Tahltan Word Formation:

Considerations for Creating New Words in Tāɬtān

By

Odelia Dennis

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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B.Sc N., University of British Columbia, 2002.

Supervisor

Dr. Leslie Saxon, Department of Linguistics

Committee Member

Dr. Megan Lukaniec, Department of Linguistics

Abstract

The Tāłtān language is a language at risk of becoming a sleeping language. Although language revitalization efforts are helping to reclaim this language, more could be done to create speakers. As languages evolve to contemporary life, developing new words would allow the language to be spoken uninterrupted by the dominant language and would spark the interest of younger generations to learning and speaking their language. This research focusses on the ways in which Tāłtān and other Dene languages have created new words in the past and more recently with consideration to how worldview is expressed in the language. There are steps that need to be taken when carrying out the task of creating new words in the Tāłtān language. Involving first language speakers will help to preserve the Tahltan way of thinking in the language. All language speakers should have a role to play in the creation of words, including those of different stages of language learning, and different dialect of speakers.

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Glossary

Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣidē means ‘We are speaking our language again’. This refers to the Tāłtān Language Council or Tāłtān Language Authority

Dzimēs Chō T’oh is the name of the Iskut language nest

Esbē’e means ‘my aunt on my father’s side’.

K’asbā’e T’oh is the name of the Dease Lake language nest.

Łuwechō is a location meaning Iskut, British Columbia. It is also used to refer to the dialect spoken in the community of Iskut.

Tāłtān is the phonetic spelling of our Tāłtān language.

Tātl’ah is a location meaning Dease Lake, British Columbia.

Tl’ebāne is a location in the Klappan or Spatsizi area near the Northeastern part of British Columbia.

Tlēgo’in is a location meaning Telegraph Creek, British Columbia. It is also used to refer to the dialect spoken in the community of Telegraph Creek.

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Tahltan Word Formation:

Considerations for Creating New Words in Tāłtān

1. Sini, ja'ast'ē (This is me) - Introduction

My name is Odelia Dennis. I am Tahltan from the Tl'abāne territory in Northwestern British Columbia. I am a descendant of Alec Dennis and Winnifred Quock on my late mother's side and Peter Leon Dennis and Mabel Louie on my late father's side. I am also a descendant of Matilda Quock and Bearlake Billy Dennis on my late mother's side. I belong to the Ch'iyone (Wolf) clan. Currently, I'm studying to become a proficient speaker in the Tāłtān language. I grew up in Łuwechō (Iskut) with a population of approximately 250 people, and currently live in Tātl'ah (Dease Lake), a neighboring Tahltan community with a population of approximately 600 people.

I start with a story of my life. It's not a complete story, however it will help the reader to understand how I came to be where I am today. Also, it will help readers understand the reality of the struggles that Indigenous people of Canada have gone through and some have overcome. While conducting the research for this work, I have been thinking a lot about the struggles that we face today as Indigenous people in Canada. It is with learning our language, learning our history, learning from our ancestors and passing these on to our future generations that we can strengthen our identity and allow the multi-generational healing process to continue. If we take the opportunities to teach non-Indigenous people about our history, our culture and our ways, we can continue the process of Reconciliation.

I grew up on the Indian Reserve #6, Łuwechō (Iskut). Life was very different than the stories I hear about growing up in the city. As a child, we lived in poverty in the sense that we did not have a lot of money or luxuries. However, our experiences were rich. My parents spent a lot of

time with us out on the land. We gathered berries each summer and fall. We fished for trout every summer and winter for sustenance. My dad hunted moose all the time, so we always had moose meat in our freezer. The food we ate back then was superior to what we eat today. As children, we were allowed to roam around in the nearby forests, go fishing by ourselves, go on small hikes, and walk into the creeks once we were done with our chores at home. There were a lot of positive memories that I have from my childhood. My parents gave me strong roots and these memories helped me out later in life. I did not know it at the time, but my parents were teaching us what it means to be a Tahltan person. They made sure they taught us the values, the beliefs, the stories and some language along the way.

I spent some time with my grandparents as a child. They died when I was very young so the extent of their influence on me was not what I hoped it could have been. I would have very much loved to have been around my grandparents and to learn stories and language from them. From what I know, they were very rich in culture, language and history of the Tahltan people. Today I enjoy spending time with Elders in my community to visit, to help them with small chores, and to learn stories, language and history from them. I believe that one day we will be without our Elders, so we need to spend time, to learn and to document the knowledge that they have while they are still here.

