Literacy and Language Revitalization: Leaving a Visible Trace

by

Emily Comeau
B.A., University of Alberta, 2012

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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The purpose of this research is to seek out Indigenous perspectives on literacy in Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR), and to explore the role of print literacy in ILR in British Columbia. The central research question of this study is: does print literacy play a role in language revitalization? Through qualitative interviews and an extensive literature review, this thesis explores community-based language revitalization initiatives in Indigenous communities, as described by Indigenous language champions and scholars. In international forums, literacy is often discussed in terms of development goals, functionalism, and economic success. However, literacy is "socially and historically situated, fluid, multiple, and power-linked" (McCarty, 2005, p. xviii), and it is inextricably linked to political, historical, and cultural contexts (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005). This study concludes that these contexts are vital to defining the role of literacy in Indigenous communities. Every community has its own historical, political, social, environmental, technological, and philosophical context for language learning, and as such, literacy plays a different role in every community. Furthermore, the role of literacy can be expected to change over time, much like languages shift over time. This research also demonstrates that literacy, situated within Indigenous-controlled education and language initiatives, can contribute to larger goals of decolonization.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"There is value in leaving a visible trace of the language in a world dominated by English"
(Margaret Noori, *Bringing our Languages Home*, p. 126)

1.1 The Research Question

Literacy is often considered to be a vital component of language learning in Western pedagogies; however, the value and the role of literacy in Indigenous language revitalization have yet to be fully explored in the literature. The purpose of this research is to seek out Indigenous perspectives on literacy in Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR), and to explore the role of print literacy in ILR in British Columbia. The central research question of this study is: does print literacy play a role in language revitalization? In order to answer this question, this thesis will explore a number of community-based language revitalization initiatives in Indigenous communities, both within and outside the school context, as described by Indigenous language champions and scholars. While the literature review explores ILR initiatives across North America, the qualitative interviews focus on community-based initiatives in BC. One major conclusion of this study is the importance of context in defining the role of literacy. Every community has its own historical, political, social, environmental, technological, and philosophical context for language learning, and as such, literacy plays a different role in every community. Furthermore, much like languages themselves, these contexts shift and change over time, and therefore, the role of literacy can also be expected to change over time. This research also demonstrates that literacy, situated within Indigenous-controlled education and language initiatives, can contribute to larger goals of decolonization.

It is often assumed, in mainstream Canadian public forums, that print literacy is a universally valuable skill, synonymous with modernity and success (Canada House of

Commons, 2012; Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, 2016; Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, 2009). Similarly, in international forums such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), literacy is generally discussed in terms of development goals, functionalism, and economic success (Matusov & St. Julien, 2004; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007). However, literacy is not a simple concept; it is "socially and historically situated, fluid, multiple, and power-linked" (McCarty, 2005, p. xviii). It is inextricably linked to political, historical, and cultural contexts (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005). One area in which literacy and its role are significant is the context of Indigenous self-determination, as enacted through language rights advocacy and language reclamation movements and programs throughout the world.

Significant strides have been taken in recent years to recognize Indigenous language rights and to address historical harms to Indigenous languages, through both the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* or *UNDRIP* (United Nations General Assembly, 2008) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), as well as through scholarly research. However, the role, or potential role of literacy in addressing historical harms to Indigenous languages would benefit from further research.

Language programming appears in several sections of the recommendations of the *Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC, 2015), within the *Calls to Action* chapter (starting p. 319), including *Language and Culture* (p. 321), *Education* (pp. 321, 331), *Church Apologies* (p. 330), and *Media* (p. 335). At an international level, the *UNDRIP* recognizes Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, and encourages member states to safeguard Indigenous peoples' rights to practice their cultures, speak and strengthen their languages, and form their own institutions (United Nations General

Assembly, 2008). For instance, article 13 states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons" (p. 7). Article 14 further states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning" (p. 7). Similarly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) states that Aboriginal peoples "have a right to protect and revitalize their cultures, languages, and ways of life" (p. 190) and that "the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities" themselves (p. 157). Article 8 of the *UNDRIP* also guarantees Indigenous peoples freedom from assimilation and from further attempts to destroy their cultures, calling upon nations to "provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress" for attempts at forced assimilation, dispossession, discrimination, rights violations, and "any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities" (United Nations General Assembly, 2008, p. 5).

The movement to revitalize languages stems from increasing rates of language loss and language endangerment around the world, caused by a number of factors, including colonialism, cultural domination and hegemony, forced assimilation, marginalization of Indigenous communities, globalization, and "the adoption of neoliberal political structures" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 2). Globalization encourages the international movement of "information, money, people, goods, and services" (p. 3), and has often led to assimilation. However, while globalization has significant "modernizing and assimilatory effects" on Indigenous communities,

these "globalizing forces have [also] triggered reacting forces as some people seek to assert, or better to reassert, their unique cultural identity" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 3).

For the purposes of this study, the term *language revitalization* is used to encompass the many different efforts being made by communities, scholars, and governments "to halt the process of language shift and to promote the usage of [...] heritage language[s]" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 2). Grenoble & Whaley (2005) explain that "although many similarities can be found in the causes of language loss around the world, this does not mean that similar approaches to language revitalization can be taken. There are simply too many differences in the political, social, and economic situations" between communities to assume that the same approach to language revitalization will have the same effects everywhere (p. ix).

Leonard (2017) insists on a distinction between *language revitalization* and *language reclamation*, arguing that while *language revitalization* is "a process focused on language itself" (p. 19) that "tends to call for a focus on creating speakers, and locates this effort around mastery of linguistic units such as words and grammatical rules" (p. 20), *language reclamation* "calls for an ecological approach to language work, one that recognises how language is never independent from the environment in which its speakers (and potential future speakers) live" (p. 20). In this view, a focus on *reclamation* "begins with community histories and contemporary needs, which are determined by community agents, and uses this background as a basis to design and develop language work" (p. 19), rather than the "top-down model" often used in revitalization initiatives "in which goals such as grammatical fluency or intergenerational transmission are assigned" (p. 19) by scholars and other outsiders. Leonard (2017) argues that *reclamation* more broadly addresses language shift, including its causes and effects, and aims to assert community language rights. Further work in this area addresses similar distinctions between linguist-centred and

community-based language work in terms of collaboration and community direction (Crippen & Robinson, 2013; Cruz & Woodbury, 2014; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Grenoble & Whaley 1998, 2005; Rice, 2009; Yamada, 2007). However, most of the works cited in the present study use the term *language revitalization* to refer to language work that reflects what Leonard (2017) calls *language reclamation*. It is for this reason that I have chosen to also use the term *language revitalization* throughout the present study.

In Indigenous communities, language revitalization often goes hand-in-hand with decolonization, reviving cultural practices, and reasserting identity. Leonard (2017) explains that "many Indigenous language research initiatives are intertwined with community efforts toward decolonisation, a process which entails identifying and resisting the imposition of Western values and knowledge systems that contribute to the subjugation of Indigenous peoples" (p. 16). Further, language and cultural revitalization have been shown to positively impact the mental health of Indigenous youth. As Greymorning (2011) explains, "at a time when educators pondered issues of confidence, self-image, and self-esteem, I saw the impact that being able to speak one's Native language had on Hawaiian and Maori youth" (p. 200). Greymorning observed Maori youth prepare and perform Haka, and the leadership and empowerment he observed among these youth in learning about their culture and actively participating in it influenced his approach to Arapaho language programming (Greymorning, 2011). Conversational fluency in a heritage language has also been shown to reduce youth suicide rates in Indigenous communities (Wiart, 2017). According to Wiart,

> a 2007 study by researchers at the universities of Oxford, British Columbia and Victoria that looked at 150 Indigenous communities in B.C. found that areas where at least half of the people had a conversational knowledge of their Indigenous language, youth suicide

rates were very low – and in some cases zero. In communities where fewer than half of the members had this knowledge, youth suicide rates were, on average, six times higher. (Overall, the suicide rate among First Nations youth in Canada is five to seven times higher than that of non-Indigenous youth. For Inuit youth, the figure is 11 times higher) (2017, para. 8).

Scholars within the field of language revitalization have often considered literacy "a necessary first step in language revitalization programs" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 102). While literacy can positively impact language use: "developing literacy in a local language can imbue a greater sense of prestige to it [...]; literacy in a local language makes it suitable for use in many modern social domains; and so on," it can also have a negative effect, "facilitat[ing] acquisition of a majority language, thereby accelerating the loss of the very language it was instated to protect" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 102). Incorporating literacy into language revitalization initiatives inevitably raises questions about standardization, promoting certain dialects over others, and the place of oral tradition. As Grenoble & Whaley (2005) ask, "what are the potential benefits and what are the potential detriments to a local culture with the introduction of literacy?" (p. 102).

Language revitalization is taking place in Indigenous communities all over Canada and the United States. There are many different approaches to language revitalization currently being explored, such as Total Physical Response (TPR) (Reyhner et al., 1999), TPR-Storytelling (Cantoni, 1999), Mentor and Apprentice models (Virtue et al., 2012), the Greymorning method (Greymorning, 1997; 2011), the multi-modal approach developed in Listuguj, Québec (McClay et al., 2013; Sarkar & Metallic, 2009), the "Where are your keys" method (Gardner, 2011), other types of immersion approaches (Hermes, 2007), and bilingual approaches (Cummins, 2005;

McCarty, 2003). Moreover, language revitalization occurs within a variety of both mandated and self-determined educational contexts at all levels of education (Battiste 1998; Hampton, 1995; Hornberger, 2008; Sarkar & Metallic, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002; Strong-Wilson, 2007). Each of these approaches to and contexts for language revitalization has an interpretation of what literacy means and how to address literacy training. Because literacy is complex and context-dependent, the implications of literacy training in different contexts depend on who is in control of education policy and who is producing and delivering the curriculum. As a result of the diversity of pedagogies and educational contexts in language revitalization settings, it is essential to explore the social, political, and cultural implications of print literacy in these differing contexts.

In this thesis, I use qualitative methods to explore how language champions in Indigenous communities view print literacy, and what role literacy might have in language revitalization initiatives. In order to begin answering the research question, it is first necessary to establish a basic understanding of what assumptions exist surrounding the value of print literacy in Indigenous communities, both in general and in the context of language revitalization. Chapter 2 establishes the methodological foundation of this research and outlines the specific methods to be used. Chapter 3 explores initial findings in the literature on definitions of literacy, literacy as a political concept and its implications in the context of decolonization, and literacy in current Indigenous language revitalization initiatives. In chapter 4, I present the themes gathered from interviews with Indigenous language champions, and in chapter 5, I discuss how themes from the interviews and the literature fit together. Chapter 6 concludes this work, addressing constraints and limitations, proposing further study, and summarizing the main points.

1.2 Self-Location

An important component of qualitative research in general, particularly research that hopes to follow an Indigenist paradigm, is locating the self in relation to the research being conducted. I was born on traditional Coast Salish territory, in a place now known as Victoria, BC. My early childhood was spent on Vancouver Island, with occasional trips through mainland BC to Alberta and the Rocky Mountains. Though we lived in a suburban area, near PKOLS (Mount Douglas), my siblings and I were instilled with an early curiosity and appreciation of nature and our place in it. We moved to central Alberta in 2000, where I passed the remainder of my childhood and adolescence on Treaty Six territory. I am descended from European settlers on both sides of my family. This heritage includes ancestors who were part of the earliest Acadian settlement in Nova Scotia, and, slightly more recently, farmsteaders in eastern and central Canada, originating in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Post-secondary education was an eye-opening experience for me. During my undergraduate studies at the University of Alberta, I had the opportunity to attend many classes that formed and reformed my understanding of the world. One of the most life-altering of these classes for me was an anthropology class, which was primarily a discussion of language issues facing the Inuit, Aleut, and Kalaallisut peoples of the "Circumpolar North." This class brought to my attention issues of language rights, policy, and planning that I had not previously considered, and opened my eyes to the many Indigenous language revitalization initiatives taking place around the world. Another class that greatly influenced my subsequent choice to pursue language revitalization was called "Languages in Contact," which brought to light the realities of language change caused in whole or in part by contact with other languages and cultures in different historical and contemporary contexts. While my passion for activism was conceived much earlier

than this, sometime in my teenage years, these courses fueled my interest in both language and advocacy, and provided a foundation of knowledge for my subsequent academic pursuits.

As Battiste (2007) explains, "Indigenous knowledge can only be fully known from within community contexts and through prolonged discussions with each of these groups" (p. 121). According to Kovach (2009), "one of the most critical aspects of Indigenous research is the ethical responsibility to ensure that Indigenous knowledges and people are not exploited" (p. 35-36). The role of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous studies is therefore primarily as allies, in solidarity, and lending support in ways that are determined by Indigenous people themselves. Land (2015) discusses the importance of non-Indigenous allies "developing a moral and political framework through which to be supportive of Indigenous people" in a healthy and non-paternalistic way (p. 202). To strive for decolonization, non-Indigenous allies (such as myself) must repeatedly confront our participation in systems of oppression. My hope for this research is that it will contribute to discussions about Indigenous control of Indigenous education, exploring assumptions regarding the role of written language in education, and approaches to decolonizing education, academic research, and language policy. For me, discussing decolonization has to start with the place I myself consider home (BC), and my relation to language revitalization as a movement. Following the culmination of this research, I hope to be able to continue to contribute to language revitalization work as an ally, for and with Indigenous communities.

Chapter 2: Methodological Foundations

2.1 Introduction

In establishing the theoretical and practical underpinnings of this research, I sought methodologies that would first and foremost treat Indigenous language experts and their perspectives in a respectful and holistic way. I did not come to this research with a hypothesis or a theory to prove or disprove, but with a question. My research was guided by the methodological works of several Indigenous authors. In particular, I followed the Indigenist, relational, and decolonizing approaches of Kovach (2006; 2010), Wilson (2007), and Smith (2012). As Figure 1 illustrates below, these approaches are not discrete or separate; rather, they overlap and complement each other.

This is a qualitative study, and as such, I sought out qualitative methodologies that would also complement Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, and that seemed to be most in line with the approaches listed above. This included constructivist grounded theory, as well as exploratory, interpretive, and phenomenological approaches (Charmaz, 2014; Gibson & Brown, 2009; Guest et al, 2014), and Talmy's reflexive approach to *research interview as social practice* (2010). The specific methods used in this study for conducting the interviews, analysis, and literature review emerged from this methodological foundation. In this chapter, I discuss the methodological approaches that informed this research, as well as the practical approaches to research methods that guided the interviews and interview analysis.

2.2 Indigenist Methodologies
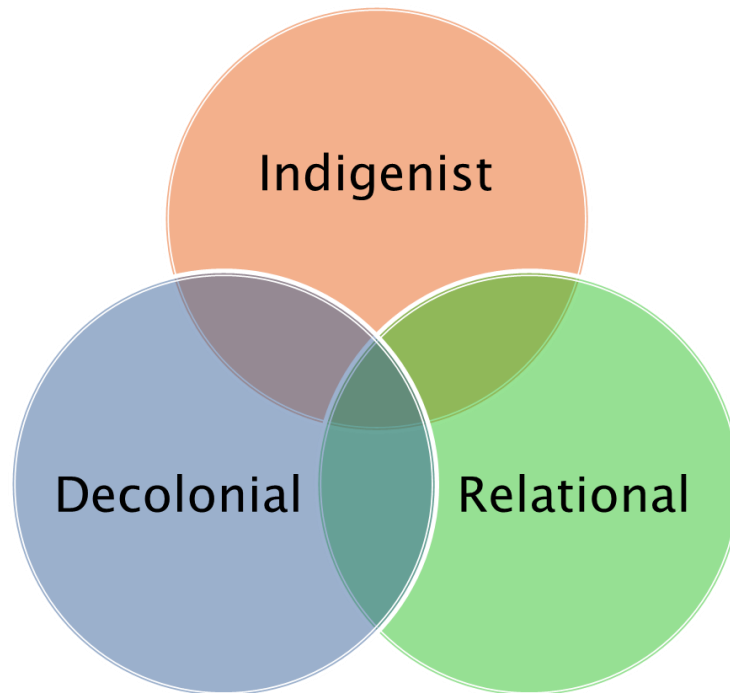
Figure 1: Guiding methodologies

An Indigenist Paradigm

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I do not claim that my research is Indigenous, or that it creates Indigenous knowledge. I do, however, strive to foreground the interviews and analyses in an Indigenist way, following the methodological approaches outlined in Wilson (2007), and Kovach (2006; 2010). In particular, this research is "process-oriented" and grounded in "the reality of the Indigenous experience" as much as possible, keeping in mind "that the languages and cultures of Indigenous people are living processes" (Wilson, 2007, p. 195). Wilson (2007) describes this paradigm as *Indigenist* rather than *Indigenous* because "it is my belief that an Indigenist paradigm can be used by anyone who chooses to follow its tenets. It cannot and should not be claimed to belong only to people with "Aboriginal" heritage" (p. 193-194). Further, Wilson (2007) lists eleven principles for guiding Indigenist research; all of these principles have informed and guided my research, particularly those found in bold:

- Respect for all forms of life as being related and interconnected.

- **Conduct all actions and interactions in a spirit of kindness and honesty; compassion.**

- **The reason for doing research must be one that brings benefits to the Indigenous community.**

- **The foundation of the research question must lie within the reality of the Indigenous experience.**

- Any theories developed or proposed must be grounded in an Indigenous epistemology and supported by the elders and the community that live out this particular epistemology.

- **The methods used will be process-oriented, and the researcher will be recognized and cognizant of his or her role as one part of the group process.**

- It will be recognized that transformation within every living entity participating in the research will be one of the outcomes of every project.

- It will be recognized that the researcher must assume a certain responsibility for the transformations and outcomes of the research project(s) which he or she brings into a community.

- It is advisable that a researcher work as part of a team of Indigenous scholars/thinkers and with the guidance of Elder(s) or knowledge-keepers.

