Language Revitalization Practices in Indigenous Communities of the U.S.

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Indigenous languages rely on revitalization programs to prevent extinction. In the US the diversity of indigenous languages prevents advocates from creating a comprehensive program for the whole country like in New Zealand or Ireland. This leaves room for choice about which revitalization practice will work best in each community. Different areas of the country have experienced heavier language atrophy than others based on their historical pasts. To reverse language loss, language revitalization programs endeavor to rebuild what has been lost. Language revitalization relies on intergenerational transmission to be successful. This thesis focuses on three communities: Navajo, Hawaii, and Wukchumne, the methods they used, and four factors that help lead to language transmission. Starting a language revitalization program requires the consideration of many complex factors that surround individual attitudes, identities, and beliefs (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). The scope of this thesis is to examine four situational factors and how they correlate a positive outcome. The factors addressed are the size of the indigenous speech community, language mobility, program funding, and the target audience of the program. A discussion of the case studies on the three communities suggests that high language mobility, or the ability to be in contact with the language in a colloquial setting for large periods of time results in language learners retaining the language.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

Minority and endangered languages are pushed further out on edge of society as other languages take the functional spot minority languages once occupied. The threat of language death has some speakers up in arms to combat not just the loss of language, but the loss of culture and history. Also involved are language activists and linguists who work against language loss. The main movement to prevent language loss is to revitalize the language. In other words to reverse the damage that has been done. Through the years there have been numerous programs and strategies to work towards this goal. Some efforts operate at the legislative level to procure rights and funding for local programs. Other revitalization practices are community oriented and work to rehabilitate the language within a community. The aim of this paper is to evaluate which social factors may have contributed to useful programs in restoring language. This analysis is to highlight the circumstances in which language revitalization has its best chance of thriving.

1.2. Culture and Identity
Language loss is natural; it has happened in the past and will continue to happen. Languages can be displaced by dominant languages that are communicatively beneficial, lose too many speakers to continue, or suffer from a combination of causes (Hinton & Hale 2001). While language loss is always a possibility for the fate for a language that doesn’t mean there is no hope to change that reality. There are a multitude of reasons to prevent language loss. In the literature about language revitalization there are three prominent motivations for continuing the work of language revitalization. Of the three arguments the first revolves around academic necessity. Preserving or revitalizing linguistic diversity provides the data needed for linguists to do their research (Hinton & Hale 2001, 5). Continuous loss of the language data pool will lead to stagnation in the ability for new linguistic theories to develop. The only way to combat that reality is to sustain as many languages as possible.

Another argument focuses on the knowledge and information encoded within language. Each language has a different philosophy of reality imprinted within them. This leads to the development of knowledge systems such as medical practices and musical traditions (Hinton & Hale 2001, Hinton 1994, Harrison 2007). The languages must be preserved to understand those systems, and to make the knowledge in those systems useful to a larger audience.

The last argument and the most salient for this paper is the argument for the speakers of minority languages. Language, especially indigenous language, is tightly bound to culture. The loss of one is conducive to the loss of the other. Both language and culture are essential to the landscape of an individual’s identity. This sentiment is elegantly expressed by the Chicano poet Gloria Anzaldúa:

“Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity-- I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself.” (Anzaldúa 1987, 59)

Preserving language is not just about saving the spoken words, but protecting the very personal and meaningful identity that the words perform.

1.3. Historical Context

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1 In the documentary *The Linguists*, the Bolivian language Kallawaya is discussed. The language is used by healers and is passed from father to son. The language is endangered and knowledge of the herbal remedies and natural healing practices will be lost too if the language dies.
In the United States, indigenous languages are in an endangered state because of repeated foreign intervention. The French, Spanish, and English have made their linguistic stamp at the expense of the languages that were there first. English especially has had a crippling effect on linguistic diversity. If a language survived the initial encounter of disease and war, the speakers were then subjected to government enforced language reform. These reforms had the dual purpose of oppressing the minority communities and standardizing the country’s language; the latter at the expense of the former (Hinton & Hale 2001).

The United States started this process early in the inception of the country. Originally in the 1780s the US government adopted the practice of the previous ruling entities, that of treaty based relations which relied on go-betweens (Haake 2007, Fixico 2012). The go-betweens were colonists who had studied one of the indigenous languages and established a relationship with tribe members. The go-betweens were then used to facilitate talks between the two parties. Half a century later the questionably peaceful policy changed. The indigenous groups were becoming rebellious under the coercive methods of the US government. Skirmishes and attacks became common in retaliation to the encroaching power of the US government. The uprising had become so prevalent that in March of 1824 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was created as an offshoot of the Indian Office that resided in the Department of War. The basic task of the office was to regulate the violent pushback to government control in Native American areas. When Senator John C. Calhoun was appointed head of the BIA, he was “charged with the examination of claims arising out the laws regulating the intercourse with Indian Tribes” (Fixico 2012, 14). Calhoun’s primary campaign, which was continued by many of his successors, was to transition Native Americans from a hunting-gathering lifestyle to Anglican style agricultural practices. This had the added benefit of freeing up parts of the large tracts of land that Native Americans used for hunting (Haake 2007). They would “all become agrarians and help to build the United States,” for settlers moving deeper into the country (Fixico 2012, 14). This policy of ‘civilization’ and ‘assimilation’ continued and was extended to the schools that the bureau set up to facilitate this change.

