morning, I was relaxed and maintained a positive outlook. I was not worried about having to repeat myself, nor was I worried about having someone repeat something to me. If my pronunciation was off, I felt fine asking for a correction or simply trying to adjust my pronunciation the next time I used the word.

This relaxed feeling during language learning was really new to me, especially regarding pronunciation. Mispronouncing words has always been the most stressful aspect of language learning and use for me, but WAYK emphasizes that you should just make your best attempt at the word, and try to adjust your pronunciation as you become more familiar with it. This positive language learning ideology is valuable in any context, endangered language or not. As Supahan and Supahan (2008) note, valuing the attempt in language is critical to building up confidence in a learner.

For the last two days of the workshop, we began using SENĆOTEN in the mock lessons. The community members were really excited about using their language, and getting the chance to practice some of these new teaching methods in it. However, I noticed two things happen when we started using SENĆOTEN instead of Unangam Tunuu. First, people began to put more pressure on themselves to learn new pieces of language from each other, and second, there was more focus on the language than on learning the methods and techniques.

The atmosphere briefly changed and people started feeling more responsibility to teach and learn quicker. As the new learner and outsider to the community, I had never heard SENĆOTEN before. Many of the people at the workshop had grown up hearing the language but not speaking it, which is not uncommon across many communities with endangered languages. So, when people began teaching me, they often went faster than they did in Unangam Tunuu and were less likely to repeat themselves. This caused a bit of panic in me as a learner because I had to learn the basics quickly, which placed additional pressure on me. Once people started realizing that I had no previous exposure to the language they were more patient with me, and, stopped pressuring themselves to teach faster.

This realization was important for them for two reasons. First, it relieved some of the pressure they were placing on themselves. They felt as though they had failed as teachers because I could not fully introduce myself after only fifteen minutes of a mock lesson. Second, it reminded them that they will be teaching learners who have limited exposure to SENĆOTEN. These learners will be in my situation, and will value patience coupled with these teaching methods. Once they remembered that their focus for the workshop was to learn new ways to teach, they realized they had placed unrealistic expectations on themselves as teachers in these mock lessons with me. As a group, we discussed these understandings, and I felt more

comfortable moving forward in our activities using SENĆOTEN. I was no longer stressed about my pronunciation, nor did I worry about asking for repetition or help.

Atka

In Atka, I spent more time with Evan, Susanna, and Crystal than I did with students. So, I gained more insight on the language teacher aspect of revitalization, which was extremely helpful and complimentary to my experiences in Saanich. I will discuss these experiences in the next section.

Although the majority of my time was spent with WAYK and Crystal, I did get a chance to be a language learner in Atka. We spoke in Niiġugġim Tunuu during activities such as pre-lesson warm-ups and tea-time, which gave me the opportunity to learn since I had very little exposure to Niiġugġim Tunuu before arriving in Atka.

As a learner in Atka, I felt inclined to seek out language on my own rather than waiting for the next day's lesson. For instance, sometimes I would play hangman with the elementary students on their break, and ask them to only use Niiġugġim Tunuu words. This turned into a very long game of hangman, which often involved the kids giving me hints by acting out the word. Once I had guessed the word in English, they would make me try to spell it by guessing letters.

While WAYK places significant emphasis on oral curriculum, they also encourage learners to write down words or phrases. They do not disregard the value of written components in language teaching, but they caution teachers and learners to use it sparingly. They suggest that when people become too fixated on aspects of writing, such as grammar and spelling, they are less focused on speaking the language (Evan Gardner, personal communication, September 2017). My French language education was primarily focused on developing reading and writing

skills, and I often had to fill out worksheets of verb conjugations and word translations. In my entire fifteen years of French lessons, I hardly ever had to do oral presentations or tests. Even now, as a semi-fluent adult, I am more confident in abilities to read and write French than my ability to speak it. I feel as though it would be extremely valuable to have the same level of confidence in my oral French since my primary use of French is to converse orally with family.

Being exposed to a curriculum that placed a great deal of emphasis on listening and speaking, rather than writing and memorizing, was very refreshing. However, since my only other prolonged experiences with language learning have been French lessons, I still found myself wanting to know how words were spelled. These games of hangman with the elementary kids gave me a chance to practice writing, which allowed me to connect sounds that I had been hearing with particular letters and words. Even though I enjoyed writing in Niiġuġim Tunuu, I was surprised to find that I was not as dependent on writing as I thought I might have been, given my previous experiences with language learning. Interestingly, by the end of my first week in Atka, I had started introducing myself and answering the phone using Niiġuġim Tunuu. This might not seem like an extraordinary feat on the surface, but for me it was.

I have struggled a great deal with confidence in foreign language use, particularly with speaking. Usually, I am not confident enough to use a target language in such a casual way when I am first learning it. So, answering the phone or introducing myself in the language without having anxiety over it was a really incredible feeling. I think my confidence in this particular setting was due to the fact that the community was very welcoming, and even though I had only known them for a week at that point, it felt like so much longer. Every time someone, anyone, used the language, their attempt at it was valued. People got excited to hear you speak, even if it was only a few words. That was a really encouraging atmosphere, which I believe encouraged

not only myself, but most likely encouraged others as well (Bell 2013; Johnson 2013; Supahan & Supahan 2008).

4.1.2 Language Teacher Perspective

I gained insight as a language teacher in two main ways. First, I was actually teaching parts of language to others, as per the WAYK method. Second, I was able to spend time with WAYK, as well as the language teachers from each community outside of the classroom/workshop setting. By participating in daily activities with each of them, I had the chance to learn about what goes on behind the scenes of language class. I learned about the types of decisions and obstacles language teachers encounter, and how they may go about handling them.