- **It is recognized that the integrity of any Indigenous people or community could never be undermined by Indigenous research because such research is grounded in that integrity.**

- **It is recognized that the languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples are living processes and that research and the discovery of knowledge is an ongoing function for thinkers and scholars of every Indigenous group (p. 195).**

Following an Indigenist paradigm does not mean that I have ignored methodologies more mainstream within the academy, or that Indigenist methodologies exist in opposition to western methodologies. As Wilson (2007) explains, "we need to articulate what we mean by an Indigenist paradigm without comparing it with other paradigms. To do so would mean falling into a mainstream, positivist trap by creating a binary" (p. 194). Rather, this paradigm has influenced my "choice of methods (i.e., why a particular method is chosen), how those methods are employed (i.e., how data is gathered), and how the data [have been] analyzed and interpreted" (Kovach, 2010, p. 41). Throughout the process of conducting this research, my work has also been guided by Kovach's (2006) four methodological guideposts of Indigenous theory:

1. Decolonizing, Political, Ethical and Social Action aspect of Indigenous research;

2. Personal Narrative and Self-location encompassing the high value of story-telling as a means to acquiring knowledge;

3. Indigenous Languages, Philosophies and Theories as it influences the construction of knowledge; and,

4. Cultural and Traditional Knowledges that encompass the sacred and spiritual (p. 57).

A Relational Approach

A Relational approach includes acknowledging the environment and relationships which form my understanding of the world and shape my identity (Wilson, 2007), "honour[ing] a relational worldview involving both the stories of the research participants" (Kovach, 2006, p. iv) and my own relationship to the research, and being cognizant of the worldview that influences my organization of information. It is important to continually reflect on the assumptions that inform the organization of knowledge that is necessary in this study (coding, identifying themes, analysis, etc.), and to maintain the context of the knowledge shared with me

(Kovach 2006). Relationality has a central aspect of this research, not only in terms of methodological approach, but also in terms of the resulting analysis and discussion. As Kovach (2010) explains, "from an Indigenous research perspective the relational is viewed as an aspect of methodology whereas within western constructs the relational is viewed as bias, and thus outside methodology" (p. 41).

A Decolonial Approach

As a non-Indigenous researcher striving to be an ally, it is my responsibility to "be both engaged [in] developing self-understanding through the practice of critical self-reflection and committed to collectivist and public political action" (Land, 2015, p. 161). This self-reflection is important at the personal level, as well as in the broader context of the academy. This means "understanding and unpacking the central assumptions of domination, patriarchy, racism, and ethnocentrisms that continue to glue the academy's privileges in place" (Battiste et al., 2002, p. 84) and confronting the role that the academy has played "in upholding Western intellectual superiority…[and in] dismissing or denying the existence of indigenous knowledge, a view that still exists in some parts of the academy today" (Smith, 2012, p. 222). It is also important to recognize that, as Smith (2012) explains, "research exists within a system of power" (p. 226), including research in the field of Indigenous language revitalization.

Legg (2017) argues that a distinction is necessary between decolonization, or the "un-acquiring [of] colonies," and decolonialism, which involves "challenging the practices that made colonies and which sustain colonial durabilities" (p. 347). According to Legg (2017), while the concept of decolonization can be useful in some contexts, it "holds out the prospect of an achievable final state," whereas "decolonialism emphasises an endless process" that encourages scholars to "become more aware of the colonial durabilities" and continue to transform their

fields by "endur[ing], resist[ing] and refus[ing] colonial durations" (p. 347). Similarly, Nakata et al. (2012) argue that a simplistic approach to decolonization "as a rationale for teaching, too often bypasses assisting students to think and navigate through complex and contested knowledge spaces," and that a more transformative approach should focus on "teaching students to think about the limits of current language and discourse for navigating the complexities of knowledge production" (p. 136). Rather than focusing solely on decolonization "as a method for emancipating colonised peoples and reinstating Indigenous worldviews" (p. 120), often falling back into the "Western-Indigenous binary" (p. 136), Nakata et al. (2012) assert that decolonial approaches to higher education should:

> [equip] students with understandings and analytical tools that can make explicit the conditions of the knowledge complexity Indigenous peoples confront-- as they move forward in their efforts to 'decolonise' knowledge, assert Indigenous analysis, reassert Indigenous 'ways of being, knowing and doing', or generate new knowledge to transform Indigenous social conditions (pp. 120-121).

Acknowledging this tension regarding terminology, in the present study, I use both *decolonization* and *decolonialism* to refer to the process of unsettling colonialism and confronting its continuing influence in education, language policy, and academic study.

In order to work in a decolonizing or decolonial way, it is important to understand what Smith (2012) describes as "the five conditions or dimensions that have framed the struggle for decolonization:"

1) a critical consciousness, an awakening from the slumber of hegemony, and the realization that action has to occur;

2) a way of reimagining the world and our position as Maori within the world, drawing upon a different epistemology and unleashing the creative spirit. This condition is what enables an alternative vision; it fuels the dreams of alternative possibilities;

3) ways in which different ideas, social categories and tendencies intersect: the coming together of disparate ideas, the events, the historical moment. This condition creates opportunities; it provides the moments when tactics can be deployed;

4) movement or disturbance: the distracting counter-hegemonic movements or tendencies, the competing movements which traverse sites of struggle, the unstable movements that occur when the status quo is disturbed;

5) the concept of structure, the underlying code of imperialism, of power relations. This condition is grounded in reproducing material realities and legitimating inequalities and marginality (p. 201).

Beyond self-reflection and self-understanding, a decolonial approach to research actively works to break "the cycle of colonialism" by creating "intellectual, theoretical and imaginative" spaces for intersection and resistance (Smith, 2012, pp. 202-203). As Smith (2012) explains, "decolonization must offer a language of possibility, a way out of colonialism [which already] exists within our own alternative, oppositional ways of knowing" (p. 204). This means giving "prominence to the voices of Indigenous peoples" (Brophey & Raptis, 2016), centring Indigenous empowerment (Battiste et al, 2002), and challenging the colonial mindset of an Indigenous—non-Indigenous binary (Land, 2015). As Kovach (2010) explains, "a decolonizing perspective […] focuses on Indigenous-settler relationships and seeks to interrogate the powerful social relationships that marginalize Indigenous peoples" (p. 42). Further, it "enables a form of praxis that seeks out Indigenous voice and representation with research that has historically

marginalized and silenced Indigenous peoples" (Kovach, 2010, p. 42). In conducting this

research, I have followed a decolonial framework by centring Indigenous perspectives,

developing a critical understanding of my own relationality within the research process, and

using methodologies that challenge universalist, positivist, and colonial assumptions still

prevalent in academic research.

2.3 Qualitative Research
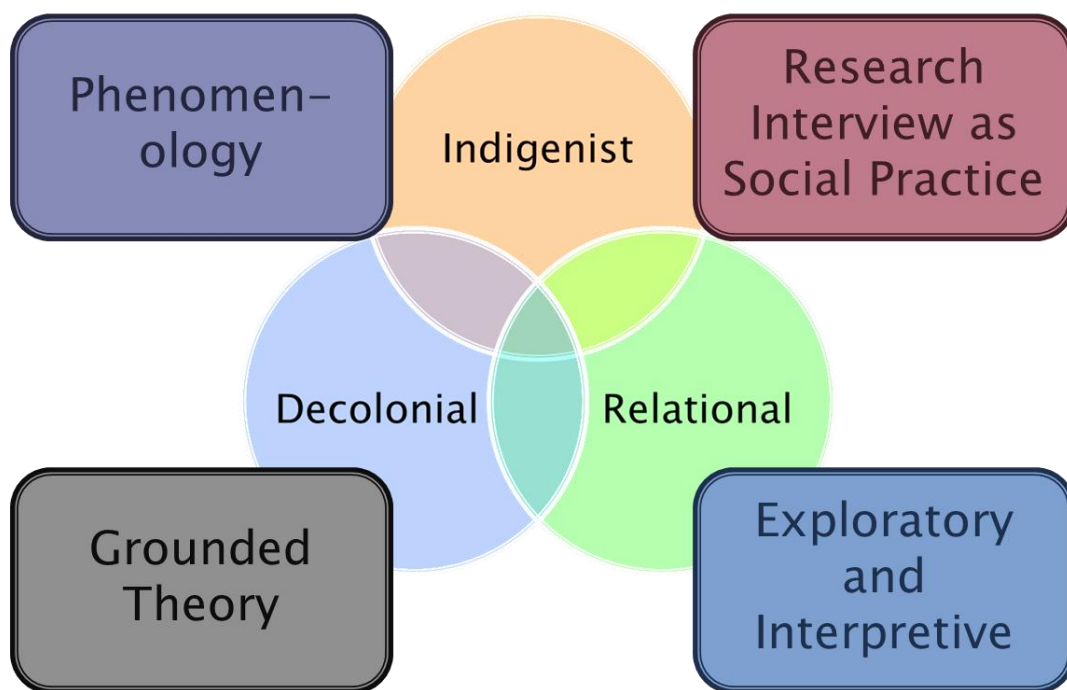
Figure 2: Complementary qualitative methodologies

The approaches discussed above formed the methodological foundation for this research,

together with the qualitative methodologies detailed in this section. They informed all stages of

the research process, including the research design, the data collection through literature searches

and interviews, and the interpretation of both the literature and the interviews. As Figure 2

illustrates, the Indigenist and western qualitative approaches (see Kovach, 2009) that formed the

foundation of this research do not exist in binary opposition, but rather they overlap and complement one another. In this section, I discuss the ways in which this research was guided by grounded theory, exploratory, phenomenological, and interpretive approaches (Charmaz, 2014; Gibson & Brown, 2009; Guest et al, 2014), as well as Talmy's *research interview as social practice* (2010).

Grounded Theory

Gibson & Brown (2009) define grounded theory as "the process of developing theory through analysis, rather than using analysis to test preformulated theories" (ch.2, p. 14). Likewise, Guest et al. (2014) define grounded theory as "a set of inductive and iterative techniques designed to identify categories and concepts within text that are then linked into formal theoretical models" (ch.1, p. 11). According to Charmaz (2003), grounded theory has at times been used in problematic ways; for example, when "authors choose evidence selectively, clean up subjects' statements, unconsciously adopt value-laden metaphors, [or] assume omniscience" (p. 269). This type of "fractured" or selective data risks focusing too heavily on analysis "rather than the portrayal of subjects' experience in its fullness" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 269). Grounded theory has been criticized for being built on "subtle positivistic premises" and "objectivist underpinnings" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 251), wherein "the social world is regarded as being readily available for 'discovery' by researchers" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, ch. 2, p. 15). However, one strength of grounded theory is its adaptability to different research contexts. This research follows Charmaz' constructivist grounded theory approach in a way that honours the Indigenist methodologies listed above. According to Charmaz (2003), "constructivist grounded theory celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical worlds," and is based on constructivism, which "assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of

knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings" (p. 250). Keeping in mind that the purpose of this study was not to necessarily generate new theories, I chose to apply grounded theory in terms of its flexible and emergent analytic strategies (Charmaz, 2003). For example, conclusions were uncovered by interpreting language champions' perspectives in terms of their context, requesting clarification rather than assuming a particular response, and by asking questions in both the interviews and the literature review that seek to understand the relationships between the various aspects of literacy and language revitalization. Following a constructivist approach that "recognizes that the categories, concepts, and theoretical level of an analysis emerge from the researcher's interactions within the field and questions about the data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 271), this research seeks "to find what research participants define as real and where their definitions of reality take them" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 272).

Exploratory, Phenomenological, and Interpretive Approaches

This study also follows exploratory, phenomenological, and interpretive approaches, which are often applied alongside grounded theory in qualitative research. I consider this research to be exploratory particularly in terms of analysis. As Guest et al. (2014) explain, "for an exploratory study, the researcher carefully reads and rereads the data, looking for key words, trends, themes, or ideas in the data that will help outline the analysis, before any analysis takes place" (p. 7). I approached the interview data through multiple readings to uncover codes and themes that were then used to structure the analysis.

Similarly, this research follows a phenomenological approach, as outlined by Guest et al. (2014), in that it is "the participants' perceptions, feelings, and lived experiences that are paramount" (p. 13) in this study, and meaning interpreted and constructed from the interviews is

understood to be subjective and relational. Furthermore, following an interpretive approach, this research "is most interested in interpreting deeper meaning in discourse and understanding multiple realities (as opposed to one "objective" reality)" (p. 13), as shared with the researcher through narrative and discussion. As in a phenomenological approach, an interpretive analysis emphasizes the multiple meanings found in discourse, rather than the measurement of quantifiable data (Guest et al., 2014).

Talmy's Research Interview as Social Practice

This study employs interviews not only as a research instrument for data collection, but also as a reflexive process in itself. It is understood that through interviews as fundamentally social encounters, knowledge is produced jointly by both researcher and interviewee (Talmy, 2010). Data is therefore dependent on an analysis that focuses on "how meaning is negotiated, knowledge is co-constructed, and interview is locally accomplished" (Talmy, 2010, p. 132). According to this approach, it is not only *what* knowledge is produced during an interview, but also *how*. This approach also treats interviewees as active co-constructors of knowledge, rather than as passive repositories. Interview responses are understood to be contextually situated in each interview, with knowledge stemming from the experts' perspectives via their responses to the questions, as well as the discussion between the experts and myself (the interviewer).

Summary

The Indigenist paradigm (Wilson, 2007), relational approach (Kovach, 2006; 2010), and decolonizing approach (Battiste et al., 2002; Kovach, 2010; Land, 2015; Legg, 2017; Nakata et al., 2012; Smith, 2012) summarized in 2.2 informed my general approach to this research, helping to form my understanding of the place of this research within the field, as well as my place within this research itself, and guiding my use of particular methods. Charmaz'

constructivist grounded theory (2003) also informed not only the research design, but also my

general approach to analyzing the literature and the interviews. The exploratory,

phenomenological, and interpretive approaches (Guest et al., 2014) discussed in 2.3 particularly

informed how I analyzed the interviews. Talmy's research interview as social practice (2010)

guided my use of interviews as not only a way to find answers to my research question, but also

as a process of reflection and a way to co-construct knowledge with interviewees.

2.4 Methods: Literature Review, Interviews, and Analysis

Reviewing the Literature

The literature review began broadly with a search of literature related to literacy in

language revitalization initiatives, where I sought literature describing current language

revitalization initiatives using literacy (or intentionally not using literacy). Finding very few

concrete definitions of literacy directly related to language revitalization, I broadened my search

to explore how literacy is defined in general, as well as in other fields such as education and

curriculum, policy, and applied linguistics. These searches led me to other articles and chapters

discussing the political nature of literacy. I searched for terms such as *literacy, language*

revitalization, language learning, Indigenous literacy, orality and literacy, oralcy, language

policy, and *orthography*, among others, primarily in university libraries and online academic

databases. I also sifted through the bibliographies and reference lists of pertinent sources to find

further references related to these topics.

Similar to the interview analysis, the literature was analyzed thematically, though more

informally. However, rather than looking first for narrow codes and then compiling these codes

into broader sub-themes and themes as in the interview analysis (explained below), the literature

review began with an exploration of broad themes which led to narrower sub-themes and

nuances. Following an initial surface reading of an article, I would reread the article more closely, highlighting points for discussion and further exploration. I then compiled these highlighted phrases into a document organized into the broad themes seen in chapter 3: defining literacy, literacy as political, and literacy in ILR. In each of these broad themes, several sub-themes also emerged, which were explored article to article before being compiled together and organized into the final literature review.

The literature review informed my expectations of the interviews. It also informed my "reading" of the interviews, in that I anticipated that interviewees might talk about similar themes, particularly definitions of literacy disputing the primacy of text, the histories and complexities of power connected to literacy and formal education, and self-determination in language/literacy programming. Seeking out Indigenous works on literacy and language revitalization also informed the questions that I asked in the interviews, including the quotations used.

Planning and Conducting the Interviews

My approach to the interviews was influenced by conversational and narrative methods as outlined in Kovach (2010 and 2006, respectively). According to Kovach (2010) there are seven particular characteristics of using a conversational method within an Indigenous framework:

a) it is linked to a particular tribal epistemology (or knowledge) and situated within an Indigenous paradigm;

b) it is relational;

c) it is purposeful (most often involving a decolonizing aim);

d) it involves particular protocol as determined by the epistemology and/or place;

e) it involves an informality and flexibility;

f) it is collaborative and dialogic; and

g) it is reflexive (p. 43).

Within this research specifically, as seeking to be Indigenist rather than Indigenous, these characteristics appeared in the following ways:

a) The interview process was linked with the Indigenist paradigm and the methodological approaches discussed above, rather than with any particular tribal epistemology.

b) Relationality has been an important aspect of this study, in not only the planning and foundational work, but also in the analysis and interpretation stages.

c) As discussed above, this research did follow an intentionally decolonizing aim.

d) Constrained as this study was by the requirements of a graduate thesis, I did seek direction from Indigenous experts on how best to follow the protocol of their communities in sharing their stories and perspectives.

e) While I did my best to meet experts on their own terms and in their own environments, the flexibility of the interview set-up was somewhat constrained by formality, partly because of our limited relationships, but also because of the environments that were available to us (university offices, work-spaces, etc.).

f) Similarly, collaboration was somewhat limited, as interview questions were established beforehand and formally approved by the Human Research Ethics Board. However, we did have an opportunity to "go off-script" and discuss further in some cases.

g) Reflection has occurred continually throughout this study, at every step of the process.

Kovach (2010) further cautions that "to thematically group stories works to fragment data. In this process the researcher maintains the power in determining the analysis whereas in presenting a story as data the research participant's story is intact and speaks for itself" (p. 47). In my analysis of the interview data, I tried to circumvent this fragmentation as much as possible by keeping quotations more intact and letting the stories speak for themselves, interjecting mostly to frame and summarize the experts' words.

This research is also influenced by a narrative method, which Kovach (2006) describes "as a component of Indigenous research," describing "knowledge derived from experience and revealed through stories" (p. 61). Further, in discussing the use of narrative methods, Kovach (2006) explains that "integral to the discussion of personal narrative is the primacy of language and oral tradition in preserving the unique nature of Indigenous philosophies" (p. 63). Through personal narrative, interviewees shared their experiences with literacy and language revitalization. The interviews themselves were conducted as conversations, informed by the importance of oral tradition in transmitting story. While it was not possible to conduct these interviews in the interviewees' Indigenous languages, we were able to discuss the languages (via English) and, to a certain extent, the underlying philosophies and structures that inform and are informed by the experts' worldviews.

In conducting the initial literature review, I found that there were further complexities and questions that needed to be addressed in order to begin answering the overarching research question. The interview questions, listed below, are a result of these emerging complexities and

nuances, particularly those posed by Indigenous authors and scholars in the field of language revitalization.

     The research process included co-construction of knowledge, in that through conversation, both the interviewees and myself (the interviewer) played an active role in discussing the interview questions. As well, following my transcription and initial analysis of the interviews, interviewees were given the opportunity to review their interviews as well as the full analysis chapter, and to make changes where they felt it was necessary. Very few changes were requested at this stage, and all of them were grammatical, rather than thematic.

The Interview Questions

     The following is a full list of the questions asked during my interviews with language revitalization scholars. These questions were approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, as per university protocol involving participant interviews.