By 1900 roughly 50 percent of Native American children were enrolled in schools intent on enforcing the newly termed policy “Americanization” (Haake 2007). The policy “intended for
Indians to be educated in the ways of the white man and to give up their tribal identification” (Haake 2007, 19). Most recent damage to indigenous language happened through schooling where “their charge [was] not just the teaching of English to their students, but also the forced eradication of their native languages” (Hinton 1994, 173). In these schools, the prohibition of the use of native languages were “backed up by severe corporal punishment” (Hinton 1994, 173). This treatment of young children placed in foreign and abusive environments lead to language attitudes that were anything but proud of their linguistic heritage. Elsie Allen a former student of one of these schools said:

“I’ll never teach my children the language or all the Indian things that I know. I’ll never teach them that, I don’t want my children to be treated like they treated me” (Hinton 1994, 176).

Elsie Allen’s quote shows how native speaker growth is stopped, by refusing to pass the language on to children, but also the ideological devastation that resulted. Experiences with the BIA’s ‘Americanization’ policy left an incredible amount of native language speaking children with an aversion to their language because of internalized inferiority, and this contributed to the dropping number of native speakers. Ms. Allen’s feelings perfectly show the success of the polarizing policy, and why the policy held, because the BIA got the result they wanted. And while not everyone left with feelings of discontent for their native language, there was still a large drop in intergenerational transmission (Spolsky 2002).

Another contributing factor to indigenous language loss is the rise in English-only legislation. This was a movement beginning in the 1980s that conservative policy makers took up in protest to bilingual education. Bilingual education had received government support in the previous decade after the Supreme Court ruling of the Lau vs. Nichols case in 1974, which stated that children had the right to equal education. If language was a barrier then it was the school’s duty to provide a program to allow a level playing field (Hinton and Hale 2001). The case ruling resulted in the introduction of ‘Lau Remedies’ which manifested as funds for bilingual programs for the entire country, that were utilized by over 70 American Indian bilingual education projects in the 10 years after the ruling (Hinton and Hale 2001).
Yet legislation started to push back against the ruling in favor of bilingual education by trying to limit the use of non-English languages in certain social settings. The anti-bilingual group wasn’t against indigenous language education specifically. The Supreme Court case, *Lau vs. Nichols*, concerned the use of Chinese. In fact much of this English-only law making was intended to address the increased immigrant population in states with high immigration like California, and only inadvertently affected native languages (Hinton 1996). But potential laws like The Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act of 1996 that would make English the official language of the U.S. Government and require representatives of the Federal Government only use English, would still negatively impact the health of indigenous languages (Hinton and Hale 2001).

The combination of the multiple forced removals, the imposed anglicized education, and other US government interference resulted in the loss of identity, community, and language. The amount of devastation wrought seems irreversible, but there are people who are passionate about breathing life back into dying languages.

1.4. The Rise of Revitalization

The indigenous communities of the US are not the first places to be faced with the threat of language death. It’s estimated of the 7,000 languages spoken in the world, around 2,400 are in some level of endangerment (Lewis et al., 2015). And although language death and endangerment is recognized and documented now, it was not historically. So what happens when a language becomes endangered? The responses boil down to three options: preserve as much as the language as possible, make efforts to revive the language, or do nothing. Some languages have too few speakers left or too little interest within the community to be able to rebuild what has been lost. Some communities don’t have the resources or the time to devote to a language revival campaign. At that point the best option is to preserve as much of the language as possible for future study or future efforts to revive the language.

The active pursuit of language revitalization is a relatively new occurrence in language history. The earliest and most notable is the revival of spoken Hebrew. Other than being used for religious purposes, Hebrew had not been spoken for two thousand years by the 1800s.³ In the late

³ With the exception of Sephardic Jew who have spoken Hebrew since 1000 AD.
19th century a Jewish man named Eliezer Ben-Yehuda began work on revitalizing the language (Hinton & Hale 2001). By 1948 Hebrew was made the official language of Israel and today has nearly 5 million speakers (Lewis et al, 2015).

Because there are so many Native American nations with their own language, each community approaches language revitalization differently. Some communities are more internally driven, having leaders like Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, intent on doing the work to save their language. Others have linguists come into the community asking to work with them, and for others still it is too late. Further, other communities have other important community stresses to address. Activists, teachers, and speakers now have the benefit of decades of work to model revitalization practices off of hopefully finding one that best serves the needs of the community.

2. **Scope**

Using previous studies of the Navajo, Hawaiian, and Wukchumne speech communities, I will evaluate the social factors that can contribute to the effectiveness of a language revitalization program. These factors include the size of the speech community, language mobility, funding, and educational focus and target. Speech community and language mobility are the conditions of a language that help set up a revitalization program. Knowing the size of the endangered language speaking population is important for deciding how severe the need is to institute revitalization processes and how extensive the implementation needs to be. The closer a language is to language death, the more involved a program needs to be. Language mobility also comes into play when determining how involved the program will be. Language mobility is looking at how mobile the endangered language is. This refers to the accessibility of the endangered language to those who don’t speak it. Some endangered languages are taught at the university level, and individuals are able to get certification to teach the language. Other languages that are not as pervasive rely on native speakers, who could be untrained, to teach. Speech community size and language mobility will help determine the needs of the community and funding dictates how closely those needs will be met. Certainly other factors are salient when discussing how a program will fill the communities’ needs, like the number of individuals
willing to plan, teach, and organize the program. But funding is a reported and easily identifiable means to determine if a program will fulfill its aims. Lastly the educational target refers to the intersection of the education method the program employs and its audience to look at strength of language transmission. These factors were chosen because they are circumstantial to the language, influence the outcome of the program, and were mentioned in the literature for each of the three languages in the case studies.