During my childhood, I was frequently exposed to my language. However, it was not in an immersion setting, nor was it intentionally taught at home. It was always a few words or phrases, here and there. Most of the words I heard had to do with jokes and common words and phrases that everyone in our village seemed to know. My dad grew up hearing the language from his parents and grandparents but to the best of my knowledge he was not a fluent speaker. He knew a lot of Tā̀łtān language but unfortunately, he had attended residential school from the age of 8 to

12 years old. He taught us a little bit of language when we were growing up. However, he did not talk to us about residential school.

From kindergarten to grade 7, I attended the Klappan Independent Day School. My experience attending a day school was in no way equivalent to the experience that others had while attending Indian residential schools. I was taught by the nuns for only the first year. In kindergarten if we arrived late, we had to kneel down in the corner facing away from everyone for one hour and pray for forgiveness. This part of school confused me. I felt punished for showing up late but was not given an explanation as to why being on time was so important. This was near the extent of my discomfort in attending a day school. In my life at the time, no Indigenous ceremony or prayer existed for me, so it was easy to accept what the Catholic Church was trying to teach me about religion.

As a child, the history of residential schools was not part of either formal education or discussions at home. It was something that was still a dark secret that no one wanted to talk about, and nobody talked about it. It was not until I attended the University of British Columbia, via satellite in Kamloops, BC in 1994 that I learned about residential schools. At the age of eighteen I finally knew the reason behind so many hardships during my childhood growing up in a small community and Indian Reserve. I found out in later years that my dad had attended two residential schools for several years as a young child. Now as I remember the times that he taught me and my siblings language, I am forever grateful. I fully appreciate that, after having been through such a painful experience around language, he still felt strong enough to teach some language to his children. Unfortunately, like many who had attended residential schools, my dad passed away at a relatively young age.

At this day and age, when Orange Shirt Day comes along and people all over BC make an effort to recognize that Residential Schools are a part of Canadian history, I often wonder if many people know the extent of these impacts. I was in an elevator with two people at a hospital, and both were wearing orange shirts on September 30, 2019. I complimented them on their orange shirt which was created by First Nations Health Authority. The woman looked a bit uneasy but thanked me for the compliment and they went on their way. There is still no easy way to bring up the topic of residential schools. I am finding it easier and easier to talk about my connection to the residential school era. It has now become a small part of my identity as an Indigenous person living in Canada. Still I wonder how many people think that residential schools are a thing of long ago. I wonder if the people in the hospital elevator would have any idea that they encountered a second generation residential school survivor the day that they were honouring residential school survivors.

As I mentioned before, my upbringing helped me later on in life. My parents raised me in large part out on the land and instilled in me values, beliefs and a strong sense of ancestral rooting. Since learning my language, I feel a connection to my ancestors. While studying my language, I often asked myself, “Why did they say it like this?” and the answer could tell me a bit more about how my ancestors lived their lives. I believe knowing my language and remembering my strong upbringing of values, beliefs and culture has ensured that I remember my roots and take back my identity. There is still much social change that I seek within my life and within my community. It is my hope that I will make a difference for both. It is my hope that I become the knowledgeable Elder that my grandparents and others were so that I could pass this knowledge on to future generations.

My educational journey began when taking university transfer courses at a community college in Terrace, BC. Eventually I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of British Columbia at 26 years old. I moved back to my community after my UBC graduation and have lived and worked here since then. I have conducted community research in traditional medicine, as well as industrial environmental consultation studies both within my traditional territory.

Once I moved back home to Łuwechō from UBC in 2002, I wanted to learn my ancestral language and I began writing field notes of language onto napkins at Elders' luncheons or picnics. I started spending more time with the Elders in order to learn language from them. I began building my Tāłtān language vocabulary. When my youngest son was born in 2010, I realized that I did not have a lot of time to learn the language if I really wanted to make a difference by teaching him our language. I realized in 2011 that after 9 years being in my home community, I still had not learned much of my language. At this time, there were no language revitalization efforts happening in any of our communities. The Tāłtān language was considered a language at risk of becoming extinct. We had fewer and fewer fluent speakers left and as every year passed, we were losing more Elder, fluent speakers. I decided that it was time to do something about the language and I started with myself and my family. I decided that I would learn the language along with my youngest son. I would also teach my oldest son our language, but I felt that by teaching my youngest son the language, it would be the best opportunity to pass on the language at his young age.

The Tāłtān language (also known as the Tahltan language) from the Dene language family is the ancestral language of the Tahltan First Nation. More recently the spelling for Tahltan has changed to Tāłtān in reference to the Tāłtān language. The original spelling *Tahltan* is commonly

used to refer to the Tahltan nation, Tahltan territory, Tahltan people, Tahltan culture or Tahltan archive and projects. The word *Tāłtān* is used to talk about the language. In the future, the leadership of the Tahltan nation may want to change fully to the phonetic spelling. If that is the case, both spellings may be acceptable when speaking about both the Tāłtān language and the Tahltan nation, territory, culture, archive and projects.