- Would you mind introducing yourself, and describing your involvement (past and present) in language revitalization and language education initiatives, as a learner, researcher, and/or educator?

- What does "language revitalization" mean, from your perspective?

- How is your language transmitted in your community right now? Where is this transmission occurring (home, school, etc.)?

- What language skills are important to revitalizing your language? (Follow up: Is literacy taught in your language programs? And if so, how is it taught?; Or: What role does written language have in your community?)

- Margaret Noori says of literacy that "there is value in leaving a visible trace of the language in a world dominated by English" (*Bringing our languages home*, 2013, p.

126). According to Marie Battiste (1984, p. 1), "when the processes of becoming literate are applied to the youth of their own culture, literacy is called cultural transmission. But when a certain literacy is forced upon youths outside that culture, literacy becomes cultural assimilation and cultural imperialism." Do you agree with either of these statements? What does "literacy" mean to you?

- According to McCarty (2005), "English literacy, often conceived as contextually and ideologically neutral, has served in practice to manage and control Indigenous lives. At the same time, Indigenous literacies, originally developed for the purpose of religious conversion and as part of government literacy campaigns, have been taken by Indigenous communities as a means of opposing dominant discourses and asserting local educational and linguistic rights" (p.47). What are your thoughts about this statement? Does this reflect your experience with literacy?

- Hornberger (1996) explains that "literacy is not one uniform technical skill, but rather it is something which varies in each different context and society…[Local literacies…] refers to those literacy practices that are closely connected with local and regional identities and indeed often overlooked by international or national literacy campaigns" (p. 5). In your opinion, does this mean that literacy needs to be "localized?" What does that mean? (follow up: What do "local literacies" look like to you?)

- In her book, *Decolonizing Education* (2013), Marie Battiste says that "educational reforms need to redefine literacy to affirm Aboriginal languages and consciousnesses that are connected to place, for it is place where Aboriginal identity resides" (p. 147). Do you agree with this statement, that literacy needs to be redefined?

- What do you think literacy connected to place would look like?

Analyzing the Interviews

Following the transcription of the interviews, I conducted a multi-stage "coding" process similar to that used by Brophey & Raptis (2016) and Parker (2012). The first stage was to identify individual thoughts or "conceptual chunks" (Parker, 2012), as "codes," and to note when these codes were repeated throughout each interview. Each code was named with a keyword or a set of keywords (as marginal notes). Once all the interviews had been read closely and coded throughout, matching codes were then grouped together. In order to maintain the context and relationality of each separate thought (Kovach, 2006), and so as not to misinterpret the experts' perspectives, codes were analyzed as complete thoughts, rather than as short phrases (Guest et al., 2014). I was then able to describe each group of codes and identify where these sub-themes overlapped. As Gibson & Brown (2009) explain in their discussion of thematic analysis, it was at this stage that I was able to examine commonalities, difference, and relationships between groups of codes (sub-themes), collapse and divide them where necessary, and identify conceptual themes. There was a significant amount of overlap between individual codes and sub-themes. Even at a higher conceptual level, the broader themes do interact with each other and overlap somewhat; they do not necessarily exist as distinct units.

The list of individual codes, sorted according to interview question, was distilled into a list of fifteen sub-themes. Many of these sub-themes overlapped and were eventually collapsed into the eight themes discussed in chapter 4. Throughout this process, I used coloured highlighters to keep track of similar codes and then sub-themes in the transcriptions, which made it easier to identify the themes and corresponding quotations. Once the eight themes were established, I returned to the highlighted interviews and grouped quotations together into their corresponding themes. This gave rise to the analysis explored in chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Themes from the Literature

3.1 Defining Literacy

The first step in conducting this research is to establish what is meant by the term *literacy*. It is important to note that no single overarching definition of literacy exists. In fact, many different definitions for literacy have been stated and operationalized at the international, national, academic, and local levels. Literacy has often been conceptualized in terms of a binary opposition between written and non-written language, particularly in contrast with speech or oral language, which I explore further below (*The Academy*), as well as in the next section (*3.2 Literacy as Political*). The study of literacy within the academy occurs within a vast context, spanning many different fields, including anthropology, literary studies, semiotics and education, among others. As a result, there are many different approaches to defining literacy. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into this vast context, but it is important to acknowledge the work that has been done in this area. For this reason, the discussion below of literacy within academic study will briefly sample work from a number of different academic fields related to literacy. However, the present study focuses primarily on literacy in language revitalization and Indigenous language education and therefore most of this literature review focuses on definitions of literacy in that context. In this section, I explore various definitions of literacy used in international, regional, and academic spheres, as well as in Indigenous contexts.

Internationally

According to UNESCO's Resolution of 1958, "a person is *literate* who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO 1959, p. 93). More recently, UNESCO's discussions of literacy have become more nuanced,

acknowledging the complex and contextual nature of literacy. A paper prepared by the UNESCO

Education Sector in 2004 discusses the evolution of the term *literacy*:

> over the past few decades, the conception of literacy has moved beyond its simple notion
>
> as the set of technical skills of reading, writing and calculating – the so-called "three Rs"
>
> – to a plural notion encompassing the manifold meanings and dimensions of these
>
> undeniably vital competencies (UNESCO Education Sector, 2004, pp. 6).

There is not much further discussion of specifically why literacy is seen as "undeniably vital,"

but the authors of this report go on to discuss the general concept of literacy in terms of

economic "advancement" and the United Nations' efforts to establish *Education for All*. In the

2006 "Education for All Global Monitoring Report*,"* UNESCO acknowledges that "literacy as a

concept has proved to be both complex and dynamic, continuing to be interpreted and defined in

a multiplicity of ways" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 147). This shows progress in how the organization

understands literacy. However, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), which monitors

progress toward literacy and education goals laid out by UNESCO, and whose "statistics are

considered the standard for benchmarking progress globally," still measures literacy according to

UNESCO's Resolution of 1958 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). Statistics published by

the UIS are circulated around the world, and influence language and education policy and

programme development at both national and international levels.

Regionally

In Western nations such as Canada and the United States, mainstream discussion of

literacy is generally centred around economic interest and functionalism. Freire & Macedo

(1987) explain that in the United States, literacy is "[reduced to] either a functional perspective

tied to narrowly conceived economic interests or to an ideology designed to initiate the poor, the

underprivileged, and minorities into the logic of a unitary, dominant cultural tradition" (p. 2). In this context, not only has literacy become an extension of corporate interests within education, but it "becomes the ideological vehicle through which to legitimate schooling as a site for character development" (p. 2) and assimilation. The 2007-2008 report of the Office of the Auditor General of BC (2008) is a good example of this *Western ideal* of literacy, whereby "A commitment to learning throughout life leads to a society characterized by more literate, healthy and productive individuals, families, communities and workplaces" (p. 1). This report defines literacy as "the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities" which they state is "fundamental to improving individuals' lives and a society's economic prosperity" (p. 3).

Political literature published by organizations such as the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (2009) conceptualize the end goal of literacy as "individual, societal and economic prosperity" (p. 1). While this report does acknowledge that "literacy is not a static skill set" (p. 1), it overwhelmingly uses economic ideals and deficit models (e.g. "children entering school with deficits in early cognitive development are likely to find it difficult to catch up to their better prepared peers" (p. 2)) to justify functional literacy training in public education.

In a similar vein, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an international organization that "uses its wealth of information on a broad range of topics to help governments foster prosperity and fight poverty through economic growth and financial stability" (2018), defines literacy as "a particular capacity and mode of behaviour: the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community – to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (2000, p. x). According to this report, literacy skills can be divided into three domains: *Prose Literacy*,

which includes "the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals;" *Document Literacy*, which includes "the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts;" and *Quantitative Literacy*, which includes "the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement" (p. x). Building on this definition of literacy, Gulati (2013) adds a fourth skill domain: *Problem Solving*, which involves "goal-directed thinking where routine solutions are elusive. In some cases, the problem solver may have a goal, but does not immediately know how to attain it" (p. 7). Gulati (2013) also states that "for most people today, literacy […] represents a set of tangible and cognitive skills and provides a critical framework for analytical thought" (p. 7), and that some definitions of literacy include "[applying] these learned skills in his/her surroundings (e.g. the workplace and the media)" (p. 7).

The Academy

Many important studies on the history and interplay between orality and literacy have been undertaken in the fields of education and curriculum, semiotics, discourse analysis, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, and literary studies, among others. Much of this work addresses the nature of written language, as well as the perceived separation between literacy and orality, and the extent to which they rely on one another. The following section explores work conducted by a number of central figures in the study of literacy.

Goody and Watt (1962), scholars in the fields of social anthropology and literary history respectively, trace the history of written communication through the evolution of writing systems, from pictographs to logograms and hieroglyphics, to "word-syllabic" (p. 312) systems, syllabaries and phonograms, and finally to alphabetic systems. The authors argue that writing systems have become less concrete and more abstract in their representation of oral language over time. They discuss the importance of memory in the continuation of social tradition, which they describe in terms of its social aspects. They claim that with the advent of written forms for language, the act of remembering is fundamentally transformed, and that the ability to record an event in written form changed how the separation of past and present could be conceptualized: "The pastness of the past, then, depends upon a historical sensibility which can hardly begin to operate without permanent written records; and writing introduces similar changes in the transmission of other items of the cultural repertoire" (Goody & Watt, 1962, p. 311). The authors go on to point out that these changes are also contextual, in terms of the efficacy, diffusion, and nature of the writing system. This perspective assumes that a binary exists between oral and literate traditions, and reflects the notion prevalent in the Western mainstream that written language is more permanent than oral language and thus better for recording history. This does not account for oral history, particularly the extensive oral traditions attested in many Indigenous communities around the world. Since this work was published shortly after UNESCO's 1958 resolution, it is likely that the authors were informed by assumptions similar to those which are foundational to the resolution.

Literacy scholar Walter J. Ong (1980) similarly traces the history of the proliferation and intent of written communication as a technology originally "somehow serving the needs of oratory" (p. 198). He claims that writing transforms how we think, particularly in terms of logic

and linearity. Ong (1980) explains that the ideology of literacy leads us "to believe that what makes a word a real word is not its meaningful use in vocal exchange but rather its presence on the page of a dictionary. We are so literate in ideology that we think writing comes naturally" (p. 199). Written language exists in a context removed from its author; as Ong (2002) explains, the language used in writing is "context free…or autonomous discourse…which cannot be directly questioned or contested as oral speech can be because written discourse has been detached from its author" (p. 77). Ong (2002) continues: "the paradox lies in the fact that the deadness of the text, its removal from the living human lifeworld, its rigid visual fixity, assures its endurance and its potential for being resurrected into limitless living contexts by a potentially infinite number of living readers" (p. 80). While this work addresses more the interaction between oral and written language throughout history, and situates the reader as an agent in practicing literacy, it still assumes the oral vs. literate binary, as well as the idea that literacy is solely print-based.

According to Gee (1986), advancements in the study of literacy, particularly in the field of anthropology, have led researchers to view literacy as "a set of discourse practices […] tied to the particular world views (beliefs and values) of particular social or cultural groups," and that "such discourse practices are integrally connected with the identity or sense of self of the people who practice them" (pp. 719-720). It is understood that "different societies and social subgroups have different types of literacy and literacy has different social and mental effects in different social and cultural contexts" (p. 719). Similarly, as Street (2001) explains, the "autonomous" model of literacy as "a set of uniform 'technical skills' to be imparted to those lacking them" (p. 2) often employed by development programmes and education policies "impos[es] Western conceptions of literacy on to other cultures," by "disguis[ing] the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin" literacy and "present[ing them] as though they are neutral and

universal" (p. 7). Street (2001) suggests instead using an "ideological model of literacy," where literacy is treated as a set of social practices "embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" that "vary from one context to another" (p. 7). Street's work has been influential in the field of New Literacy Studies, which has emerged in the last forty years. This point, that literacy practices are situated contextually and that they vary between communities, is a major theme in the present study, as illustrated in chapter 4.

Kell (2006) also addresses the importance of context in discussing literacy, giving two examples: a message in a bottle, and a message written in sand. Through these examples, Kell (2006) challenges the idea that literacy must necessarily be defined in terms of durability, legibility, visibility, and travel, asserting the role of context in determining literacy practices. In the first example, a message (written in English) can arrive intact, durable, and visible, but in the context of where it arrives (a remote shore in Greenland), it may not necessarily be legible (p. 165). In the second example, the message may be legible, but it is not durable and it cannot travel, and therefore "its form and its meaning are exhausted in the immediacy of the practice" (p. 165). Kell (2006) explains that "literacy itself cannot travel" but that "it can enable a meaning to travel and that meaning may or may not be 'legible' in the context in which it arrives" (p. 165). Further, in response to Brandt & Clinton (2002), Kell (2006) asserts that not only does literacy "[arise] out of local, particular, situated human interactions" but that it can also "[arrive] from other places—infiltrating, disjointing and displacing local life" (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 343). This directly challenges earlier notions of written language as fixed or permanent (Goody & Watt, 1962; Ong, 1980).

An interesting intersection between semiotics, multimodality—that is, "communication as a combination of modes of representation and expression" such as print, visual, dramatic, and

oral (Harwood et al., 2017)—and early childhood education is the study of literacy learning. For example, Siegel (2006) discusses literacy as "more than 'knowledge of letters,' as the OED [Oxford English Dictionary] would have us believe" (p. 65), but rather "a set of social practices that are socially situated and discursively constructed, making it more appropriate to speak of multiple literacies than a single literacy" (p. 72). Siegel (2006) argues that "children have always engaged in what are now called multimodal literacy practices" (p. 65) such as "talking, gesturing, dramatizing, and drawing" (p. 66), and that teachers can build upon "children's prior knowledge and experience as sign-makers" (p. 71) to foster (multi)literacy learning. This speaks to the idea of multiple literacies emerging naturally in social and situational contexts between speakers, and suggests that effective literacy training in educational contexts should not focus solely on print.

Scholars in the field of language revitalization also define literacy in different ways. Grenoble & Whaley (2005) argue that the traditional western definition of literacy as a standard (functional) level of reading and writing is too restrictive for modern discussions of literacy, and that there are in fact several different types of literacy: functional, social, autonomous, and local literacy, each of which is situated in a separate cultural context and serves different purposes. *Functional literacy* is often discussed in terms of economic function, and "being able to access opportunities for socioeconomic development and growth" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 111). *Autonomous literacy* is the idea that "literacy is a technical skill that can be separated from social context… [and that exists] independently of the culture in which it is used" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 104). *Social literacy* does not define a single type of literacy, per se, but rather encompasses the idea that all literacies are social literacies, because they are "deeply embedded in social networks and cultural practices" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 110). *Local literacy*

"draw[s] attention to the complex manner in which literacy is used in a culture" (Grenoble & Whaley, 2005, p. 109). These definitions are broad enough to encompass a variety of technical skills that might arise in local literacy practices. It is therefore entirely possible that print literacy, embedded in cultural, political, and social context, can be included in a community's local literacy practices.

Indigenous Literacy

Assumptions, particularly in academic literature, that literacy did not exist in the Americas prior to European colonization "are pervasive, and reflect a linking of the arrival of the European alphabetic writing tradition and the dawn of 'literacy' in Latin America. Literacy then is represented in the Western imaginary as synonymous with having an alphabetic writing system" (Browning, 2016, p. 303). This assumption is incorrect, as many Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors can attest. Romero-Little (2006) explains,

> literacy is not new to Indigenous peoples. For centuries Indigenous peoples have had their own distinct understandings, forms, and processes of literacy that provided children with many rich and meaningful daily opportunities to acquire the cultural symbols and intellectual traditions of their local communities. However, […] because Indigenous literacies are framed within oral societies, they are often neglected or viewed as inferior versions of literacy unsuited for modern life and society (p. 399).

Further, since Indigenous literacies may not necessarily include reading and writing as we understand them in colonial languages, or resemble western literacy practices in general, "Indigenous peoples and their ways of understanding the world are excluded or marginalized in education and public schooling" (Romero-Little, 2006, p. 399).

Literacy is well-attested in Indigenous communities, whether or not it resembles western literacy or includes reading and writing as they are used in English. As Battiste (1984) explains, "Aboriginal literacy embodied tribal epistemology in native texts which interacted with and depended upon the oral tradition" (p. 4-5). Brander (2014) lists several examples of pre-colonization literacies, such as the "centuries-old tradition of writing on agave bark paper, *amatl*, to keep records" in present-day Mexico (p. 18) and hieroglyphic writing used in the Northeastern Woodlands, the Great Lakes, the eastern USA, the sub-Arctic, and the Andes. Brander (2014) also discusses Haudenosaunee *wampum* as being used for a similar purpose to French alphabetic script, particularly in the context of diplomacy and negotiation; "they [both] recorded events and made words of agreement material and binding" (p. 57). Ho'omanawanui (2005) discusses how Hawai'ian *mele* (poems/poetry) has changed over time as a result of colonial influence: "With the introduction of writing and exposure to other languages in the nineteenth century, the *lei mele Hawai'i*, or "lei of Hawaiian poetry" began to be woven with new strands: no longer strictly oral, many compositions were written and published in the numerous Hawaiian-language newspapers that flourished during the period" (p. 33). Ho'omanawanui (2005) goes on to explain the history and importance of mixed-media performance such as *hula* with chant/song, and how this continues to manifest in contemporary Hawai'ian poetry, such as through combinations of text and visual imagery, and the incorporation of spoken word.

In illustrating the social and community nature of literacy, Browning (2016) gives two examples of literacy practices in the Andes, the first being the use of scribes and messengers to send letters between a sender and receiver who may not be able to read or write. Browning (2016) explains that in this communication of information, "the encoder and the decoder are separated in time and space" (p. 309), but that the practice of writing and reading a letter in this

context is social and includes more than two participants. The second example is that of sending an *encomienda*, where meaning is conveyed not only through information but also material (such as food, money, gifts, etc.), and includes the meeting of two people (which could include a messenger as well) and a resultant social interaction. Browning (2016) explains that this practice can be considered a form of literacy, similar to letter writing, as the sender and receiver are still separated in time and space, and "the emergent, true meaning of the message is constructed through the physical meeting of the two people and their ensuing social interaction" (p. 309).