The three communities were selected based on the amount of previous study done on the language and its speakers. All three languages are well documented and have a variety of literature that includes interviews and analytical data that suit the nature of this thesis. It should be noted that the literature on these languages focus on the dialect made standard by the relevant community. In Hawaii there is a pidgin dialect that incorporates Hawaiian, and in Navajo there is a similar dialect. These dialects are no less valuable, but the discussion will center on the work being done with standard dialects of the endangered languages.

The evaluation will be done by first looking at the overview of a particular program format and the setting in which the program was employed. Then a discussion will review the four factors listed above and how they relate to revitalization programs. The revitalization aspect refers to a program that actively worked to rebuild a language's speaker population, and not to programs that are for language maintenance or documentation. For meaningful growth to move an endangered language out its threatened status, the growth has to be sustained and not occur in fits and spurts. Successful language transmission to as many individuals as possible will result in revitalization (Spolsky 2002). This can occur in other mediums beside person-to-person spoken transmission. The Internet, radio, and printed media are also spaces where endangered languages are shared. However this thesis focuses on community efforts at revitalization and language transmission that happens when speakers come together. Language needs to be nurtured to thrive, and the discussion will review four factors that seem to contribute to successful growth.

3. **Types of Revitalization Strategies**

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3 Navajo is spoken on the radio station KTNN.
Native American communities in the US vary greatly in size. Some are large, like the Navajo Nation, and have a reservation and extensive community life. Others, like the Wukchumne have only one native speaker and a small ethnic population. Revitalization programs for those two communities will and should look different to meet the needs of the community. This section is a brief review of language revitalization strategies that have been used.

3.1. Non-Community Approaches

Non-community approaches refer to language movements that extend beyond a single speech community. These programs deal more with the politics and policy that affect language revitalization. A large obstacle to overcome in revitalization is making a dying language relevant to the would-be speakers. If a language is used in more locations and in more daily experiences, the more likely it is that the language will thrive. The problem exists around the policies that control language at a federal level. Because English is the unofficial language of the US minority languages are prohibited in places, like businesses and offices, where it would be beneficial to use a minority language (Hinton & Hale 2001). To make space for meaningful and lasting minority language revitalization, community level programs don’t have the power to change legislation. There has to be change at the federal level, a legislative recognition that non-standard languages are valued and protected.

Because law making is a complex process requiring immense time and resources, there have not been large amounts of native language right bills passed. It is only in the past couple of decades that there have been movements to protect Native American languages and rights. The Native American Language Act (NALA) passed in 1990 and a second section was added two years later. The impetus behind the cause was the threat of English-only legislation growth based (Hinton 1996). As discussed earlier, if these bills were passed into laws, there would be serious consequences for the state of bilingual education for Native American children, and also the state of all indigenous language usage. The implementation of English-only legislation would further curtail the use of indigenous languages.

In the summer of 1988 a group of eleven composed of Native Americans and non-Native Americans gathered to write a resolution to prevent the English-only movement from derailing work being done to revitalize indigenous languages in the U.S. (Hinton 1996). Not only was the
resolution made in order to prevent the harm of introducing a pure English speaking system, but it was also made to uphold a civil right; the right to free speech.

Under the first of the two acts, passed in 1990, Native Americans were declared to have the right to use their own language. Although it seems unnecessary, the writers of the law want to prevent policies like Americanization from the 1900s from happening again (Hinton & Hale 2001). Further it was established that it was the government’s responsibility to “preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Hinton 1996, 181). This essentially guaranteed Native Americans immunity from any English-only legislation that would pass. The second act in 1992 was an expansion on the language rights set up in the first act and amendment on the Native American Programs Act of 1974. In 1992 new funding provisions were added. A detailed list of options for grants that can be awarded was added. This includes funding for programs to document language, programs to bring younger and older speakers together, programs to buy equipment required for documentation, and other programs that fulfill the aim of the rights in the 1990 section of the act (Hinton 1996).

As federal law provisions under NALA are available to the entire country, any Native American community can apply for funding. Because these resources are accessible to everyone, they are not necessary to the evaluation process in this paper. By having a common variable in access to revitalization practices, it’s not necessary to consider the source of the funding. But it is important to acknowledge the funding that is available. What is important to consider is how different communities utilize the resources available to them through legislature like NALA and the Native American Programs Act of 1974.

3.2. Community Approaches

For-community programs focus on language revitalization practices that utilize focus on education. For child education there is a gradient for the level of immersion different communities use. Programs vary from short lessons akin to a foreign language class, to a bilingual set up where part of the education instruction takes place in the minority language, to full immersion programs (Hinton & Hale 2001). In other formal education settings, there are also programs that provide weekly night classes for adults and families.
Some newer programs focus on colloquial settings where the minority language can be learned in a more organic manner. Grenoble and Whaley highlight a program that they term ‘community-based’, where community members select and organize a community activity that is facilitated by using the minority language (2006). Typically the activity chosen will be conducive to natural learning and somehow connected to heritage culture. Under this framework community members sign up for the activity and pick up the language as they participate in the activity.

A similar program to this is the master-apprentice program. The goal is to pair younger member (the apprentice) of an indigenous community with a native speaker (the master). Under the guidelines of the program, the minority language is to be used exclusively by both speakers. The language is to be used in real-life settings and what is learned is decided between the participants. The ‘language masters’ are trained before the inception of the program in order to introduce teaching techniques for a non-classroom learning atmosphere (Hinton & Hale 2001, Grenoble & Whaley 2006). Family-based programs also rely heavily on using the minority language in everyday setting. Here the emphasis is on raising children in a home where the language is only used, or used equally, with the society standard.

