Indigenous Languages and Reconciliation
Langues autochtones et réconciliation
Joint CAAL/CLA/SSHRC session
Séance conjointe de l’ACLA/l’ACL/CRSH

Monday, May 30, 2016
6:15 - 9:00 p.m.
University of Calgary, Room ST 127.
Indigenous Languages and Reconciliation / Langues autochtones et réconciliation
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CLA website (http://cla-acl.ca/congres-de-2016-meeting/);
CAAL website (http://congress2016.ca/program/events/256-caal);
Congress 2016 website (http://congress2016.ca/program/events/indigenous-languages-and-
reconciliation-trc-calls-action-16-and-65)

Subject: Call to Action 16 and 65 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (creating degree programs in Aboriginal languages and a national SSHRC research program on reconciliation).

Sujet : Appels à l’action 16 et 65 de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation, (création des programmes en langues autochtones et un programme national de recherche SSHRC pour mieux faire comprendre les facteurs associés à la réconciliation).

Format

Opening: Bruce Starlight, Elder, dedicated language activist, and instructor for the Tsuu T’ina language.

1. SSHRC presentation / présentation CRSH (20 minutes) Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #65, and SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grants.

2. Position statements / Énoncés de position (15 minutes apiece):
   Creating Programs is Only Part of the Action Needed. Arok Wolvengrey and Olga Lovick
   Language Loss: A deformity in education. Belinda Daniels
   Indigenous Languages, Truth, and Reconciliation. Amos Key, Jr. and Carrie Dyck
   How can University – First Nations Partnerships support the development of advanced fluency in First Nations languages with very few speakers? Marianne Ignace, Khelsilem Dustin Rivers, Lucy Bell, and Julienne Ignace
   An Aboriginal Languages Research program to address the language-related Calls to Action of the TRC. Inge Genee and Don McIntyre (with contributions from students in an Indigenous Language Endangerment and Revitalization course)
   Towards A Living Digital Archive of Canadian Indigenous Languages. Sally Rice and Dorothy Thunder.
   Urgent call for university programs to deliver 1,000 hours and adopt proven curriculum models to teach Indigenous languages. Sʔimləʔxʷ Michele Johnson and Sfâq̓alqs Hailey Causton

3. Conclusions / Conclusions (1/2 hour/ 0.5 heures): Discussion moderated by the members of the Organizing Committee / Discussion modérée par les membres du comité de programmation (Carrie Dyck, John O’Meara, Patricia Shaw)
Indigenous Languages and Reconciliation / Langues autochtones et reconciliation
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Bios

Opening: Bruce Starlight, Elder, dedicated language activist, and instructor for the Tsuu T’ina language

1. SSHRC presentation

2. Panel for position statements

Creating Programs is Only Part of the Action Needed. Arok Wolvengrey and Olga Lovick
Arok Wolvengrey is Professor of Algonquian Languages and Linguistics, and Language and Linguistics Coordinator, at First Nations University of Canada. He is fluent in Nêhiyawêwin (Plains Cree).
Olga Lovick is an Associate Professor of Linguistics and Dene Language Studies at the First Nations University of Canada. She works with Dene languages in Alaska and Saskatchewan.

Language Loss: A deformity in education. Belinda Daniels
Belinda Daniels is an interdisciplinary PhD student (education, history and anthropology) at the University of Saskatchewan, working on language revitalization and identity, particularly for the Cree/nehiyaw language. She is originally from Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK.

Indigenous Languages, Truth, and Reconciliation. Amos Key, Jr. and Carrie Dyck
Amos Key Jr. was born into the Onkwehonweh Civilization of Ontario and hails from the Six Nations of the Grand River community, in southern Ontario. He is of Mohawk descent born into the Turtle Clan. His career has been in championing, First Nations linguistic and human rights and research in stabilizing their languages, as the Director of First Nations Languages Program, at the Woodland Cultural Centre, in Brantford, Ontario.
Carrie Dyck is associate dean, research and graduate programs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and associate professor, Department of Linguistics at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She has worked with Cayuga speakers at Six Nations since 1993.