Considering these varying conceptions of literacy in community contexts, it becomes evident that defining literacy may be a more complex task than originally thought. According to Battiste (1984), "literacy is a relative social concept more reflective of culture and context than of the levels of formal instruction by which it is usually measured….Recent studies of literacy have shown, however, that literacy has not been used in the same way in all cultures, nor have its results been the same" (p. 2). Romero-Little (2006) discusses the questioning and rearticulation of literacy currently underway in many communities, where Indigenous peoples are "articulating and constructing their own distinct paradigms based on Indigenous epistemologies and rooted in self-determination and social justice" (p. 399). Romero-Little (2006) explains that this reconstruction necessarily includes "the "rethinking of our thinking" and a reexamination of our priorities as a means for reconstituting, reproducing, and validating our own intellectual traditions and cultural knowledge" (p. 399).

The history and impact of literacy in many communities is inextricably tied to that of colonialism. Smith (1994) explains, "for many indigenous communities, literacy programmes have amounted to nothing more than further colonisation through the imposition of texts and pedagogies that are embedded in the dominant language and social group" (p. 3). Mandated

education in particular has been a site for continued colonization through western pedagogy and

the co-opting of cultural symbols and practices:

> Through colonial schooling policies and practices, selected images, artefacts, social
>
> customs and stories have been re-presented and recontextualised as official school texts
>
> and official classroom/school discourses to be learned by Maori. The question of what
>
> impact this has on the ways we as Maori then re-represent ourselves to ourselves and to
>
> others has clear implications for notions such as authenticity and traditional *tikanga*
>
> which we cling to as essential differences between us and our colonisers (Smith 1994, p.
>
> 7).

Ho'omanawanui (2005) explains that in the face of colonization and assimilation in the mid-

1800s, writing enabled the Känaka Maoli "to use the new technology to record oral traditions in

writing, using pen and paper to archive mele. During this period they also experimented with and

developed new forms of mele, such as hula ku'i" (p. 71). Writing, as a "new technology" in this

context, and as a tool of colonialism itself (under the guise of "modernity"), along with colonial

language policy, had a significant impact on traditional language use, and it was eventually

incorporated into community literacy practices.

Another point that is repeated throughout the literature on Indigenous literacy is the

necessity of understanding the context for literacy practices. As Battiste (1984) explains, "any

attempt to define literacy must include a specification of context and an examination of that

society's experiences with literacy" (p. 3). Browning (2016) makes a similar point, stating that

"'Indigenous literacy' then, is not just the 'writing down of indigenous languages,' but how

literary practice is enacted in specific communities" (p. 304). Elaborating on this point, Brander

(2014) suggests using the term "pen-and-ink work" instead of "writing," in order to "[displace]

the hegemonic power of the word ''writing'' [which is] too easily equated solely with alphabetism […and to reveal] the presence of multiple and distinct literacies, each of which was strange and illegible outside its own cultural context" (p. 57). Context includes not only history, political environment, and available technology, but also worldview, relationships, and connection to the land. Smith (1994) elaborates on this point, and reiterates the importance of self-determination in language practice:

> The relationship between language and landscape is what binds me as a Maori academic to the Maori world in which I live, a world in which the 'spirits' or the spiritual are embedded in language and practice. It is a way of knowing, writing and communicating with Maori people, using a discourse over which we have some control (p. 7).

3.2 Literacy as Political

Print literacy has at times been both imposed (Matusov & St. Julien, 2004), and withheld (Battiste, 1984) in Indigenous communities. It has been "wielded [both] for the purpose of self and social empowerment [and] for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 1). In colonial and colonizing education systems, certain knowledge is privileged, or taken as "truth," while other knowledge is invalidated (Asher, 2009; Battiste, 2013). Both Grenoble & Whaley (2005) and McCarty (2005) challenge previous notions of literacy that reduce all civilizations to a binary distinction between literate and non-literate. These binary assumptions "intersect with ideologies of merit and privilege" (McCarty, 2005, p. xvii), and establish and maintain power hierarchies, such as those between colonizer and colonized, by defining non-standardized (primarily oral) language varieties in terms of deficiency.

Colonialism and the Politics of Knowledge

Within the academy, the politics of knowledge have also influenced our understanding and assumptions of literacy, through a "binary categorization of primitive and civilized societies based on the Euro-Western conceptualization and practices of literacy" (Romero-Little, 2006, p. 400). These binary and evolutionary models can be found in many influential texts including Goody (1968) and Ong (1980). According to Browning (2016), the "evolutionary model of writing imposes a structuralist divide between 'literate' and 'illiterate'" and treats non-alphabetic writing "as a barrier to higher cognitive abilities" (p. 304). Smith (2012) argues that "the academy played a very significant role in upholding Western intellectual superiority [and] dismissing or denying the existence of indigenous knowledge, a view that still exists in some parts of the academy today" (p. 222). This dismissal occurs alongside "the colonial idea of literacy-as-book" which violently erases any "nonbook" literacies practices in Indigenous communities (Browning, 2016, p. 306).

Gee (1986) addresses this dichotomy, particularly as it has been applied in the field of anthropology, explaining that the so-called "literate/nonliterate" distinction, connected to concepts of modernity and technological advancement, replaced an earlier "civilized/primitive" distinction, and that it is based on an assumption that literacy is linked to "higher order mental skills, such as analytic, logical, or abstract thinking" (p. 719). However, Gee (1986) argues that

> literacy in and of itself leads to no higher order, global cognitive skills; all humans who are acculturated and socialized are already in possession of higher order cognitive skills, though their expression and the practices they are embedded in will differ across cultures (p. 742).

According to Gee (1986), literacy is acquired through socialization into discourse practices "embedded in the particular world view of a particular social group [and] tied to a set of values and norms" (p. 742) and it is through socialization, not literacy, that higher level cognitive skills are acquired.

Indigenous literacy is well-attested around the world; however, "because Indigenous literacies are framed within oral societies, they are often neglected [in Western language policy and educational planning: EC] or viewed as inferior versions of literacy unsuited for modern life and society" (Romero-Little, 2006, p. 399). Indigenous literacies are also generally excluded from mainstream curriculum because they "do not resemble the narrow and decontextualized literacy associated with reading and writing and privilege in educational institutions" (Romero-Little, 2006, p. 399). As Romero-Little (2006) explains, revitalization efforts have rarely "questioned the validity of [these] conventional theories and paradigms" or have "fail[ed] to include the intellectual traditions of the Indigenous peoples themselves, including their ways of knowing, learning, and teaching" and so have failed "to meet the needs, goals, and desires of the Indigenous peoples and their communities" (p. 400).

Historically, literacy has also been wielded as a tool of colonization. Rappaport & Cummins (2012) discuss the role of literacy in establishing Spanish colonies in the Andes, founded on "the primacy of the written word and the power of pens wielded in the service of empire" (p. 113), which is evident in the text-centred ritualistic and ceremonial practices of evangelism, map-drawing, property granting, and royal decrees (pp. 113-114). In this context, the hegemony of Spanish literacy was controlled by upper level bureaucrats, and settlements themselves were "maintained by notaries and their minions, who penned the numerous legal documents that oiled the Spanish bureaucratic machine" (Rappaport & Cummins, 2012, p. 114).

International Neoliberal and Neocolonial Rhetoric

Western rhetoric surrounding education often discusses language learning and literacy in terms of economic benefits, which reflects and promotes neocolonial values of competition, credentialism (e.g. the myth of the meritocracy), power, status, upward mobility, and profit (Green, 2009). At the international level, neoliberal and neocolonial policies featuring hypergrowth, exploitation of resources, privatization, consumerism, corporate deregulation, and corporate bureaucracy, often encourage homogenization by favouring dominating (generally written) languages such as English, to the detriment of local Indigenous languages (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2010).

Functional print literacy (i.e. reading and writing) is mandated by many multinational organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank, which are both steered by economically powerful OECD nations (members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), where the functional print literacy model is held to be the standard in education. It is important to remember that the World Bank is first and foremost a financial institution; as Wickens & Sandlin (2007) explain, "originally created to help rebuild Europe after World War II, the principal focus of the World Bank has been providing start-up capital for developing needed infrastructure for trade and national growth" (p. 277). Since the 1960s, its focus has been on "investing in vocational education programs based on demands for manpower," and even further, on "all levels of education, from elementary to higher education" (Wickens & Sandlin, 2007, p. 277). So-called "developing" nations are often bullied by more powerful nations into adopting a functional model of literacy training in education, through fear-mongering over the *literacy myth*—that is, the commonly held belief that literacy training always leads to positive outcomes such as economic mobility, access to information, and rational thinking—and the

education crisis, that is, the perceived mass illiteracy rates presented by UNESCO and the World Bank as alarming indications of cognitive deficit (Wickens & Sandlin, 2007). Green (2009) discusses the business model of education in the USA and its continuing focus on functional literacy in terms of profit, competition, and trade dominance. As Freire and Macedo (1987) explain, this so-called *literacy crisis* "is predicated on the need to train more workers for occupational jobs that demand "functional" reading and writing skills" (p. 2). In this situation, literacy also often "becomes the ideological vehicle through which to legitimate schooling as a site for character development," with programs intentionally "designed to initiate the poor, the underprivileged, and minorities into the logic of a unitary, dominant cultural tradition" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 2)

It is through these same principles that print literacy is often used as a tool of neocolonialism and continued oppression of Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups via education in dominant languages, funded under the guise of "aid" by organizations such as the World Bank and even UNESCO (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2010; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007). Literacy as an economic goal is situated within continued colonization. As Battiste et al. (2002) explain, "economics is perhaps the most formidable remaining sanctuary of an open or coded colonialism," not only through national government policy, but also through international organizations such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund, which arrange aid agreements "designed to produce the illusion of compassion, the reality of failure, and the entrenchment of exploitation with a new face and name" (p. 89) in former colonies.

UNESCO's unwavering assertion of the vital importance of literacy as "a fundamental human right […] has secured its place in the collective consciousness as a central marker of

development" (Browning, 2016, p. 303). However, beyond so-called "development," it is hopeful that the ratification of the *UNDRIP*, which states in article 13 that "[i]ndigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures" (UN General Assembly, 2008, p. 8), will create space "for meaningful connections to be drawn between literacy and indigenous rights" (Browning, 2016, p. 303), and foster support for more Indigenous-led language programming and language revitalization initiatives at international, national, and local levels.

Literacy and Education in Canada

Similarly, in Canada, the type of literacy mandated in education is functional print literacy (Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, 2016). Historically in Indigenous communities, the purpose of federally-mandated schooling has been to assimilate children into the dominant culture and language, alienate them from their own cultures, families, and communities, and produce a profitable workforce (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The *Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* explains that the Canadian government's investment in residential schools was motivated by the expectation that the schools "would provide Indigenous people with skills that would allow them to participate in the coming market-based economy," and that "it would further their political assimilation" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 61). Even following the abolition of the residential school system, most accredited education conducted in Indigenous communities continues to be mandated by the government. It is in these ways that literacy in dominant languages has been, and often continues to be, used as a tool for achieving political or economic goals. In the education-as-business model (Green, 2009),

Indigenous languages are generally seen as neither profitable nor essential, and often communities are left with the task of developing language programs with little support from the government (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008).

Bias in education also continues to be evident in the assessment and evaluation of student progress. Performance in education is measured in such a way, through standardized testing, that it often makes students of Indigenous bilingual programs appear to be less competent than their peers in monolingual dominant language programs (McCarty, 2005). Similar biases are also prevalent in Australia's Northern Territory, where dubious "invisible language policy" favours Standard Australian English, while targeting and undermining Indigenous languages and the policies that would bolster them (McKay, 2011). In the USA, the No Child Left Behind Act, in place from 2001 to 2015, sought to "close the achievement gap between "disadvantaged" and minority students and their more-advantaged peers" via standardized testing, English proficiency, and market-centred goals of "progress" (Winstead et al, 2008, p. 46). As Winstead et al. (2008) explain, this policy "further [limited] the already contested sovereignty tribes exercise over how, and in what language, their children are educated" (p. 47).

The Canadian Government's *Economic Action Plan 2012* (Canada House of Commons, 2012) discusses literacy as important to educational outcomes in First Nations communities, but makes no mention of what language(s) students are expected to develop literacy skills in:

> To help ensure readiness for the new First Nations education system to be outlined in legislation, this budget will invest $100 million over three years for First Nations education to provide early literacy programming and other supports and services to First Nations schools and students, and to strengthen their relationships with provincial school systems (p. 149).

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission does not explicitly mention literacy, the Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) does discuss literacy, particularly in terms of formal

education and job training. According to the RCAP, two (of many) reasons that the quality of

Aboriginal education in Canada has not improved as much as hoped, are that "nearly 70 per cent

of Aboriginal education has been in the hands of provincial or territorial authorities, with few

mechanisms for effective accountability to Aboriginal people and involvement of parents" and

that "Aboriginal people have been restricted in their efforts to implement curricula that would

transmit their linguistic and cultural heritage to the next generation" (Canada, 1996, p. 411). This

report outlines common criticisms of adult literacy and academic upgrading programs, including:

- the absence of Aboriginal control over the design of programs;

- fragmented, project-by-project funding for programs;

- fragmented funding sources for student training allowances;

- inadequate community facilities to support programs;

- the lack of financial support for Aboriginal language literacy; and

- the arbitrary separation of literacy, adult basic education, and academic upgrading from

  job training services (p. 467).

It further argues that "all these difficulties can be traced to the single reality that adult education

services are not under the direction of Aboriginal self-governing authorities" (p. 468). Regarding

literacy specifically, the RCAP claims that the predominance of oral traditions over print in

many Aboriginal languages:

> may have a profound impact on their survival and the nature of efforts required to
>
> strengthen them. In concrete terms, the limited amount of writing in Aboriginal languages

results in a lack of textbooks, teachers' manuals and other essential tools for language

instruction (p. 571).

While this report does address issues surrounding control of education, (print) literacy in

Indigenous languages, and lack of relevant and appropriate curriculum for language learning, it

still assumes that oral and written language are necessarily separate, and that there are no literacy

practices in Indigenous communities that differ from those learned through English and French.

Decolonization and Decolonial Goals

Government-controlled education is one aspect of colonialism that is still alive and well

in Canada today. As Battiste et al. (2002) explain, colonialism "has always depended on cultural

and educational instruments to fortify its own troops, administrators, merchants, and settlers"

alongside military force, not only imposing European views and knowledge, but also "induc[ing]

the colonized to accept and internalize the illusion of their own inferiority" (p. 90). Indeed "the

purposes and structures of education have remained discreetly or openly colonial and

paternalistic, sustained in this orientation by public policy and funds" (Battiste et al., 2005, p.

13). Confronting their historical role as bastions of colonial assimilation, schools can also play an

important role in Indigenous empowerment and emancipation. Battiste et al. (2005) argue that

"education is one of the critical sites for decolonising work" (p. 13). McCarty (2005) discusses

the value of Indigenous literacies for "opposing dominant discourses and asserting local

educational and linguistic rights" in Indigenous communities (p. 47).

A major aspect of decolonizing approaches to language education in Indigenous

communities, or Indigenous Language Education (ILE) (de Korne, 2009), is Indigenous control

over Indigenous education. De Korne (2009) also recommends supporting bi- or multi-lingual

education, to "[create] opportunities for many language communities" (p. 77), and ILE

immersion teacher training, which has often been neglected in ILE policy implementation. Similarly, Freire & Macedo (1987) argue that "if we foresee a possible revolution in these societies, we have to develop space for the literacy of possibility to take place" (p. 38). If the UNESCO or the United Nations are serious about implementing declarations or bolstering human and language rights, they must work to "avoid overly simplistic notions of literacy and empower indigenous peoples in decision-making processes" (Browning, 2016, p. 310). According to Browning (2016), we can only begin to discuss Indigenous literacy in meaningful ways "when its form, the social practice in which it is embedded, also emerges from an indigenous reality" (p. 308).

3.3 Literacy in Indigenous Language Revitalization

As stated in Chapter 1, there are many different approaches to language revitalization currently being explored in Indigenous communities, each of which addresses literacy and literacy learning in different ways. Following a discussion of common terms, this section summarizes a number of these approaches and explores their treatment of literacy. This analysis is organized into three segments: acquisition-based methods, applying pedagogies, and community-based approaches.

Defining Terms

In order to uncover the recurring themes surrounding literacy in the literature on Indigenous Language Revitalization, it is important to first define the terms that are used to discuss them. The following terms will be repeated throughout the rest of this work.

Worldview

According to Mascalo (2014), a *worldview* is "a comprehensive set of philosophical presuppositions, beliefs, and values about the nature of the physical and social world," and is comprised of "*ontological* assumptions about the nature of what exists, epistemological principles about what and how it is possible to *know*, and *axiological* beliefs about what is good, moral, or valuable" (p. 2086). Osmera (2015) argues that a worldview includes several elements, including how a culture conceptualizes self and other, gender and gender roles, invisible entities, animals, birth and death, and temporal and spatial orientation, among others (pp. 2-4). This study assumes a definition of *worldview* that includes the influence of language. In a linguistic worldview, as conceived by German philosophers Herder, Humboldt, and Hamann (Pajdzińska, 2013), it is understood that "language is a manifestation of the psychic life of a given community (the nation's spirit), i.e. a form of consciousness. The community leaves its mark on the language it is using and can also be recognized through it" (p. 42). According to this perspective, language both reflects and shapes human consciousness through "its specific and characteristic interpretation of reality" (p. 42).

Pedagogy

Collins (2018) defines *pedagogy* as "the study and theory of the methods and principles of teaching" (para. 1). There are many different theoretical approaches to pedagogy, such as Paolo Freire's *Critical Pedagogy*, which "enables oppressed people to resist the dehumanizing ideologies and institutional structures that limit the realization of their needs and interests" (Glass, 2014, pp. 4-5). Another example of a pedagogy is *Indigenous Storywork* (Archibald, 2008), which encourages a practice of healing, learning, and holistic meaning-making through story.

Curriculum

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Education, *curriculum* refers to "the content and specifications of a course or programme of study" (Wallace, 2015). It generally "expresses the purposes, goals, or aims for education" (Orpwood, 2015, p. 254).

Immersion

As an approach to language instruction, *immersion* involves surrounding the learner with the language of study for extended periods of time. In the context of formal education, the Center for Applied Linguistics distinguishes between *total immersion*, where "all or almost all subjects taught in the lower grades (K-2) are taught in the foreign language; instruction in English usually increases in the upper grades (3-6) to 20%-50%," *partial immersion*, where "up to 50% of subjects are taught in the foreign language; in some programs, the material taught in the foreign language is reinforced in English," and *two-way immersion*, where "equal emphasis [is given] to English and a non-English language and in which one to two thirds of the students are native speakers of the non-English language, with the remainder being native speakers of English" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011, Information about the Directory section, para. 2).