Most programs are created as a collaboration between native speakers and linguists. The ones already mentioned are often set up with the help of a linguist, but the burden of the work is left to the community. The process is slightly different when documentation and materials development is undertaken. Documentation is the last line of defense to prevent language extinction. To create the most useful grammar or dictionary, linguistic training is required thereby necessitating a linguist to enter the community to facilitate the work. Documentation is not a revitalization strategy. The language has deteriorated too much to pursue the other options for language revival. The process of recording as much as possible is still important as it lets a linguist continue work or someday start a revival akin to the revival of Hebrew (Hinton & Hale 2001).

All these programs work at the local level to regain language use, and there are many benefits to this method. For some languages a large part of revitalization is changing language attitudes. In systems of power the minority group strive towards a socially perceived standard. In
the process of reaching that standard, ideologies and behaviors deviate from cultural norm. The non-standard aspect of identity has to be left behind to conform (Bourdieu 1977). The premium set on the standard inherently disvalues the non-standard. Reversing this internalized view of being non-standard is difficult and sometimes can’t be done just through learning how to speak the language. This thesis will look at immersion with Navajo, family-based language learning with Hawaiian, and the Master-Apprentice Program with Wukchumne.

4. Case Studies

When it comes to indigenous languages, the United States contains a unique collection of languages that exist within its borders. Each language is attached to a unique community with their own cultures and practices. While linguistic diversity is valued, especially by the academic community, it creates problems when trying to enact meaningful change to overall indigenous language use in the US. Just as each language is unique so must the revival program, which means there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to language loss. Just looking at the history of some indigenous groups illustrates how different the makeup of the communities is. When investigating the history of different communities it's clear that each speech community will require a program tailored to the needs of the community.

The purpose of this section is to highlight three speech communities with their own unique set of histories and cultures that led to different choices for approach of language revitalization, and layout the social factors for the discussion.

4.1. Navajo

Background

Navajo, or Diné as it’s called by its speakers, is an Athapaskan language in the same family as the languages spoken in Alaska, Western Canada, and small parts of California. The most recent census data states that there are over 170,000 speakers of Navajo from a 266,000 ethnic population (Lewis et al, 2015). The majority of speakers live on the nation’s reservation which occupies the Northeast corner of Arizona, the Southeast corner of Utah, and the Northwest corner of New Mexico (See Appendix 1). In addition to the 25,000 square mile reservation, there
are also several other reservations in New Mexico and small communities on the borders of the reservations.

According to the ranking from Ethnologue, Navajo is classified as 6b ‘threatened’ and stands within the ‘in trouble’ bracket for languages. This is based on a ranking system for language development by the editors of Ethnologue called the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). The ranking system is based off of Joshua Fishman’s classification system, where languages are assigned a number from 1 to 10. The number corresponds a value for where the language falls in a continuum for how prevalent the language is spoken or used in the world where 10 is extinct and 1 is national. Lewis et al. added the ‘0’ level which means the language is international (2015).

The Navajo’s first experience with colonial forces was in the 17th century with the Spanish. There is linguistic evidence of contact between the two groups in some loan words in Navajo taken from Spanish. The contact also introduced the Navajo to new types of livestock like sheep and horses, which would become the basis for their economic system. After the Americans seized the land from the Mexicans under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Navajo were forcibly removed to Fort Sumner by the US government. The land was returned to the Navajo people after their removal in the Treaty of 1868 (Iverson 2002).

The state of the Navajo economy is much different than it was at the turn of the 19th century. Most income came through farming and livestock, but in the 1930s a US policy forced the reduction of the livestock industry (Spolsky 2002). Combined with the overall collapse of the US economy this left the Navajo nation in dire straits. This lead to most community members looking for work off the reservation, including joining the army. Today’s overview situation has not much improved. The majority of income is collected through wages, general assistance, and social security with over half the population living below the poverty line (Spolsky 2002).

The 19th century produced a time of fluctuating language practices. The introduction of federal education exposed a larger amount of the population to English. “[Prior] to the 1950s, fewer than half of Navajo children attended school, whereas by 1955 attendance figures were

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4 See the appendix.
5 besso in Navajo for peso in Spanish (Benally & Viri 2005).
closer to 90 percent” (Field 2009, 38). Within the community people’s experiences were
different and while some were not cut off from their heritage language, all were taught that
English is the “language to get ahead”. This stems from the large amount of people leaving the
reservation to work and being integrated into English-speaking work contexts as a result of the
economy. Those individuals are now adult stakeholders in the community, upholders of
community norms and pass this ideology down to their children by only speaking English. This
contrasts to the views of the elderly monolingual speakers, who are in favor of what has been
termed ‘older speaker purism’ (Field 2009). This is the disapproval for changing how a language
is used, often in opposition to the younger generation altering some aspect of the language. There
are also competing ideologies that focus on the status that speaking Navajo gives to the speaker
in the societal context. In some areas Navajo is seen as a lower class attribute, probably
stemming from the English-first ideology. Interestingly in other spaces Navajo is a sign of
cultural status and connection to tradition that is highly valued. All these language preferences
and beliefs and more, exemplify the complex feelings a community or even an individual who is
Navajo can have about their language. And at the beginning of the 21st century the ideologies for
English were winning out, the population for Navajo speakers had been massively decreased.
These ideologies in turn affect how language revitalization was carried out.