I have been actively involved in Tāłtān language revitalization efforts since the beginning of 2012 when I became enrolled in the Master Apprentice Program through the First People's Cultural Council. I have since been working on several projects for the Tāłtān Revitalization Program over the past 4 years. We started the process of publishing the first two Tāłtān language children's books in our language and we opened language nests in Iskut, BC called Dzimēs Chō T'oh, and Dease Lake, called K'asbā'e T'oh.

I learned the Tāłtān orthography from esbē'e (my aunt on my father's side) Angela Dennis. She was very determined to teach me to read and write in the language. Having attended university for part of my life, I knew that learning to read and write in my language would be an important part of my language learning journey. I felt it was an important part of my language journey so I listened to some recordings over and over again to have the sounds and pronunciation correctly match my writing of the language. I did this until esbe'e Angela had very little or no corrections to make. I am grateful to her for her efforts to continually teach me the Tāłtān language.

In the revitalization of the Tāłtān language, I know we need to create new speakers. We also need to think about recovering the words that have been lost over the years. When the residential schools were in operation in the early years, people did not anticipate the extent of the negative impact it would have on Indigenous languages by not allowing intergenerational transmission of

the language and the loss of many words in those languages. Intergenerational transmission of a language is crucial to its survival. It's a sad reality knowing that it was a conscious decision made by the Canadian government to extinguish the Indigenous languages of Canada. Those children eventually had children of their own but by then had suffered so much trauma around their language that most of them felt they needed to reject their own language in order to prevent trauma to their children and grandchildren. This is why we are in this situation today. Tahltans, as well as many other First Nations across Canada, are doing their best to revitalize their Indigenous languages.

2. Introduction to My Research: Creating New Words in Tāltān

In revitalizing any Indigenous language, there is a need for contemporary words in the language for use in everyday life. This is to ensure that the language continues to be relevant in the lives of both learners and fluent and semi-fluent speakers of the language. We want to gain and maintain interest within our communities for people to learn the language. If the language can be used every day as well as be adapted to our contemporary lifestyles, then we will be able to increase all speakers' proficiency in the language.

After reading recent documents on the status of the Tāłtān language and learning that we are currently at a critical stage in language endangerment, the task of creating new words has become important to me. The language we are learning lacks many required words that are needed in order to function fully in the language whether we are at home with our children, attending university, living in the city or at our workplaces. Not having words for contemporary everyday objects poses a challenge for second language learners who are motivated to use the language in all aspects of their lives. There needs to be a focused effort on creating new words in

the Tāłtān language. In my research, I explore the protocols, and grammatical rules that are behind creating new words in a meaningful Tahltan way. I expect that a better understanding of these two factors will reveal more about Tahltan ways of thinking. From my examination of the protocols and grammatical rules, I intend to develop some guidelines and make recommendations for others who are interested in creating new words in the Tāłtān language.

The Tāłtān language is not well documented. When I look at dictionaries from Tłı̨chǫ Yatıì (Dogrib), and Nak'azdli Bughuni (Central Carrier), and other Indigenous languages it seems that they have been updating their lexicon and new words have been continuously created over the years. The Tłı̨chǫ Yatıì (Dogrib) language has words for 'authorize', 'band councillor', 'baptism', 'battery', 'jerry can' and 'jury' (Saxon & Siemens, 1996). The Nak'azdli Bughuni (Central Carrier) language has words for 'airplane', 'binoculars', 'doctor', 'hair dryer', 'ironing board', 'hair clippers', 'wagon', 'warehouse', and 'radio' (Walker and Wilkinson, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 1974). Both the Haida and Tlingit languages have words for 'dryer', 'dishwasher', 'piano', 'drill', 'drill bit', 'dentist', 'dentures', 'doctor', 'camera', and 'wool' (Edwards, 2009; Lachler, 2010; Twitchell, 2015). It is possible that more words exist that are not in the dictionaries mentioned here.

It is possible that we do have words for many items, but they could have been lost as many fluent speaking Elders passed away over the years. I remember my dad's aunt telling me that the word for 'cake' is *kiks* (R. Louie, personal communication). She said that her brother-in-law Walter Dennis, who is my grandpa on my dad's side, taught her the word for 'cake'. Walter Dennis passed on in the early 1990's (A. Dennis, personal communication). I imagine he would have known many more words that we do not know of today.