Saanich

Almost all of the time I spent at the workshop was dedicated to understanding the mechanics behind WAYK and other language teaching methods, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) resources. TPR is a method that WAYK has incorporated into its own practices, but has existed as its own method for a while. Essentially, TPR is a language teaching method that involves coordinating language and physical movement (Johnson 2013). We also referred to ACTFL for their “Can-Do” statements, which are a series of performance indicators for language learners. These statements provided a loose guideline for self-assessment, which was necessary for understanding one’s own fluency level. ACTFL’s Can-Do statements also guided some curriculum planning, as it provides information on what novice, intermediate, and advanced

learners may be able to communicate in their target language. Importantly, Evan suggested that although ACTFL is not tailored to Indigenous or endangered languages, it is still a valuable resource that WAYK suggests communities use (Evan Gardner, personal communication, August 2017).

The workshop gave me a glimpse into what we would be doing in Atka, and allowed me to understand something extremely important about my own past experiences with language learning. Learning about the mechanics of teaching methods, and the ideologies that accompany them made me realize there were a number of instances where I had been taught with efficient methods, but not the right ideologies. Above, I mentioned that I had primarily been taught French curriculum with a heavy emphasis on reading and writing, and not much emphasis on oral skills. Some of my grammar lessons were helpful, and even fun, but there will still a constant pressure to produce the correct answer on your first attempt. Even though the lesson was going well, and I was retaining information, I still felt like it was not okay to make mistakes. This is one example of how the wrong ideology can make an otherwise positive lesson stressful.

An encouraging ideology about language learning that WAYK emphasizes, and that the communities already held, was that it takes time to learn language. Saanich and Atka community members understood that nobody learned at the same rate, and, that no one would gain fluency overnight. This understanding led to more patience with learners, which is very reassuring and allows people to make mistakes or spend more time on something they may not understand right away.

If a teaching program is tailored to each individual's needs and fluency level, then extra attention can be paid to new learners, or to those who need more time on a particular part of language. For instance, during the mock lessons when we started using SENĆOTEN, I was a

completely new learner. Therefore, someone was assigned to mentor me in some of the basics of the language, while other teachers worked with the more fluent speakers. Although this can seem time consuming, or become difficult with a limited number of teachers, it was a great way to ensure that not only was I welcomed, but that I never felt like a burden as a new learner. WAYK stresses that new learners should be valued, and that they should never be made to feel like they are holding anyone back. This ideology is a significant part of a learner's success because it helps eliminate the comparison of your own progress to the progress of your peers (Horwitz, et al. 1986).

Atka

My experience in Atka proved especially helpful in understanding how small communities work with limited resources and people. Often, this meant that individuals played multiple roles in the community. These individuals had to make time for language activities in between their jobs and personal life, which only begins to speak to their dedication to the language.

A great deal of the time I spent with Evan, Susanna, and Crystal was devoted to problem solving. Crystal sought help on new ways to keep the language going in the school, as the program had come to a bit of a standstill. This standstill was due to the lack of flights coming into Atka, which resulted in Crystal (and others) being stuck in Dutch Harbor for an extended period of time in September 2017. Since she was not in Atka for the beginning of the school year, the language program had a late start. Evan, Susanna, and I arrived shortly after Crystal did, so we spent some time helping her prepare for the coming school year.

We helped Crystal brainstorm solutions to other issues, such as fluent speakers moving off the island, and worked on rethinking the program's short-term and long-term goals. Revising goals to reflect the current context is important in any situation. This was an important experience to be part of because it proved that language revitalization is not just about teaching and learning the language, as an outsider or researcher it is often about helping with community needs and issues. Although WAYK, Crystal, and I cannot solve some of these systemic issues that Atka faces, we can help create solutions for the immediate obstacles they produce. Researchers are often charged with tasks other than research when working with communities (Speas 2009). While some tasks may not be directly related to one's research, it is important to help the community with these tasks, as part of building better relationships with community members. This can also be a way to demonstrate reciprocal research practices, which are especially important in establishing trust and respect in the community (Kovach 2009).

4.2 Interviews

While I was in Atka, I conducted interviews with Crystal and the only three high school students: Nate Williams, Junior Golodoff, and Tim Zaochney.⁷ Before I arrived in Atka, I also conducted interviews with Evan and Susanna while we were weathered into Dutch Harbor, awaiting our flight to Atka.⁸ The interviews ranged from approximately twenty minutes to two hours in length, and covered topics related to emotions, identity, and language learning. For example, I directed our conversations to explore topics on where the language was being used,

⁷ All participants provided signed consent to their full name used in this thesis.

⁸ Flights are often delayed or cancelled due to extreme fog in the harbours. If the fog is too dense, or too low, planes cannot safely fly into and out of the islands. Before heading to Atka, I was warned that we could be delayed in Dutch Harbor for this very reason. Likewise, our flight out of Atka was also cancelled, which delayed our departure by three days.

by whom, and how people felt about general and/or specific aspects of learning. I found three main themes across all the interviews: 1) Motivation for language revitalization work, 2) Stressful aspects to revitalization work, and 3) How WAYK has helped each of them with language learning and/or revitalization. In this next section, I will address WAYK's perspective and the Atka community members perspectives with regard to these themes.

4.2.1 WAYK Perspective on Language Revitalization

As previously noted, I conducted a joint interview with both Evan and Susanna before we arrived in Atka. When designing the interview questions that I planned to ask Evan and Susanna, I was interested in learning more about how WAYK was created, what their motivation was for doing revitalization work, and what the most encouraging aspect of their job is (see Appendix D).

Motivation for Language Revitalization Work

I asked Evan and Susanna what their motivation for revitalization work is, since they have each been involved with it for almost ten years. Evan stated that his motivation comes from helping people create a stronger sense of belonging, purpose, and identity (Gardner in Gardner & Ciotti 2017). Susanna added that part of her inspiration to continue doing revitalization work comes from watching it click for people. She shared that she enjoys watching people learn something new in their language, or gain a better understanding of what they already knew (Ciotti in Gardner & Ciotti 2017).