Navajo Head Start
The program being focused on for this section is the Navajo Head Start Immersion Project from
1995-2000. The original Navajo Head Start program founded by the Department of Head Start
was started in 1965 as a preparatory program for young children aging three to five (Hinton &
Hale 2001). From the 199 children served during the first class year, Navajo Head Start has
grown to reach thousands of kindergarten-aged students (McCardle 2015). The goals for the
programs are to promote a healthy lifestyle, classroom competence, and readiness skills in
language and arithmetic (Hinton & Hale 2001). The centers, numbering at around 150, are set on
the exterior boundaries of the Navajo reservation and cover 12 counties in the Four Corners area.
Student eligibility for the program is garnered for low-income children, which makes up about
13% of all Navajo children in that age group (Hinton & Hale 2001). It’s estimated that for every
Head Start Center on average there are nine eligible students that are wait listed. This shows how necessary and desirable early education programs are, as the education provided to indigenous communities is below the level as the rest of the country.

When Navajo Head Start was started there was no specific emphasis on Navajo language acquisition. However a study in 1991 was conducted on the language habits of the incoming students. The results showed that 53.3% spoke only English, 27.9% were bilingual speaking English and Navajo, and only 17.7% spoke only Navajo (Platero 2001, McCardle 2015). Further, of those children who do speak Navajo, “[I]ess than a third of [the children] are considered by their teachers to be reasonably competent speakers of five-year-old Navajo” (Spolsky 2002, 141, Benally & Viri 2005). The same comments were noted about English speakers, that another “one third group of student who were monolingual in English also tested with weak abilities in their primary language” (Benally & Viri 2005, 99). Compared to the estimated 90% majority of the same aged speakers in 1970, the state of intergenerational transmission had taken a serious blow. The across the board, language deficiency does not directly index Navajo language loss, but shows that there is a greater problem of language education which does affect revitalization efforts.

To counteract the growing trend of English monolingualism and poor Navajo knowledge, Albert Hale, the former Navajo Nation President, issued an executive order in 1995 to make Navajo the primary language of instruction in all Head Start classrooms (Lockard & De Groat 2010). Because of funding and shortage of staff, or lack of compliance, only 20 centers were able to implement a fully Navajo school day. What came to fruition was a language immersion program inserted into the layout of the already existing Head Start system. The announcement was made in July, and immediately a curriculum was drafted and tested in the first year at the Chinle School as a pilot program. The revised curriculum combined the wisdom of traditional Navajo teachings with the current program and learning environment (McCardle 2015). This was applied in the classroom by teaching the children songs and stories, and learning about plants and the seasons. During the day the children were fully immersed in Navajo from the time they got on the bus in the morning until they got off in the afternoon. Teachers were sure to incorporate culture as well as language into lesson plans. One example comes from a teacher at the Rough
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Rock site where she did a unit on the four sacred mountains. The four mountains border the Navajo homeland and are intrinsic to Navajo culture. Each of the mountains is associated with a color and direction, and on a nature walk the teacher had students search for the corresponding colored rocks and then make models of their place within the mountains.6

Part of the curriculum designed by Dr. Wayne S. Holm focused on Situational Navajo. This is a topic related to second language acquisition, in that a speaker is able to respond using the language in a new situation rather than passively understanding. A parent commented to a teacher that their son was using Navajo, saying:

“Thank you for teaching my child Navajo. Yesterday my son wanted to feed the dogs and telling them to come over and eat. He said it all in Navajo!” (McCardle 2015, 99).

Testimonials like these were heartening to the motivation of the teachers in the program. Indeed “the full immersion program was effective” building a solid base of Navajo language and culture (McCardle 2015, 99). Unfortunately the immersion part of the program was shut down when mandates were given to change the curriculum. The previous curricula, the Situation Navajo and Dine Curriculum, were passed over in favor of Ade’e’honiszin Curriculum by the Department of Health and Human Services. The new curriculum shifted towards using English as the language of instruction, which was promoted by education policy No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The new act was based on measuring educational progress countrywide through standardized testing in English. Because the US Government policies apply to federally funded schools within the reservation, autonomy for education policy and practice does not exist for the Navajo Nation subjecting the people to what Uncle Sam dictates. So at the implementation of the new curriculum the Navajo Head Start Immersion Project ended in 2000 after 4 years.

6 The four colors are white, turquoise, yellow, and black corresponding to Mount Blanca, Mount Taylor, San Francisco Peaks, and Mount Hesperus respectively (Iverson 2002).
4.2. Hawaiian Background

Hawaiian is an Austronesian language in the same family as Maori, Malay, Malagasy, and Pilipino. Today there are over 27,000 speakers of Hawaiian, which is the co-official language of Hawaii. The island state is located in the Central Pacific, the furthest distance an Austronesian language traveled from the origin point in the Malay Peninsula. The eight islands that make up the state cover about 11,000 square miles and are home to 1.4 million people, who range in ethnic backgrounds. The islands’ diversity is reflected in the languages utilized, including English, Hawaiian, Hawaiian Creole English\(^7\) (HCE), Japanese, and Chinese. The expanse of languages comes from the large immigration population that came into Hawaii during the late 1800s when the island called for a large labor force for the sugar industry (Hinton & Hale 2001). In fact HCE formed as a means for immigrants from China, Japan, and other Pacific islands to communicate with each other without having to fully learn each others’ languages.