Bilingualism & Biliteracy

There are many interpretations of the term bilingualism. For the purposes of this study, *bilingualism* is considered to be the "production, processing, and comprehension" of at least two languages (Bhatia, 2013). Similarly, *biliteracy* is "used to describe competencies in reading and writing [or other literacy practices: EC], to any degree, developed either simultaneously or successively, in two linguistic systems" (Gort, 2009).

Fluency & Competency

According to Sayer (2008), *fluency* is a speaker's "ability to use language in a fluid and coherent way. It includes the ability to manipulate a range of linguistic resources: vocabulary, grammatical structures, productive skills (speaking and writing), and receptive skills (listening and reading)" (p. 2). Sayer (2008) argues that a distinction must be drawn between the business term *competency*, and linguistic *competence*, "which is a central concept of Chomskyan linguistics referring to a native speaker's intuitions about what constitutes well-formed sentences" (p. 3). However, for the purposes of this study, *competence* and *competency* are considered to be synonymous.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a technique where the instructor establishes a "temporary structure or support to assist a learner in a task [which] can be gradually reduced and eventually removed altogether once the learner can carry out the performance on his or her own" (Zydney, 2012). According to Zydney (2012), scaffolding "involves an ongoing diagnosis of a learner's proficiency" in order to adequately meet the learner's needs at any given time.

Domain

This study uses the term *domain* to refer to the specific contexts that determine a speaker's language usage. Building upon Mahboob's *Three-Dimensional Framework of Language Variation,* Lin (2016) explains that language variation depends on "whether we are talking to people in our community (local) or people outside our community (global), […] whether we are speaking or writing, and […]whether we are engaged in everyday or specialized discourses [in terms of vocabulary]" (Lin, 2016, p. 22). Lin (2016) thus identifies eight domains of language usage, four of which address written language use:

1. Local everyday written,

2. Local everyday oral,

3. Local specialized written,

4. Local specialized oral,

5. Global everyday written,

6. Global everyday oral,

7. Global specialized written, and

8. Global specialized oral (p. 22).

Orthography

For the purposes of this study, *orthography* is defined as the "representation in writing" of a spoken language (Sebba, 2007, p. 11), situated in the social, political, and cultural context of a language. It includes spelling and punctuation conventions for representing sounds, words, and grammatical structures in a language (Sebba, 2007).

Writing

Most of the references cited in the present study assume a concept of writing in terms of print, as the physical representation of language. According to Ong (1980), writing is a technology that uses "coded marks for voicing real words, exteriorly or in imagination" (p. 199), and that it "depends on consciously contrived rules" (p. 200). Ong (1980) argues that while writing and print are technologies, we also internalize them, "transforming them and enhancing our own thinking and verbalizing activities in the process" (p. 204). In this sense, "writing is not merely a transcription of oral performance" (p. 204), but also takes on characteristics separate from oral language, particularly influencing how events and thoughts are sequenced, organized, and analyzed.

These terms are commonly used throughout the literature on language revitalization and literacy, though they are not always clearly defined. For each term, more than one definition exists; however, I have summarized these terms in the ways in which I understand them, and in the ways in which they appear in the scholarly works that have informed my research.

Acquisition-Based Methods

The following are examples of instructional methods that can be applied in various language and community contexts. These methods apply theories of first language acquisition in natural learning contexts to foster active and participative language use and increase oral competency.

Total Physical Response and TPR-Storytelling

Total Physical Response (TPR) is an approach to second language learning that uses imperative grammatical constructions and physical response to demonstrate learner understanding and maximize learner intake. That is, the instructor issues a command (e.g. "stand") and the student physically responds to the command (e.g., the student stands). Modelled after first language acquisition, TPR fosters listening fluency through scaffolding grammatical complexity in "acquisition-enriched" environments that emulate the home environment (Asher, 1981). In terms of literacy, Asher (1969) argues that "depending upon the fit between phonology and orthography of a specific language," there appears to be a positive transfer between listening skills and more abstract skills such as reading and writing (p. 4). However, Asher (1981) recommends that language instructors "postpone abstractions until a more advanced stage of training, when meaning is transparent from the context of the situation" (p. 329). In general, TPR focuses on listening skills first, then speaking, followed by reading and writing.

Similar to TPR, TPR-Storytelling (TPR-S) focuses on language production. However, rather than teaching solely through imperative constructions, TPR-S uses storytelling to develop students' vocabulary and speech production in meaningful contexts (e.g. narratives, descriptions, and conversations), and through a range of activities "such as videotaping, drama, creating booklets…, designing bulletin boards, and so forth" (Cantoni, 1999, p. 4). As Cantoni (1999) explains, "TPR-S strategies utilize vocabulary first taught using TPR by incorporating it into stories that students hear, watch, act out, retell, revise, read, write, and rewrite. Subsequent stories introduce additional vocabulary in meaningful contexts" (p. 2). While TPR-S centres "the principles of kinesthetic learning and the primacy of aural input" (Davidheiser, 2002, p. 2), it is possible to incorporate literacy training into the approach. As Lichtman (2012) explains, "TPR-S is implemented in different ways by different teachers, in part because it keeps evolving and in part because every individual is different and every teaching situation is different" (p. 310).

Where are your keys?

Where are your keys? is a game-based approach to language learning that focuses on conversational fluency through active participation. In this method, participants use signed language mapped onto spoken language and a set of "techniques" or rules to "play" the game. The "game" itself is comprised of "an ordered series of conversations, grammar, and vocabulary" (Gardner, 2011). An important aspect of this method is fostering a space where learners feel safe to take chances in speaking. Participants are also encouraged to help guide each other, as teaching others can help to reinforce learning. According to Gardner (2010), *Where are your keys?* "encourage[s] people to start just with speaking, and putting off any reading or writing till later, because of the easy magic that eventually happens when you're 'ready' for it" (para. 1).

Mentor-Apprentice

In a *Mentor-Apprentice* (or *Master-Apprentice*) program, "a fluent speaker of the language (a master [or mentor]) teaches a language learner (an apprentice) through language immersion" (Virtue et al., 2012, p. 3), based on the way babies acquire language through immersion in the home. This technique was first designed and implemented in California, as a way to bring pairs of native speakers and young adults together in an intensive environment "so that the younger member may develop conversational proficiency in the language" (Hinton & Hale, 2001, p. 217). While this technique is commonly referred to globally as *Master-Apprentice*, it is now called *Mentor-Apprentice* in BC, as "the term 'Mentor' more closely reflects the mentorship role of the fluent speaker in the First Peoples' Cultural Council's Mentor-Apprentice Program" (FPCC). In a Mentor-Apprentice program, teams are expected to spend around 50 hours together per month "doing everyday activities using only their First Nations language, with no English" (p. 3). The goal of this program is to increase an apprentice's speaking fluency, and as such, writing is not generally a component of these programs. Virtue et al. (2012) explain that "while reading and writing are valuable skills, an apprentice must be able to speak and understand to become fluent" (p. 3).

Applying Pedagogies

In this section, I summarize a number of broader pedagogical approaches to language revitalization that have been applied in different community contexts using various instructional methods. There is a much larger body of literature on bilingual and multilingual language learning, but I have included the following examples because they illustrate how these approaches are applied in Indigenous contexts.

Bilingual Curriculum

McCarty (2003) discusses the positive impacts of bilingual programs and enrichment approaches to Indigenous education on empowerment, identity, and academic success. Using examples from bilingual programs in Navajo, Yup'ik, and Hualapai, McCarty (2003) shows that developing "curricula grounded in local languages and knowledges" along with "the cultivation of a critical mass of Native educational practitioners," through a 'bottom-up' approach to language planning, "create[s] a means of empowerment for Native teachers, children, and communities" (p. 152).

Cummins (1989) discusses bilingual education programs in terms of their benefits to academic success, "intellectual and linguistic progress [as well as] sensitivity to linguistic meaning [and] flexibility in their thinking" (p. 20). However, as Cummins (1989) argues, traditional teacher-centred models of second-language teaching are less effective in producing these positive results. Cummins (1989) advocates the adoption of an interactive pedagogy to encourage real, meaningful interaction and active use of the target language through "genuine communication and collaboration" (p. 29), treating learners as "negotiators of meaning" (p. 24) rather than passive recipients. Cummins (1989; 2000) also argues that a positive transfer occurs between the development of literacy skills in a minority language and proficiency in the majority language. According to Cummins (2000), there are many benefits to bilingual education: "not only does maintenance of L1 help students to communicate with parents and grandparents in their families, and increase the collective linguistic competence of the entire society, it enhances the intellectual and academic resources of individual bilingual students" (p. 38). Specifically referring to Indigenous bilingual students, Baker & Lewis (2015) argue that:

the child in Indigenous-language education is likely to perform at least as well as the

child in mainstream education. The explanation seems to lie at least partly in self-esteem

being enhanced, and language and intellectual skills better promoted by education in the

home language. Such skills appear to transfer easily into second-language (majority-

language) areas (p. 118).

Language Proficiency Method

The *Language Proficiency Method* is a sequential approach to language instruction where

"each level builds on the earlier one" (Bennett et al., 1999, p. 86). Bennett et al. (1999) discuss

the Language Proficiency Method and the role of writing in Hupa language revitalization

programs. In this method, it is up to the teacher to decide when is most appropriate to introduce

writing, and writing (in whatever form it takes, including drawing) is used for communication,

presenting new material, and reinforcing concepts. Writing can serve as a way for students to

return to a form and work through its complexities, for self-study and as a useful reference (p.

86). Although this approach embraces writing, it does so cautiously and intentionally. It is

understood that writing is "a tool for improving speaking skills, not for replacing them" and that

"written language can be anything that is spoken," which "de-emphasizes the notion of

correctness associated with written language" (Bennett et al., 1999, p. 88). Writing in this

context is considered to be "a way of making a spoken language tangible because it exists in a

form where it can be collected, stored, and recalled" (pp. 88-89).

This approach, much like the bilingual approaches described above (Baker & Lewis,

2015; Cummins, 1989, 2000; McCarty, 2003) and the Ojibwe example in the next section

(Hermes, 2007), builds upon and is influenced by learners' knowledge and understanding of their

first language. It is also understood that the "early introduction of writing provides an

opportunity for writing skills to develop simultaneously with new thought processes in the second language" (Bennett et al., 1999, p. 89). As Bennett et al. (1999) explain, "instruction that combines writing with spoken language reaches a broader group of students" (p. 88). Since most of these learners have a background in English literacy and are learning Hupa as a second language, writing is considered to be a way "to maximize opportunities for learning" (p. 85).

Community-Based Approaches

This section gives an overview of programs developed *in* communities, *by* community members, and *for* language revitalization in the community itself. These approaches are grounded in each community's needs, goals, and local context.

Culture-Based Curriculum and Ojibwe Immersion

In the context of an Ojibwe immersion school, Hermes (2007) discusses the value of shifting the focus of curriculum from language and culture as content to language and culture as *medium* of instruction. This study shows the positive effect that a culture-based curriculum can have on student motivation, self-esteem, and academic success in all subjects. In this context, Ojibwe was the language of instruction for all subjects except English, and culture was incorporated throughout all subjects. Using scaffolding techniques, instructors "implemented a hands-on, environmental, and thematic-based curriculum, which we were creating one step ahead of our teaching," as curriculum materials were non-existent prior to this initiative (Hermes, 2007, p. 63). Since literacy learning was a major aspect of this program, instructors were also tasked with "creating a literate tradition for an oral language" (p. 60). Where necessary, instructors adapted existing English teaching materials to be used in Ojibwe. As Hermes explains, a learner's ease in becoming literate in a second language depends on their first language literacy skills. In this school, as most students were first-language English speakers, Ojibwe literacy was

taught alongside English literacy, and students were encouraged to become literate in English before Ojibwe (their second language). The program also embraced multimedia as a way to bring Ojibwe "back into the homes of the students and parents" (Hermes, 2007, p. 65).

Arapaho Immersion

Greymorning (1999) describes how the Arapaho Language Lodge (Hinono'eitiit Hoowu') is greatly influenced by the philosophy of "language from the breast" (p. 15) that Hawai'ian and Maori language immersion programs are founded on. Hinono'eitiit Hoowu' prepares children for Arapaho immersion school by fostering early language learning in a nurturing environment where they are surrounded by "language, culture, caring, and love, as it traditionally was in our own languages and cultures" (p. 15). As Greymorning (2011) explains, "by developing a library of children videos, like the *Bambi* [Disney] video, both children and adults could begin to pick up a lot of Arapaho" (p. 197). This initiative was part of "a multifaceted approach" to language revitalization, where "efforts [were] taken to have the language seen and heard in as many places as possible, like on street signs, the radio, computers, videos, and books" (p. 197).

Mi'gmaq in Listuguj

Sarkar & Metallic (2009) describe a learner-centred approach to revitalizing Mi'gmaq developed for adult learners in Listuguj (a community in Gespe'gewa'gi, close to the provincial border between Québec and New Brunswick). In this approach, grammar and vocabulary are introduced gradually through "a carefully selected sequence of key images" (Sarkar & Metallic, 2009, p. 57). As Sarkar & Metallic (2009) explain, this approach is more reflective of the structure of Mi'gmaq, rather than following a curriculum based on English or French. Classes are guided by learners, in that "the classroom is built around mutual negotiation of course content

and constant coming to consensus on what is most important or what should come next – a traditional Indigenous cultural practice" (Sarkar & Metallic, 2009, p. 65), and conversations include "advanced explicit discussion of grammar" (p. 58). Learners are prompted using "visual context, mime, and gestures […] as the teachers ask questions, give instructions, and encourage interaction" (p. 60), and are encouraged to speak when they feel ready. Writing is not a focus of this program, but Sarkar & Metallic (2009) explain that "when writing is used, the in-house, locally developed Listuguj system is preferred" (p. 57).

Summary

As this chapter illustrates, there are many different approaches to language revitalization that can be used by Indigenous communities. In each of these approaches, writing and literacy play a slightly different role. Some of these approaches directly incorporate literacy training into language programs, while others do not address literacy directly, but instead focus on other language skills.

There are several common themes among these approaches regarding the role of literacy in Indigenous language revitalization. Where literacy in Indigenous languages is used and taught, the focus is generally on producing and engaging in the language. Learners are encouraged to collaborate and communicate with one another. Writing is not the primary focus of any of these approaches, and when it is employed, it is used in domain-specific ways that reflect everyday life and activities; this often involves using literacy in tandem with digital technology and multimedia. In these approaches, literacy training, and the understanding of what constitutes literacy itself, is grounded in culture and community. Therefore where literacy is used in ILR initiatives, the focus is not on achieving certain standards of performance or achievement, but on

bringing literacy into real life and into the home in ways that are true to each community's

worldview.

Interchapter: The Interviewees

There continues to be a dearth of literature highlighting and centreing Indigenous perspectives on literacy in language revitalization. As such, one aim of this study has been to establish what some of these perspectives are. A major part of this research is the conversations I had with five Indigenous language champions, through one-on-one interviews. The interviewees are all members of Indigenous communities, with experience in language revitalization initiatives—as learners, educators, activists, and scholars. Each interviewee is or has at some point been connected to the University of Victoria, and is either a colleague or an acquaintance of my thesis supervisor. I had also met or worked with most interviewees prior to the interviews. In the section below, I have included biographies of all five language champions, paraphrased from their self-introductions during our interviews. All interviewees were given the option of being credited by name or remaining anonymous (identified by a pseudonym) in this thesis. It is my wish to give credit for these responses in a respectful and responsible way, and so the names of the interviewees, their languages, and their communities are only revealed with permission.

Peter Jacobs

Peter Tenaxwten Jacobs has been working in language revitalization for almost 30 years, primarily on Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, which is on his father's side of his family. Peter has also done some work on Kwak̓wala in the last few years, which is on his mother's side of his family. For the last several years, Peter has taught Sḵwx̱wú7mesh in a North Vancouver high school, as well as at the college level at Capilano University. He has also taught in the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh language immersion program at Simon Fraser University. In addition to teaching, Peter has also done a lot of research in language revitalization. He has been involved in creating a community dictionary

that was published through the University of Washington Press, and has also been involved in curriculum development with the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh language team in North Vancouver. As well, Peter has also been involved in advocacy work promoting language revitalization at both the provincial and national levels.

S.I.

S.I. is a Secwepemc immersion teacher at Chief Atahm School. S.I.'s parents were both fluent Secwepemctsin speakers, but S.I. did not know the language as a child, and so has been learning the language through immersion as an adult. S.I. has been involved in language revitalization in the Secwepemc community now for almost thirty years.

Trish Rosborough

Trish T'łat'łaḵuł Rosborough is an assistant professor in Indigenous Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria, as well as the program lead for the undergraduate language revitalization programs. Trish is involved in instructing language-teaching and language-learning techniques. Trish is a Kwakiutl person from northern Vancouver Island, and her community is in the location Tsakis, also called Fort Rupert, close to the township of Port Hardy. Trish's late mother was a fluent Kwaḵwala speaker, which Trish knew to some extent growing up, but it wasn't until Trish became an adult that she started really working to acquire Kwaḵwala. Fifteen or so years ago, Trish participated in the mentor-apprentice program, where she worked one-on-one with an elderly fluent relative through 900 hours of immersion lessons. Along with working one-on-one with speakers, Trish also engages in some text-based study, as well as using all sorts of resources such as First Voices. Currently, Trish is also acting as a coach for mentor-apprentice teams, guiding them in the method.

PENÁĆ

PENÁĆ David Underwood, is a language champion from W̱SÁNEĆ, from the SȾÁ,UTW̱ reserve, and a teacher and learner of SENĆOŦEN. He works with the children of the ŁÁU,WELṈEW̱ tribal school and the LE,NOṈET SCUL,ÁUTW̱, as well as with the adult learners of the W̱SENĆOŦEN,IST program partnership with UVic Indigenous Education department. PENÁĆ works on language because he believes it to be absolutely vital to bring the language back, and this is his role in the community. He thinks of language learning as a lifestyle. As a learner, PENÁĆ has been involved in the mentor apprentice-program with his late elder and late grand uncle Ray Sam, who PENÁĆ explains brought him from a place of knowing just words and token phrases to actually communicating. PENÁĆ has also participated in "elder sessions" in his community, through a language apprenticeship program where he learned SENĆOŦEN alongside other apprentices who also went on to become speakers and then eventually language teachers. This program focused on learning hands-on with the elders as teachers, and teacher-shadowing for work experience in the school.