Although new words have been created and are still being created in the Tāłtān language, it is happening at a very slow rate. There are constant questions from second language speakers that we, as language instructors and fluent speakers, cannot answer; how do we say 'refrigerator', how do we say 'computer', how do we say 'thumb drive' in the language? Many times, we do not have words for the most common items that occur in our everyday lives. Any new words that we hope to create need to be discussed at length with fluent speakers and presented to the members of the Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣidē (abbreviated as DDN) group. *Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣide* means 'We are speaking our language again'. This group represents the Tāłtān language authority and one of their responsibilities is to approve newly created words in the language. The DDN meets at a frequency between 1 and 3 times per year. As it stands, we do not have an efficient method or system for creating new words in the Tāłtān language. We do not have a New Words Committee to handle the increasing demand for newly created words.

My research focused on data collected from fluent speakers of the Tāłtān language. The research was largely community-based. Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek are relatively small communities and I believed, based on my studies, that a community-based approach would bring the research right into our communities, and would lead to improved research results from having the involvement of fluent speakers from each community. I asked four questions as part of my research:

- How are new words being formed today and how have they been formed in the past? What are some grammar rules that are being followed?
- In what ways can we see the Tahltan worldview being expressed in words formed today and in the past?

- How have new words been created in other Dene communities? What are some grammar rules being followed? How are they expressions of worldview?
- How can we use this information to come up with considerations for creating new words in Tāłtān?

From this study, I came up with future considerations for my community for creating new words in the Tāłtān language. Creating new words in any language is essential for maintaining everyday use at every stage of language revitalization. This will contribute greatly to Tāłtān language revitalization efforts as well as have implications for creating new words in the Dene language family of British Columbia.

In Section 3 I provide some background information about the Tāłtān language and in Section 4 I review the literature on topics related to my research, including Tahltan worldview. Sections 5 and 6 outline my research methodology and findings. Section 7 includes my recommendations, implications and ideas for future research.

3. Tāltān dzāhge (Tāltān Language)

The communities within the Tahltan Traditional Territory are Iskut (Łuwechō), Dease Lake (Tātl'ah), and Telegraph Creek (Tlēgo'in). The only two dialects left of the original 3 communities are the Łuwechō (Iskut) and Tlēgo'in (Telegraph Creek). Sadly, it is believed that there are no more speakers of the Tātl'ah (Dease Lake) dialect (A. Dennis, personal communication). Tahltan members who live off-reserve in larger urban areas consist of those living in Whitehorse and Watson Lake, Yukon Territories; Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Prince George, Kamloops, Vancouver, Victoria, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; and elsewhere. The Tāłtān language is close to becoming a sleeping language, with fewer than 28 fluent

speakers left in our nation with a population of approximately 5000 people (Edōsdi, personal communication).

The Tāłtān language is part of the Dene language family. There is a relationship between the many languages that fall under the Dene language family. For instance, there are very close similarities between the Tāłtān and Danedzāgé' (Kaska) languages, as well as Tāłtān and Dakelh (Central Carrier). Tlingit is an immediate bordering language of the Tāłtān to the north. In terms of trading between nations, knowledge of both languages would have allowed closer interaction and possibly a motivation to communicate efficiently.

Today there is a Tāłtān language movement happening. In 2013, under the Iskut First Nation's lead, Tāłtān Language Revitalization Program began. This organized effort was created in part due to Edōsdi's (Dr. Judy Thompson) doctoral thesis titled, *Hedekeyeh Hots'ih Kāhidi – Our Ancestors Are in Us: Strengthening Our Voices Through Language Revitalization From a Tahltan Worldview* (Edōsdi,Thompson, 2012). Edōsdi played a major role in starting the Tāłtān Language Revitalization Program. Some of the projects include creating Tāłtān language children's books, establishing two language nests, community learning sessions, an adult language program and developing online language resources. There are two language nests in the Tahltan territory. The first, Dzimēs Chō T'oh, was established at Łuwechō in May 2014. The second, K'asbā'e T'oh, was established in Tātl'ah later that year, in December 2014. Whereas the Dzimēs Chō T'oh language nest has mostly the Iskut First Nation families attend, the K'asbā'e T'oh has mostly the Tahltan Band families attend. Both language nests continue in operation today. In 2016, the Tāłtān Language Revitalization Program was transferred from the Iskut First Nation to the Tahltan Central Government. The Tāłtān Language Revitalization Program was then renamed as the Tāłtān Language and Culture Program. In 2019, the name of

the department changed from the Tāłtān Language and Culture Program to the Tāłtān Language Reclamation Department.

