

WSÁNEĆ SEN: I am emerging
An Auto-Ethnographic study of life long SENĆOŦEN language learning

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DIWIEŁ SEN

HÍŚWKE NEĆE XAXE, FIFEŁ SIÁM
MEQ ĆENs ĆAI, MEQ EN ŚW, LÁTEN.

HÍŚWKE E TFE ŚWEŁOKE ŁTE.

HÍŚWKE E TFE SELEWÁN LE ŁTE.

HÍŚWKE E TFE ÁLEŃENEĆ ŁTE.

HÍŚWKE E TFE IJYMET STELITKEŁ, I JISEŃ MEQ SĆELÁNEŃ I HELISET,OLW TFE
SKÁŁ ŁTE.

HÍŚWKE E TFE MEQ STÁN Ćs NIŁ XAXE.

ĆTÁTOŃE FIFEŁ SIÁM E TFE EN SĆENÁŃEŁ.

DÍEMP,TOLW E TFE SDÁLNEW SU XEN SE ŁTE Ćs KÁŁ TFE SENĆOFEN.

HÍŚWKE ĆENs EĆOST,TONES TFE IJYMET SOŁ FIFEŁ SIÁM.

HÍŚWKE FIFEŁ SIÁM ĆENs QOMQEMSET TFE WILNEW EŁTÁLNEW.

HÍŚWKE FIFEŁ SIÁM ĆENs WYÁŁKEN TFE HELI ET TFE SKÁŁ ŁTE.

HÍŚWKE XÁLS FIFEŁ SIÁM ĆENs LELÁNEŃ ET NE DIWIEŁ E TIÁ ÁNEĆ.

HÍŚWKE SIÁM HÁLE

Thank you first to my family for believing in me. For encouraging me and having faith in me. Thank you to my parents, my siblings, my aunts, uncles and many cousins who have always been a strong support system for me.

Thank you to everyone at the WSÁNEĆ School Board who have always encouraged me to work and teach at the school and to be the teacher that I am today. A special thank you to SXEDTELISIYE, PENÁĆ, SDEMOKELTEN, STOLŒEL, PENÁWEN, MENEFIYE, Tye, Curtis, Maryanne and the rest of the STÁSEN team and the supporters of language revitalization in our communities.

Thank you to the many WSÁNEĆ STELITKEĒ who I have had the privilege of working with. You are also my teachers. Thank you for your many teachings both big and small.

From the University of Victoria, thank you to the many people who's paths I have crossed. A special thank you and appreciation to Trish, Peter, and Onowa, for your inspiration and dedication to your languages, the field of indigenous language revitalization and the MILR program.

A special thank you to Aiona, Pearl and Deanna for being a gentle reminder for me as to why we are doing this very special work. Hearing your stories and being in your presence always reminded me to be strong; and what we are doing is very special and important work.

To the rest of the MILR 2014 cohort, thank you so much for sharing each and every one of your journeys. I have many new family members and for that I am grateful. We have become a family and I hope we all achieve great things for our languages and our communities.

Thank you to the many, many people who have helped me to become the language learner I am today.

HELISET TFE SKÁL LTE (We give the language life)

I dedicate this work to the future of our language. To the children whom I have worked with in the time I have been working on this project. They are the current and future champions of the SENĆOFEN language. They have inspired me in every way. They have taught me more than I could ever have taught them. They are so beautiful. They will be the next generation to bring our language back to life. We will begin to see our language being used in so many different ways. These children all carry different gifts and will be nurtured by their parents to do great things for our people, and so thank you to those families who have believed in the school and the revitalization of our language. These children will tell stories in our language, know significant and important place names in our territory, share family names, conduct rituals and ceremonies in the language. They will be strong leaders in our nation and will carry on our teachings to their children and their families.

Abstract

This reflexive masters project was an exploration of learning the first nations language SENĆOTEN over the span of twenty-two years in formal classes, immersion, and more. The experience was shared from a teaching and indigenous lens of the researcher and language learner using auto ethnographic concepts. Various modes and domains of SENĆOTEN second-language learning have been highlighted. This work uncovered challenges the researcher discovered in her learning and leads to recommendations and a road map for future SENĆOTEN second language learners. This reflective project makes use of emotion and lived experience. It showcases ways in which there is room to grow and newfound wisdom to share with other SENĆOTEN language learners. The first section embodies the history of the language and community set the stage for the journey of language learning that has taken place. The second section is about Indigenous research theory. This theory was the foundation of this project, especially the field in Indigenous language revitalization as it relates to the community of WSÁNEĆ and the SENĆOTEN language. The third section made up of several reflections over a span of twenty-two years. Fourth and finally, there is a discussion of challenges presented, findings of this reflexive inquiry which then turned into universal recommendations for other SENĆOTEN language learners.

Keywords: [Indigenous language revitalization, auto ethnography, second language learning, adult language learning, western theory, indigenous theory, personal narrative, reflexivity.]

ĆSE LÁ,E SEN (I am from...): Identifying and locating myself.

Jacqueline Jim FE NE SNÁ. Ć,SE LÁ,E SEN E TIÁ TENEW. Ć,SE LÁ,E SEN ET WSÁNEĆ I Ć,SE LÁ,E SEN ET TFE WSIKEM ÁLELENS. Ć,SE LÁ,E SEN E TFE Jim ŚW,ELOKE. ĆÁI I WUCIST SEN ÁLE ET LENONET SCUL,ÁUTW. ITOTELNEW SEN TFE SENĆOTEN SKÁLS. My name is Jacqueline Jim. I come from the place of clay and I am of the emerging people. I belong to the Jim family. I currently work and teach in the SENĆOTEN immersion school. I have been working here for almost two years now. I also attended ŁÁU,WEL,NEW as a student from pre-school until grade nine. I am currently a student at the University of Victoria and I am completing a Masters Degree in Indigenous Language Revitalization. I grew up in WSÁNEĆ, the territory of my father's family. I was born in Washington State, U.S.A. and I belong to the Lummi Tribe on my mother's side. I am an American citizen and I am also a Status First Nations Canadian. I am the only child born to a father who lived most of his life in the city of Seattle and a mother who was from the Lummi Tribe in Bellingham, Washington, U.S.A. My father brought me to Canada when I was four years old to start his family in his home community. He had another daughter with my step-mother and we were brought to Canada as a family. I was raised by my dad and my step-mom with three younger half-sisters. I am a First-Nations¹ (WSÁNEĆ, Lummi, Tsimshian) American female with a heritage that includes Mexican and Filipino descent from both sides of my parents. I am a product of a federally-funded band operated school and the BC provincial public education

¹ When I refer to First-Nations, I am referring to the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and Washington State. When I refer to Indigenous, I am referring to the native peoples across the globe who are native to their homelands. I may also use aboriginal interchangeably with First Nations. I will only use the words Indian and Native in reference to older works that may be included in my paper and to refer to past derogatory indications.

system: I attended three schools in Sidney, Brentwood and Saanichton, British Columbia, Canada. The first school I attended is the school I am currently teaching at. I completed my high school education at Stellys Secondary School in 2006. I then went on to receive a Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of British Columbia in 2012 with a specialization in First Nations Education. I am currently employed as a SENĆOŦEN immersion primary classroom teacher at ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal School in Brentwood Bay, British Columbia, Canada.

My Language Journey

“While my story is my own and will have parts that are unique to me, I also believe that my story is one of an untold generation- a generation that may feel that they have nothing useful to say because we do not have the language... I hope that my story will bring a voice to a generation lost. Lost without our language. Lost without our grandparents and their teachings. Lost without land and traditional food to nourish our mind-body-spirit. But especially for those who have not lost hope.” (McIvor, 2010)

I have been learning SENĆOŦEN for the last twenty-four years of my young life. I began as a three-year-old in pre-school. I have learned to read, write, speak and hear the SENĆOŦEN language so that I can teach in an immersion classroom, converse with my students and mentors, and actively listen to SENĆOŦEN being spoken by those who are more fluent in the language. I have had many mentors, supports and role models who have guided my formal education and language learning journey. I have learned the language in many different settings, to be discussed later in this story. I am now on a journey as a researcher and scholar in the field of Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR) and I have been preparing for this journey for the better part of seven years, which will be covered in my reflections section. This story includes reflections of the various learning methods I have encountered over the years. Influences which helped guide my learning are also explored. I have not stopped learning SENĆOŦEN yet, for me this is only the beginning of my journey. I summarize my writing by making recommendations for those who are

learning their indigenous language in a similar fashion that I am. I will continue to learn my language using this piece of work as a guide for my own learning as well. I decided to write this story because I am part of a small group of teachers learning our ancestral language and teaching it at the same time. I am writing this piece of work because SENĆOŦEN language learning is an important part of my life and will be the foundation of my career. The language has shaped me as a professional, as a community member, as a First Nations person growing up in my community. The language has brought me to life and I want to honor it and showcase how the much I have learned and how it has helped me become the person I am today. This work will be a puzzle piece among others, that will tell the story of the generation of second language learners in WSÁNEĆ. It gives perspective to a larger story. A story of our language revitalization in our community. It will be a guide for other learners who are not far behind me, pursuing a higher education, becoming a part of the language revitalization movement here in WSÁNEĆ.