Stressful Aspects of Revitalization Work

When talking to Evan and Susanna, it was clear that one major challenge for them was navigating the difficult, complex histories that each community has, specifically with regard to colonialism. Evan shared:

So from cradle to the grave now, people don't have to speak their Native language. So the land doesn't have to exist in the Native language, and the people of the land don't have to communicate with the land in that language. Which is really the biggest tragedy. That connection has been broken in a lot of places. So, I mean, our role is to help in whatever way we can, get the inhabitants of a place to speak the language again. I mean that's the big goal. And it's more difficult in some places than others just because of the makeup of the town or the community, or what that town and community have gone through and sort of where they're at now (Gardner in Gardner & Ciotti 2017)

WAYK Benefits for Language Learning

Having the opportunity to talk to the creators of WAYK provided me with unique information about WAYK methods. While it is important to understand perspectives of the learners who use WAYK, it is also significant to understand the perspectives of Evan and Susanna. In particular, it was helpful to hear their perspectives on what the benefits of using WAYK methods are with regard to language learning. Our interview gave me the chance to better understand what both Evan and Susanna hope WAYK can help people with.

One of the main objectives of WAYK is to help a community generate new language learners and language teachers. They offer strategies to help learners become teachers, and emphasize that locals should be the ones showing their community the ways of the world, rather than outsiders assuming that position. Evan noted that an important and fairly unique feature of WAYK, as compared to other language teaching/learning methods, is that WAYK encourages learners to be teachers at a very early stage in language learning (Gardner in Gardner & Ciotti

2017). Although encouraging learners to also be teachers is not exclusive to WAYK, prompting them to teach at a very early stage of fluency is.

Another benefit of encouraging learners to teach is that it breaks the stigma around making mistakes in the language. For example, WAYK has a technique called How Fascinating, where a learner and their peers throw their hands up in the air and say “how fascinating!” when they make a mistake, or forget a word. This gets everybody involved to laugh because, obviously, it is a funny thing to do in the middle of a lesson. As silly as this sounds, I have found that this is actually a very useful technique. If a learner is struggling with a particular lesson, and consistently makes mistakes or forgets a word, it can be frustrating after a while. But, by using the How Fascinating technique, it breaks the tension and gets everyone smiling. Any time I used the technique for my own mistake, I felt like it was easy to let go of the frustration after, and was never embarrassed about my mistake.

Challenging the notion of mistakes being a hindrance to progress in language learning is critical to creating a positive learning environment. Evan touched on another extremely important point, which was that if a teacher does a good job of setting up lessons and sharing techniques, then no one will ever feel ashamed of what they did not know, or what they have forgotten (Gardner in Gardner & Ciotti 2017). Taking steps to avoid placing blame on individuals, and avoid the feelings of shame and guilt that can result, is essential in language revitalization contexts. Individuals must be encouraged to continue making progress, and must be recognized for their decision to be a part of revitalization work.

4.2.2 Atka Community Member Perspective on Language Revitalization

In Atka, I interviewed Crystal and the high school boys during the last few days of my visit. Similar to my interview with Evan and Susanna, I had prepared questions beforehand that I let Crystal and the boys read. I provided the four of them with the same set of interview questions (see Appendix E). I did not have separate questions that specifically investigated Crystal's role as the teacher, but during our interview she discussed her position as the school's language teacher, in addition to sharing her experiences as a language learner.

Motivation for Language Revitalization Work

Everyone I interviewed said their primary motivation for language revitalization work was to make sure Niiġũĩm Tunuu does not die. Crystal and the high school students shared their fears that the language would cease to be used in the near future. As Crystal poignantly noted, "I worry that I will live to see the day when all our fluent speakers are dead" (Dushkin 2017). This is a powerful reminder of the pressure to gain as much knowledge as possible from Elders before they pass away, which many individuals involved in revitalization work feel. It was especially interesting to learn the high school boys' perspectives on language revitalization because their opinions contrasted the male respondents' comments on my survey. As noted, many of the male respondents critiqued my survey, and unlike the female respondents, they did not provide insight into their own experiences or thoughts on revitalization. For this reason, interviewing the boys in Atka provided an interesting contrast to my survey results.

Stressful Aspects of Revitalization Work

I asked Crystal and the boys if there was anything that was particularly stressful about revitalization, anticipating that there would be. In Saanich, I talked to several community members who shared what they found stressful about revitalization work. For example, some individuals stated that they placed a great deal of pressure on themselves to learn SENĆOTEN. Based on these types of conversations, I expected that individuals in Atka might share similar frustrations.

They each shared something stressful about revitalization work. For example, Nate shared that when they repeat the same lesson or phrase several times, he quickly loses interest. Tim stated that he found it difficult to have to think of ways to incorporate language into an activity that is not part of their normal lesson in order to maintain consistency in language use every day. Junior often found it difficult to deal with last minute issues that came up, such as rescheduling an Elder visit, because he values a consistent routine. Crystal also noted that the lack of resources, funding, and people were difficult. She talked about how she had wanted to start a language nest for the younger kids, but she was one of the only people able to work on it, and she never received funding for it, so it was never started. Unfortunately, this is common across revitalization work. Hinton (2008) notes:

Perhaps the greatest cause of failure in the teaching of endangered languages is inadequate teacher training in language-teaching pedagogy owing not to a lack of diligence on anyone's part, but to lack of opportunity and training resources (349).

While Hinton specifically addresses the lack of opportunity for teacher training, not community resources in general, she conveys an important reminder. The lack of resources is not a reflection of a teacher's dedication, though too often it is easy to blame one's self.

WAYK Benefits for Language Learning

I asked each interviewee if they felt WAYK has helped them with language learning in any particular or unique ways. The high school students mentioned that they liked how active the lessons can be because they often get bored having to stay seated for long periods of time. They also agreed that it was nice to have visual components of language around the room. For instance, WAYK helped them create a number of posters with traditional songs, a vocabulary list, and helpful reminders about grammar, which are all posted around the language classroom (see Figure 4.1).

Crystal was appreciative of WAYK for a number of reasons. She kept reiterating that the WAYK program was the fastest way she had ever learned. She spoke about the various other ways she had tried to learn compared to the WAYK methods, and shared:

When I was in school, I realized I wasn't getting anything in our regular class, other than just lists of words. And I wanted to be able to actually speak with my mom and people who spoke the language (Dushkin 2017).