In addition to these efforts, as well as what stemmed from Edōsdi's work, the Tāłtān Language Authority was created in 2014. The name for this group is Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣidē (DDN) which means, 'We are speaking our language again.' This group consisted of fluent speakers and language teachers from each of the three communities of Łuwechō, Tātl'ah, and Tlēgo'in. Employees working under the Tāłtān Language Reclamation Department were required to attend all DDN meetings. As a former employee, I have personal experience participating in these meetings, which contributes to the background information I have about the procedures of the DDN. The DDN members provide feedback and support to the work that the Tāłtān Language Reclamation Department does under the Tahltan Central Government, and to language research being conducted by Tahltans under several universities. The DDN also helps to create new words by approving words that are suggested by fluent speakers or learners of the language. This has been an informal way of creating new words in the language, but it has not been efficiently used, due to the infrequency of meetings. There are often large items of discussion (e.g. online language learning applications, language nests, and the adult language program) that take up a lot of time at these meetings, which leaves little time to talk about the creation of new words. This system works but it is a long process that takes a lot of time.

There are recent Tāłtān language research studies that have been completed by Tahltan language scholars. In 2014, Oscar Dennis completed his Master's thesis on *How I learned the language: The pedagogical structure of the Tāłtān language*, from the University of Northern British Columbia. This work includes important information on the grammatical structures of the Tāłtān language and the Tahltan worldview as it is imbedded in the language. In 2016, Dennis

published an iBook about part of the grammatical structure of the Tāłtān language called *The Tahltan Pronoun*. In 2017, Kāshā Julie Morris completed her Master's thesis on *K'asbā'e T'oh: Sustaining the Intergenerational Transmission of Tāłtān* from the University of Victoria. This research was about how the K'asbā'e T'oh language nest was established, and what keeps the people involved motivated to continue learning language. In 2019, Louise Framst completed her Master's thesis on *Tahltan verb classifiers and how to use them*, from Simon Fraser University. This work includes very useful information on the grammatical structure of the Tāłtān language. All of these research studies are useful resources and tools for second language learners and for the revitalization of the Tāłtān language.

In January 2016, the adult language program, the very first of its kind for the Tahltan nation, was offered in the Tahltan territory. Through a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Tahltan Central Government, a program offering the Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization (abbreviated as DILR) was created. This program ran from January 2016 to June 2019. Various courses were offered for 8-10 days per month in Dease Lake. Some of the coursework included Tāłtān language, self-directed immersive language learning, and linguistics. I was the instructor to several of the Tāłtān language courses taught in that timeframe.

For those living outside of the Tahltan territory, the Tāłtān language has a portal on the First Voices website, operated by the First People's Cultural Council. A Tāłtān language app is also being created but has not been launched as of February 2020. There is a Facebook page for both the Dzimēs Chō T'oh and the K'asbā'e T'oh language nests where parents could see videos inside the language nest as well as videos to help continue the use of language at home. A Facebook page called "Speak Tahltan to Me" is one that is exclusively dedicated to uploading

videos of spoken Tāłtān language, and is used as a teaching tool for those not able to access in-person language programs within the Tahltan territory.

The Tāłtān Language Reclamation Department has gained some momentum in the last 7 years. Two language nests are in operation within the Tahltan territory. Language is being taught and learned both in and outside of the territory using both in-person and online learning methods. There are increasing numbers of language resources, including those about Tāłtān grammatical structure. Research studies on the Tāłtān language are consistently being conducted.

4. Literature Review

I have looked at research by others to inform me and guide me in my own research. I looked at how other Indigenous groups have created new words, other Dene language dictionaries, and other theses and reports that talk about Indigenous worldviews. The first part of this section (4.1) will cover what Indigenous language revitalization looks like in general for BC and what challenges we face. Section 4.2 will summarize a Tahltan methodology created by Edōsdi (Dr. Judy Thompson). Next, in 4.3, I will discuss research about Indigenous worldview. The next two sections are about ways in which words are created in some Dene languages (4.4) and other Indigenous languages (4.5). The last section (4.6) is about how other Indigenous groups have created New Words Committees to help in the expansion of their lexicon.

4.1 Indigenous Language Revitalization

In the geography of British Columbia, there are 34 Indigenous languages. In 2010 many of these languages were at risk of ceasing to be spoken (FPCC, 2010). The most recent languages report of First People's Culture Council (FPCC) in 2018 shows a positive picture. There are

significantly more people, including younger people, who are learning the language than in previous years' reports (FPCC, 2018). This demonstrates that the efforts of BC's Indigenous groups to revitalize their languages are working, but this does not eliminate the urgent need for increasing and utilizing various efforts to revitalize our Indigenous languages.

As stated in the article, 'Beautiful Words: Enriching and Indigenizing Kwak'wala Revitalization through Understandings of Linguistic Structure' (Rosborough, chuutsqa – Rorick, & Urbanczyk, 2019), there are many issues and challenges that are unique to teaching and learning an Indigenous language. There are fewer fluent speakers available to teach languages; increasingly, Elder speakers who have specialized cultural and grammatical knowledge are passing on; there are limited language resources to draw upon; and the social and emotional barriers to learning our languages are still prevalent as a result of colonization and assimilation policies and practices (Rosborough et al., 2019).