WSÁNEĆ AND SENĆOŦEN: The community and the language

“We have a rich heritage. With our knowledge of it we have much to offer. It is still beautiful on our Saanich Peninsula, but we must all learn to follow the ways of our ancestors. If we bring back a deep respect for nature we can be an example to everyone and prevent our beautiful land from being destroyed.” (Elliott, 1983)

WSÁNEĆ

WSÁNEĆ, translated in English as the land which is raised up, is comprised of four communities: BO,ĶE,ĆEN, WJOĒĒP, STÁUTW, and WSÍĶEM. Historically, our headquarters were our permanent winter homes on the Saanich Peninsula. Most of the year was spent fishing, hunting, and gathering on the ocean in temporary homes, on the San Juan and Gulf Islands. Our territory stretches south to PKOLS (Mount Douglas) and west to SELEKTEĒ (Goldstream

Provincial Park). (Elliott, 1983, p. 15) Membership of our communities continues to grow and was documented as approximately 1,750 people in 2014 (WSB 2014; FPCC, 2014). WJOĒĒP (Tsartlip) and STÁUTW (Tsawout) are our largest communities, followed by BO,ĶE,ĆEN (Pauquachin), which has politically emancipated itself due to a history of being a separate peoples and coming to make a permanent home among the WSÁNEĆ people. Finally, my community, WSÍĶEM (Tseycum), has the least amount of band membership and is the smallest geographically. Our traditional winter homeland of WSÁNEĆ is situated on the Saanich peninsula thirty minutes south of Victoria, B.C. travelling by car.

We are of the Salishan language family and the Coast Salish subfamily as designated by ethnographers, linguists and other such western academics (Swallow, 2005; FPCC 2014). Our WSÁNEĆ homelands were rich in natural resources and our connection to the environment played an enormous role in our social activities, ceremonies and our everyday learning. Our land was un-scathed, our resources were plentiful and our SENĆOFEN language was prosperous. (Swallow, 2005). In my lifetime, our language has not been so prosperous but this project will illustrate the strength our language is regaining since contact with English-speaking peoples and the history of residential schooling.

SENĆOFEN

In 2010 and again in 2014, a First Nations-run organization in British Columbia called First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) published a ‘Language Status Report’, which states that we have a total of sixty fluent speakers in 2010 which has dropped to a devastating 7 of all five languages within our ‘language subfamily’. This subfamily includes SENĆOFEN, Malchosen, Lekwungen, Semiahmoo and T’Sou-ke. Of these five languages, 3 dialects are what are called

sleeping languages, which means there are no living speakers, the language is not used and there is little to no documentation of the language. In 2010, in our Coast Salish subfamily we had less than 2% first language speakers, 4% second language speakers and 5% learners of three languages, all classified as nearly extinct. In 2014 there was growth in semi-speakers with 104 people speaking one of our subfamily languages. Statistics like these show improvement and yet, devastatingly low numbers of SENĆOFEN speakers and require immediate action. Current language revitalization efforts in our community are helping to address this issue.

The SENĆOFEN language is in a critical state with the few fluent speakers WŚÁNEĆ has left. All Indigenous languages of British Columbia, Canada are classified as severely endangered, nearly extinct, or extinct (FPCC, 2014). Language revitalization efforts are underway in many First Nations communities across the country in an effort to reverse the impacts of colonization, the history of Indian Residential School on our languages, and disconnection from our homelands. Guilar & Swallow (2008) describe:

Bringing together people in traditionally meaningful places allows stories to be told, questions to be asked and perspectives on what learning from place can mean...Learning from place is a context for engaging in meaningful experiences and encouraging a common dialogue to explore how we can learn from our homeland. (p.9)

I believe that current revitalization efforts are important for the SENĆOFEN speaking people so that we can regain and strengthen our connection to the land in which we belong and can learn from which was aggressively ripped from our elders in the dark years of residential schooling.

SENĆOFEN has historically been an oral language transmitted intergenerationally. The SENĆOFEN writing system was only devised thirty-six years ago by late Dave Elliott, a local

man from WJOLEEP, in 1978. He had spent time with a linguist in Victoria and had learned the international phonetic alphabet. Realizing that without a method of recording the language it would eventually be lost, Dave began to write down SENĆOFEN words phonetically. He soon discovered that upon returning to read previously recorded words, he could not understand what he had written. (WSB, 2014, History of SENĆOFEN section, para. 4/5) The difficulty that he found was that many symbols were needed to represent some of the complex sounds of SENĆOFEN, which resulted in very long words. So he bought a \$30 typewriter and created his own SENĆOFEN alphabet that was accessible to the WSÁNEĆ people. He created this method of writing because without it he knew the language would eventually be lost.

Respected language champion, John Elliott Sr., is Dave Elliott's son. John works avidly with his father's same passion and continues to carry on his father's legacy. The WSÁNEĆ School Board, to be discussed later, adopted the use of Dave Elliott's alphabet to help preserve SENĆOFEN language learning at ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal school where John currently teaches the language. In schools is the domain in which SENĆOFEN is spoken the most. The next three sections will discuss areas for improvement and other places where we are beginning to see the presence of the SENĆOFEN language.

Domains of Language Use

Domains not used often, room for improvement:

TE TU TE OL SENĆOFEN, KEN (ONLY A LITTLE SENĆOFEN)

There are some key areas where there is possibility for more SENĆOFEN language use. This is where we can start to see the most improvement for language exposure and where SENĆOFEN is beginning to be found. There are domains in which holes can be filled and projects can come into fruition. In our Longhouse Ceremonies, Hul'q'umi'num' is the

predominant language used when the Master of ceremonies addresses the guests on behalf of the hosting family. These ceremonies are an integral part of our cultural practices as WSÁNEĆ people and therefore this place is held in such esteem and importance. In recent years, SENĆOFEN has become more present at the gatherings held at the longhouse. This has created a more personal, meaningful and embedded learning environment in the ceremonies allowing for increased [language] learning of the largest age group of WSÁNEĆ people as a collective (Swallow, 1998, 74). Functions such as these are perfect place to integrate more SENĆOFEN language presence. Language in the community workplace and in governance is not in existence other than greetings, a welcome, and prayers. One of the four communities, BO,ŪE,ĆEN First Nation adopted Hul'q'umi'num' as their official language in recent years. The community has made their official language Hul'q'umi'num', the language which many families in the community belong to.

Greetings are common in WSÁNEĆ but lengthily conversations among friends, between adults and within families in community and workplaces are not very common in WSÁNEĆ. Also, within the public schools there is no formal SENĆOFEN language exposure instruction from grades K-5 & 10-12 but as per all goals in Saanich School District's Enhancement Agreement (School District #63-Saanich, 2013), there is plenty of opportunity and obligation to have more language instruction taught at all levels and to all students in the near future.

Domains used more often:

EXIN OĆE TFE SENĆOFEN,ŪEN? (Where is the SENĆOFEN?)

The Interventions of Language Endangerment Model was developed by Joshua Fishman twenty-five years ago. This model is a tool for endangered languages to see what interventions need to take place in order for revitalization efforts to be successful. (Fishman, 1991) The model

starts with stage eight being the most critically endangered languages with the least effective intervention and ends with stage one being the most successful interventions of language revitalization. According to this model, domains of SENĆOFEN language use vary drastically across stages eight through four and efforts being made have not yet been successful in producing fluent SENĆOFEN first language speakers. Although, there is a shift happening. There are up to eight primary-school aged children being raised to be fluent second-language SENĆOFEN speakers. The parents/family members are SENĆOFEN immersion teachers and second language speakers themselves speaking SENĆOFEN on a regular basis in the home. WSÁNEĆ is currently at stage eight status because our community only has a few elders who speak SENĆOFEN as a first language. We are working our way up to stage four status where ‘language is required in elementary schools’. We have brushed the surface of stage one with language classes taught to the first cohort of Bachelor of Education students in 2011-2014.