How can University – First Nations Partnerships support the development of advanced fluency in First Nations languages with very few speakers? Marianne Ignace, Khelsilem Dustin Rivers, Lucy Bell, and Julienne Ignace.
Marianne Ignace has a joint appointment with First Nations Studies and Director, First Nations Language Centre. For the past twenty years, Marianne has focused her research on the Secwepemc (Shuswap) people of the Plateau, where her interests are aboriginal land use and occupancy, ethnobotany, traditional ecological knowledge, ethnohistory, and the linguistic and anthropological analysis of Aboriginal language discourse.
Khelsilem Dustin Rivers is a young educator living in Vancouver, BC. Khelsilem is a community organizer by passion, language revitalization activist by need, and graphic designer by choice. He is an outspoken Skwxwú7mesh-Kwakwaka’wakw blogger.
Lucy Bell is a member of the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Band in Port Hardy, BC. She has a
Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance from University of Victoria. She is a lawyer, and works for the Department of Justice in Aboriginal Litigation Services and Indian Residential Schools. Julienne Ignace is an indigenous youth and Secwepemc speaker.

**An ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM to address the language-related Calls to Action of the TRC.** Inge Genee and Don McIntyre (with contributions from students in an Indigenous Language Endangerment and Revitalization course)

Inge Genee is Associate Professor of Linguistics, working on Blackfoot. At the University of Lethbridge she is involved in redesigning the teaching and learning of indigenous languages, in particular Blackfoot, in response to community and student need for language preservation and revitalization.

Don (AhnAhnsisi) McIntyre is an Ojibway of the Wolf Clan from Timiskaming First Nation, and has been adopted in the Potlatch by the Beaver Clan of the Nisga’a.

Don is currently completing his PhD in Laws looking at Legal Pluralism and the abilities of Indigenous Socio-Legal practices to enhance and improve Western legal paradigms in the area of property. He is presently Assistant Professor in the Native American Studies Department at University of Lethbridge, and is also ongoing faculty at The Banff Centre in the Indigenous Leadership and Management Development programs.

**Towards A Living Digital Archive of Canadian Indigenous Languages.** Sally Rice and Dorothy Thunder.

Sally Rice is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Alberta and a co-founder and former director of CILLDI, the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute. Through CILLDI, she developed an accredited Community Linguist Certificate in 2007, which has now been awarded to over 90 Indigenous language speakers in Canada. She actively works with speakers and language revitalization programs in three First Nations communities in Alberta: Cold Lake First Nation (Dene Sųłiné), Tsuu T’ina Nation (Tsut’ina), and Alexis Nakoda Sioux Nation (Stoney/Nakota). Beyond language documentation, her other research areas include lexical semantics, corpus linguistics, and multimodality in language.

Dorothy Thunder is a Plains Cree (nêhiyawiskwêw) from Little Pine First Nation, Saskatchewan and full-time Cree instructor in Native Studies at the University of Alberta. Her passion for the Cree language began at the U of A, where she completed her BA in Native Studies in June 2002 and MSc in Linguistics in December 2015. She co-authored the book, *Beginning of Print Culture in Athabasca Country*, which won the Scholarly and Academic Book of the Year in June 2011. In March 2011, she received the Graduate Studies Teaching Award in recognition of excellence in the performance of teaching duties in the Faculty of Native Studies. Being a fluent nêhiyawêwin speaker and instructor has inspired her to continue in developing resource materials and promoting nêhiyawêwin language programs.