The decline of the Hawaiian language is a result of Western contact. Europeans first made contact with the monarchical nation in 1778 and brought diseases potent enough to reduce the population by 60%, going from 800,000 native Hawaiians to 47,500 over a period of hundred years (Grenoble & Whaley 2006 and Hinton & Hale 2001). The 19th century saw a rise in non-native language influence, which depressed Hawaiian. Christian missionaries from America came in the 1820s bringing English and religion transitioning Hawaiians away from their ancestral religion. The missionaries did help spread literacy by creating a standard orthography that is still used today\(^8\). In 1848 the land-tenure system was altered, mainly due to outside pressure. The land was divided and placed under private ownership, which resulted in the loss of livelihood for more than 90% of common Hawaiians (Hinton & Hale 2001). Persistent foreign contact by the Americans eventually led to the upset of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and the nation became the Republic of Hawaii, a provisional territory to the US (Yamauchi et al. 2015). At this point English had replaced Hawaiian in government processes and Hawaiian had even been outlawed in public schools. Like the Navajo children forced into boarding schools corporal

\(^7\) More commonly known as Hawaiian Pidgin.
\(^8\) The orthography consists of only twelve consonants and was used to document a plethora of Hawaiian oral traditions.
punishment was utilized to enforce the policy and resulted in similar attitudes of discontent with their native language and a significant decline in language usage (Yamauchi et al. 2015). Under the Organic Act of 1900, English was decreed the official Hawaiian government language (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). Combined with the increased immigrant population, which perpetuated the mutually intelligible HCE amongst the younger generations, Hawaiian fell into language endangerment. By the 1970s the estimated speaker population was around 2,000 people, the majority of which were over 70 years old\(^9\) (Grenoble & Whaley 2006).

The severity of the loss of Hawaiian did not go unnoticed. Starting in the 1960s there was a resurgence of Hawaiian culture termed the ‘Hawaiian Renaissance’. Interest in traditional music and dance, especially amongst college students, grew and lead to an interest in learning the language behind the cultural practices. During this period of reappreciation of Hawaiian culture, the spoken language was a domain that received wide support because the language had ties to ancestral Hawaiian culture, European-Hawaiian culture, and Hawaiian Christianity (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). This is best exemplified when in 1978, Hawaiian was designated an official language of the state along with English (Hinton & Hale 2001). Although the move was symbolic, the validation of the language created space for larger revitalization programs to take seed.

The Hawaiian Language Immersion program started in 1987 was the first in the efforts to revitalize the language (Yamauchi, et al. 2015). The coordinators and language advocates of the program opened a private preschool called Pūnana Leo meaning ‘language nests’. Language nests are full immersion language schools. In Hawaiian Pūnana Leo is targeted for children ages 2 to 5, and is based off a model from a successful program in New Zealand\(^{10}\). The focus of Pūnana Leo is on building a language-speaking community that will create future generations of Hawaiian speakers. The first was opened on Kaua‘i in 1984 and two more a year later on Hawai‘i and O‘ahu (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). The process in opening Pūnana Leo schools was difficult as there were many legalities around following state regulations that limited the extent of

\(^{9}\)At that time most native Hawaiian speakers were from the island Niihau. The island was isolated from foreign contact as it had been privately purchased from the Hawaiian kingdom in the 19th century (Hinton & Hale 2001).

\(^{10}\)Designed based of the Te Kōhanga Reo schools in New Zealand that worked to revitalize the native Māori language (Grenoble & Whaley 2006).
language schools. Funding for the private schooling was also problematic. At the beginning tuition was the main source of funding, but the non-profit branch of the program, ‘Aha Pūnana Leo (‘APL), received around $1 million in funding per year since 1990 (Hinton & Hale 2005). The money has been put towards subsidizing tuition to open up the educational opportunity to more families. In the 1990s ‘APL worked diligently and was able to open Hawaiian medium schools for students from kindergarten to high school.

Hawaiian in the Hale

_Hale_ means ‘home’ in Hawaiian, and is the basis for the revitalization strategy that Bill Wilson and Kauanoe Kamanā put into practice when raising their children. The couple met at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa during the pivotal Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s. They shared a Hawaiian language class and their relationship progressed while working on language advocacy. Bill and Kauanoe stayed dedicated to revitalizing the language as they pursued degrees in Hawaiian linguistics and Hawaiian studies respectively. In fact the couple cofounded ‘APL in 1983 (Wilson & Kamanā 2013). Both are not native speakers of Hawaiian, but learned it during their college years and continued afterwards (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). Bill and Kauanoe made the decision early on to raise their children in a Hawaiian speaking home, and had to overcome several hurdles to achieve their goal. The first was creating a Hawaiian speaking home. Both had to commit to speaking the language full time to each other, and it was a hard transition to make (Wilson & Kamanā 2013). Not only did they have to get situated in using Hawaiian with each other, they also had to contend with societal pushback from community and family members. Bill is not ethnically Hawaiian while Kauanoe is, and his family could become irritated by the exclusive use of Hawaiian. The decision to become a Hawaiian medium household was novel at the time in the late 1970s. Kauanoe and Bill were the first to make the choice.

Bill and Kauanoe’s dedication to maintaining their Hawaiian medium home was tested. They were the first family to instigate a fully Hawaiian speaking home and had to make definitive decisions about how to do it successfully. One of these decisions was to commit to only speaking Hawaiian to each other and to their two children. This includes outside of the
home; if Bill, Kauanoe, or one of their children wanted to communicate with each other it had to be in Hawaiian. This practice was supported by sending the children, Hulilau and Keli‘i, to only Hawaiian medium schools. Both children were in enrolled in Pūnana Leo at Hilo, and attended Keaukaha Elementary School, and the middle-high school program called Ke Kula ‘O Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u where English was taught as a second language (Wilson & Kamanā 2013).