Within three of our four communities (BOKÉĆEN, STÁUTW, WSIKEM, and WJOLELP), we see the SENĆOFEN language in a very rudimentary sense. It can be seen in the form of building and street signage. Some traditional place names now have signage and there is a movement towards reclaiming our natural and historical spaces and replacing western names of places. These reclamation efforts are vital in making sure our people continue to stay connected to the places which have been of historical importance. Other places we see the SENĆOFEN language written and presented are in community and educational newsletters, promotional and informational posters that usually have stemmed from projects in the SENĆOFEN language department over the last ten years.

In WSÁNEĆ, SENĆOFEN language is taught in both the band-run and public education systems and up to formal adult classes. There are K-10 Band School language classes (20-40 min/day, 5 days/week), and Pre-school & Kindergarten Language Nests held at ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School. SENĆOFEN is sometimes taught at evening community classes held once per week, pending instructor availability and without conflicting functions/activities/ceremonies happening. These classes are often funded by small grants or other soft sources of funding and are not consistent throughout the year. Greetings, welcomes, and prayers are common in the SENĆOFEN language heard throughout the community, mostly from adults, leaders, elders. In the Saanich School District #63, Sarah Kell, a linguist and colleague based out of the University of Victoria, has worked closely with our community to develop the grade 10 SENĆOFEN integrated resource packaged and now Grade 6-9 language classes are held weekly for 40-60 minutes at a time in one of our middle and high schools.

At the Post-Secondary level, SENĆOFEN classes were introduced three years ago for a small cohort of Bachelor of Education students from WSÁNEĆ. This group of people were either apprentices and language teachers already but some are now certified to teach SENĆOFEN at our local schools in classrooms of their own. There is now a two-year diploma program that has been offered in the last two years to a new cohort of students that are learning the language in formal classes and in immersion to earn credits towards their diploma. Many of these students have spent time in my classroom in order to fulfil the required hours as part of their SENĆOFEN language apprenticeship component.

WSÁNEĆ has had up to fourteen linguistics from different universities that have worked and currently work for and with our community on a variety of projects involving archiving, documentation, education, and history from the early 1970's (Personal Communication, Janet

Leonard, July 21, 2014). The housing of many of these materials is scattered in many places and some are not easily accessible. The most recent and exciting project to date will be the publishing of the SENĆOFEN dictionary which is due to be completed spring of 2017. This dictionary has proven to be very useful to SENĆOFEN language learners so far.

Our community is fortunate to have a variety of recent thesis and post-doctoral work that focuses on our language and identity as a nation. Themes include: learning from place as curriculum, land based research which focuses on the local geographical area and the relationship with our language, and a number of papers on SENĆOFEN linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax. Renee Sampson (SĀEDFELISIYE) has recently completed the Masters of Indigenous Language Revitalization program in 2014. She shares her story woven throughout the many initiatives that have begun in the SENĆOFEN language department in recent years.

Our nation has been a pilot for many online and technological tools and resources over the past four years with the help of organizations such as: First Peoples Cultural Foundation, First Peoples Cultural Council and First Voices. (FPCF, Newsroom, 2013; FPCC 2014) Many SENĆOFEN language enthusiasts have embraced the use of modern technology and I have realized that technology has become our friend and our ally in our language revitalization efforts. It would be unreasonable to expect our language to survive without the incorporation and aid of the technological tools we have accessible to us. (Galla, 2010, p.26) One of these resources is Firstvoices.com, a language learning portal with includes a chat and dictionary application. A project that was funded in 2011/2012 with “funding from the Victoria Foundation allowed the SENĆOFEN language community to develop a new, comprehensive database of everyday

language to foster and encourage the use of SENĆOFEN in every situation”. Many of us SENĆOFEN language learners, teachers and mentors still access this database regularly as a teaching and learning tool. We are frustrated with many of the resources available to us because they are not up-to-date or as comprehensive as we would like, but we make due with what we have.

Although our community has incorporated many technological tools to accommodate language revitalization, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) has proven to be a very inexpensive and easily accessible vessel to engage more community members in the revival movement. Various Facebook groups, events and pages that have a SENĆOFEN focus allow learners, teachers, parents and community members to stay up-to-date with current efforts, classes offered, achievements, learning tools, and so much more, all at the touch of a screen. This being said, most SENĆOFEN we still see and hear is at ŁÁU,WEL,NEW elementary school from teachers and students in formal classes to be discussed in the next section.

WSÁNEĆ SCHOOL BOARD AND ŁÁU,WEL,NEW TRIBAL SCHOOL

WSÁNEĆ School Board

The WSÁNEĆ School Board (WSB), formally known as the Saanich Indian School Board (SISB) was created as a means to save the SENĆOFEN language and to regain control of the education of WSÁNEĆ children in the 1970’s and 1980’s. The building in which it is housed is located fifteen kilometres north of Victoria, British Columbia. It was built on the land of WJOLEEP (on the TSARTLIP Reserve). There are many educational programs and services available to community members at the school board office. There are ongoing working partnerships with educational institutions such as Camosun College and the University of

Victoria. There is also a daycare facility for adult learners who attend classes in the building. Most recently, there has been an addition of the STÁSEN language department. The creation of this department has a long history and will be discussed in the next section. One building on site at the WSB was previously a one room Indian day school. Many of our elders from our four communities suffered at the hands of residential schooling and Indian day schools and the transmission of our language almost came to a stop. SISB was created as a collective effort of many WSÁNEĆ leaders and elders who believed in the education of our people and the survival of our language and culture (Sampson, 2014). The philosophy of the school board has not changed in twenty-seven years. (SEE APPENDIX) The first and what I would argue is the most important, of the seven statements that make up the philosophy of the school board is in regards to SENĆOFEN. The first statement reads “that our SENĆOFEN culture must be maintained, perpetuated, and protected.” The elders and community members who came together to fight for our educational rights and fought to revitalize our language have created a legacy of protecting and perpetuating our SENĆOFEN language and our WSÁNEĆ culture. Many of these same people and their descendants are still employed with the school board, working or teach at ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School, living out this legacy.

ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School

ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School(LTS) is a federally-funded band school that sits on the same piece of land next door to the WSB. Students attend the school from the four local communities: WSÍKEM, WJOŁEŁP, BOKEĆEN AND STÁUTW. These four communities worked together to create the Saanich Indian School Board and then build ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School in 1989, one year after I was born. The four local bands continue to politically and financially support the school. The school’s name ŁÁU,WELNEW comes from the time of the

flood. ŁÁU,WELNEW (later named Mount Newton) is the WSÁNEĆ name of the mountain you can see north of where the school is built. ŁÁU,WELNEW is a spiritual place where the WSÁNEĆ people sought refuge after the great flood. To this day, our sacred mountain offers healing and wisdom to our people. The school has become a place where WSÁNEĆ students become familiar with our history and find a clear vision of the future of our people, our culture and our language. A totem pole showcasing our WSÁNEĆ people's history stands at the front of our school and guarding the schools entrance is a large cedar carved Thunderbird.

School buildings include an immersion pre-school, full-size gymnasium, Cultural Building, Leadership High School, STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN language department, the current Heritage Society building which was once an Indian day-school and WSÁNEĆ School board administration building. This building also houses adult education in partnership with the University of Victoria and Camosun College as well as early childhood education spaces. Over the years, local teachers at ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School have developed SENĆOFEN language and culture curriculum. This language education promotes the values of the WSÁNEĆ people by offering a quality education guided by B.C. Ministry of Education curriculum.

STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN: The WSÁNEĆ language department

The WSÁNEĆ language department is called STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN roughly translated as the security system of our people and our language (Sampson, 2014). The department is housed in the WSÁNEĆ School Board administration building. STÁSEN has been in existence for approximately three years and was created due to the shortage and immense workload of the existing language teachers for the past twenty years. Through the creation of this department the Master-Apprenticeship Program, now called Mentor-Apprentice Program began.

The Master-Apprenticeship Program is a pairing of a fluent first language speaker with a new language learner (Hinton, 2002; FPCC, 2014). There were two positions to be filled and seven people applied. All seven were accepted to become apprentices (WSB, 2014, About the SENĆOFEN Apprentices). Many of these people working in the department have been extremely busy with various language initiatives over the past several years including mentorship, resource development, curriculum building, teaching post-secondary level courses, and facilitating workshops and presenting at conferences. Over time, weekly language sessions have occurred with a group of first and second SENĆOFEN speaking Elders. They will listen to old audio recordings of the SENĆOFEN language that have been archived over the years. The purpose of these gatherings is to uncover lost words, translate the stories and record new information. Grammar workshops have been held on occasion with a linguist from the University of Texas, who is currently working on our language dictionary.