**Urgent call for university programs to deliver 1,000 hours and adopt proven curriculum models to teach Indigenous languages.** Sʔímlaʔxʷ Michele Johnson and S̱ax̱alqs Hailey Causton

Sʔímlaʔxʷ Michele Johnson (PhD) is Syilx (Okanagan Interior Salish) and suyápix (Euro-Canadian) and lives in unceded Syilx territory, Penticton BC, Canada. She is a full-time language activist and Nsyilxcn (Okanagan, Interior Salish) teacher in Penticton as well as a post-doctorate researcher at Simon Fraser University. She is training a cohort of fifteen adults to become n’tlčin (intermediate speakers) by using cutting-edge immersion, acquisition techniques and assessments. She is the lead teacher at Syilx Language House Association.
Staʔqʷalqs Hailey Causton haileycauston@gmail.com co-teaches the Nsyilxcən (Okanagan, Interior Salish) language at the Syilx Language House Association.

3. **Closing discussion (1/2 hour):** The closing discussion will be moderated by the members of the Organizing Committee.

Carrie Dyck, Associate Dean of Arts (Research and Grad Studies), SSHRC Leader on behalf of Memorial University. Bio provided above.

John O’Meara, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University; SSHRC Leader on behalf of Lakehead University. John’s research interests include Algonquian languages (Ojibwe, Cree, Delaware), general linguistics, second-language learning, verbal art and literacy. He is a published author of journal articles, books, and a Delaware-English/English-Delaware dictionary. He has been a longtime proponent of Lakehead’s Native Language Instruction Program.

Patricia Shaw, Founding Chair, First Nations and Endangered Languages Program, Faculty of Arts, UBC; Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia. Patricia is the founder of what is now the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program (FNEL). She founded the award-winning First Nations Languages Program (FNGL) in partnership with the Musqueam Indian Band in 1997. Patricia has been a pioneer in opening community access to UBC, and has also taken UBC to communities throughout the province, having taught UBC-accredited FNGL courses in Alert Bay, on the Kwantlen First Nations reserve and at the Urban Native Youth Association, and at Britannia Centre in East Vancouver.

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Arok Wolvengrey <awolvengrey@firstnationsuniversity.ca>, Olga Lovick <Olga@lithophile.com>, Belinda Daniels <bcd127@mail.usask.ca>, Amos Key <amoskeyjr@woodland-centre.on.ca>, Carrie Dyck <cdyck@mun.ca>, Marianne Ignace <ignace@sfu.ca>, Khelsilem Dustin Rivers <khelsilem@gmail.com>, Lucy Bell <lbell@uvic.ca>, Julienne Ignace <jm.ignace@gmail.com>, Inge Genee <inge.genee@uleth.ca>, Don McIntyre <don.mcintyre@uleth.ca>, Sally Rice <sally.rice@ualberta.ca>, Dorothy Thunder <dthunder@ualberta.ca>, Sʔímlaʔxʷ Michele Johnson <michelekjohnson@gmail.com>, Staʔqʷalqs Hailey Causton <haileycauston@gmail.com>
This presentation will focus on SSHRC’s consultations and developing plans to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #65. SSHRC will also present a synopsis of SSHRC’s work in support of Aboriginal research, including SSHRC initiatives on provisions to support Aboriginal research and talent, and the upcoming SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grants about Aboriginal peoples.

Le CRSC présentera une synthèse des intérêts du CRSH en trois parties: (i) les travaux du CRSH en ce qui concerne la mise en œuvre d’un plan pour l’Appel à l’action 65; (ii) initiatives CRSH pour appuyer la recherche et le talent autochtone; (ii) initiatives CRSH à propos des subventions de synthèse des connaissances visant les domaines des défis de demain au sujet des peuples autochtones.
Creating Programs is Only Part of the Action Needed

Arok Wolvengrey and Olga Lovick

In our position statement, we want to address Call to Action 16: “We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.”

At our Institution, we have successfully taught such programs for several decades. We offer full degree programs in Cree and Saulteaux as well as minors in Dene, Dakota, and Nakota. We also offer a First Nations Language Instructor Certificate and a Linguistics program geared towards the documentation of First Nations languages.