Crystal repeatedly mentioned how grateful she was for the help Evan and Susanna provide throughout the year. They visit Atka several times a year and remain in contact with Crystal in between visits. They provide a great support network for her, and she credits a large part of Atka's revitalization success to them (Dushkin 2017).

It is clear that WAYK techniques and methods benefit individuals with regard to the mechanics of language learning, in addition to promoting positive ideologies about language and language learning. Their use of unique techniques and a wide-array of teaching methods creates a fun and involved experience. They also benefit the communities they work with in that they help beyond language. Their dedication to language revitalization is critical in building

relationships and trust with community members. Their commitment to the community helps perpetuate a positive attitude, which consequently creates a productive learning environment.



Figure 4.1: Atka Language Classroom (Photo by R. Achilles, September 30, 2017)

4.3 General Results

My time with WAYK was short, but extremely busy and productive. In Saanich, I conducted participant-observation and autoethnography, while in Atka, I conducted interviews in addition to participant-observation and autoethnography. Three main themes emerged in my research from both Saanich and Atka: 1) Community involvement in language revitalization teaching/learning process, 2) Importance of strengthening community-learner relationships (and in the Atkan community, familial relationships), and 3) importance of multiple domains of use.

Although these themes were present in both communities that I visited, the context around them varies. I will discuss each in detail below.

Community involvement in language revitalization teaching/learning process

In both Saanich and Atka, the individuals involved in language work emphasized their desire to include the broader community whenever and however possible. Many people felt it would be a good way to not only gain valuable and critical knowledge from Elders, but that it would also be a good opportunity to expose children to the language.

Members of each community expressed that they wanted to find ways to incorporate their languages into their own homes more. People from each community also noted that they used their languages at public events, especially during songs and prayers. One individual in Saanich shared that she hoped using the language in this way at the beginnings of events would increase the likelihood of individuals using it instead of English throughout the event (Saanich workshop participant, personal communication, August 2017). In Atka, Crystal and WAYK have worked hard to get more of the community involved with the school's language program. However, many of the Elders and young people are moving off the island to pursue resources that an urban area can offer, such as healthcare and better access to job opportunities. With this shift in population comes the loss of fluent speakers and language learners. This adds to the difficulty of running a language program, as there are fewer fluent speakers readily accessible and a smaller pool of potential learners. During my time there, I witnessed Crystal and WAYK's attempts to combat this ongoing issue.

For instance, they had frequent phone conversations with Elders who had moved to Anchorage, in order to continue to incorporate them into their language program. As part of the

language curriculum, the high school students and teacher would also go visit with Elders and fluent speakers who still live in Atka. During the visits, the group has tea together while the students try to learn a new part of the language or to have a conversation with the speakers. While this is not always the most convenient way to keep fluent speakers and Elders involved, it is an immediate solution. Unfortunately, many small, isolated communities face the same lack of resources, which tend to severely affect those in need of job opportunities and/or better healthcare.

Importance of strengthening community-learner relationships

When a learner of any language feels supported in the places they use the language, it promotes further language use, and can help create a positive sense of self (Bell 2013). Making an effort to involve community members in language revitalization effort, and ultimately language use, can help strengthen the relationship an individual learner has to their community as a whole. This was particularly notable in Atka, where a closer relationship to the language often meant a closer relationship with one's own family.

As previously mentioned, learners are encouraged to visit with Elders as a way to socialize in the language outside of the classroom setting. This is also a good way to get to know the Elders better, as they often do casual things together such as having tea. For some of the high school boys, this means spending more time with their own grandparents. In our interview together, one of the high school boys, Nate, commented on how his grandmother uses Niigugim Tunuu all the time, and he feels that since he has started learning, they have become closer. He shared that they enjoy cooking together and practicing the language during similar activities (Williams 2017).

Crystal talked about how she wishes she had used the language more at home when her daughters were younger. She shared an emotional story about why her mother never taught her the language when she was a child, and how she felt that may have affected her as a mother:

I regret that I didn't know more of Unangam Tunuu when my girls were small. I didn't use the language with them a whole lot. I should have been using everything I knew, but I just didn't know how to really work it into – to not be fluent, but to help babies learn. It's tough. Tougher than it might seem (Dushkin 2017).

She goes on to share:

I know [my mom] wishes she had [taught me the language]. But the politics of language, I think, was just so different in [her parents'] age, when they were growing up. My mom's generation, I feel like, were brainwashed to believe that they were doing their kids the best service by speaking only English. So that when their kids went to school, they didn't have to go through the same kind of torment that they went through (Dushkin 2017).

Crystal shared that her mother was forced into an English education, which was an institutional attempt to assimilate Unangx̂ people and their language. Consequently, many people, including Crystal's mother, were ashamed to speak Niiḡuḡim Tunuu, and often chose not to teach it to their children. Now, Crystal and her mom use the language together, but Crystal had a difficult journey reaching this point. She tried for many years to learn, but was always discouraged by her lack of progress. She stated:

After thirteen years of taking a language, you graduate without being able to have a single conversation with each other. So, with WAYK to go on your very first day, in some cases, or at least your very first week, to be able to ask and answer questions and have small conversations with each other is completely revolutionary as far as language learning goes (Dushkin 2017)

This explanation was a particularly emotional part of our interview. While Crystal explained how encouraging these new learning methods were for her, she began to cry. She expressed how happy she was to have found teaching methods that are effective, especially since she is now able to have conversations with her mother. Understandably, she wishes that she had made this

discovery sooner, so that other individual's language learning experiences, as well as her own, could have been more positive and productive.

Multiple Domains of Language Use

A really encouraging trend I noticed in both Saanich and Atka was the use of language in multiple domains. Each community was using language outside of the classroom and/or learning context. This is a crucial aspect to any language learning, as it helps socialize a learner and expose them to multiple uses for their language (Leeman et al. 2011). As noted in Chapter One, socialization is particularly important in language revitalization because it allows individuals to learn from Elders, which helps ensure language transmission to future generations (Aragão 2011; Hermes et al. 2012; Leeman et al. 2011).