Many people working on the STÁSEN team have attended several language conferences and professional development workshops locally, nationally and internationally. Through these many opportunities, various second-language instruction methods have been introduced to our community of teachers including: sign language, total physical response (TPR), neurolinguistics model and the Greymorning method (FPCC, 2016). Many of the language teaching staff continue to use a mixture of these methods to teach SENĆOFEN. Teachers on our team are always willing to incorporate new methods that have successfully used to teach a second language.

LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW: Language revival school

The immersion programming in the school is currently pre-school up to grade 3 with opportunities to work in resource and curriculum development and extra-curricular activities after

school. There are currently thirteen staff members on our immersion team including teachers, language mentors and support staff. The language programming will be expanding further in the next couple of years and I am proud to be a teacher currently on the team. The program will include grade four immersion with English as a subject in the 2016/2017 school year. Our program is growing alongside the children who attend the program. We are currently at full capacity with teachers working long hours during school hours, late into the evenings and on weekends as well. As a staff of only thirteen, we are currently capacity building. We are hoping that some if not all our current apprentices, who are completing the second year in their diploma program will go on to complete a Bachelor of Education degree and become a part of our teaching team in some way. In the 2017/2018 school year, our program will include a grade five immersion class. At this point, LE, NONET SCUL, ÁUTW will produce students who are fluent second-language SENĆOŦEN speakers who can read, write, pray and converse in the language of our ancestors.

Theoretical Background

The field of Indigenous Language Revitalization

The field of Indigenous Language Revitalization came to fruition as a result of an international movement towards saving endangered languages across the globe. Work in this field can be seen in all parts of the world including a strong academic presence Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Africa, South America, and North America (Smith 2012, Wilson, 2008). Much of this work has begun in response to the devastating effects of colonialism over the last one hundred years, which intentionally sought to eradicate Indigenous languages and peoples for the purposes of acquiring their land and resources as well as assimilating them into the culture and society of the

colonizers (Galley, 2009). In the past 25-30 years, progress has been made in reuniting many languages with their native speakers – speakers with an inherent right to these many languages. (Sampson, 2012, McIvor 2008). These efforts include the creation of immersion programming from pre-school up to the university level giving university credits for learning language (Freeman & Long 1991, Sampson, 2012). These efforts have also produced many scholars who have been and will be referenced throughout this work.

Indigenous Knowledge

The influence of Indigenous knowledge comes from many different places. Anishinaabe scholar Kathy Absolon says “Indigenous knowledge lives in the animals, birds, land, plants, trees, and Creation” (2011, 31). In his very dedication, Umeek (Richard Atleo), a First Nations Philosopher, acknowledges his ancestors saying “may their legacy thrive”. His work is their work and his acknowledgement of them is not uncommon of Indigenous academics. Ancestors are those who have already passed so with this reference we can also see the distinct influence of the spiritual world in Atleo’s work as with all of the other scholar’s works I look to for guidance and relatability. This scientific field of research and rediscovery of historic and sacred knowledge is one of healing and ceremony for Indigenous peoples in Canada. The social climate in the last hundred years has experienced a loss of many fascinating theories, stories and languages of the Indigenous peoples of these lands. This has been detrimental to our ‘lost generations’, generations of Indigenous peoples who have lived out some or parts of their life with a beautiful, rich and abundant culture ripped away from them. Or worse still, never offered or unknown. Our First Nations people have many gifts to offer and to share openly but unfortunately many of them have been buried, burned, lost and forgotten. We as a people and we as academics, within western

institutions, are in the process of repatriating our sacred knowledge and languages. Absolon draws attention to the influence of western invasion of our lands and communities. If Indigenous Theory is an old theory, it's downfall she says was not spontaneous or voluntary. A common similarity of invasion can be drawn upon with one man's experience, which many academics are familiar. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian/Jewish psychologist, fought for his knowledge and theories at the time of the Russian revolution, much like that of Indigenous peoples of Canada in more recent past. The deprivation and degradation of Indigenous knowledge and scholarship has been the fuel that drives this re-emerging scientific field within the academy. We are coming into a time of re-emergence of Indigenous methodology, pedagogy and research. At this time in history, there is an immense amount of focus on the revitalization of our indigenous languages across the globe. As I learn SENĆOFEN and conduct language revitalization and language learning research, I learn so much more than letters and words written on paper. I learn about the land that my ancestors lived on and the land I feel obligated to acknowledge, respect and protect. I become in tune with my spirituality. The knowledge of my own genealogy and lineage are being built and strengthened as I learn. A connection is being developed to my homelands and I continue to learn stories about our history and our beliefs. Below is a breakdown of Indigenous Methodologies that I relate to and have reference throughout my work.

Indigenous Methodology

Location

When I introduced myself earlier in this paper, I used my geographic location as well as my position/location among my community and my family. Kathy Absolon's definition of location is "...identifying their nation, name, clan, family, territory, and where [researchers] receive their

teachings. Almost all of the researchers detailed stories about critical experiences and shared personal aspects of their life. In this sense, searching for knowledge promotes an identification of location, which...is distinctly Indigenous and goes directly against the positivist Eurowestern research presumption that there is only one truth, that neutrality and objectivity are possible and that to safeguard against researcher bias, the researcher's location doesn't (and must not) matter" (2011). Locating myself amongst my family, peers, community and mentors is crucial to the work I am doing. It is crucial because it is part of our protocol. Elders and community members want to know which family I come from. My family and my community are very much part of my research as will be shown in my reflections.

Stories as a form of research

I use stories and my personal narrative to write about my language learning. In western theory, the use of stories is seen as a teaching and learning tool. In social science, "storying the experience of teaching, particularly novice teaching, and of learning, has become an accepted method of research" (Swain et al., 2011). The criticism with this statement is that storying is meant for novice teaching and only "has become" an accepted research method. Many indigenous researchers including myself would conclude that storying has always been an accepted research method and is one that is only returning to the academy or being reintroduced as a legitimate method of research (Archibald, 2008). In Richard Atleo's book *Tsawalk*, a creation story is told about Son of Raven. Son of Raven demonstrates to his community the characteristic of humility. He always carries a lesson in his blunders of how to act as a person. He teaches us about Ego and the difficulties we may face if our Ego becomes inflated. "Whenever Son of Raven transforms himself, and blunders under the influence of an overly inflated ego, it is often to the merriment of

story listeners. He becomes, quite comically, a giant king salmon rather than the small sockeye salmon and creates a bizarre image that is so obvious to the other community members that the strategy fails" (Atleo, 2004). He often acts a comic relief to the group as well as a teacher of morality. First Nations stories come in various forms and will offer many teachings. They are very useful to Indigenous research. They can be symbolic. They can be songs and they can also be a form of prayer.

Stories as symbols, song, prayer

Prayer and symbolism are exhibited in the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW flood story that is woven throughout this work. In Indigenous Theory "[stories] hold mythical elements, such as creation and teaching stories, and there are personal narratives of place, happenings, and experiences...[which are passed along from generation to generation] through oral tradition"(Kovach, 2010, 95). Umeek Richard Atleo (2004) demonstrates symbolism using Son of Raven stories to teach his audience about Indigenous theory in a way that is Indigenous in nature. The context in which he delivers his information is symbolic, in the form of a story in parts and includes the metaphysical/mental realm. The story of Son of Raven has many common threads among Coast Salish First Nations communities up and down the West coast of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. These communities have a strong belief that stories like Son of Raven and other stories of morality similar to it are "tightly bound since time immemorial as a legit form of understanding" (Kovach, 95). They are akin to that of the Scientific Method in western science that is fluid and changes and contains trial, error and experimentation.

Individual vs. Collective

Most Indigenous scholar's theories are that of a collective, whether it be a community, an eco-system or both (Archibald 2008, Absolon, Atleo 2004, Smith, Sampson 2012, McIvor, Wilson 2008). Kathy Absolon, sees the collective as "earth-centred, with ecology-based philosophies derived out of respect for the harmony and balance within all living beings of Creation." (31) This is in contrast to most theories explored in Western science as Atleo also discusses in his book. The idea that Western scientific theory assumes is that the world is fragmented, only having a relationship or being interconnected once proven by their methods of discovery like many other fragmentation's among the Western culture.