4.2 Tahltan Research Methodology

In her research, *Hedekeyeh, Hots'ih Kāhidi – "Our Ancestors are in us": Strengthening our voices through language revitalization from a Tahltan worldview*, Edōsdi, Dr. Judy Thompson, outlines her research framework called *Hedekeyeh Hots'ih Kāhidi*, the Tahltan worldview. Part of her research framework includes her Tahltan methodology, named Tahltan Voiceability. It states that we have the opportunity to include the voices of the coresearchers (participants) in a very good way. Providing direct quotes from her interviews as part of her thesis was a way to bring the voices of the participants into her research (Thompson, 2012). Another part of Tahltan Voiceability is the ability to communicate ideas and findings in a way that our Tahltan members will understand. We need to have a connection through both written and oral communication

with the coresearchers (participants) as well as through the audience that will be reading our research (Thompson, 2012). Edōsdi states that she considers Tahltan ethics to be equally as important in comparison to the ethics of the universities under which we carry out our research (Thompson, 2012). She also believes that the relationships with her coresearchers are not complete when the research is finished. She believes in maintaining relationships with coresearchers (participants) beyond the study.

4.3 Indigenous Worldview

Indigenous Elders and first language speakers provide important knowledge about the worldviews expressed in their language (Rosborough et al. 2019) and thus would be essential in being able to continue expressing worldview through language in a contemporary mindset. In Oscar Dennis' thesis (2014), he provides a definition of worldview:

> All cultures, or people within various cultures, perceive and conceptualize their environment from a specific perspective. This perspective is usually referred to as their worldview. A worldview is made up of the principles we amass to make sense of everything around us – our world. The worldview permits the possessors to make sense of their surroundings, fashion artifacts to fit this surrounding, generate behavior, and understand their experiences within their universe. (Dennis, p. 31)

When looking at ways of creating new words from an Indigenous perspective and worldview, we could appreciate the value and richness this might add to the lexicon of an Indigenous language. Dr. Trish Rosborough states that:

> For language revitalization to be an Indigenizing process, it is important that we consider not just how to retain the language, (ie. teach and learn it more effectively) but also to retain the

> worldview and understandings within the language – what can be thought of as the spirit of the language. (2019, p. 430).

Worldview is an important aspect of all things Indigenous. When thinking about the acts of decolonization, in a way we want to preserve many things Indigenous, worldview is a very integral part of that. Worldview is embedded in our Indigenous languages. Therefore, it is important to include this when thinking about the spontaneous creation of new words in a contemporary lifestyle. In my opinion, including literature on Indigenous worldview was important when looking at my research on Tāłtān word formation.

4.4 Tahltan Worldview

When we are talking about creating new words, the Tahltan way of thinking needs to be part of the process. Some of my knowledge of the Tahltan worldview comes from being brought up as a Tahltan person from my parents, grandparents, extended family, and peers. Other parts of my experience come from what I learned from fluent speakers in the DILR program. In this section, I will talk about some of the things I've learned about how the Tahltan worldview is embedded in the language.

Tahltans in earlier times moved around with each change in the season. Seasons are so important that we consider there to be five different seasons in our language. There are two 'Spring' seasons. In the early Spring when the snow is melting, it is called *No'dāleł̓i,* meaning 'it's melting'. Later in the Spring, it is called *Dāne,* and this is referring to when *et'āne,* or 'leaves' are starting to show. Below are just some of the examples that I think of when I have seen the Tahltan worldview embedded in the language.

In Tāłtān, the word *tōtsāne* translates to ‘having difficulty’ or ‘barely’. Some fluent speakers have translated it also as ‘having a hard time’. When you say, *tōtsān nidisā*, it means, ‘I have a hard time to pick it up’. You will not say like in English, “It’s hard to pick it up.” Here you will talk about who is doing the ‘picking up’ and who is having a hard time picking the object up. You are not talking about the object as being ‘hard to pick up’. Similarly, when it’s snowing very lightly you would say, *tōtsān ẕaꞩ nadetl’id.* That means ‘It’s barely snowing’. My Tahltan way of thinking has always translated the phrase *tōtsān ẕaꞩ nadetl’id* to ‘it’s trying to snow’. This is one example where an English and Tāłtān phrase do not translate directly.