In Saanich, I would hear people using SENĆOTEN with each other when they first arrived in the morning, during breaks, and when they were joking around. Multiple individuals expressed how proud they were to use the language at home and with their families as well. Similarly, in Atka, I heard many individuals both within and outside of the school speaking Niigugim Tunuu. In many cases, people did not even realize they had switched into their language from English. For instance, in Atka, I asked Junior (a high school student) if he used Niigugim Tunuu with friends when they were doing something together. His initial reply was that he was not sure. But, just moments before our interview began, I had heard him and another student speaking the language while goofing around on lunch break. So, I rephrased and asked him if he perhaps uses the language without realizing it. After some thought, he stated that was most likely the case.

4.4 Summary

Evan frequently stresses that WAYK is not hired to teach a community's local language to them. Instead, WAYK helps communities create their own teachers, support learners, and develop curriculum. WAYK offers a number of language learning and teaching methods that encourage learners to begin teaching language as soon as possible. This not only helps ensure the number of teachers grows with the number of learners, but also emphasizes the value of any fluency level. Opening up the position of teacher, which is traditionally occupied by fluent speakers, to novice learners, puts less focus on evaluating individuals' rate of progress, and more emphasis on evaluating the quality of their progress.

This chapter has explored the themes I found in my ethnographic fieldwork data. Community involvement in the teaching and learning process is an important factor in creating a sense of belonging for learners. Strengthening the community-learner relationship, as seen in Atka, means strengthening one's connection to one's own family. Creating and strengthening these kinds of relationships exposes learners to the language in multiple domains, rather than just the educational realm. The next chapter will address how themes present in both my survey data and fieldwork data and compliment one another. I will suggest areas for future research, and suggest future directions for my own thesis research.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results & Conclusion

A rising that begins
With one voice rising
My voice rising
With my sisters rising
With my mother
For my daughters rising

(Deerchild, 2015)

5.0 Introduction

This thesis has examined the interconnectivity of language, identity, and emotions, as well as the ways in which they are embedded in language revitalization practices. During the course of my research, I found that emotions and identity were significant parts of language revitalization, and that they influenced many aspects of individuals' lives outside of language learning. Therefore, emotions and identity have been inseparable from the themes that emerged in my data.

5.1 Discussion of Results

After reviewing my survey results and spending time in two communities to participate in and observe language revitalization efforts, I found three notable aspects that have helped them achieve success: sense of community, non-traditional teaching/learning methods, and positive ideologies on their language and on language learning. In addition, drawing on examples from my fieldwork, I will discuss how isolation and a lack of resources affect language revitalization in general, which I will address in Section 5.2 below.

Emotions

In answering my research questions, I have come to realize how deeply embedded emotions are in all aspects of this project. At first, I struggled to categorize my data into an Emotion theme, because I found myself coding every single survey response, every interview, and all of my participant-observation notes under Emotion. For this reason, I have instead commented about emotions throughout this thesis, in relation to language learning and identity.

Throughout this project, I myself experienced many instances of heightened emotions. I often found myself tearing up while reading survey responses, in which individuals shared a personal story. I felt deeply connected to some individuals' survey comments or to a community member's personal story, as I shared similar experiences. I learned that some individuals across all areas of my research have had negative past experiences with language learning. However, the majority of individuals have also had positive experiences that are continuing to drive them forward in language learning.

Identity

Language allows individuals to access a unique part of their identity, as it exposes them to a different way of understanding the world, their community/family, and ultimately themselves. When an individual gains confidence in their language use, they may also gain confidence in themselves. This confidence can encourage them to continue interacting with other community members and learners, which provides a sense of belonging that extends past language use.

Both participants in my survey and individuals in Atka commented on how learning their language has strengthened their relationships with family, friends, and the broader communities they live in. In my own personal experiences, gaining confidence in my oral French skills has

allowed me to converse with family and community members that I used to only speak English with. I also feel confident in my ability to teach others French, which has helped me embrace the French part of my identity that I had suppressed for a long time.

5.2 Answering the Research Questions

I will draw from the data I collected through my online survey and ethnographic fieldwork, and address their similarities in order to answer my research questions. Below, I have used the research questions as headings for each subsequent section.

How do positive and negative social factors influence a learner's identity as well as the learning process?

I found that both positive and negative factors directly influenced both communities I visited. Some survey respondents also noted the influence of these factors as well. The negative factors include isolation and lack of resources, which are often linked together. Some individuals also noted that a lack of funding for revitalization work is often directly associated with isolation and/or lack of other resources, such as access to urban centers. The positive factors I found in both areas of my research include: sense of community, non-traditional teaching/learning methods, and positive ideologies for both the target language and language learning. Below, I will discuss each factor in greater detail.

Negative Factors

1) Isolation

I found that there were two types of isolation that affected individuals: geographical and linguistic. Geographical isolation refers to an area of land that is physically isolated from urban

centers and/or critical resources, such as health care. Atka is one example of a geographically isolated community, as the island is only accessible by plane most of the year. This isolation causes a population shift, which I witnessed during my visit. Many Elders moved into Anchorage for better access to health care, while younger individuals moved to the mainland to pursue job opportunities. In fact, the three high school boys interviewed will be graduating in the coming year, and two of them had plans to leave Atka for work. This was an issue that Crystal, Evan, and Susanna were working on during my visit.

Linguistic isolation is what I have defined as having limited or no access to fluent speakers. In some communities, this occurs when the fluent speakers have all passed away. For example, ELLES Respondent #12 stated that there were only a handful of speakers left in her community, which adds pressure to learn from them before they pass away. In other communities, linguistic isolation might mean there are no fluent speakers in an individual's area, even if fluent speakers of the language exist. For instance, ELLES Respondent #38 reported that she was learning Ojibwe from CD's because there were no fluent speakers where she lived.

2) Lack of Resources

Lack of resources can be closely tied to isolation, but also exists in communities that are not isolated. For instance, many community members in Saanich commented on how thankful they were to receive grants for their revitalization work, but suggested that more funding would help in further resource development. In Atka, Crystal understandably expressed frustration over the lack of funding for their language program. This made it hard to not only purchase more resources for the classroom, but also to hire staff. With almost the entire grant being dedicated to the basics of running a language program, there is no money left over to pay wages. This means

that everyone who is involved with the revitalization program must volunteer, which is difficult when those individuals also have jobs and families to provide for.