Based on these experiences, we can attest to the many benefits of teaching Aboriginal languages in the post-secondary education system. Students with degrees and certificates in Aboriginal languages are highly employable as interpreters, translators or language teachers. Especially in the North, there continues to be great need for strongly bilingual and biliteral individuals to assist in the communication between First Nations language speakers and institutions such as clinics, the RCMP, or schools. Aboriginal language teachers are being actively recruited by schools and universities all across the country. Language teachers have the potential to contribute directly to the maintenance and revitalization efforts within their linguistic community and beyond. By graduating with a degree or diploma in an Aboriginal language, an individual can thus “give back” to their community. The inclusion of Aboriginal languages in University curricula also valorizes these languages.

We argue, however, that the Call to Action does not go far enough. It is one thing for a postsecondary institution to create and offer such programs. It is another matter entirely to find students who have the funding to take them.

Community-based language programming is expensive to put on. In order for the University to break even, a cohort of 15-20 students is required (assuming that some students drop out over the 2–4 years required to complete the program). But if a program is delivered locally, this means 15-20 students have to be able to pay for this program at the same time. This creates problems; bands do not have sufficient education funding for that many students simultaneously to take one program. At the same time, Universities continue to be under pressure to make profit. Added to this is the problem that community members need to pay not only for tuition and fees, but also to cover their cost of living. The inability to find adequate funding remains one of the biggest roadblocks facing Aboriginal students.

Thus, we find that the Call for Action needs to be accompanied by a Call for Funding—either by funding post-secondary institutions, so they can provide language-related programming at a reduced rate for Aboriginal students, or by funding these students directly as they work towards their degrees.

References

Language Loss: a deformity in education

Belinda Daniels

**Position Statement** - Universities need to think of other ways to support other types of language programs and classes for Indigenous learners and speakers that does not evolve around the familiarity of English reading and writing practices and to increase support to research (by Indigenous researchers) in the area of Indigenous language revitalization in order to address the Truth and Reconciliation Report call to action.

**Background Information** - Each summer, for the past 11 years, I have engaged camp participants in a learning space that reawaken the Indigenous and non-Indigenous spirit of those who come and learn, what was originally an Indigenous way of educating, a way that was successful for First Nations people since time immemorial. I have established this land based culture camp as a language playground of learning, speaking, knowing, and doing which honors the spirit, body, mind and emotion. This is based on nēhiyaw ways of knowing, being and doing.

**Research Context** - Policies of the Canadian Government imposed detrimental effects on First Nations peoples and the results have been catastrophic. As we are all Treaty people, these effects can still be seen and felt within societies of Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike and in communities throughout this nation, in terms of the loss of First Nations language, culture and identity; political, social, economic, educational, and health status; and intergenerational trauma within families and communities. In regard to education, one way of addressing the problem of language loss was a Ministry framework to implement the teaching of Indigenous languages in the education system in Saskatchewan. Revamped in 2008, this initiative was well intentioned, however this common curriculum framework from K-12 was not, and still is not, the solution to healing the identity of First Nations people by replenishing Indigenous languages. An alternative and more holistic possibility is taking the language back home, to Indigenous homesteads and lands, with an opportunity to participate and engage with the land, the people, oneself and Creator, the original way of learning and being for Indigenous people.

My contribution as an Aboriginal educational leader has been to return to the lands of my ancestors in recreating an old idea of informal learning situated in Indigenous ways of knowing and being, but new and innovative in the field of mainstream education. The one of a kind summer language camps have helped rejuvenate an awareness of language preservation within First Nations communities, where language loss is moving into a critical state. Education for Indigenous peoples, as mandated in *Indian Control of Indian Education Policy*, “stressed the importance of children learning about their past, thus linking history, education and self-government” (McLeod, 2002, p. 45). My research requires strong historical understandings and knowledge, as well as a situatedness in anthropological and historical conceptualizations, in order to envision new possibilities for the field of education.