In English, a person could say, ‘I wish you get better soon’. In Tāłtān you would say, *dūli k’adla soga anāndē.* This translates to ‘I wish you get better quickly’. It’s similar when a person gets angry easily. You won’t say, ‘easily he gets angry’. You would instead say, *k’adla idī anadē.* This means ‘fast he gets angry’. There is no word for ‘easily’ or ‘soon’ in Tāłtān. Similarily, if you want to say ‘I woke up early this morning’, you would say *dūgi chacholōne k’adla ts’e’isẕet.* This translates to ‘this morning I woke up quickly (or fast)’. When you want to say ‘I will be right back’, meaning ‘I will be back right away’, you will say *k’adla łandēsāł.* This translates to ‘quickly I will come back.’ In the Tāłtān language, the word *k’adla* has four different meanings depending on which context you use the word. It could mean ‘soon’, ‘easily’, ‘early’, and ‘right away’. These are a few examples of where the Tahltan worldview is important in determining precise meaning when creating new words.

When talking about a person’s birthday, you would simply put a possessive on the word *dẕenēꞩ*, meaning ‘day’. *Medẕenēꞩe* means ‘his birthday’. But it really translates to ‘his or her day’. Esdẕenēꞩe means ‘my birthday’. It’s very simple. In English we say ‘Happy Birthday.’ In Tāłtān there is no mention of birth or it would have been *didẕenēꞩ huslīn ja’at’ē* which means,

'this is the day I was born'. In Tāłtān, we say *endz̲enēs̲e kōnelīn* for 'happy birthday'. This translates to 'your birthday is beautiful'. To say 'he, she or it is beautiful', you would say *monelīn*. As Oscar Dennis states in his thesis (2014), for the definition of *konelīn*, the personal pronoun 'k' is used when you are talking about the environment, universe or cognitive landscape:

> The personal pronoun /k/ is usually restricted to the use with the environment. However, from a holistic perspective we also use it to describe the contents (cognitive landscape) of our being. When we make reference to the land in this context we say "dah-nenhe koneline" (our land is beautiful). We give the land a personal pronoun that is equal to ours (people) because, in our traditional worldview, we look upon our universe as a living, breathing entity that has a vibrant personality, which is reflected in the various weather conditions, seasons and cosmos. (2014, p. 39.)

If you are talking about 'your birthday', you would not use *monelīne*. That is referring to something physical that you can see and touch, a person or a thing. It is a beautiful event that you were born, and it is considered to be a cognitive landscape. You were born at a certain day, year and physical landscape or location. It will be *konelīn*, or 'a beautiful place in time'. Your birthday is a conceptual date, and time in our universe upon which you were born. Therefore when you say 'Happy Birthday' to someone in Tāłtān you will say *endz̲enēs̲e konelīn*, which translates to, 'your day is beautiful (conceptually as a landscape of where and when you were born)'. Words and phrases like this captures the Tahltan worldview.

The Tahltan worldview is an integral part of our language. In order to speak the language and be fully understood by fluent speakers, you need to be able to think in the language. This is an important aspect to consider when creating new words. There are many words which we cannot

simply translate from English. One word in Tāłtān could have several meanings in English depending on the context of the conversation. It is important that the first language speakers pass on this knowledge of the Tahltan worldview to second language speakers for creating new words.

4.5 Ways of Creating New Words in Tāłtān

Creating new words in the Tāłtān language is something that has been done for as long as anyone can remember. It is not a new thing. The process of creating words are based on functions or descriptions, creating compound words, borrowing words and extending the meaning of some already existing words.

Some words are formed using verbs. For various items these are postposition + verb descriptions. The postpositions include *me eł,* 'with it', *mekāge*, 'on top of it', and *met'āt*, 'inside of it' or 'through it'. This demonstrated one pattern of word formation. Examples are *me eł etse kā* (lit. 'you measure with it' for 'ruler'), *me kāge s̲edah* (lit. 'on top, one sits' for 'chair'), and *met'āt hodedēhi* (lit. 'through it you talk' for 'phone').

Extensions of meaning are instances where a word already exists in the language, but the meaning is extended beyond the original meaning to a newer object or concept. A couple examples are the word *ts'āł* 'moss', which was extended to also mean 'diaper', and *etsok* 'wild rhubarb', which was extended to mean 'celery'.

Another word formation process is the formation of a compound word. An example is the word for 'tent'. The word for 'tent' is *ts̲is̲ā khit*, which translates to 'cloth building'. There is also a process of creating a noun using a combination of a noun + adjective, or a noun + verb. The first word tells us what kind of object we have and the second word describes it. An example

would be the word for ‘skirt’. The word for ‘skirt’ is *eghadēn ēch*, which translates to ‘woman’s shirt’.