Positive Factors

1) Sense of Community

Both Atka and Saanich have a reliable and consistent core team to work with. Even though students may come and go, there is a group of people who are dedicated to the specific programs that are part of the community's revitalization efforts. In Saanich, the core team consisted of the Tribal School teachers, who participated in the WAYK workshop on their own time before the beginning of the 2017 school year. Similarly, in Atka, there are a few individuals who ensure that the school language program continues to exist for future students. As previously mentioned, some Elders have moved into a more urban area in Alaska for healthcare, which has resulted in there only being a few people left in Atka to look after the program. However, the individuals in Atka make an effort to remain in contact with those who have moved, which provides an opportunity to continue learning from Elders, and to consult them about the language program and curriculum.

One survey respondent also commented on how a sense of community contributed to their language learning experiences. For example:

I enjoy talking to others in my community. I think it's helpful to hear [the language] from others who are more fluent than me. It encourages me to think that one day I will be that fluent (ELLES Respondent #31).⁹

This example shows how important it is for learners to be exposed to other speakers, even if they are more fluent. This demonstrates how community can be a form of motivation for learners, as they aspire to become as fluent as others.

⁹ Quote edited for clarity.

2) Non-Traditional Teaching/Learning Methods

Non-traditional teaching methods consequently embrace non-traditional learning styles. Even though each community was still running a language “class,” the curriculum did not resemble a traditional Western language curriculum. I observed the use of non-traditional teaching methods in almost all of my survey’s responses. One question at the beginning of the survey asked how people had been learning their language. It offered several options that respondents could select, as well as an “Other” option, where respondents could write a response if it was not listed. Out of 89 total respondents, 9 individuals selected that they were learning (or had learned) through Master-Apprentice programs, 8 individuals through Language Houses, 6 individuals through Language Nests, and 6 individuals through Language/Culture Camps. Additionally, 53 individuals selected “Other” and some reported that they learned from family/spouses, through CDs and music, and one individual reported learning from conferences they attended.

In both Saanich and Atka, it was obvious that the WAY K methods were helping the community members embrace non-traditional teaching and learning techniques, especially through the emphasis on developing oral skills first. In Saanich, teachers at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School were already using other non-traditional methods, such as TPR, but applied new methods they learned from WAYK in addition to their existing curriculum. Rather than trying to adhere to a universal teaching method, people learned to embrace techniques and methods that worked for them. In doing so, they had more productive and positive language learning experiences, which fundamentally helped in creating and maintaining a sense of community.

3) Positive Language and Language Learning Ideologies

Since many language revitalization programs use non-traditional teaching methods, they often do not evaluate “right” and “wrong” with regard to learning or language use in the same ways that traditional language curriculum might. For instance, instead of correcting someone for pronouncing a word wrong, the effort is rewarded and encouragement is given to continue practicing.

Many people I spoke with in both Saanich and Atka had extremely positive beliefs about their language. While they acknowledged historical traumas, and shared with me personal consequences of that trauma, they always had a positive and hopeful outlook for the future. Several survey respondents commented on how negative ideologies about their target language and language learning impacted them. One respondent shared:

Teachers both young and old are still angry when they teach. [Teachers] are arrogant, and a lot of other students feel anxious as well. I attended five class sessions with different teachers/instructors, but [they] still had the same attitudes (ELLES Respondent #28).¹⁰

Similarly, another individual stated:

I'm self-taught - don't really do language lessons, just spend as much time as possible going around talking to people. Some people lose patience more quickly than others.... it can be a bit nerve-wracking due to the cultural differences and cultural kurnta (shame), but it's rewarding when you're able to chat to people (ELLES Respondent #46).

These examples demonstrate how discouraging negative ideologies can be, and enforce the need for positivity regarding both an individual's target language, and the language learning process. Many people felt that their language was a part of their identity, and, therefore, learning it created an improved sense of self-worth. As well, community involvement was increased, leading to a more positive outlook for current and future learners.

¹⁰ Quote was edited for grammar and clarity.

How do language revitalization programs create low-anxiety learning environments, and how can that be applied to other language learning contexts?

Before I address some of the specific language teaching/learning methods that language revitalization programs use, it is critical to note one of the most significant findings of my research, which helps answer this research question. Throughout this thesis, I have addressed how language revitalization programs employ positive ideologies as a strategy to create safe and comfortable language learning spaces. I have also discussed how low-anxiety learning environments can foster positive ideologies, which creates a cycle that generates positive experiences (Figure 5.1).

In both Saanich and Atka, there were times when some community members would share how colonialism has directly affected them and their families. Often, these individuals shared their experiences from Residential Schools and the shame they felt about their language. Some people also disclosed their experiences with racist attitudes and actions from their non-Indigenous peers. These were unexpected, powerful moments. These moments served as a space for individuals to share their experiences, without judgment, as everyone else in the room listened, but did not respond. People were not sharing these stories to elicit responses from others in the room; rather, they were sharing as a way to continue moving forward in their revitalization efforts.

After each of these moments our normal activities continued and everyone resumed their positive, upbeat manner. These moments were extraordinarily profound experiences, and watching everyone immediately return to their activities with smiles and laughter was remarkable. This speaks to the perseverance and dedication that is so prominent in these communities. When considering the trauma that many Indigenous people have suffered under the

weight of colonialism, it is worth noting how impressive and important positive approaches to revitalization are. These moments of sharing allowed community members to express their frustrations or pain, which helped them to continue moving forward.

As mentioned above, the communities I visited each employed different teaching and learning methods that best suited their language programs. There is no universal method that is guaranteed to create a low-stress learning environment for every individual. However, employing some of the strategies outlined in this thesis may help learners and teachers create a positive and productive environment that is best suited to their own goals. Specifically, the use of non-traditional teaching/learning methods and positive ideologies on language and language learning can help create a sense of community, which is an essential part of encouraging learners to not only continue increasing their own fluency, but also to help future generations increase theirs.