For eleven years, following my attainment of a Master of Education degree, I first founded, then continued to coordinate the camps, teaching others the basics of learning known as *nēhiyawewin* in the form of five day summers camps during the month of July, a time of significance. July is the time of renewing the spirit through interacting and being a part of nature. Camp activities have included sweatlodge ceremonies, a spiritual honoring done through praying in the mid-day sun in hopes of a vision; skinning and preparing meat and hide; and harvesting and gathering various herbs, plants, berries and roots. Because the benefits of engagement in these Indigenous ways of being and knowing, all the while learning to speak Cree, have been amazing in my own developmental growth and wellness as a nēhiyaw, I created the camp to avail this learning and teaching to others. My intention was to
facilitate this learning process by creating opportunities that honor the learning style of individuals wanting to nourish and replenish their mother tongue memory and language. Current colonial educational approaches have proven unsuccessful for many of our First Nations students and non-First Nations students alike, including Indigenous teachers. How might embedding Indigenous teaching and learning practices into current educational systems provide a promising alternative?
Indigenous Languages, Truth, and Reconciliation

Amos Key and Carrie Dyck

In Canada’s Indian Residential School system, the 53 Indigenous languages spoken in Canada were suppressed—even demonized—silencing the voices of well over seven generations of Indigenous humanity. In the words of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*,

“The intent … was to “kill the Indian in the child.” … those in charge of the schools repeatedly told the children that their language and their culture was worthless and evil…”

What is wrong with this picture?

Changing its policy from active suppression to lukewarm support of Indigenous languages, Canada began to distribute $5 million per year to its 644 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. To put this in context, “[t]he total [provincial] funding for [Ontario] French-language boards for the 2010-11 school year was $1.24 billion…” This is a wonderful example of what adequate language funding could and should be. Can you imagine?

In 2006, the Liberal government decided to increase the $5 million budget to $172.5 million over 10 years; the *Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures* was established to recommend how the funding should be spent. In 2005 (and $12.5 million later), the recommendations in *Towards a New Beginning* were released. In response, the then-new Conservative government permanently committed…wait for it…$5 million annually as of 2006.

What’s wrong with this picture?

Indigenous languages encode the distilled wisdom of peoples who have lived here for millenia; they provide wonderfully varied perspectives on how to get along, how to live healthily, and how to develop emotional and spiritual intelligence. The following facts about Ongwehón:weh (Iroquoian) languages provides some inkling of the intellectual heritage of Canada’s Indigenous civilizations:

- The word ‘Canada’ derives from the Laurentian word, Kaná:ta’, meaning ‘settlement or town’.8
- The Moral Code of Handsome Lake (in the Cayuga language, “Gaihwí:yo:) is a blueprint for cultivating, nurturing and maintaining a good mind, living well with others, and cultivating virtues valued within the Ongwehón:weh civilization. The Code is steeped in emotional, social, and spiritual intelligence. Each year, the Great Orators go on the “Gaihwi:yo: Trail” and eloquently recite the Code in the participating Longhouse communities in New York State and Eastern Canada. It takes a full four days to recite and interpret the Code each time.
- With about 6000 words and word-parts, Ongwehón:weh languages have elegant expressive powers: for example, the Cayuga word for the Canadian Constitution is Hodiyanehsronni:gó:wah, which means ‘Great Law Created by Men’; and the word for Parliament is Ganonhsowanenhgó:wah or ‘Pre-eminent Great House’.

While all of Canada’s Indigenous languages have writing systems, most of the distilled wisdom in these languages is passed on from speaker to speaker, in an oral tradition. Yet, for many Indigenous languages in Canada, the most fluent speakers are over 60 years of age.
As “Treaty Peoples”, Canadians have an obligation to support Indigenous languages: Section 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and subsequent court cases recognize and protect “non-extinguished” Indigenous rights that “were integral to the distinctive culture of the specific aboriginal group” before European contact. These rights include the right to speak an Indigenous language.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on Canada’s Treaty Peoples, and post-secondary institutions in particular, “… to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.” As called for in the Principles of Truth and Reconciliation, we need to consult with Indigenous scholars, wisdom keepers, and Elders, so that we can embed new frameworks of Indigenous inclusion and Indigenous knowledge throughout our discourse and in our institutions.