Interconnectedness/Relationality

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian/Jewish psychologist, used a metaphor showing a parallel to the Indigenous Theory of interconnectedness and relationality. He used the metaphor of water to demonstrate his teaching, learning and development within his sociocultural context. "Water, when separated into its parts, is qualitatively changed. The separate atoms of two parts hydrogen and one-part oxygen are not water; it is their union that creates water" (Wink, 2002). He explains that to understand the properties of water for the purpose of extinguishing fire you cannot achieve the results you need by studying the elements of water individually. They must be examined in this exact combination. You cannot maintain the integrity of water if you separate the elements H₂O. This metaphor applies to people in a social context. According to Vygotsky, you cannot separate an individual from their social context and still maintain a solid understanding of each. Within this dialectical relationship a person is directly linked to their social, cultural, historical and political context and it is this which informs our full understanding of them as an 'individual'. This metaphor when applied to the process of learning can be seen as "pedagogy [as not] two

separate processes of a teacher, teaching, or learner, learning. Rather, pedagogy, itself a dialectic, is the reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning, creating more than the sum of its parts” (Wink, 2002.) This metaphor does not go so far as to say this reciprocal relationship includes ecological systems but would not exclude it based on the many sociocultural relationships a person may have.

Relationships

Relationships hold a very dominant theme within this paper. Relationships with stories, relationships with the geographical area, relationships with my family and with cultural context and relationships within the academy. These relationships shape reality, they are a narrative not only to track development, but are sites of development themselves (Swain et al., 2011). This theme is also a similarity with Vygotsky’s idea in the water metaphor and as Wilson (2008) states “relationships don’t just shape Indigenous reality; they are our reality.” Indigenous researchers develop relationships with ideas in order to achieve enlightenment in the ceremony that is Indigenous research (Archibald, 2008). All of the scholars introduced so far hold relationship building and connections in a very high regard in the social learning process.

THEORETICAL PARADIGM

ŁÁU,WELNEW SXIÁM: The WSÁNEĆ flood legend

I use our local ŁÁU,WELNEW SXIÁM (flood story) as a theoretical paradigm for past, current and future language revitalization efforts. I have been told the story, heard retellings of the story, read the published version and retold the story myself many times before. This is how it begins. I will refer to each section of the story as a metaphor for different stages of language revitalization.

...Long ago before the time of the flood, resources were plentiful and WSÁNEĆ people lived in peace with all of creation.

The story goes that we, as WSÁNEĆ people and as a community, once lived in a time where our language and culture were rich, alive and well in abundance. We had no outside influence on our traditions, practices, language and place in the world. We prayed. We spoke SENĆOTEN and we lived a reciprocal life with the animals and the land.

XÁLS, our Creator, who always watches, saw that our WSÁNEĆ people were becoming complacent and were not living within our teachings and not abiding by our natural laws. XÁLS is the creator who is here to teach us lessons about our WSÁNEĆ morals and values and beliefs, and he has come to the people with a lesson. XÁLS came to our people in the form of a man and warned of a great flood to come and our people were to prepare or perish.

XÁLS has made an example of many of our people, for not heeding the WSÁNEĆ teachings of taking care of our lands, each other and taking care of our SKÁLS (our language, beliefs and oral teachings). Some WSÁNEĆ people were washed away and lost to the flood, and with them, our cultural knowledge and language has been diminished as well.

The final part of the story illustrates our language champions, our elders, our knowledge keepers and our allies within linguistics and within the greater community of language revitalization.

Others though, listened to XÁLS and prepared themselves for a great flood that would come. They prayed and prepared a very long and strongly woven cedar rope and packed it in one of their journey canoes. This rope would be crucial to their survival of the great flood.

This strong and powerful group of people are crucial to the revitalization to our language.

Renee Sampson (2014) acknowledges many but not all of our past and current language and education champions of the WSÁNEĆ community including herself. These people include but are not limited to:

late Dave Elliott,
late Ernie Olsen,
late Philip Paul,
late Earl Claxton,
late FKOLEĆTEN (Ivan Morris),
Marie Cooper,
STOLØEEL (John Elliott),
ÇOSINIYE (Linda Elliott),
Lou Claxton
KÁNTENOT (Helen Jack),

SELILIYE (Belinda Claxton),
SXEDFELISIYE (Renee Sampson)
PENÁWEN Elliott,
PENÁĆ Underwood,
SDEMOXELTEN (Ian Sam)
MENEFIYE (Elisha Elliott),
STIWET (Jim Elliott),
KÁNTENOT (Helena Norris)

Our community would not be as successful in our language revitalization efforts without the significant and tireless contributions of those mentioned to the survival of the SENĆOFEN language. Before I can share my own contribution to these efforts, I must first discuss the methodology that I use in my research and the way in which I carry myself throughout my life.

Research Purpose

What are my reasons for learning *SENĆOFEN*?

Freeman & Long (1991) explain that learners acquire a second language for a variety of reasons: to fully participate in a society, to travel as a tourist, to pass an examination, to obtain employment, to read scientific texts, etc. Some of these reasons could potentially suit my language acquisition goals, but most do not. I am in a unique position to be learning my own ancestral language as a second language. One of the reasons I am learning SENĆOFEN as a second language include learning history of place names in my homelands. Learning my ancestral language also means learning about my genealogy. As stated by Freeman & Long, I too

want to learn my language to feel empowered as a minority group member. (1991) Learning my First Nations language is empowering and furthers the interruption of residential schooling history in my nation. I am also learning SENĆOŦEN so that I can continue to be a strong role model for my friends and family, my current and future students as well as other community members. I will continue to learn SENĆOŦEN so that I can maintain full and active participation in language programming offered at ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal School. I am also learning SENĆOŦEN because as many Indigenous researchers have said, it my responsibility to my ancestors, family, and community (Absolon 2011, Wilson 2008, Smith 2012). I carry this responsibility with me and I have a full understanding that this work requires lifelong participation and is not simply a 9-5 job or merely a smart career choice.

Research Questions

This Masters of Education project in the field of Indigenous Language Revitalization is an auto-ethnographic reflection on my learning journey so far and focuses on my second language acquisition (SLA) as I have learned and continue to learn SENĆOŦEN. I have been learning SENĆOŦEN in a variety of educational and workplace settings and so my question is, what combination of second language (L2) learning methods have been most effective in my language learning so far and how will they help me to achieve a higher level of proficiency in my future learning? I use narrative inquiry to find the answers to this question and to make further recommendations.

Research Methods

Second Language Acquisition: Learning SENĆOŦEN as a second language

Research is finding answers to questions in a systematic way and must come from a well-planned research design. Research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is often of a qualitative nature. Freeman and Long (1991, p.11) state that “the prototypical qualitative methodology is an ethnographic study in which the researchers do not set out to test hypothesis, but rather to observe what is present with their focus, and consequently the data”. This type of study was most appealing to me for my Masters project. I am more concerned with the process of learning a second language rather than analyzing data from the learning that occurs. I have conducted my research using my own introspective experience in SLA. The approach of my auto-ethnographical research was more process oriented rather than outcome oriented. My intention was to document the key aspects of my language learning to share with others. Although I mention levels of my proficiency at different times, I do not focus on the level of proficiency which I have attained. An Introspection research method is used to examine my own behaviour for insights into my language learning or SLA. Although there is some doubt of validity in self-report data in the academy, introspection has been used traditionally in the field of psychology for many years (Freeman & Long, pg.12). I cannot document my language learning without introspection.

Auto ethnography: I have a unique and exciting story to share with you

Auto ethnographic writing will be the overall method of reflecting on my own SENĆOTEN language learning journey. Auto ethnography is defined as a self-reflection and relies on the researcher more than anyone or anything else. It’s a conscious reflection of the self as part of a larger cultural group or as part of a larger societal phenomenon (Butz & Besio, 2009; Johnson, 1992). There has been a crisis of representation of Indigenous language researchers in

the field of social science research. Representation of indigenous languages and the indigenous peoples in which they belong to, is just that, representation. It is valuable speaking position to be an Indigenous person who is doing research on my own ancestral language and it contributes to the academy in an important way. Indeed, Indigenous language researchers are gaining momentum in the social sciences and it is an honor to be a researcher and a language learner adding variety and complexity to the works that exist in the field thus far.

Personal Narrative Inquiry: What have I learned in the last twenty-two years?

The use of narrative inquiry as a framework and methodological tool allows me to tell my story of language learning that has occurred up until this point in my life and allows me to showcase my process of learning as the research is carried out. The type of personal narrative inquiry that I use is that of a story-teller. Narrative inquiry blends the art of story-telling with the science of research and uses the stories as the data itself or as a means to present the data for analysis or findings (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik 2014). This methodological tool has become useful because I share my research in the form of a stories about myself, my ancestral language, my community and my colleagues. Telling my story is a tool in which I can empower myself as a SENĆOFEN language learner. Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chil (2014) state:

...Interest in narrative has been linked to a turn towards the idea that research should both involve and empower the groups and individuals whose behaviors are the subject of research. Narrative Inquiry expands the range of voices that are heard in research reports, often highlighting the experiences of marginalized groups outside the academy, although we should always bear in mind the ways in which these voices are mediated through those of the researcher in published work (Casey, 1995: 215).