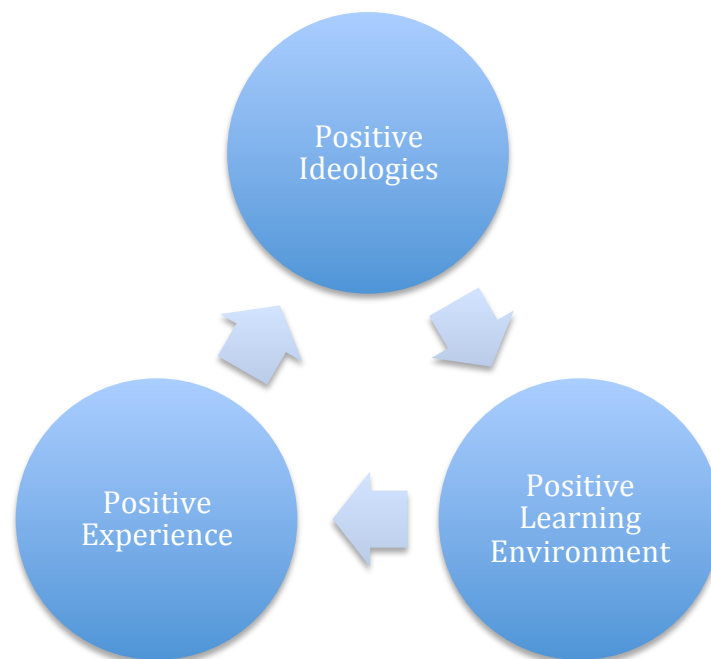


Figure 5.1: Language Learning Cycle of Positivity

5.3 Areas of Future Research

Due to the limited nature of a Master's thesis, I did not have the time, or the space, to further analyze other areas of this data. However, more work could be done to further investigate the relationship between emotions, identity, and language revitalization. For instance, possible areas for future research include: 1) gathering more information on the role emotions play in language revitalization, 2) exploring more ways that language activists and community members can address the institutional issues language revitalization programs face, and 3) understanding how non-traditional language teaching methods positively influence both a learner's identity and the learning process.

Further exploring the ways in which non-traditional language teaching methods have a positive influence on learners can continue to highlight how language revitalization programs continue to successfully employ these strategies. Many community members that I spoke with in both Saanich and Atka felt that more literature is needed on this topic. They stressed that having a large database of literature to highlight their achievements would be invaluable to their grant applications that significantly support their revitalization programs.

Many individuals who participated in this project, through both the survey and community-based work, complimented my desire to examine emotions in relation to endangered languages and language revitalization. Since emotions are so deeply embedded in our experiences and identities, I believe this area of research has many avenues to expand upon. Contributing to the conversation on institutional injustices that Indigenous people continue to face is critical to both reconciliation and the future of revitalization work. Without acknowledging systematic issues, it is impossible to resolve them. Continuing to address these inequalities is only the beginning of the steps we must take to correct them. More work is needed

in order to provide adequate support and resources to language revitalization efforts across North America. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action states that “[f]unding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages,” and that “[t]he federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation” (2). These Calls to Action should serve as a reminder to both the government and the public, as reconciliation is the responsibility of every Canadian.

5.4 Conclusion

By first addressing the negative social factors that exist in language revitalization, I was able to showcase how they can create high-stress environments, and how they can potentially be detrimental to both the language learning process and the revitalization effort as a whole. Isolation and lack of resources are two factors that are not often easily solved. However, community members and language activists can work together to create immediate solutions that best suit their community. The ways in which WAYK and Crystal work together to address larger, systemic issues that affect the Atka language revitalization program is a strong example of this. By continuing to focus on their progress, addressing future obstacles can feel productive and achievable.

In discussing the positive factors that contribute to language revitalization and language learning, I was able to highlight specific examples from my data that demonstrated the effects of these factors on emotions and identity. Appreciative Inquiry has been a useful methodological framework from which to conduct my research. As I have noted throughout this thesis, language revitalization programs often apply the basics of Appreciative Inquiry to their work by continuing to focus on using and discovering efficient teaching and learning methods.

Additionally, language revitalization efforts often employ positive ideologies on both language and language learning, which correspond with Appreciative Inquiry. This methodology has proved to not only be useful in framing my own research, but is also beneficial in structuring language revitalization curriculum and programs.

In Chapter Four, I discussed various individual's motivations for their involvement in language revitalization. Every individual that I interviewed (including Evan and Susanna) share that first, and foremost, they want to ensure that Niigũgĩm Tunuu continues to be passed on to future generations. Evan and Susanna feel this way about every language they work with, and noted that helping people creates a stronger sense of self and belonging for the community members. The most encouraging aspect of my research, *my* motivation for doing revitalization work, is helping people navigate the complexities of unlocking a fundamental aspect of their identity, and watching as they find confidence in each other and themselves.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Appendix B: Endangered Language Learning Emotion Scale (Survey)

Demographics:

1. Which gender do you identify with?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

2. Do you identify as Indigenous (Aboriginal, Métis, First Nations, Inuit)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. What is your age?
 - a. 18-24
 - b. 25-30
 - c. 31-36
 - d. 37-42
 - e. 43-48
 - f. 49-54
 - g. 55-60
 - h. 61-66
 - i. 66 +

Language:

1. What endangered language(s) are you learning/have you learned?

2. Is this language(s) from your home community?

3. What level of fluency do you best identify with?
 - a. Beginner
 - b. Beginner – Intermediate
 - c. Intermediate – Advanced
 - d. Advanced

4. What style of language lessons are you participating in? (Please check all that apply).
 - a. Immersion program as part of school/course credit
 - b. Language house
 - c. Language nest
 - d. Mentor-apprentice program
 - e. Language camp
 - f. Online

- g. Other _____.
5. How many years have you been learning for?
- a. Less than one year
 - b. 1-3 years
 - c. 3-6 years
 - d. 6-9 years
 - e. 9-12 years
 - f. 12-15 years
 - g. 15-18 years
 - h. 18-21 years
 - i. 21-24 years
 - j. 25 +

Self-Evaluation:

1. In your day-to-day life, on average, would you rate yourself in terms of introversion or extroversion? Please indicate below, where 1 = introvert and 10 = extrovert

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. When you find yourself in a learning environment, where would you rate yourself in terms of introversion and extroversion? Please indicate below, where 1 = introvert and 10 = extrovert.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ELLES Questions:

- 1. I feel confident when I am speaking in my language lessons.
- 2. I don't worry about making mistakes in the language lessons.
- 3. I get nervous when I know that I'm going to be called on during the lesson.
- 4. I worry when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the language.
- 5. I was excited to start these language lessons.
- 6. I keep thinking that the other students are learning the language quicker than I am.