Lorna Williams

Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams is an Ucwalmicwts speaker who has been involved in reclaiming, reviving, and revitalizing Indigenous languages for many years. Her work began in her home community, where she worked with a linguistics student from Holland on developing orthography, documenting, and archiving her language. Through this project, they also developed all of the early curriculum materials for use in the school and the community which are still being used today. After fifteen years on this project, Lorna moved to Vancouver and then to Victoria, where she became manager of the Developmental Standard Term certificate being developed with some communities in the North Island, working to increase the language

revitalization abilities of speakers and those learning to speak those languages in the North Island, so that eventually they could teach. During that time, Lorna became Canada Research Chair, with a cross-appointment between the Faculty of Education and the Department of Linguistics at UVic. She co-developed two degrees, a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Indigenous language revitalization, and was chair of the First Peoples' Cultural Council, whose main focus is language revitalization. Lorna has conducted research and written reports on the work of First Nations language teachers in band schools, as well as a report on the use of the province's curriculum template for First Nations languages. She has sat on a review panel of the linguistics program at the First Nations University of Canada, and currently sits on the sub-committee on languages for the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee.

Chapter 4: Themes from the Interviews

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present in an organized way the perspectives that interviewees shared with me. In conducting this analysis, I aim to accurately represent interviewees' knowledge in terms of recurring themes, and in such a way that speaks to the initial interview questions. Through multiple close readings of the transcribed interviews, I identified codes that could be organized into larger themes, and analyzed themes as they emerged. As discussed in chapter 2, I considered each code relationally in the context of the question being discussed and what the speaker was saying overall. Eight overarching themes were identified in the interviews:

1. literacy as a tool for language learning;

2. representing Indigenous thought;

3. redefining literacy;

4. distance, diaspora, and situating literacy on the land;

5. the future of literacy in communities;

6. identity, reconnection, and making a political statement;

7. localizing the context of literacy;

8. and being cautious with literacy.

4.1 Literacy as a Tool for Language Learning

Literacy can be a tool for language learning, and many adult language learners (L2) find print material to be helpful because it is a medium that they are already comfortable using in English and/or French. Peter Jacobs explains:

Some people are really against writing […] but I just find like if you don't make it the focus of what you're doing, then I think that's okay, right. Especially for beginning learners, […] especially with adults, I think you have to kind of lower their effective barriers right, and, that they're comfortable with. But then kind of push them away from that and get to the, you know, the listening and speaking part of it.

S.I. adds that literacy can also be a tool for understanding language structures and developing language skills.

So we have understanding of the language, now we can see it in print and go "okay now we can see those forms." They're making more sense to us […] I believe literacy [is playing] a big role there, for us to now study our own language, and make sure that we're getting all our forms right and we're, you know, we're speaking proper Secwepemctsin […] we're developing our language skills. So that's another role for literacy.

Similarly, PENÁĆ describes the value that literacy has had in his own experience of language learning, particularly in understanding the grammatical structure of SENĆOŦEN:

It can be a means for us to grow our proficiency and grow our ability to articulate in the language, you know. Just by having those models of good grammatical SENĆOŦEN, you know. But I also really enjoy having it as a visual aid to just observe words, you know. And break them down. Like I like to look at the suffixes and the morphemes, and you know, all of those, and these are all just sort of things I've only been recently finding out the terminology for, right[…] I've kind of really taken to that and started applying that to my own learning.

While literacy can be a useful tool for language learning, it should not take precedence over listening and speaking. This understanding, that speaking and listening must precede literacy, was repeated many times throughout these conversations. S.I. explains:

> *If the children are not speaking, they're not writing. So they need to be speakers of the language first. And not just mimicking or rote memory or anything, it really needs to be their thoughts that they're saying.*

When literacy is the primary focus of language learning, it often comes at the expense of speaking and listening skills. As Peter Jacobs explains:

> *You kinda gotta wean people off of literacy for a while. And then bring it back, eh. Because otherwise they don't speak, they'll just keep going to their paper, and then they never get that kind of fluid use of the language.*

While tools such as print materials, as well as audio and digital materials, can be very helpful, particularly in the context of language revitalization, any tool that is used for language learning should be used actively. Trish Rosborough explains:

> *To study text on its own wouldn't be useful, but to use the text to support myself to be in speaking and listening settings can be really helpful. Audio resources are also really helpful, but again, I have to do something active with them…People will always say to me "oh yeah I got some tapes and I'm listening in my car." Well I listened to tapes in my car for a long time without learning. I thought I was learning, because I'd memorized the tapes, but I couldn't retrieve those things. So, you know, they were in there, I knew what the speaker was going to say next on the CDs. But when I was away from the CDs, I could not retrieve those things. So all those other tools, text, audio, video, whatever it is, has to be used actively to engage in the language with other speakers.*

Trish Rosborough goes on to describe two different approaches to language learning she has observed that use text in different ways. One is the Mentor-Apprentice approach, where teams sometimes find text helpful in preparing for sessions and reviewing afterward. In the other, a "domain method," space is designated for speaking only the language being learned and objects within the space are labelled with their names in the language. Learners also developed some short scripts to use in the space. As she explains:

> *The idea wasn't for those texts to stand alone, but for the family members to take that text, just as a reminder, so that they can work those, the vocab and the scripts, into their communication in that kitchen space.*

Although literacy and text-based materials can be helpful language learning tools for some, they are not always helpful. Literacy can be counterproductive, particularly for those who are already speaking the language. As Lorna Williams explains:

> *What I noticed during that time was that the people who had literacy skills [in English and/or French] were able to use literacy as a tool, you know, for memory…to help them remember, to record, to…and to just have…like all what they were learning, to have it organized and visible, and that they could refer back to. And the people who were fluent speakers but didn't have really strong English literacy skills, became confused by the literacy. […] because they knew the language so well, they didn't need the literacy to help them.*

Hearing these different accounts of the usefulness of text in language learning, we can understand then that literacy can be valuable, if used wisely, and taking into account the context and the needs of the learner, the language, and the community. Trish Rosborough notes that in her experience:

Those that I'm working with who are really having success with their language learning,

I see are coming back to a place of being able to embrace the use of text, but you know

[in] really wise ways.

4.2 Representing Indigenous Thought

There is value in using literacy in ILR initiatives, if it is developed, presented, and used

on the community's own terms. Literacy may not look the same in every language or

community, and the form that literacy takes in a language should be decided by the community

itself. S.I. explains:

Who will dictate what literacy we're going to…what form it's going to take, you know? Is

it going to be in a book?…How is the book going to look?…Are we going to have

graphics, are we not going to have graphics?…We have this format of books and

everything where now we have computers and you know these paragraphs and

everything. Well maybe that's not how our literacy is supposed to look.…We need to be

the ones to put down our perspective in written form.…It would be great if more people

become literate, I guess, our own people, and we do the recording how we want to do it,

and present it to the world, and present it for ourselves.

Trish Rosborough adds: "if we're creating literacy for our own use, in ways that make sense to

us, then I think there's a lot of value there."

As S.I. points out, literacy should also be a medium for representing a speaker's own

thoughts in their language, and to maintain cultural perspectives and worldviews, rather than

simply a vehicle for translating English texts:

I think a lot of people have misunderstanding of what literacy is. Like the written form of

the language. When we're teaching our young people, and they think it's copying it off

the board, and just "okay, they're writers." No. and I think, "no, when it's your thoughts

being written down on paper in Secwepemctsin you want, that's literacy to me" so…I

think that needs to be clearly defined.

S.I. further explains that text should be useful and meaningful:

So you need to have command of the language. Your thoughts and your thinking has to be

in that language, and not basically. Not, you know, translating in your brain to say "this

is what I want to say." You need to be thinking and dreaming what you want to say in

your...in the target language that you want to speak in….We need to write it in

meaningful ways, and I guess be creating texts that are useful.

If it is used, literacy should not compromise or detract from the spirit of the language. PENÁĆ

describes the value of literacy in SENĆOŦEN:

I've always kind of maintained that seeing the SENĆOŦEN on SENĆOŦEN's terms has

been a real kind of gateway kind of a…almost like a hallmark of speaking from

SENĆOŦEN thought, and so long as we can speak from SENĆOŦEN first, to speak from

SENĆOŦEN thought, or get to that place where that's possible, then the threat of what

could happen to our language, in terms of compromising its integrity, is really being

reduced, you know. And it's funny, you know, because I think orthography has really

been one of the ways that I've been able to engage in SENĆOŦEN thought, to think of

things from SENĆOŦEN.

Language connects us with each other, with history, and with the land. As Lorna Williams

explains:

The way that people use language, you know, can come from the land, the history of the

people. The way that communities use language is, I think there are language patterns

that emerge in communities. And I think literacy tries sometimes to impose an order

around that. I think that…I agree that it's not one kind of like it's not a uniform technical

skill. But it's, like language, I think that it's fashioned by the way people experience the

world.

S.I. adds: "the language bases me here on this land, not over there on the island. Here. This is my land, and through the language I know that. I know where I come from through our language." Understanding this connection between language and land, particularly in the context of ILR, it is evident that if literacy is to be meaningful, it must reflect this connection. Peter Jacobs points out that:

You can't separate communities of people from the land where they live, and so it's not

really possible to learn Sḵwx̱wú7mesh without learning about the land and the

connection between land and language, and literacy necessarily then would also be

reflecting that, right. And we do that, I mean we do that instinctively….One of the earliest

things that our children learn how to say is where they're from, you know…and so they

learn all of these place names, eh. And then, you know, when they get older they'll learn

a bit more about how these place names themselves have meaning, right, and why they

have those meanings. And so you know the connection between geography and place

names and knowledge about resources and all of that stuff is all tied together with

knowledge of the land, right.

4.3 Redefining Literacy

As discussed above, literacy is more than simply reading and writing. S.I. notes that writing is not literacy, if you are not also thinking in the language: "when it's your thoughts being written down on paper in the language you want, that's literacy to me."

Literacy can be a tool for studying and reviewing language. PENÁĆ describes how literacy is used for learning in SENĆOŦEN:

> *It can be a means for us to grow our proficiency and grow our ability to articulate in the language, you know. Just by having those models of good grammatical SENĆOŦEN, you know. But I also really enjoy having it as a visual aid to just observe words, you know. And break them down….I think it's allowed me to really to grow as a speaker….I think that aspect of using literacy as a tool to expand my own growth, to better myself with SENĆOŦEN I think has really been probably the biggest thing for me, you know. And I think it's a…I see it as a great tool in that sense, for people to learn on their own.*

Beyond visually representing language, literacy also involves imagery, humour, storytelling, and reception. Lorna Williams talks about what literacy means and where it comes from:

> *Literacy is not…it's not just…the codes in an alphabet. There are lots of different literacies. And so they're…it's however people use symbols. And so there's a literacy, for example, in the use of petroglyphs. That's a literacy. And I think there's also a literacy in how people who are so familiar with a place that the place speaks to them. That's a literacy. And when you think about the songs and chants that we sing, that's a literacy. And where did many of those come from? They came from the spirit world, they came from streams, they came from the sounds in the forest, they came from the animals, they came from humans, they…you know. And when we sing those, they're communicating something. That's a literacy. And the same with our dances. And I know that when people, when our people, and this is never taken to mean anything, but in our world, observation and listening are so deep and you're socialized to really be observant and to really listen. Like you're not just listening to what's on top, the superficial. You're*

listening to all the layers. And that's a literacy. So, you know, the symbol system of an

alphabet is not the only literacy. And it's really important, I think, that in any language

work, language programming, that the idea of literacy has, if it's going to mean anything

to us, it has to be expanded.

S.I. further elaborates on what literacy includes and whether print materials can reflect the
richness of language and storytelling:

I think it probably includes everything, like not only imagery, but even humour and you

know all that that entails…you know and I...sometimes I think of too our master, my

master storyteller, my uncle Lawrence Michel, and I just think you know like you talk

about imagery you know, there it is. The sound effects that he has, the way, you know that

he tells a story too and the way, how it is perceived in the, you know, received from the

listener too, right…here he's presenting thoughts and really it's really important what

he's saying and it ties into what's happening, and it ties into, you know, why we're

gathered and it ties into the people that are there. And then there's a message and a

teaching for us and ties into nature, it ties into, you know, that's part of the training, and,

you know, will that come across in print? I'm not sure.

Literacy is situated in the local context of the language; as such, it will look different and be used
differently in every community. As Lorna Williams explains,

Language patterns...emerge in communities. And I think literacy tries sometimes to

impose an order around that. I think that…I agree that it's not one kind of, like it's not a

uniform technical skill. But it's, you know, like language, I think that it's fashioned by the

way people experience the world.

Further, as discussed above, language is situated on the land, and so literacy must also be grounded in this connection. Peter Jacobs states, "it's impossible to learn Sḵwx̱wú7mesh without learning about the land." A redefinition of literacy then will necessarily reflect connections with the land and the contextual nature of language patterns.

A new definition of literacy would not necessarily encompass all languages or all communities, and nor should it. In order to broaden the concept of literacy, we should look at how it is used in the context of each community. S.I. explains the importance of a community empowering itself to define its own literacy:

I think we as Indigenous people or Secwepemc people…need to define it for ourselves. Empower ourselves, and like you said, go through the layers and go "why are we making these statements, why do we have this belief that, you know, we don't have the right…" or the, you know, how we want to present our language. 'Cause, you know, we want to make it look like, you know, how the seme7 do it, the white people do it. We really do need to take our power and say "no," you know, "let's go back." You know, "what would our ancestors do" you know, "let's think like them now, and let's base our decision-making on that."

Additionally, it is important to note that literacy changes over time and context, just as language and language use change over time. It is not a finite, one-time event, but rather an ongoing process. S.I. notes that we are never really finished becoming literate, that "literacy too means that it's a lifelong thing, it's training to get better and better at it."

4.4 Distance, Diaspora, and Situating Literacy on the Land

Languages are situated locally in the context of land, history, culture, and community. By extension then, literacy is also local. Peter Jacobs explains:

Our languages in that sense then are totally…are only local then, right. Because, you know, there's just a little part of the world here where Sḵwx̱wú7mesh is…because we consider our languages to be tied to the land, and they represent a relationship that, you know, our group of people have had for thousands of years in one area, you know, like localized literacy is much more important than most people realize, and western education often overlooks the fact that all knowledge is local right. You know, it always comes down to that. And when you have like a whole language and culture and everything that is derived from one particular area, like where Sḵwx̱wú7mesh is, that's like every knowledge about everything, all contained with people that live in a small area...like the fact that this is a group of people and connected to this land is the same thing, eh. And so you can't separate that…so the local-ness of it is much more rich than I think sometimes is implied by the term like "local literacy," eh. Because you just have to move to W̱SÁNEĆ then, which is like another Salish language. Their experience of the world which is much different than over here…the land here is different, right. Like the weather's different, the plants are like, they're similar but different…so then your connection between language and the location and the land is also different. And it gets mapped out differently, and even with the same words, right. You know, like knowledge has to be local then.

While it is important to understand language as situated in place, many language learners are far away from language communities. Trish Rosborough talks about how she situates her learning while she lives away from her home community:

We often talk about working and learning in place. That that's where the languages live and so that's where they're best learned. However, here I am 6 hours away from home,

and tonight we'll gather in somebody's living room to learn Kwak̓wala. However, there

are always times when what we're learning brings us right back to where our languages

come from, because there are things about how we talk about things that show what's

important in our way of seeing the world. So, for instance, the word a'tłi, the forest,

actually means "behind" or "away from," because our homes were always situated on

the beach, and the forest was behind or away from. So to teach the word a'tłi without

situating that in story so that people can understand, doesn't make sense. It's disjointed,

right, and maps then the word…like I don't want to map the word a'tłi to the English

word Forest, I want to map it to the vision of homes along the beach and the forest being

what's behind us. So, you know, language recovery, like if we're to recover Kwak̓wala, I

want to recover it in the ways that it was born and where it comes from, and what it's

connected to.

Though most of our conversations touched on varying approaches to diaspora and hopes of

expanding language initiatives outside their communities in the future, all interviewees in this

study spoke about focusing on language learning physically within their communities first. Peter

Jacobs describes the process in his community:

We're all struggling with just doing what we can for those of us who are around here

locally with the language. We do have, like Sḵwx̱wú7mesh has…when we have

membership activities, they will send people down to Seattle, because there's enough of a

population down there, like a voting population. So they'll send someone down there to

pass on information and stuff like that. So it is a relevant question. Most of us live in

North Van, like the large majority of us. Even though that…we have communities in

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh. Like the majority of us live in this location, whether it's on-reserve or not.

So…but for those outside of the community, and this is already true, even for our own community members, that they don't have a connection with the land through the language….And so it's part of our bigger, you know, goals to get people reconnected with all that knowledge too, even locally. So when we figure out how to do that locally, then we'll do that for everybody else too. But I guess we're not that far ahead yet…

PENÁĆ gives the analogy of his community as the core or hub for language learning, where further language revitalization will flower from:

We're quite a small community, you know. So I think that…I've always thought of this as the core of where language revitalization is, here and now, is with the school….I think that localized literature like in the way that we've maintained language revitalization kind of, is most secure with the hub I guess. So to speak, you know. And that here is the place where we want it to kind of like grow out so I think about it kinda like flowering out or something and becoming something bigger than here but until we get to that place, I think yeah, keeping it very much within that local sort of context I think is pretty important. We always just call it capacity. Building on that, you know.

S.I. talks about the possibility of using digital technology as a way to extend language learning into the broader community, so that community members anywhere can learn and engage with the language:

We use total physical response, TPR, and TPR-Storytelling, you know, as a way to hopefully get some language into our children, language skills. So these, this is what we're working hard on now, is how do we extend so that, you know, we can go into the media and you know, I don't have to be going all over the place to teach, but now somebody can click on a button and go "oh, there she is! Look at that! She's teaching

some basic Secwepemtsin" and so we're working hard on that right now. Just to have

more access and, you know, how do we do it, and yeah. So we are working on that, and

again, we're just basically at the base level, and hopefully we can keep growing with

these students, and then you know, like we say put out more.

Elaborating on this point, S.I. also mentions the possibility of using technology such as virtual

reality for learning, particularly as a way for community members to listen to stories away from

their home community, while still being situated on the land:

So I'm thinking, plug this in and then you're hearing the elders tell the story, while these

images are going, thinking "okay that's where we need to be," like why are we waiting?

And that technology is here already.

Digital technologies can open up opportunities for diaspora to participate in language learning.