Hulilau and Keli‘i, now well into adulthood have a deep appreciation for their language and culture:

“We were well aware, growing up, of the difference between our upbringing and that of our peers. We were raised in a Hawaiian-language world, completely immersed in the home and in school... When Hawaiian is the language of the home, our mother tongue lives on... This is how we will assure that our language lives on, and Hulilau and I [Keli‘i] plan on to contribute to this as we have our own families in the future and raise our children in the same way” (Wilson & Kamanā 2013, 117).

Bill and Kauanoe’s experiences illustrate how successful a family immersed in the language can be to revitalizing the language. Although one fluent family is small in comparison to the amount of Hawaiian speakers that have been lost, their example is a source of inspiration and representation of how an endangered language can become the first language for a new generation. Bill and Kauanoe’s example did lead others to follow in their footsteps and “[t]he number of families speaking Hawaiian in the home has grown and is an encouraging sign that the Hawaiian language revitalization movement continues to move in a positive direction” (Wilson & Kamanā 2013, 117).

4.3. Wukchumne

Background

Wukchumne is a dialect of the Yokut language, spoken in the San Juan Valley of California. The language is rated at 8a on the EGIDS, meaning that the only speakers left of the language are in the grandparent generation or older. Ethnologue estimates that there are fewer than 10 speakers out of the 300 ethnically Wukchumne (Lewis et al., 2015). Wukchumne is one of many

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11 Named after Josepa Kaho‘olani Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, a 19th century Hawaiian leader who has connections to many of the families that helped found the school (Wilson & Kamanā 2013).
12 Alternate spelling, Wukchumni.
languages in California that are disappearing. The state is dense in language diversity, once
having close to 100 different spoken languages. Now the number hovers around 50 and is
dropping as the elderly speakers pass on without fully sharing their language (Hinton & Hale
2001). The languages are rarely spoken at home so that intergenerational transmission, the
lifeblood of language perpetuation, is not occurring (Hinton 1996).

California language loss follows the same basic pattern as Navajo and Hawaiian.
Foreigners encroached during the 18th century, bringing disease and brutality to depress the
native population. For California it was the work of missions that first made contact, and then the
Americans after the Mexican-American war. The Gold Rush brought in immigrants, and then in
the late 19th century the government-mandated boarding schools were put in place. All these
events resulted in atrocities for the indigenous of California (Hinton & Hale 2001). Although the
people survived their callous history, their languages did not.

The Master-Apprentice Program
In terms of revitalization, the wide range of languages in California works against the process of
revival. Because there are so many languages and they have such small speaker populations,
there is not one language or culture to fully support. For Navajo and Hawaiian, the concentration
for revitalization could be directed towards one language. Despite this challenge California
language revitalization is a task that many are dedicated to. The Master-Apprentice Program
(MAP) was initially conceived from an idea that Julian Kang, a Karuk speaker, had (Hinton & Hale
2001). In 1992 the idea was further developed through Native California Network (NCN).
The program is set up so that a master and an apprentice apply together for a period of three
years. If accepted “each member of the team receives a $3,000 stipend for 360 hours of
immersion work,” and the master undergoes training to better facilitate language learning during
sessions (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). The money provides support and incentive for the team
members to be able to meet several times a week.

Over the three years, the apprentices’ goal is to learn enough of the language to be able to
converse and develop plans to teach the language to others. The designers of the program
recognize that full fluency is not a tangible goal for the scope of their program, but choose to
focus on transmission (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). The sessions between the master and apprentice take place in everyday settings so that the language use is natural and mirrors how children learn a first language. Many Wukchumne teams have participated in MAP. Eddie Sartuche, a Wukchumne master, has been paired with three people at once. He is dedicated to his work through the program:

"I will carry on teaching, as long as I'm on this earth! If I go, I don't want (Wukchumne) to go with me. I want to give it away! We're not trying to save our language. We're doing it" (Whittemore 1997, 7).

Two of his apprentices are teaching their grandchildren the language mimicking the style in which they learned. While MAP has been successful in its goal to instill enough language so that the apprentice can pass it on, the program does not have the capacity to fully rebuild a language like Wukchumne (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). Additionally even with a program like MAP that works to meet the needs of small indigenous communities, some communities still don’t have the capacity to support revitalization programs. Still MAP provides a space to prevent the language from dying, and to pass on cultural practices connected to the language.

5. Discussion

Navajo, Hawaiian, and Wukchumne are good examples of language revitalization put into action. Not all languages or their speakers get a chance to pursue language revival. And while these three communities chose to respond to their language loss, the programs in the case studies overviewed all differ from each other. The factors that immerse as relevant are the speaker population, language mobility, funding, and the educational focus of the program.

The 1990 census reported that out of the 219,189 who identify as Navajo, 171,000 speakers, and 7,616 were monolingual speakers of the language (Lewis et al. 2000). Census data is based on self-reporting, so the level of fluency is unclear, but the number provides an estimate that valid enough to provide a picture of the linguistic climate. The goal under the Navajo Head Start (NHS) immersion program was to give some of Navajo’s youth a connection to the language. This happened through a curriculum, which focused on developing Situation Navajo,
designed by teachers of Navajo Nation Head Start (Lockard & deGroat). The teachers who worked for the program all have degrees in child education and Navajo studies; degrees that are offered at Diné College. This shows that Navajo is mobile; teachers are able to learn the language and then teach it to their students as demonstrated in the case study. The level of language sharing between teacher and student is high; the student has full access to the language when in school. It’s the students who don’t attend these schools that can’t access the language, where an average of nine students were waitlisted for the thirty-nine preschools. Here is where funding played a decisive role in creating access to Navajo. The low budgeting limits the access children have to the program (Hinton & Hale 2001). For the five years that NHS was open, the program relied on tuition and federal funding to subsidize the tuition to make it as affordable as possible. In 2000, the program was shut down because of policy that resulted in the defunding of the Navajo immersion side of NHS. ‘No Child Left Behind’ demanded a standard of English fluency that directly challenged the mission of the immersion program (Lockard & deGroat 2015). Ultimately the policy required the Navajo program to stop, which put a stop in the learning trajectory for the students. Parents who wanted their children to continue learning Navajo had to seek out another program, or choose to stop disrupting further transmission of the language.