Above all, we must understand the Residential School context which created language endangerment. We owe it to the next Seven Generations to support the Indigenous peoples of Canada in their efforts to maintain their languages. Only then will we move beyond the current third-world conditions of Indigenous humanity in Canada, and put into action a new epiphany of conscience, so that Canada’s Indigenous voices will be heard again.

Da:netoh! (That’s our final word.)

1 The word “Indian” is used here because Canada’s Indian Residential School system is the official designation for the system.


11 “Too many Canadians still do not know the history of Aboriginal peoples’ contributions to Canada, or understand that by virtue of the historical and modern Treaties negotiated by our government, we are all Treaty people.” P. 8 in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication. ISBN 978-0-660-02078-5. Cat. no.: IR4-7/2015E-PDF.

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

12 Ibid, p. 130. Also see Leitch, David. 2003. Canada’s Native Languages: The Right of First Nations to Educate Their Children in Their Own Languages. Constitutional Forum, vol 15, no 3. 107-120. Canada is founded on an historic treaty process, in which some Aboriginal rights were extinguished in exchange for land (“Canada”). Treaty rights are also upheld in Section 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter and subsequent court cases recognize and protect “non-extinguished” Aboriginal rights that “were integral to the distinctive culture of the specific aboriginal group” prior to European contact (P. 113 in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Canada’s residential schools : the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. V. 5. The legacy. ISBN 978-0-7735-9827-0 (v. 5 : ePDF)

http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Volume_5_Legacy_English_Web.pdf). These rights arguably include the right to speak in Indigenous language; (this specific interpretation has not been explicitly tested in court).


http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf, accessed 2016-03-17


How can University – First Nations Partnerships support the development of advanced fluency in First Nations languages with very few speakers?

Marianne Ignace, Khelsilem Dustin Rivers, Lucy Bell, and Julienne Ignace

This position statement deals with the difficult question of how, given that in British Columbia most indigenous languages have a very small number of first language speakers left, we can nourish a critical mass of new proficient speakers for many (32+) languages. In order to breathe new life into our languages, we require advanced “fluent” or “proficient” second language speakers to enable the whole range of what has been prescribed as useful mechanisms of language (re)vitalization: language nests, immersion and intensive FN as second language programs, even future Mentor-Apprentice training, last not least training parents who can create intergenerational transmission in the home.

After years of offering courses within the typical university structure of three contact hours per week or similar low-intensity courses, we realize that this structure is not conducive to producing the level of proficiency we need. We thus turn to “outside of the box” structures of offering courses and credentials together with community partners, and we lay out a path for additional and new credentials that will enable the proficiency level we think is required. Experiences and examples of these are:

a) “Bootcamp” type of 4-month concentrated language injection, e.g. four months followed by participants’ follow up in work situations (teaching the language in various settings)

b) An 8-month language academy (Squamish) through interactive and communicative learning

c) A language house approach – seconding employees to learn their language for one or two days per week – long term, for two or more years.

d) Intensive and sustained mentor (master) – apprentice work.

Based on preliminary results, we maintain that eclectic but interactive and effective teaching methods are crucial; so is a structured and sequential curriculum as a “road map” to, of and as learning. In our communities, emphasizing and celebrating the connection to life, culture, identity and personal/collective history is crucial, and we will speak to that from experience.