However, it may not necessarily be effective in all contexts. Trish Rosborough talks about

meeting with other Kwak̓wala learners to spend time together in the language, and why they

choose to keep the gatherings face-to-face rather than online:

I very often get messages from people in different communities from Nanaimo or

Vancouver saying oh I wish we had that here…and requests that we would open our

sessions up through Skype or FaceTime or something to people who don't live in the

community. And unfortunately, I've said no to those requests, because we're really doing

very communicative…and I guess it's a generative process that we're engaged in, it

doesn't lend itself to teaching over multimedia. It would be different if we were doing a

lecture kind of situation that could be easily broadcast…

4.5 The Future of Literacy in Communities

Interviewees discuss their hopes for language revitalization and future directions for language learning in their communities. In particular, goals of using the language in higher levels of education (such as post-secondary), developing a body of literature including all different genres, improving access to learning and creative materials, and engaging in discussions in the language. S.I. notes, "I wish we were maybe more successful with our immersion program and, you know, the kids that go higher in the language, and you know they go all the way like the Hawaiians and the Maoris." In a similar vein, PENÁĆ talks about expanding language use to different domains:

> *I'm really hopeful and I have a lot of faith in what it could mean for our own*
> *advancements with language, you know. I mean, writing stories, writing poetry, you*
> *know, that kind of stuff…I want to see it in that place where we're referring to the*
> *broader spectrum or the world beyond our community, and how it'd be something to see.*
> *And to me, in the way that we've been growing, that would mean that we've entered those*
> *higher domains of language use, you know, and have expanded the domains into those*
> *really more complex areas of like poetry and literature and stuff, you know.*

Trish Rosborough also discusses hopes for improved accessibility of written materials and building a body of literature that reflects place-based connections:

> *I would like to see creating text that is accessible to people who want to learn, and to*
> *people who are learners, and maybe even to speakers who want to engage with text.…It's*
> *not like we have this big body to draw from. And there's not a lot of art pieces there,*
> *although that's starting to come… So yes, I want to see the value of place-based*
> *connections within the text, but our text is limited.*

Many communities have opted to use pre-existing curricular models for language learning, translated from English or French. PENÁĆ explains that this is the model that has been effectively used in his community:

> *Going through the alphabet and creating an alphabet song has been one of the obvious first things to do with them, but as time goes on, you know, it's been about engaging those sight words and trying to create…trying to bridge that sound-to-word, and you know…yeah all these different things that elementary or primary schools might do with children and teaching them literacy, so we follow a lot of those models and we try to translate everything to SENĆOŦEN, so it's until we really dig into what literacy means on our own terms, we always use those models, right.*

While many ILR initiatives have been successful following this path, there are conflicting opinions on whether it is possible to authentically learn an Indigenous language through the vehicle of a curriculum based on English or French. Lorna Williams elaborates on this:

> *When people are learning an Indigenous language through curriculum templates that are based on French or English, then that's cultural assimilation and cultural imperialism. Because then they're learning their Indigenous language patterned after English or French language. And that does as much disservice to a language than anything else. So that's cultural imperialism,…not [learning the Indigenous language] in its authentic and respectful way. You're learning it as English.*

Whether or not a community chooses to model its language programs on English or French curricular models, it is up to community members to decide how best to maintain the integrity of their language. PENÁĆ explains:

And I think that's the ultimate, that we want to be able to engage in those kinds of

discussions [about grammar, language materials, and creating words] in SENĆOŦEN,

you know. But then I think that that flag is always kind of like being raised and thinking

sort of in terms of well, when is it too much? When is it compromising the integrity of our

language?

4.6 Identity, Reconnection, and Making a Political Statement

In each conversation, we spent some time talking about ILR in general, before

specifically talking about literacy. Several interviewees talked about the value of ILR initiatives

in making it possible to once again raise children in their language. S.I. talks about naming in

particular as a way of reconnecting with the land: "giving our children back their Secwepemc

names, that places them here on this land." Trish Rosborough discusses ILR as not just about

teaching language but also about getting to the point where children are raised to be natural

speakers of their language:

> *Ultimately, if language revitalization is successful, you know, I guess the real goal, where*
>
> *I'd like to see us get to, is where we have babies being born into the language. So it's not*
>
> *just about teaching the language. You know, we don't think about teaching our mother*
>
> *tongue English, right? So, but having a natural generation of that language, you know.*
>
> *That's when we know we'll have done good.*

Similarly, Peter Jacobs explains that raising the children in the language includes teaching them

about the land:

> *My grandmother was part of this group of elders and she said you know we need to bring*
>
> *back the raising of our children in the language so that our children can know who they*
>
> *are. 'Cause that's how they were raised, and they wanted to bring that back. So to them,*

language revitalization was bringing back a traditional way of S̱ḵwx̱wú7mesh raising of children and pedagogy. We need to bring back the raising of children and, you know, the raising of children involved like making them…teaching them about the territory that they come from and the meanings that all these place names and the connection with traditional activities that go on here and there. So yeah, so it's really like, you know, they [community members previously interviewed about language revitalization] really wanted to bring back that S̱ḵwx̱wú7mesh pedagogy through the language.

ILR initiatives can be a way to reconnect communities with land, culture, and history, and to look forward to a future where the language can grow even stronger.

I think the metaphor is, you know, this language had been exiled from the community from all the processes that we know. And we're bringing it back. (Peter Jacobs)

Lorna Williams notes that language revitalization should not focus solely on one group or one generation, but "all ages. You can't focus only on one generation. And it's all aspects of language, that language is actively used." S.I. explains the responsibility that current language speakers and learners have to maintain the language for future learners and speakers:

So now if we're [doing] revitalization, then we're actually in the mode of making sure that the language does continue.…the language is here, it's still here with us, we still have language keepers, and if we don't tap into them, then, you know, we're in dire straits.

It follows then that if and when literacy is to be part of an ILR initiative, it should contribute to these goals of reconnection, language maintenance, and raising children in the language. PENÁĆ elaborates on this:

I mean really in the end, you know, we want the program not only to transmit language to the kids, but the culture, you know….So I guess my question kind of is how do we integrate literacy in such a way that we're going to maintain that language and cultural sort of parallel? I mean they're gonna be seeing the world from the first language perspective.

One benefit of text materials and literacy is that they can help to reconnect with the past and with speakers who have passed on. Lorna Williams explains,

It is important to have a trace, I think. But I think that literacy is more than a trace…because having the recordings and…of people who are no longer here, whether it's audio or in a literate form, it's more than a trace. Then those people's voices are still here. And that's really valuable. And being able to read something, not as a translation, but really in the voice of the people, is really a gift. So I would say that it's more than a trace…it's more than just a visible trace. And when you think about, you know, the attempts to obliterate our knowledge, what we can hold onto from people is really, you know, it's priceless.

Many ILR initiatives rely on language materials preserved by previous generations. Peter Jacobs explains that literacy can be a vital tool for documentation and preservation:

We could not have been doing the things we're doing today if our previous generations didn't allow things to be written down, eh. Like if those elders didn't agree to work with those linguists or those anthropologists, and all those people, we would not have the wealth of knowledge that we have today, of our language. So we wouldn't have the breadth of vocabulary, and the…all of that, if people had not written it down. So, you know, in that way, we're absolutely dependent upon literacy. Because the generation of

> *speakers that we have now didn't grow up with all of this, all of that other knowledge in the same way as their parents and grandparents did, and they're well aware of that, right. And so there's like some more complex terminology and stuff like that that we're really, you know, we're just fortunate that the previous generations had it written down, eh. So it's invaluable. In that way, it's invaluable for us.*

Similarly, S.I. talks about the value of text recorded by previous generations in today's language programming:

> *Once our fluent speakers are gone, they're gone, right. We don't have a...something to go by. And I guess, you know, the example there would be the Hawaiians, right. All that recording that they did turn of the century, that's their valuable resource right now, for their revitalization movement....So yes, I believe that we do need to lead that path.*

Some ILR initiatives use literacy to make a political statement or to increase awareness of the language. S.I. explains how literacy can be used to assert educational and linguistic rights and to empower Indigenous communities:

> *I think we as Indigenous people or Secwepemc people, need, like I said, need to define it for ourselves. Empower ourselves...giving our children back their Secwepemc names, and...that places them here on Secwepemculecw. And this language places me here. The stories that are told to me places me here in this area. This is where I'm from, this is where my ancestors' bones lie. So I totally agree with her, that this is, like I say, goes back to, you know, vital for life, vital for our being. This is our...my being is here, my existence is here, so you know I can remove myself from here, but I exist here. I flourish here. This is where I come from, and it comes through the language. So like we said, what is it going to look like in the future? For me, for us too, for our future generations.*

That, okay how, you know, we can't break the language link. How are we gonna have it for my great-great grandchildren. What, you know, hopefully the language will be flourishing, and it'll still be here.

Literacy, as a physical representation of language, can be used to make statements in public spaces. Peter Jacobs discusses the possibility of using murals to achieve this:

You know, you have these murals in small towns, like Chemainus or something like that, you know. But do a big mural of language, eh. Wouldn't necessarily have to be the writing connected with other things, right. And just to make that statement about, you know, we are here. So that political statement, eh. So that, you know, I'm agreeing with the first statement. I think it's…and we can only talk about every individual community and how they're dealing with literacy, right, because everybody's at a different stage….I think it's important to, yes, in the world where everything is written, I think it's imp…-for us, it became important.

Similarly, Trish Rosborough talks about how signs can be used in a similar way:

So you know, like creating signs as an example, is something that's going on in my community. Signs are not going to answer the language revitalization problem, however, they serve in the context of where we're at, to start making the language visible, so there's a political statement there, you know, so might help people to recognize particular words, maybe open their interest to learning other things.

4.7 Localizing the Context of Literacy

Interviewees listed a number of current settings for language use and where language revitalization is taking place within their communities. These settings are: at school, in ceremony, on social media, on apps and websites such as FirstVoices, at social gatherings

(particularly amongst and with elders), and some home use at varying proficiency. Lorna Williams explains the importance of fostering language use in a variety of contexts:

> *I think that there needs to be a very rich language use constructed in the learning experience, but also in a variety of settings, so that people can actively use the language in the most natural way possible.*

It is likely that new generations of speakers will have new and different contexts for language use, particularly in terms of the digital world. Peter Jacobs discusses how environments for language use have changed over time in his community:

> *I just brought up Facebook, but you know like larger…you know, a larger electronic world now. We use it in our job, and everything. It's the world of, you know, my nieces and nephews. It's pretty much a necessity now I think, to be engaged and a part of everybody's life, eh. I think that generation will have to tackle that, you know, the use of technology and how to incorporate it into our efforts. But like I said, people are already using it, so it's just encouraging them to use it more and then to become, you know, more proficient.*

"Local literacy" and localized approaches to language programming involve not only situating the language on the land, but also in history, cultural values, and worldview, as well as in the immediate needs of the community. For example, Lorna Williams discusses developing an orthography that could be used by the prevalent technology of the time—the typewriter:

> *Some of them [orthographies of Indigenous languages] are based on the International Phonetics Alphabet, that code, and many have been adapted. And in my community, that's what we did, we adapted it to use kind of a Roman alphabet symbols, so that we could use a typewriter.*

Similarly, Peter Jacobs discusses the role of literacy in his community in previous generations as a politically subversive act:

> *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh has certainly heavily been influenced by the Catholic Church and the earliest documents, some of the earliest documents certainly were religious documents for the Catholic Church….But at the same time, and this is where this doesn't get documented because this just happens in the community, is community members, you know, and this is like my great grandparents' or my great great grandparents' generation like those back then were using literacy that they got from this period to document political knowledge and decisions that were going on. To keep a record, right. And so, you know, literacy took on another meaning. You know, it was like a politically subversive activity from leadership in the day to…because no-one else would be able to read it, right, you know. It was written in a type of shorthand that no-one uses anymore, and so I would say, you know, the community has quickly adapted literacy for their own means in a way that made sense for the political situation.*

Contexts for language use and needs within the community have changed over time. As Peter Jacobs explains:

> *Of course nowadays everybody is literate, so it's…I mean, not everybody, but majority of people are literate, so it's, it has a whole different meaning now….We want our community members to be literate in both English and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, because they have to live in the English-speaking world, and we want them to have Sḵwx̱wú7mesh for all the reasons that we know, eh. So that's different, like the need for literacy is different from what it was, you know, with our great grandparents' generation, because they were fluent in Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and they needed, you know, they needed political protections for*

themselves, and to be able to communicate. Unlike us today, it's like we can…you know, we're free politically to write what we want and all those things, so we don't have to hide, eh. But we need literacy for Sḵwx̱wú7mesh for learning our own language, not for, you know, hiding our political activities.

Trish Rosborough explains how contexts for language use and needs for language revitalization are locally situated in communities, and as such, approaches to language revitalization should also be localized:

Localized…to me, what that makes me think about is localizing the approach to the context. So not so much the cultural issues, you know, we might get there one day, but more the contextual needs. So the state of the language. So we have to consider: not everybody reads the language, people are not familiar with the orthographies, some things might be more useful than other things. I remember getting on the Vancouver bus and seeing that they had I don't know what it was, the bus schedule or something, in I don't even remember what language it was, but it was one of the Indigenous languages. But the state that our languages are in right now, nobody could really read that. Or you know, another example, when I was working with government, we would have organizations approach us and say a service we could provide is to have your documents translated into your Indigenous languages, but to have policy documents translated into our Indigenous languages would just go into a vacuum. There's nobody that would be able to use those, unless they would be using them kind of the way I was using the religious texts, to study the language, right. So I think the approach needs to be localized to the context that our languages are in right now, which are different for most languages.

Local literacy can also mean using literacy to bolster and support cultural practices. As PENÁĆ suggests:

> *To me, it's kinda like integrating literacy with cultural practices or traditional ways of doing things, you know. Or using literacy to complement those other things….I mean really in the end, you know, we want the program not only to transmit language to the kids, but the culture.*

Peter Jacobs gives an example of the context for language revitalization in his community, where not all speakers are expected to know everything, but instead knowledge is a shared responsibility:

> *Place-based knowledge and language is also like that because it was really about, you know, like not everybody hunts, not everybody fishes, not everybody picks certain foods, or all of these things right. So, you know, eventually like literacy has to become then giving those people who have those interests like enough knowledge to be able to do that and to benefit from, you know, all of the knowledge that previous generations had, eh. And certainly something that we're working on is finding ways to package that knowledge for people who want to use it and learn it. And so…none of us as language teachers knows everything about everything…the individual person, the individual Sḵwx̱wú7mesh person is not expected to know all of these things, like it's expected that the whole community together would, right. So it's creating that space for everybody again, and then…a lot of that's happening already. Just like it's already happening organically in the community….You know, and then if you connect the language and language learning and language use to that, just find a way to work with them to make those materials useful for language learners.*

4.8 Being Cautious with Literacy

While literacy can be a useful tool, it is also important to be aware of the possible negative outcomes of using literacy for ILR. Lorna Williams talks about the impacts of linguist interference in some communities:

Linguists from all over the world have worked with people in our communities. And sometimes they've come in, and they've worked with certain families, and they developed a writing system. And so a community can have two or three or four writing systems. And then after a while, they can't agree which one they'll use….And so that the work, you know, once the person is finished working on their dissertation or whatever, they stop working with a community, and the community then has a writing system that is incomplete. And so then the people who that linguist has worked with are very loyal, loyal to what they've produced and to the linguist they worked with, and they don't want to give it up. And so, it makes it really really challenging then to come up with a writing system that's standard and that people feel okay about….So linguists have really played a disservice to the Indigenous communities of Canada, because of that. And so that it's really difficult now to have any…so the northern dialect and the southern dialect then…it's difficult for them to work together, having these two systems….Every community has to go through a process really of coming to terms with multiple forms of writing systems…to come up, to agree. And that impacts literacy.

Furthermore, linguists working in communities have historically been treated as the language authority, when the authorities are really the community members, particularly elders. S.I. explains that in many communities, the idea that a linguist's approval was necessary for language work is still being unlearned:

It's basically the same old thing, right. Like for some reason, non-native people wanted

to come in and save us. So this and being dominant, this is the language that you're

going to use, because this will make you successful. And obviously our parents bought

into all of that, or brainwashed into all of that.…People feel imprisoned not to do that.

Until you get the okay from a non-Indigenous person to say "okay, you can do this. Yeah,

you can do this."…That's our history, and, you know, sometimes people come to our

school and say "well, where…" you know, "where is your linguist?" You know, like

"where is your white linguist?" Well, we don't have one…our experts—Elders, fluent

language speakers—are right there, they're sitting right there.

Literacy also impacts how a language is learned. Lorna Williams explains how a focus on

writing can effect a learner's acquisition of the sound system, particularly when the writing

system is influenced by English:

Although it made it easy on one part, on the other side, it becomes really confusing,

especially to those people who are learning the language and they don't have the sound

system, because then it gets influenced by English.…Everybody has adapted it to suit

their language, not all the sounds exist in a similar way across all languages. And so I

think that makes it really confusing, like just to get some congruency between the symbol

and the sound.

When a language is written down, it changes how people view and treat the language. Whether

intentional or not, a standardized writing system is generally considered to be the authority. It is

important to consider, when using literacy or when developing an orthography, that writing

carries weight both within communities and in the broader world. Peter Jacobs explains why it is

important to be cautious with orthographies and dictionary projects:

I try to be really really cautious about giving people a sense that this is all there is about these words, right. Like the authority versions of a dictionary, right. And that comes with writing, you know, and so some people are very cautious about writing things down for that reason, because, I mean, they become the authority, and it kind of goes against, it goes against our, like our traditional ways in our community, where there's a lot of give and take between different families and different parts of the community. And so writing sets up an authority that never existed before….We're in a bind then because really we need it to record everything, we need it to find out everything we could from the elders that we have, right….Everything you have about learning reading and writing English comes into, you know learning to read and write Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, your expectations about what's going on...are the same, so you assume that there's a standard that everybody's figured out and agreed upon and that's what you're learning, right. And that's not quite right, because we don't have that kind of a…we don't have that long history of standardization and everything for Sḵwx̱wú7mesh….And so, in the dictionary, we tried to include all the different pronunciations of words that we knew, eh. Just to sidestep the issue, so that we weren't doing a standardization of what is the correct pronunciation.

A written form of the language is often considered to be more accurate, and therefore carries more weight than spoken forms. Peter Jacobs discusses how language teachers in his community try to work around this and continue to encourage variation:

It's the accuracy thing that freaks everybody out about literacy. It's, once it's down there, it just carries that weight. Regardless of how much provisos you put in the writing, like "this is just me talking with so and so." The fact that it's in writing already means that it's very very important, right….So we have all of that knowledge and we just, when we

use it in class we just add onto it, because we want to acknowledge, you know, that this is

living knowledge and people have learnt in their own families about stuff, about how to

use plants and what they can be used for, and we just keep adding on.