The style of teaching in the classroom was Situational Navajo, a language-learning program made for second language learners. Even though some of the students in the program already knew some Navajo, all the students were being instructed in the same manner. Because the language was being taught in a L2 format, the lessons were focused on more specific uses of the language than when learning a L1. In the classroom students were taught grammatical structures and vocabulary to use situationally, which contextualized the material learned in class (Lockard & deGroat). Based on parent testimonies, the strategies worked and the children were effectively learning to use Navajo.

The results of the Navajo case study contrasts to the family immersion that Bill Wilson and Kauanoe Kamanā instituted with their family. The couple was married in 1976 during the Hawaiian Renaissance when awareness of the deterioration of the language was at an all-time high (Wilson & Kamanā 2013). Bill and Kauanoe were involved in starting the preschool
program and in the non-profit that provided funding for revitalization projects in Hawaii. Both had studied Hawaiian throughout their undergraduate education at the University of Hawaii and further pursued Hawaiian studies afterwards. For them access to the language was at a high level. They were able to learn the language in class and meet with elderly speakers (Wilson & Kamanä 2013). Because the scope of their revitalization efforts was directed at only their children and taught through their own knowledge of the language, there was no financial burden or funding needed to pursue their Hawaiian medium household. The children had direct access to Hawaiian through their parents constantly reifying their connection to the language. The connection with the language produced two fluent speakers who plan to pass the language onto their children (Wilson & Kamanä 2013). This is a perfect example of transgenerational transmission; the key to productive language revitalization. Here Hawaiian was being acquired as a first language in the home, and supported through adolescence by means of Hawaiian medium elementary, middle, and high schools. This contrasts to the capacity of NHS, as after the pre-school there were few programs to continue language acquisition at the same level that was offered in the immersed preschool classrooms.

The Wukchumne case study is similar to Hawaiian in the style of language acquisition. Both are set up to take place in intimate settings backed by an interpersonal relationship. The master and apprentice only communicate in Wukchumne when together and this is meant to simulate first language acquisition (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). The language is being passed on in small increments, and the apprentices learning the language are teaching it to others (Hinton 2001). But Wukchumne has a much smaller ethnic and speaking population than both Navajo and Hawaiian, with less than ten speakers among an ethnic population of less than 200 (Vaughan-Lee 2015). The speakers are also more spread out geographically, making access to the language even harder and requiring full commitment from the participants. The stipend given to the participants and the recording technology used to document their sessions are provided through federal funding and private donors. For this program the participants are compensated for their time instead of having to pay tuition at a school. Wukchumne also doesn’t have the benefit of having Wukchumne programs at the collegiate level where students could receive a degree that could be used to teach in an education institution. This is the case for many
indigenous Californian languages, and is why MAP was created. It meets the need for a space in which language learning can occur without education requirements or policies getting in the way.

The case studies each exhibit a strength that contributes to sustainable language revitalization. The Navajo Head Start program reached the greatest amount of people having multiple locations and having an age range of three to five. The Hawaiian case study shows how language revitalization can happen without any funding. Lastly the Wukchumne is an example of adapting language education to a unique situation.

6. **Conclusion**

For language revitalization to work the language has to be transmitted to a new generation of speakers and that generation has to continue to use the language and then repeat the process. Programs that can facilitate this will make a lasting impact. To do this there has to be an ample enough speech community and access to those who speak the endangered language. Language mobility and access is where a revitalization program can flounder. Navajo Head Start, while it was employing the immersion curriculum, had plenty of eager students, but was thwarted by federal education policy in maintaining access to the language when the program was discontinued. The case studies for Hawaiian and Wukchumne highlight strategies that put the emphasis on language mobility. Both programs focus the most on time spent between the learner and the teacher and the relationships built out of the experience. Participants in both programs also expressed their intent to continue using the language. This thesis suggests that there is validity in programs that specialize in learning environments where the emphasis is placed on the people learning the language, their relationship, and the experience, rather than on the language by itself.
References


Haake, Claudia B. 2007. *The state, removal and indigenous peoples in the united states and


Ho`opili ka Mano`o i ke Kukakuka: Instructional Conversation as an Effective Strategy for Indigenous Students’ Engagement and Learning. Narrowing the Achievement Gap for

Appendix

1. The Navajo Nation
Source: http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/navajoweave/contemp/map.html
2. Hawaiian State Map

Source: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/USA/hawaii_map.htm
3. California Indigenous Language Map

Source: https://oaklandnorth.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ca-map.jpeg
4. EGIDS Table

Table 1. Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wider Communication</td>
<td>The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Vigorous</td>
<td>The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shifting</td>
<td>The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Moribund</td>
<td>The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Nearly Extinct</td>
<td>The only remaining users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no one has more than symbolic proficiency.

The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Source: http://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status