Finally, we argue for the coalescence of teaching/learning and research: Very little research exists on First Nations language learners’ production of their emerging language skills, given also the historical and systemic issues that have got in the way of language (re)acquisition, and the reconciliation that we strive for. All of these have impacts on learning we need to understand better. We strongly advocate a connection between learning/teaching and research, and we will show how research into second language acquisition can provide important insights into productive ways of engaging communities and universities in supporting the next generation of speakers.
An ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM to address the language-related Calls to Action of the TRC

Inge Genee and Don McIntyre

Call to Action 65 calls for “a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.” This research program should include a national ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM to address the question what reconciliation means with respect to Aboriginal languages and linguistics. A separate program to address this question is warranted because language loss is one of the consequences of the residential school system that is particularly intractable and difficult to reverse or mitigate. The ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM which we envision should minimally address the following questions. (Please note this list is not intended to be exhaustive and is based on our particular local context and input from our Aboriginal students and collaborators.)

1. Post-secondary degree programs in Aboriginal languages. Call to Action 16 asks for “post-secondary institutions to create university and college level degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.” Post-secondary institutions should commit to funding such programs to the same degree that they fund programs in Canada’s two official languages. The ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM will address how these programs can be created. It will ask questions such as: What does a good post-secondary degree or diploma program in Aboriginal languages look like? What knowledge and skills should graduates of such programs have? How should such programs be structured? Who should teach in such a program? What should the qualifications of the teachers be, and how will they be able to acquire such qualifications? To what extent should such programs be similar to or different from degree and diploma programs in non-Indigenous languages? What alternate methodologies, such as Mentor-Apprentice programs and Community Linguist programs, are appropriate for such degree programs? Who should be involved in making decisions regarding these questions? How can such programs be funded and run sustainably?

2. Aboriginal languages for K-12 students. Call to Action 16 cannot be separated from Call to Action 10.iv, which calls for the protection of “the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses” in the K-12 education system and Call to Action 12, which calls for “culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.” The ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM will investigate how Aboriginal languages are best promoted, taught and learned in the school systems and in ECE programs, on and off reserve. The questions it asks are similar to those mentioned under 1. In addition to “credit courses”, other proven successful models will be investigated, including languages nests, immersion, bilingual (dual stream) programs, and other models in which Aboriginal languages are not just subject but also medium of instruction and conversational fluency is a main objective. Since many of the graduates from the post-secondary degree programs in Aboriginal languages discussed under 1. will likely become Aboriginal language teachers in the ECE/K-12 system, the post-secondary programs should include appropriate training in L2 teaching and learning and curriculum development.

3. Aboriginal languages in other contexts. In addition to the obvious Calls 13-17, language is relevant
in many other realms. For instance, wherever a Call to Action asks for something to be “culturally appropriate”, this should be interpreted to mean “culturally and linguistically appropriate” (e.g. Calls 1.ii, 1.iii, 5, 10.iii, 12, 19, 23.iii, 24, 27, 28, 33, 36, 84.i, 90.iii, 92.iii). The ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM will investigate the relevance of language to all areas identified in the TRC recommendations and provide evidence-based guidance for the promotion of Aboriginal languages across all spheres.

4. Decolonizing linguistics. The ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES RESEARCH PROGRAM will address the responsibility of post-secondary institutions and the field of linguistics in its broadest sense to engage in work that prioritizes the revitalization of Indigenous languages. It will also investigate ways of incorporating Indigenous ways of looking at language into linguistic theory and practice with the goal to develop a truly decolonized linguistics that contributes to reconciliation by marrying western and Indigenous approaches to language.

**Bibliography**


Meek, Barbra A. 2010. We are our language. An ethnography of language revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan community. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.