In some communities, traditional stories have been translated and written into English. While

these can be useful texts, it is important to exercise caution in using them, as they may not

necessarily be accurate representations of language, culture, or worldview. Lorna Williams

explains how stories translated into English were changed to fit English sensibilities, and how

this affects Indigenous literacies:

English literacy is not ideologically neutral, so… no matter how you can stretch it, it

isn't.…So I recognized this early in two ways. One was I was reading transcripts of our

stories, our sptakwlh, our teaching stories, and even though they were coming…it was

said that they were coming from my language, what was imposed on them was a

sanitization of…through English. It's…so the person who recorded the story transcribed

them and then put them in a story form. What he did, because he was an Englishman, an

English speaker, the way that he transcribed them he was already cleaning it up. And

because when you, when we really hear the story, as it would've been told, like they

didn't sanitize the stories for children's ears. Some of them were pretty violent. There

was, you know, an upfront talk, you know, a portrayal of sex and…so it was all there. But

in the transcriptions, it was no longer there. That's one. The other is our story form is

really different. The structure of our stories is really different. And it's not in the English,

French, and Spanish form. You know, where…and so when people who are not from that

culture transcribe and then translate those stories, they shift…the structure shifts. And

the other thing is in our languages, there's usually…there isn't…the pronouns are

different. There's no "he" and "she" and "it." And so, when we speak, we're not using

those pronouns, but when they're translated, there's those, you know like the pronouns

exist. And so that's not in our story form. And so that affects, I think…so that's why it

isn't neutral.…So the Indigenous literacies that are originally developed for the purpose

of religious, for religion, all have that quality of sanitization to fit kind of the ideology of

Christianity.

Many communities find it helpful to adapt western educational models and curricula for

language programming. These materials are prevalent, easy to access, and familiar to most

teachers. However, PENÁĆ explains why communities should always be mindful in employing

these strategies for language revitalization, to use them strictly as tools, rather than goals in

themselves:

Down the road, you know, even if the kids are, have been involved in the school here,

there's never gonna be…it's never not gonna be necessary to consider processes of

decolonization, you know, because that's just the reality of school and institution of

school. Because traditionally this is just not the way that we would've learned. You know,

I mean our school was really out there on the land and living amongst our people. We did

everything together, and it was all hands-on and, you know, we had those aspects of

sitting and listening sure, you know, being told things like stories and different teachings

and stuff like that, you know. And you couldn't relate that to a classroom maybe you

know, as a teacher would instruct a student, but there's certainly an aspect of that aspect

of community and relation and kinship and spiritual or cultural values, or they're all just

married in together and really not in a sense separated or made to be something, you

know, unto itself in the way that, you know, school does, right. I mean there's, so I think

that's probably one of the big compromises that we have being in a place like this, and I think that one of the real ways that we've kind of maintained this as acceptable is that it's a, we just call it a tool. It's a tool for us, you know.

Chapter 5: Circling Back

5.1 The Research Question

The main research question in this study is: does print literacy play a role in language revitalization? This seemed like a simple question at first, but through an extensive review of the literature, interviews with Indigenous language champions, and reflection throughout the research process, I have come to understand the extent to which this is a complex question that has a complex answer.

Originally, I had intended this research to address more potential alternatives to print literacy, non-print literacy in ILR, and the overlap between orality and literacy in Indigenous language programs. The earliest version of the research question, developed for a grant funding application prior to my thesis proposal, stated that one goal of this research was to ascertain the value of literacy education in Indigenous second language classrooms. It is clear to me now that this question was premised on assumptions of what comprised literacy and its unquestionable value, and that I needed to further deconstruct the research question and reflect on my own presuppositions. This happened organically as I waded further into the literature.

In another early draft of my thesis proposal, the research question asked "does literacy play a role in language revitalization?," excluding the word *print*. However, as I conducted a preliminary literature search, it became evident that before I could explore "alternative" literacies to print, I would need to figure out what was meant by *literacy* and *print literacy* in the first place. As discussed in chapter 3, there is a large body of academic literature which addresses the nature of literacy, non-print literacy, and orality; however, many texts that have historically impacted Indigenous language programming, particularly in Canadian educational contexts, are

government policy documents and international agency reports (Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, 2009; OECD & Statistics Canada, 2000; Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2008; UNESCO, 1959; 2004; 2006; UIS, 2014). The majority of these documents also tend to discuss the needs of Indigenous communities without presenting an Indigenous point of view. The out-dated assumptions in these documents, which have been disproven by many scholars in the fields of literacy study (Gee, 1986; Kell, 2006; Siegel, 2006; Street, 2001, among others) and Indigenous languages (Battiste, 1984; Brander, 2014; Browning 2016; Ho'omanawanui, 2005; Romero-Little, 2006; Smith, 1994), surrounding the so-called "oral-literate binary" and the primacy of written language, along with the need, more practically, to focus my research, motivated me to reframe the research question in terms of *print* literacy. Asking this revised question, *does print literacy play a role in language revitalization,* did not necessarily limit my ability to explore other forms of literacy and orality, but acknowledged the prevalent and historical assumptions surrounding the primacy of written language in policy and educational planning documents. I was able to use print literacy as a starting point to address these assumptions and then to explore other possibilities.

Particularly in the early stages of the preliminary literature search, I made notes on questions that arose from scouring the literature for themes and clues. These questions (listed below) guided the literature review and informed the interview questions.

- What *IS* literacy? Why literacy? Are there other ways?

- What are the intersections between oracy/orality and literacy?

- What literature exists on community-based language revitalization initiatives focusing on oral fluency and approaches that do not use print literacy?

- What does literacy mean specifically in First Nations communities? What "local literacies" exist?

- Literacy/ies as implicated in power negotiations: how is it used and what does it represent?

- Literacy as part of (imposed, colonial) schooling: can it now be used by communities to revitalize language and culture?

- Does literacy need to be decolonized? Can it be decolonized? If yes, how?

- What does decolonized language pedagogy look like (for language revitalization) and how does literacy figure into it?

- In ILR, should literacy be approached in a decolonizing way?

- What does emergent, community-based, community-directed language and education policy look like? How are communities doing this?

- Can literacy play a role in decolonizing language pedagogy for revitalization? What would this look like?

- Do language revitalization and linguistic research need to be decolonized? What would this entail?

- Does a language need to be written in order to be empowering? Who decides? If not, what role does writing actually play?

This research has been able to answer some of these questions. It has also unearthed even more questions. Those that remain unanswered will serve as windows into further research possibilities.

5.2 Answering the Research Question

Thus, does print literacy have a role to play in ILR? And if yes, what is its role? The answer is: conditionally, yes. The conditions that have emerged from my interpretation of the interviews and the literature, as illustrated in Figure 3, are that literacy should reflect the language itself, as well as the worldview, culture, and ways of knowing of those who speak it; it should be treated as an extension of Indigenous thought; it should be defined by the community, and its role determined by the community, not imposed from outside; it should be used cautiously and intentionally, resisting prescriptivist ideas of right and wrong linguistic forms, staying true to cultural values, and not intended to replace oral fluency or face-to-face communication; and, finally, it should reflect the relationship between language and place. The remainder of this discussion will draw on specific statements from the excerpts quoted in chapter 4 above.


Figure 3: The role of literacy in ILR

It reflects the language itself, as well as the culture and worldview of those who speak the language

As Trish Rosborough explains, "if we're to recover Kwak̓wala, I want to recover it in the ways that it was born and where it comes from, and what it's connected to" (pp. 78-79). Similarly, PENÁĆ adds that "really in the end, you know, we want the program not only to transmit language to the kids, but the culture" (p. 86). In Ojibwe culture-based language programming, Hermes (2007) also demonstrates that "seeing through an Ojibwe lens, experiencing the world through the Ojibwe language" (p. 58) has been instrumental to students' success, both academic and cultural.

It is treated as an extension of Indigenous thought

S.I. argues that copying text or translating are not literacy in Secwepemctsin, but that "when it's your thoughts being written down on paper in Secwepemctsin you want, that's literacy to me" (p. 74), and that "we need to write it in meaningful ways" (p. 72). Further, PENÁĆ explains that "seeing the SENĆOŦEN on SENĆOŦEN's terms has been a real kind of gateway, kind of a…almost like a hallmark of speaking from SENĆOŦEN thought" (p. 72). Through the Hupa *Language Proficiency Method,* Bennett et al. (1999) also discuss the connection between thought processes and writing skills, arguing that an "early introduction of writing provides an opportunity for writing skills to develop simultaneously with new thought processes in the second language" (p. 89) and that writing can be "a way of making a spoken language tangible because it exists in a form where it can be collected, stored, and recalled" (pp. 88-89).

It is defined by the community; its role is determined by the community, not imposed from outside

As Trish Rosborough explains, "if we're creating literacy for our own use, in ways that make sense to us, then I think there's a lot of value there" (p. 71). As well, Lorna Williams discusses the need to expand the definition of literacy: "it's really important, I think, that in any language work, language programming, that the idea of literacy has, if it's going to mean anything to us, it has to be expanded" (p. 75). S.I. points out that the task of defining literacy falls to First Nations communities themselves: "I think we as Indigenous people or Secwepemc people need to define it for ourselves" (p. 76), and that "we need to be the ones to put down our perspective in written form" (p. 71).

It is used cautiously and intentionally, resisting prescriptivist ideas of right and wrong linguistic forms, and staying true to cultural values; also, it is not intended to replace oral fluency or face-to-face communication

Peter Jacobs explains the approach to developing a dictionary in Sḵwx̱wu7mesh, and the importance of recognizing multiple forms: "writing sets up an authority that never existed before.…We're in a bind then because really we need it to record everything, we need it to find out everything we could from the elders that we have, right.…And so, in the dictionary, we tried to include all the different pronunciations of words that we knew, eh. Just to sidestep the issue, so that we weren't doing a standardization of what is the correct pronunciation" (p. 96).

Trish Rosborough describes her intentional use of text to actively engage with Kwak̓wala: "To study text on its own wouldn't be useful, but to use the text to support myself to be in speaking and listening settings can be really helpful. Audio resources are also really helpful, but again, I have to do something active with them.…So all those other tools, text, audio, video, whatever it is, has to be used actively to engage in the language with other speakers" (p. 69). As well, according to Bennett et al. (1999), in the Hupa *Language Proficiency Method*,

writing is considered to be "a tool for improving speaking skills, not for replacing them," and "written language can be anything that is spoken," which "de-emphasizes the notion of correctness associated with written language" (p. 88). Trish Rosborough's examples in particular show the importance of using text as a tool to supplement to active language learning and interaction, and not as a stand-alone learning approach or as a replacement for face-to-face communication (p. 69).

It reflects the relationship between language and place

As Peter Jacobs explains, "you can't separate communities of people from the land where they live, and so it's not really possible to learn Sḵwx̱wú7mesh without learning about the land and the connection between land and language, and literacy necessarily then would also be reflecting that" (p. 73). Similarly, S.I. explains that "the language bases me here on this land, not over there on the island. Here. This is my land, and through the language I know that" (p. 73). Trish Rosborough also explains that "if we're to recover Kwak̓wala, I want to recover it in the ways that it was born and where it comes from, and what it's connected to" (pp. 78-79).

To summarize, literacy that is defined and applied contextually by communities themselves can play a role in language revitalization. Print literacy as solely a function of neoliberal and neocolonial goals (Freire & Macedo, 1987; OECD & Statistics Canada, 2000; Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2008;), rooted in outdated definitions (UNESCO, 1959) and assumptions of the primacy of written language (Goody & Watt, 1962; Ong, 1980), is not effective in Indigenous language revitalization and does not have a place in Indigenous language education. However, local literacy practices that include print, as determined by Indigenous communities themselves, can play a role in language revitalization.

5.4 Framing and Approaching Literacy

Literacy as a set of social practices occurs within a broader context that varies from language to language and from community to community (Gee, 1986; Kell, 2006; Street, 2001). As Figure 4 illustrates, this context includes: worldview, connection to place, and social relations; orality and local literacy practices, including rhetorical devices, narrative and other genres, and specialized skill-based knowledge systems; the history of education, language shift, and assimilation within the community; politics within and surrounding the community; the community's goals regarding language and education; technology currently being used and technology available; and resources available for language program development, such as fluent speakers, teaching materials, funding, etc.

Figure 4: Forming the context of literacy in communities

Trish Rosborough explains that, from her perspective, *local literacy* means "localizing the approach to the context:"

> *we have to consider: not everybody reads the language, people are not familiar with the orthographies, some things might be more useful than other things....So I think the approach needs to be localized to the context that our languages are in right now, which are different for most languages* (pp. 91-92).

These contexts are also continually shifting and changing. As Peter Jacobs explains,

> *the need for literacy is different from what it was, you know, with our great grandparents' generation....We need literacy for Sḵwx̱wú7mesh for learning our own language, not for, you know, hiding our political activities* (p. 91)

Contexts shift over time not only in terms of political necessity, but also in terms of available technology and popular media use. Lorna Williams discusses the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet for developing orthographies: "in my community, that's what we did, we adapted it to use kind of a Roman alphabet symbols, so that we could use a typewriter" (p. 90). While typewriters have waned in popularity, similar constraints are often replicated in the tools available to language revitalization in general. Similarly, media use also shifts over time, and literacy will have to continually evolve alongside these technologies. Peter Jacobs explains, "it's pretty much a necessity now I think, to be engaged and a part of everybody's life, eh.…I think [the next] generation will have to tackle that, you know, the use of technology and how to incorporate it into our efforts" (p. 89).

In order for literacy to really be helpful in Indigenous language revitalization, it must be defined in the local context of each community and applied in a way that grows from and reflects

this context. Just as language shifts over time, so will literacy practices change and evolve alongside technology, media, and political necessity.

5.5 Moving Forward

The reality is that even in contexts where print literacy was not traditionally used, it is now present. In the examples discussed above, Indigenous languages are generally being learned as second languages, or alongside English, which generally includes print literacy training (Baker & Lewis, 2015; Bennett et al., 1999; Cummins, 1989; 2000; Hermes; 2007). Even in immersion, students are still generally exposed to English at home, in their community, and in the world in general, as well as online. They are coming to Indigenous language learning with at least some background in English literacy. However, moving forward, literacy can be used in a way that not only is effective for language revitalization, but that upholds cultural practices and values without further colonizing or compromising the integrity of the language. It is only the community itself that can decide how this should be done.

Literacy that follows the conditions listed above will necessarily not adhere to the "business model of education," where the ultimate goal of literacy, and of education more broadly, is national economic growth (Green, 2009). In refusing a "functional" economic agenda for literacy, communities also refuse further colonization through neoliberal government policies surrounding education (Battiste et al., 2002). Further, as an extension of Indigenous control of Indigenous education (de Korne, 2009), Indigenous control of Indigenous *literacy* is also fundamentally decolonizing, whether this literacy includes print or not. Language revitalization can disrupt colonial power and assimilation by "opposing dominant discourses and asserting local educational and linguistic rights" (McCarty, 2005, p. 47) through literacy that is situated in local contexts and that "emerges from an Indigenous reality" (Browning, 2016, p. 308).

This study demonstrates that a fluid approach to defining literacy is necessary for understanding its potential role in Indigenous language revitalization. *Context* is a major theme throughout both the interviews and the literature (Gee, 1986; Kell, 2006; Siegel, 2006; Street, 2001). Whereas previous definitions of literacy (Goody & Watt, 1962; Ong, 1980) were more rigid in their understanding of literacy as fixed or permanent, and separating oral and written language, this research has shown that literacy is local, that it can take many forms, that it is not separate from oral language, that it reflects the worldview of those who define it, that it is co-constructed between users, and that it changes over time.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This research has used qualitative methods, grounded in complementary Indigenist and non-Indigenous methodologies, to explore the role of literacy in language revitalization initiatives, from the perspectives of Indigenous language champions. Through an extensive literature review, I have explored political, historical, and academic assumptions surrounding the definition of literacy, the political nature of literacy and how to approach decolonization, and current applications of literacy learning in Indigenous language revitalization initiatives. Following a summary of the methodological foundation of this research, and an outline of the specific methods used, I presented the eight main themes gathered from my interviews with Indigenous language champions. These themes were then considered in light of the literature review, and both were synthesized together in a discussion addressing the overarching research question: does print literacy play a role in Indigenous language revitalization? In this concluding chapter, I address the constraints and limitations of this study and propose future directions for research in this area.

6.2 Constraints and Limitations

One limitation of this research is that, out of necessity, it was conducted in English, though Indigenous perspectives are best represented in Indigenous languages. Since I do not speak or understand Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, Secwepemctsin, Kwak̓wala, SENĆOŦEN, or Ucwalmicwts, I am restricted in how fully I can represent the knowledge that interviewees have shared with me. It is my hope that this research can show the importance of centreing Indigenous experiences in English as well, and serve as a bridge for change in this way within academic study.

This research is situated within a tradition that has historically been (and often still is) implicated in the exploitation, assimilation, and oppression of Indigenous peoples. Taking my cues in particular from the fields of linguistics, ethnography, anthropology, and education, I have to be mindful of the colonial history of harm inflicted by researchers upon Indigenous communities. Situated within academic research in general, this research was shaped, and to a certain extent constrained, by requirements to use mainstream qualitative methods and methodologies. While not necessarily incongruent with Indigenous methodologies, I tried to apply these approaches in critical and relational ways that would not inflict further harms upon Indigenous communities.

In terms of reliability, it should be understood that the interviews were analyzed solely from my perspective. As such, the codes and themes, as well as the resulting interpretation, have all been formed by my own understanding of the interviewees' words. Another researcher might have interpreted these words differently, from a different perspective, but might also have asked completely different questions. This research therefore cannot be separated from my perspective and interpretation, just as the interviewees' responses cannot be separated from their experiences and perspectives.

6.3 Future Directions

Further research on this topic could take any number of different directions. More work can be done on defining literacies within specific contexts. I would particularly like to explore the intersections between (non-print) literacy and: oral tradition; worldview; literary genres; art, sculpture, and architecture; knowledge and skills from the land; law, treaties, jurisdiction; mapping physical landscapes; and digital archiving. Much work also needs to be done on decolonization and self-determination in language education and policy.

On the academic side, I would like to further explore Indigenous and Indigenist methodologies for Indigenous language revitalization, as well as what it means to work in solidarity as a non-Indigenous researcher. Conducting further work in this area would necessitate community-based (and community-motivated) research, as well as more active research models such as participatory and learner-based approaches to language revitalization and materials-development.

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