ILR researchers, Onowa McIvor (2010) and Renee Sampson (2012), from the University of Victoria both use similar methodological tools to share their research. Both of these works focus on the field of ILR. Both authors use a similar method of presenting auto-ethnographical work. These authors are both part of a small group of people doing research in this way in this emerging field of research. These two works are primary sources from which I draw guidance and knowledge as I carry out my own research.

Reflections

Learning SENĆOTEN as a child: before I was aware of my path

When I was child, attending at the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal School, only introductory foundational SENĆOTEN exposure classes were taught to students from the time of conception of the school. These classes were typically offered for only 20 minute, 3 days per week, which adds up to 75 minutes of instruction per week. These classes were taught at the exposure level, meaning they are not taught in immersion. I have roughly estimated that I received 466 hours of SENĆOTEN instruction from at least 3-4 SENĆOTEN teachers from the time I was three years old, until I left the school after completion of grade nine. At that time, the school only went up to grade nine. Over 10 years, I learned a broad vocabulary including counting to 20, most of the primary colors, greetings, common phrases, days of the week, months of the year, numerous plants and animals. My friend and colleague PENÁWEN Elliott is also part of our team and he is now teaching the SENĆOTEN class that his dad STOLØEL (John Elliott) was teaching. He shared with me that he found some old school records last year that showed that I had high grades in his dad's SENĆOTEN class when I was young. Past records show a keen student and I did well. This was part of the reason I was encouraged to return to work for the school and for the language.

This strong foundation would later help me in learning SENĆOTEN as an adult, in an immersion setting.

Thirteen years ago, I was in grade nine at ŁÁU, WEL, NĒW Tribal School. I raised my hand in our computer class to volunteer to do some SENĆOTEN work with two other peers. That day changed the way I thought about my language and my part in its revitalization. The work my peers and I volunteered for in class turned into a Children's book called "NETE NEKÁ SKĒLÁLNEW-One green tree: Counting in SENĆOTEN, which turned into a ground breaking publication in language revitalization in British Columbia. It was exciting project to be a part of. I was proud of this book I contributed to. My peers and I were praised, acknowledged and felt included in something big and exciting. What seemed like a small project at the time, enabled other First Nations communities to take their language and publish the same book in many different First Nations languages across British Columbia (Peter Brand, personal communication, 2013). I didn't learn or understand the impact I had been a part of until ten years later.

Once I finished grade nine at ŁTS, I entered the public school system, where unfortunately, SENĆOTEN language classes were not offered as an elective. I was always interested in learning my First Nations language. As a child and young teenager, I would often go to ceremonies on evenings and weekends with my dad and hear the language spoken at these gatherings. I would take pride in knowing the meaning of some of the words and phrases spoken in SENĆOTEN. After leaving ŁTS in 2003, I didn't learn any new SENĆOTEN in a classroom until 2012. From then on, all my learning became self directed and of personal interest or for reference.

Learning SENĆOFEN as an adult: intrinsic motivation

The positive experiences I had with my language learning as a child and education in my community (subconsciously) led me to pursue the Native Indian Teacher Education Degree at the University of British Columbia, which had a strong First Nations Education and community cultural component. Upon completion of my Bachelor of Education degree in 2012, I moved back to WSÁNEĆ to look for work. It was then that I began a short summer internship at the WSÁNEĆ School Board in the STÁSEN language department working with apprentices in web-based archiving, facilitating and participating in Elder's language meetings, and networking with numerous language programs, university instructors and organizations. Reflecting back, this networking has helped me in the career that has been forming. In the following school year, I was interviewed and offered the First Nations Support Teacher position at an elementary school with a high percentage of First Nations students within the local public school district. I worked for two years in this position and the programming I offered to First Nations students felt segmented rather than integrated into the classrooms. I took it upon myself to include more SENĆOFEN language exposure in my classroom and into the school culture. It still didn't feel like it was enough. Something was missing. I have now learned what was missing. It was my purpose.

Learning SENĆOFEN as an adult: The warm-up and overcoming fear

I was initially afraid of being in the position I am currently in. What I mean by that is that I understood at the time I graduated with my teaching degree that I wanted to teach the SENĆOFEN language. I was encouraged to work for the school that I am at. I was young and I was not ready for the responsibility. I knew that once I began on this journey, there would be no turning back. I understood that it would become a big part of my life. I understood the

implications of becoming part of the team. I am very grateful for the teaching experience I had before I became part of the LE,NONET immersion staff. It gave me the time to grow as a professional and to build a strong foundation of teaching. Since 2014, I have fully committed to the revitalization of my language. It has been the most rewarding work and I will continue to do this work for the remainder of my career. I have learned the language in many different settings already as a young adult. I began in 2014, in a kindergarten and grade one classroom as an informal language apprentice/educational assistant for seven months. I then moved into a grade one/two classroom as an immersion teacher for the next seven months. I have been on many land-based education outings for the last 14 months with other apprentices, mentors, teachers and students. We've spent many days hiking, hearing stories, and exploring the territory. Our outdoor education includes: identifying plants, meaningful place names and land forms. For the last four years and before I began teaching in immersion I have done some part-time contract work with STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN language department in different capacities. I have assembled and distributed community language outreach kits (flashcards, alphabet cards, stories, songs, and various posters). I have helped to create and edit online language tutor lessons via <http://www.Firstvoices.com>. I have worked in partnership with the University of Victoria's linguistics department recording student's storytelling and creating a video of storytelling in SENĆOFEN for later use in linguistics and/or education research. For a short time, I was the facilitator of our Elders language groups: listening to elders who have high proficiency in the SENĆOFEN language make corrections to speech, collaborate, and answer questions with Tim Montler, a linguist based out of Texas, who is creating a SENĆOFEN dictionary which is in its final stages of development. Most of my post-secondary academic course work has focused around Indigenous education, Indigenous worldview and perspectives and Indigenous language

revitalization. Many courses that I was enrolled in during my Masters of Education program at the University of Victoria encouraged me or required me to engage with my language in one way or another by creating a community language plan, recall the history of indigenous languages, build a curriculum of sorts, and even teach it to others in my cohort. The most engagement I had with my language was in immersion primary classrooms.

Learning in Immersion

After I graduated with my teaching degree in 2012, I was first hired at Brentwood Elementary School and taught for two years before taking an educational leave in 2014. In that time I was hired as an EA in the immersion Kindergarten class at LTS. I worked in the kindergarten room for six months and a lot of the language I had learned in the past came to the forefront. I was able to stay in immersion all day after a short time. In December or 2015, the K/1 immersion teacher went on Maternity leave and I was then assigned the contract to teach her class. I taught K/1 in immersion for 7 months. I am back again this school year in the immersion program to teach grade ½ this year and have been teaching this grade for now 4 months. I have now spent 17 months immersed in SENĆOŦEN in three primary grades. I will finish teaching in June and will reapply for a continuing teaching position for September 2017. I have reflected on my experience as a child learning in school and an adult learning/teaching in the immersion program for the last two years. These reflections have helped shape my project. I began to see themes in my writing. What worked. What didn't. What way I learned SENĆOŦEN best. I truly began to grow when I began working in the immersion Kindergarten.

LENONET KÁLEK: Immersion Kindergarten

In March 2015, I successfully applied and was accepted to work with STÁSEN language department at the WSÁNEĆ School Board again as an Education Assistant (E.A.) in a SENĆOFEN immersion Kindergarten classroom. My ultimate goal of working in this position was to learn SENĆOFEN as an informal apprentice to the teacher and also learn from the students. My thinking at the time was that once my second language proficiency and teaching skills were stronger I would ideally like to move into a teaching role in the SENĆOFEN immersion program at the primary grade level in the near future. My language grew exponentially in the short amount of time I worked as an EA. I was so excited to be learning the language. It did not feel like a job to me. I was learning so much from the students and the teacher and I was able to communicate with them in just a month or two. I felt discouraged when I couldn't speak or understand but I was very disciplined. I did not stray from the language. I stayed in immersion. I would not speak English. I would check references in our dictionary and I would ask the teachers questions before or after work to make sure I was on the right track, and even better yet, I would check with the kindergarten students for understanding. The system was beautiful. I learned from them and their learning was being assessed as well.

In March of 2015, I was interviewed and hired on contract to teach the immersion K/1 class while the current teacher was on maternity leave until June 2016.