Towards A Living Digital Archive of Canadian Indigenous Languages

Sally Rice and Dorothy Thunder

In this position paper, we sketch out a vision being developed at the University of Alberta—with consultation across First Peoples communities and other Canadian institutions—for a national consortium of training centres and linked digital archives. The twinning of training with an on-line interactive repository will support the documentation, digitization, cataloguing, and curation of samples of individual Indigenous languages for use and reuse by speakers, learners, language teachers, and scholars for generations to come. At present, there are a number of language-specific or regionally oriented language revitalization programs in the country. Similarly, there are numerous private/community-held or scholar-specific institutional repositories of raw and primary language data, but hardly any of these data are available for community members or scholars who may not have been part of the initial collection. The need is great for a redoubling of effort now that national attention has been drawn to the eloquent Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Moreover, a reenergized collective consciousness by communities and institutions to track down, stabilize, and allow for the repurposing of past recordings and language samples as well as to support current and future language documentation projects is best encouraged with the knowledge that a network of language archivists, designers, programmers, and support personnel could be in place to assist in these efforts. A safe and accessible (under conditions set by each community or depositor) database of the current audio, video, textual, and photographic record of a Canadian Indigenous language and speech community can surely inspire younger generations in that community to participate in, learn about, and help grow their linguistic and cultural heritage.

The University of Alberta is home to CILLDI, the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute, a summer school for Indigenous language activists, speakers, linguists, and teachers, now in its 17th year. Arguably, this is the most national (and international) of similar language revitalization programs in Canada aimed at the promotion of First Peoples languages. CILLDI has welcomed well over 600 speakers of nearly 30 Canadian Indigenous languages since 2001 offering courses in second language teaching, curriculum development and assessment, immersion, Indigenous knowledge, linguistic analysis, language technologies, language policy and planning, dictionary-making, corpus-building, and language archiving, among others. For the past 9 years, CILLDI has offered courses leading to a provincially accredited Community Linguist Certificate that provides the basics of linguistic analysis along with technologies for language documentation and endangered language advocacy. By the end of this decade, CILLDI hopes to initiate additional certificate and degree programs for speakers and learners of Canadian Indigenous Languages and to continue implementing a series of in-community language workshops tailored to the individual community’s needs in their own development of their language sustainability efforts. However, with the existence of a national Indigenous Language Archive, the training we and other similar programs deliver could extend to best practices for data collection, data collation and digitization, and data redistribution in the form of full-curriculum teaching materials, text and conversation collections, spell- and grammar-
checkers, searchable corpora, and other new resources from old data that help promote the re-
awakening, growth, and sustained use of the Indigenous languages of Canada. Numerous archiving
models exist, but we hope to create a 21st century model that ensures training, deposit, and active use
by both Indigenous and scholarly communities through the creation of a digital legacy that extends well
into the 22nd century.
Urgent call for university programs to deliver 1,000 hours and adopt proven curriculum models to teach Indigenous languages

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Most Indigenous languages are critically endangered and in urgent need of new adult speakers in the parent-aged generation. However no consensus exists on language revitalization strategy, and most programs are desperately lacking curricular design, sequenced lesson plans, trained teachers, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. Misinformation and lack of training continues to lead programs to follow failing models (Fishman 1993; Parkin 2012). For language speakers to be created, language programs must provide sufficient time on task (over 1,000 hours), quality instruction, and follow quality curriculum delivered by teachers trained in a teaching method (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998; Johnson 2013, 2014; Rifkin 2003; Jackson and Kaplan 2009). Universities must address the need for new, trained speakers, meaning students who achieve at least mid-intermediate speech levels, rather than simply providing introductory courses, focusing on linguistic training, or researching and documenting the decline of language use. It must be stressed that linguistic training does not equate to training in second language teaching, or gaining proficiency in a given language.

This Position Statement outlines the steps necessary for academic institutions to meet the urgent need to create new parent aged speakers. University programs must adopt a proven curricular design and follow it for each Indigenous language, such as the Syilx Language House model, following the 2,000 hour Paul Creek Nsyilxcn Curriculum (www.thelanguagehouse.ca; Peterson et al. 2015). University programs must deliver at least 1,000 hours of intensive, sequenced programming, following cutting edge language acquisition techniques. University programs must be designed for learners to raise each other up while teaching, training learners to teach, and training learners to record the remaining Elders.

References


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