7. I am usually at ease during tests in the language.
8. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation during the language lessons.
9. I worry about the consequences of not learning this language.
10. Learning this language is important to me.
11. During language lessons, sometimes I forget things I know when I'm nervous.
12. I enjoy speaking the language with others during the lessons.
13. I would not be nervous speaking the language with fluent speakers.
14. I get frustrated when others correct the way I use the language.
15. Even if I am well prepared for language lessons, I feel anxious about it.
16. I worry that I will make mistakes in my language lessons.
17. I can feel my heart pounding when I use the language during lessons.
18. It is important that my language instructor shares a similar cultural background with me.
19. I don't feel pressure to prepare for language lessons.
20. I always feel that the other students speak the language better than I do.
21. I feel sure of myself about speaking the language in front of other students.
22. I don't feel anxious when interacting with my peers who are also learning the language.
23. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other lessons.
24. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language lessons.
25. I use the language outside of the learning environment.
26. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
27. I feel comfortable speaking the language with my family.

28. I feel comfortable around fluent speakers of the language.

29. I feel pressured to learn quickly if my language teacher is a fluent speaker.

30. I'm still enthusiastic about learning the language.

31. If you have any additional comments or would like to elaborate on any questions, please feel free to do so in the space provided: _____

Read each statement below and select the appropriate answer to indicate how you generally feel

1. I feel calm

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

2. I feel tense

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

3. I feel upset

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

4. I feel relaxed

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

5. I feel content

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

6. I feel worried
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

Appendix C: Reported Languages in ELLES Responses

Language	Occurrence
nuučaanuł, hənq'əmin'əm	4
Coeur d'Alene	4
Lushootseed	3
Mohawk	3
Tlingit	3
Guarani	3
Gitksan	2
Oneida	2
Basque	2
Tombulu	2
Kalmyk	2
Manchu	2
Okinawan	2
Ojibwe	1
Welsh	1
Manx	1
Irish	1
Gangte	1
Romansh	1
Low Saxon	1
Vai	1
Loma	1
SENĆOTEN	1
Yakima	1
Arapano	1
Thc ho	1
Bau-Jagoi Bidayuh	1
Mi'kmaq	1
Kanien'keha (Mohawk)	1
Cherokee	1
Tsimshian	1
Western Yugur	1
Ivilyuat	1
Slavey	1

Kala	1
Cree	1
hənqəmínəm̐ , Skwxwú7mesh	1
Secwepemctsin	1
Splatsin	1
‘Olelo Hawai‘i	1
Manyilyjarra	1
Martu Wangka	1
Djambarrpuyngu	1
Alsatian	1
Catalan	1
Kurdish	1
Māori	1
Corsican	1
Breton	1
Betawi	1
Mutsun	1
Yolngu Matha	1
Wiradjuri	1
Guernesiais	1
Anishnabemowin (Ojibwe)	1
Masunian	1
Gaelic	1
Muskogee	1
Sm'algyax	1
Mvskoke	1
Choctaw	1
Diné	1
Yucatec Maya	1
Kwak'wala	1
Yell Dnye	1
Nuuchahnulth	1
Wonarua	1
Gathang	1

Appendix D: Interview Questions for WAYK Facilitators

Note: These are suggested questions meant to guide conversation. Some questions may not be asked and/or discussed as per interview context or interviewee preference.

1. Can you tell me about what Where Are Your Keys (WAYK) is and what you do?
2. What inspired the creation of WAYK?
3. What are some of the most notable impacts you think (or have witnessed) WAYK has made?
4. What influenced your decisions with regard to structuring the WAYK programs broadly (such as the summer intensive program as a whole), as well as specifically (as in daily activities)?
5. How have learners responded to WAYK methods in the past?
6. Can you tell me about a time that was especially encouraging for you during this process?
7. What are some of the challenges WAYK faces?
8. What are some challenges you personally face with language learning and teaching through WAYK?
9. How do you hope WAYK will be used outside of the programs you run?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for WAYK Learners

Note: These are suggested questions meant to guide conversation. Some questions may not be asked and/or discussed as per interview context or interviewee preference.

General Language Questions:

1. What language are you learning?
2. Why did you want to learn this language?
3. Would you say learning this language was important to you?
 - a. Why so?
4. How long have you been learning for?
5. What would you rate your own fluency level?
6. Do your friends or family speak the language?

WAYK Questions:

1. How did you hear about Where Are Your Keys (WAYK)?
2. Why did you want to join the WAYK team?
3. How did you feel when you began learning?
4. Did you have any hesitations when you began learning?
5. What do you feel WAYK has most helped you with?
6. Do you think you will apply anything you have learned with WAYK to your future language experiences?
 - a. If so, what?
 - b. If not, why?

Learning-Based Questions:

1. If you have had past language learning experiences, how have you typically learned? (Through a classroom, online, through family, etc.)
2. How do you think you learn best?
3. What makes a learning situation successful for you?
4. What makes a learning situation stressful for you?
5. Could you describe a really positive language learning experience?
6. Could you describe a negative language learning experience?

Context-Dependent Questions:

1. Do you ever feel nervous or intimidated when speaking with someone who is fluent in the language?
2. What do you feel very confident about with regards to your language learning and/or use?
3. Would you like to improve on anything?
4. Where do you most often use the language?
5. In what form do you most often use the language (written, orally, listening)?