Learning as a teacher:

LENONET NETE,ILĆ: Immersion Grade One

I began teaching grade one in December, 2015. I was meant to start in January but the regular classroom teacher, who was pregnant, went into labour early and so I hit the ground running two weeks before the winter break. I felt like a brand-new teacher. I had taught for the last two years in a public school but I was not a classroom teacher. I was a support teacher, which

required very different responsibilities. I started preparing to teach in the later part of November. There were informal conversations and planning meetings at that time. The team² was considering me for the teaching position. I was being considered because of the time I had spent in immersion and because I was a certified teacher. There were other teachers well suited for the position but they had other obligations or were planning for the future of our growing program. There was a formal posting for the contract and I was the only person who applied and interviewed. I was formally offered the job three months after I had already began teaching. I thought I was doing well, working in the kindergarten class, but I had a lot more growing to do. I had to plan, organize, and execute the classroom teaching all in the SENĆOFEN language. I was forced to read, write, speak and listen to the language, all day, five days a week, for six and a half months. I was supported well with two language support mentors, PENÁĆ Underwood and SDEMOXELTEN Sam. SDEMOXELTEN supported my class in the morning and PENÁĆ in the afternoon. (ASK PERMISSION) Their role was crucial to my teaching. They were my advisors, language tutors, translators, reference dictionaries, thesaurus, and often my spell checkers. They essentially helped me to learn the language, while I taught. Many words and phrases were learned on the spot, day to day. There was only so much I could plan for. I was a brand new classroom teacher, teaching in full SENĆOFEN immersion. I am proud to say that I diligently stayed in immersion. I rarely strayed from using the language, even under pressure. I did not write or speak any English throughout the day unless there was an emergency or a safety concern, which was not often. I remember one of my students saying something like “Miss Jim can only speak SENĆOFEN, she

² The team is comprised of: 2-6 classroom immersion teachers, the facilitator of the STÁSEN language department, our school’s principle and 2-4 language mentors. Each member has a voice in both small and large scale matters in the development of the program and the various logistical matters. Decisions are rarely made by only one person.

doesn't know how to use English" or "she doesn't speak English". They were right. I didn't. Later, I will have recommendations of strategies I used to stay diligently in immersion.

LENONET ĆESE,ĪĆ: Immersion Grade One & Two

September 4, 2016-

I am starting a new school year as the grade one & two SENĆOTEN immersion teacher. I am much more prepared and confident than I was in December of last year. I have saved all the teaching materials I have created or copied from other colleagues from last year. I have made up thematic binders with teaching resources for each of our thirteen moons (the WSÁNEĆ calendar) which I use to guide my teaching. Most importantly, I have learned from my mistakes and my weaknesses. I know what areas I need to strengthen and focus on this year. The teacher who was assigned to grade one last year, is moving up into a higher grade, growing with the program and will become the grade two teacher when she returns from maternity leave. We have now included a grade three and so two of the teachers are moving up into the higher grades and another teacher is moving into the grade one role. I will continue to teach the cohort I had last year. We will continue to learn alongside one another. I was initially a little nervous to be teaching more complex language and grade two classroom. I have never taught grade two before, I felt more confident in grade one because I had many past experiences working and teaching grade one students. The more I prepared to teach, the less nervous I became. I began to realize as I worked, that I had not been this prepared to teach grade one last year. I had anticipated a January start date for teaching last year and thought I could have time to prepare over the winter break. I started teaching in December, so I had no time to prepare. I was just thrown in and I had to learn to swim and stay afloat at the same time. This time around I am very excited to teach. I know the students,

I had ample time to prepare. I am as ready as I can be. When I say, “as I can be”, I mean that there are some things I just cannot plan for. I will continue to have 2-3 language mentors and I still need a lot of support for translations and spelling. I need to present them with my planning and there will still be some work that happens ‘on the fly’. Many words that I need or want, I cannot find in the dictionary or in the many resource materials we have. If I did take the time to search for words, spelling, etc. it would be never-ending. I am appreciative for the ongoing support I have and it is crucial to my success and my growth as a teacher and also as a learner of the language. I am excited to learn and grow alongside the students again this year. Both in my teaching role and my family life.

Learning about my place in my family: NE ŚWEL, OKE

As an active member of my community and my family I continue to learn many names and relationships within my family genealogy. This is another extension of learning the SENĆOTEN language. The last two people in my family who spoke fluent SENĆOTEN were my great-aunt, Cecelia Jim, she has passed away around 1975 and great-aunt Madeline, who passed just last year. I had felt so heart broken that I never had the opportunity to learn from my grandma Madeline while she was alive. I was not yet fluent in the language and to be honest, I was intimidated to visit and try to speak SENĆOTEN with her. I also worried. I worried because I didn’t want to trigger any emotional trauma for her. I felt so emotional at the time of her passing. I had just begun to learn the language and was hopeful that I could share with her what I had been learning. Many elders spoke at her services. Many acknowledged that she was a fluent SENĆOTEN speaker. I wanted to honor my grand-aunt. I asked my family if it would be ok to write a short speech in SENĆOTEN and share it at her services. I had my nephew

SDEMOXELTEN help me write it. I practiced it over and over again. I didn't understand it very well. In July 2016, I went back to re-read the speech from last year and upon re-reading the speech, I understand the message I was sharing on a deeper level. It was a powerful moment for me, to see how much SENĆOFEN I was learning and comprehending in the last year. Now, I imagine what it would be like to speak with my grandmothers, NE SELSILE LE. I have started listening to audio recordings of Cecelia Jim speaking in SENĆOFEN. I don't understand everything that she says yet but she is telling the history of our family and the community in her lifetime. Currently, I have one family member who is a second-language speaker who has a high level of language proficiency. His name is SDEMOXELTEN Sam. His mom is my first cousin and he is my nephew. I have been privileged to work alongside him in my classroom for the past 7 months as well as his son, who has been a student in my class. We are beginning to see a shift in our family. His son also has a high level of proficiency in the language. They speak to one another in SENĆOFEN at home and at school. I now have another nephew, SOLEPKEN, who is enrolled in the immersion pre-school this year and there will be four family members who are active carriers of our language. I say active carriers because I have older family members who can speak and understand some SENĆOFEN but do not speak it regularly. We are a strong and proud family and we all have different gifts. I have never felt alone on my journey but it makes me proud and happy to have more family members involved in the revitalization of our language. We are learning and speaking the language of our ancestors, our SELEWÁN LE.

Learning as a scholar: SNEPENEKS (Teachings)

I have had an Indigenous worldview from a very young age and always sought out situations which re-affirmed my way of knowing. What I have come to understand is that I need

to stay strong in my convictions. My beliefs and values are valid. They are important. They are useful in my research. Historically, education has not treated my beliefs this way, especially in western public institutions. Archibald states that "public schooling continued the colonial assault on Aboriginal Children. Western-oriented educational institutions displaced Aboriginal cultural worldviews and our oral traditions with various forms of [other] literacy" (2008, p.15). Currently I am in the process of unpacking most of my Western ways of thinking and being. I am becoming who I am meant to be, a WILNEW person who thinks, speaks and teaches from the worldview and beliefs of my ancestors.

I have learned to sit and listen, not only to hear a story and enjoy it but to remember it and make use of it. It has become my responsibility to share and tell the stories I have heard. I cannot solely rely on writing notes and saving them to possibly skim through later. I love the written word and I have come to realize how powerful words can be and how careful I must be in what I write and what message I am sending out about who I am as an Indigenous woman, researcher, educator, community member and a leader. I am a reflection of my ancestors, my family, and my nation. I cannot be selfish with my agenda. What I do will affect others and I will consider them always. Just as the land emerged as the flood receded in the story of LAU,WEL,NEW, my participation in research has given me strength and helped me to emerge as an active leader in my family and community. Learning will continue in variety of ways and I accept the responsibility to be a role model for future generations who have yet to learn our SENĆOTEN SKÁLS.

This research is time sensitive due to the rapid decline of fluent speakers in WSÁNEĆ, Sampson (2014) reports only five of our community members speak SENĆOTEN fluently as their first language and this number has tragically dropped lower in the last two years. I have dedicated much of my early career in language revitalization work in whatever way I can be of

service to these efforts. Like my formal education thus far, my research and identity as a scholar does not "carry a lot of colonial baggage" (Absolon, 2008). As a corrective to the possible effects of colonization in my own life in my present research, I have told the story of my life-long process of decolonization and re-indigenizing myself.

Ongoing Learning: Findings and recommendations

Learning SENĆOŦEN will be ongoing and it has become not only part of my career but very much a part of my personal life. After reflecting on my language learning journey in my lifetime, I have discovered key findings that have enabled me to become a better language learner and a more proficient speaker. These findings have also turned into recommendations for current and future second-language learners of SENĆOŦEN. My findings are personal but all recommendations are universal and can be applied to any second language learner. I found that I needed to create unique relationships and understand the way I learn best in order to be successful in learning SENĆOŦEN. The most important of which, is a good working relationship with a mentor.

Mentorship

I will continue to have mentorship from second language speakers as long as I am an immersion classroom teacher. There are no first language speakers available to me in the classroom. My recommendation would be to seek out a first language speaker if possible and to find a good fit, meaning What gifts do you carry? What are your interests and motivations for learning the language? What gifts can you help foster in the mentor you choose? Be very intentional with your time and your goals. In my opinion, the time we spend with a proficient language speaker is very valuable and you want to be able to maximize the time you have together.

Professional Development

I highly recommend on-going professional development for language learners who are also teachers and administrators who work alongside language teachers to stay current with language revitalization research and progress. In December 2016, our team of immersion teachers will join the only two other first nations language immersion schools in BC to create a First Languages immersion professional learning community (FLIPLC). The two other First language immersion schools in British Columbia are Xełólacw Community School in the Lil'wat Nation (Mount Currie, BC) and T'selcéwtqen Clleqmél'ten, otherwise known as Chief Atahm School located in the Secwepemc territory (Chase, BC) (Personal Communication, 2016). Because we are one of only three schools teaching our First Nations languages in immersion, everything is brand new. Our team sometimes looks to French immersion in Canada but for the most part, we are all having the same struggles and we are creating a lot of our own materials, curriculum and resources as we grow as a program. Some of our team members have gone to T'selcéwtqen Clleqmél'ten (Chief Atahm) to learn about immersion education. Many members of our team have traveled as far as Hawaii to see what immersion looks like from infancy all the way up to a doctorate level of language proficiency. Experiences such as this help to keep the overall vision in mind and serve as a reminder of why we are doing this work and why we are learning SENĆOTEN. These reminders will keep the fire lit. We are doing this work and learning our languages because many of our elders and grandparents did not have this opportunity or they had this right stripped of them in their lifetime and because of this, our languages may be lost or forgotten if we do not do our best to design strong and beautiful immersion programs, settings, curriculum, legacies, and lifestyle. We will not let our languages be lost or forgotten. It is our hope

to build strong immersion programming, an immersion curriculum, and future SENĆOŦEN speakers who are advocates and teachers.

Reading & Writing

What I have found in my own experience and in my community and our school is that writing skills and knowledge about the language's orthography are both important in learning a second language. SENĆOŦEN is becoming a language with a lot of literacy and writing required. Navigation of language learning tools (websites, apps, fonts, keyboard, etc.) available to your language will be a helpful learning tool and reference to learners in communities that have developed them. I have learned to read, write and type the SENĆOŦEN orthography on both a mac and pc computer. I can identify all 38 sounds and letters of our alphabet accurately most of the time. There are only a couple sounds that I mix up on occasion, the letters Q AND K. Intermediate proficient learners continue to have difficulty with these letter sounds as they are very similar. (PENÁĆ Underwood, Personal Communication, 2015) The more I write in the language and hear the sounds individually, the more fluent I become and this skill is then transferred to my students.

Technology Literacy

Being technologically literate in a variety of program, software, platforms, etc. has proven useful and important to my learning. Skills in this area have enabled my learning to occur on all forms of my social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest and Twitter) and many other domains including all word processing programs I use. I have installed fonts that allow me to easily create documents in my language without technological glitches. I have researched and referenced various online sources of the SENĆOŦEN language. It is wise to stay up to date with

the revisions, updates and changes to these tools. These tools will assist in learning across any domains of learning.

Variety of domains, settings and activities

I have reflected on the variety of settings and responsibilities I have had over the last four years. I have learned and interacted with the SENĆOŦEN language in the following ways: auditory, visual, pictorial, in a classroom, online, one-on-one as an apprentice, one-on-one as a teacher, small group settings, large group settings, and a variety of domains including the home, soccer games, and cultural events. This is the most prominent recommendation that I have. I found so often that I would transfer learning from one domain to another and I had expedited my learning. I never learned SENĆOŦEN in only one setting. I appreciate and welcome the variety. I appreciate what the different domains offer with immersion being the most favored and challenging.

Always Stay in Immersion

As mentioned earlier, I take pride in staying in immersion. This is the second most important recommendation. Stay in the language if at all possible. Do not revert to English. Try your best to stay in the language at all times. I have tried my best to think of ways that I can stay in the language in my classroom. I make sure that I have the tools I need on a daily basis. This includes a proficient language mentor, a variety of resource books, and a dictionary.

Intrinsic Motivation

Lastly and most importantly, intrinsic motivation continues to be at the heart of my language learning. I have a personal interest in learning SENĆOŦEN for many reasons. First and foremost, I have a responsibility as a community member to be a carrier of the language and

transfer the knowledge I acquire to the younger generations and to my family. My motivation extends beyond the language. I am learning to build a relationship to the land, language and my community. In the last four years, I have been on many visits throughout the community and many outings for our outdoor education to learn about the land that our ancestors have lived on. I have been learning SENĆOŦEN for twenty-three years and I will maintain a life-long commitment to learning SENĆOŦEN for the rest of my career.

Summary and Reciprocity

During my Masters of Education program, I have examined six areas of research that have directly pertained my research topic: Indigenous language revitalization, second language acquisition, Indigenous research methodologies, auto ethnography, personal narrative inquiry and adult second language learning. What has been done so far in the field of Indigenous language revitalization is becoming greater and yet there is plenty of room for more academics to contribute to this growing field. Learning SENĆOŦEN as a second language and documenting the language journey in a unique way and from a fresh perspective will be a means to contribute personally to the academy. It is my intention that this auto-ethnography will both compliment as well as contrast the work in language instruction in schools and immersion programs so far in my community. My intent is also to honor other academic research on SLA and adult language learning. To do so, I have used personal narrative inquiry. Furthermore, I have used it as a more culturally appropriate way to express my research to an Indigenous audience - my intended audience. I also do this following Indigenous researcher Sean Wilson (2012, p. 32) who states, "Indigenous people in Canada recognize that it is important for storytellers to impart their own life and experience into the telling" of stories and this is how I intended to present my work. In

my research, I have been conscious of building a reciprocal relationship with my peers, committee members, mentors, teachers, and students, giving back much of what I have learned so far and what I will continue to learn to my community.

At the height of the flood, our people tied themselves and their canoes to an Arbutus Tree with the cedar woven rope at the top of ŁÁU, WEL,NEW mountain, named as the place of escape, healing and refuge. Days and days had passed as they waited until the flood waters finally began to subside. The people sat and prayed at the top of ŁÁU, WEL,NEW. They were reminded of our teachings and our beliefs. They understood then how they must carry themselves as WSÁNEĆ people.

This part of the story represents our current state of language revitalization efforts. We are experiencing a flood again in our community. We have lost many of our elders, knowledge keepers and language champions. In the legend, our people sat at the top of the mountain and prayed to the rope that held them above water and to the mountain for their refuge. Currently we, as WSÁNEĆ people, are also praying - for healing from the effects of colonization and the effects of residential schooling. As our current flood begins to subside, we are beginning to see with clarity, the great amount of work we have ahead of us to bring back a good life to our people. This means bringing our language back to life and remembering why we must protect our language, learn our language and share our knowledge with others. We are in the state of rebuilding from the damage that the flood of residential school and colonization has brought to our communities. This flood has brought on destruction, fear, doubt, grief and many losses. We are now praying, healing and rebuilding our strength and we must work hard to ensure the flood does not return to WSÁNEĆ.

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APPENDIX**WSÁNEĆ SCHOOL BOARD PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT****MISSION & PHILOSOPHY**

Our mission is to work in a life-long partnership with the Saanich People to assure the continuing use of the SENĆOFEN Language and the maintenance of the cultural identity of our Nation while giving students the knowledge, skills and attitudes as citizens to enable them to successfully meet the social economic and political challenges of life." – *ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School Mission*

Statement**PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

We believe:

- That our SENĆOFEN culture must be maintained, perpetuated, and protected.
- That along with the school: The SENĆOFEN people must be involved in the education of our youth.
- That our children must attain the academic skills and spiritual and cultural values which allow them to live successfully in a multi-cultural society, also, that the Non-Indian society be educated about the SENĆOFEN culture.
- That the SENĆOFEN tribes control will enhance the education of our students.
- That along with academic skills we must instill SENĆOFEN values:
 - Family
 - Self Respect
 - Initiative
 - Confidence

- Responsibility
 - Respect for the rights and values of others
 - Positive attitude and willingness to work hard
 - Pride
 - Honesty
- That students have rights and responsibilities within the education program.
 - That a safe and suitable learning environment be provided.