4.6 Ways of Creating New Words in Dene Languages

Dene languages in the Northwest Territories, Dënesųłiné Yatıé (Chipewyan), Tłįchǫ Yatiì (Dogrib), Sahtúot’įnę Yatį́ (North Slavey), Dene Zhatıé (South Slavey), and Dinjii Zhu’ Ginjik (Gwich’in), have revealed some methods, similar to other languages, of creating new words for their vocabulary. The three methods are 1) borrowing a word from another language with an adaptation of pronunciation to match the target language, 2) creating a new lexical term by describing some features of the item, idea or concept, and 3) expanding or shifting the meaning of an already existing word or phrase (Harnum, 1993). Dene languages have also borrowed words from a neighbouring language. The Witsuwit’en have borrowed words from Gitksan, Carrier, and Tsek’ene, as well as from French, English and Chinook Jargon as part of their vocabulary (Hargus, 2007).

Since the Tāłtān language falls under the Dene language family, there are many overlapping similarities in nouns as well as verbs with languages like those mentioned above. I looked at the similarities by looking at dictionaries of Danedzāgé’ (Kaska) (Kaska Tribal Council, 1997), Dakelh (Central Carrier) (Wilkinson et al., 1974), and a grammar dictionary of the Witsuwit’en language (Hargus, 2007). I used these dictionaries to look at how compound words have been created in these languages.

After looking closely at some words in other language dictionaries, I observed that there are some very distinctive ways in which words were created, excluding borrowing or extension of meaning. In Dakelh and other languages, some words were created by compounding. This is

combining two words or parts of words to create a compound word. The word for ‘clock’ or ‘watch’ in Dakelh is *sadzi.* In the language, *sa* means ‘sun’ and *‘udzi’* means ‘heart’ (Wilkinson et al.,1974). The word for ‘outhouse’ is *tsan bayoh.* The word for ‘feces’ is *tsan,* and *bayoh* means ‘building’ or ‘shed’. In Witsuwit’en the word ‘grasshopper’ is *tiltiw’*. This translates to ‘it hops forth’. The word for ‘waterfall’ is *nenli*, which means ‘it flows down’. The word for ‘home-run’ is *tabełGec* which means ‘it ran in a circle’ (Hargus, 2007). These are examples of noun words that have been made from verbs.

4.7 Ways of Creating New Words in Other Indigenous Languages

When looking at how other Indigenous nations talk about contemporary items or new concepts in their language for which no word exists, I found some similarities in the strategies of coming up with new words. There are some Indigenous groups who would say the English word with a native pronunciation (Hobson, 2013; Kimura & Counceller, 2009; Counceller, 2010) when no word existed in the language. The native pronunciation would be consistent with native sounds in their language. In other situations, speakers did not continue using their language and used English for words they did not have. This resulted in what was referred to as code-switching by inserting an English word without indigenizing the English word (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). That being said, there are many Indigenous groups that have been successful in the spontaneous creation of new words in their language.

I found one example of a method used to create new words in another Indigenous language, Hawaiian. In the Hawaiian language, new words are created using descriptive terms (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). For ‘can opener’, they created *mea wehe kini*, ‘lit., something to open a can’. For the word ‘archive’, they created *waihona palapala kahiko,* ‘lit., place to deposit old

documents'(Kimura & Counceller, 2009). When creating new words, there are sometimes very specific concepts that would be difficult to put into one word or even a few words. This is when the worldview comes into play for creating new words in the language. In order to come up with the word for 'evolution' in the Hawaiian language, the committee were looking at creating a verb 'to evolve' but one that could also be used as a noun. In the Hawaiian language, it was known that some traditional words were created from combining two or more words. There were two major thoughts which could be considered to express biological evolution. *Ewe*, 'lit., family lineage' and *li'uli'u,* 'lit., a long length of time' were the two words that were combined to form the word *liliuewe* 'biological evolution'(Kimura & Counceller, 2009).

Ultimately there are three main methods of creating new words in the Hawaiian language: 1) combining two words into one, while shortening at least one of the words; 2) the extension of meaning of a word or words; and 3) the use of a word from another Polynesian language (essentially borrowing) (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). There was also mention of coining a new word from adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word. Another technique is called the creation of a calque, where each word or morpheme meaning is borrowed and combined to create a new word. This method would be to combine two words in English and translate it directly into the target language. For example, to combine the words *lap* and *top* to create the word for *laptop* in the target language.

4.8 New Word Councils or Committees

I looked at two examples of groups formed for the purpose of creating new words in an Indigenous language. The Hawaiian Lexicon Committee and the Alutiiq New Words Council have both been successful in adding to the lexicon of the Hawaiian and Alutiiq languages

(Kimura & Counceller, 2009). In regard to creating new words in an Indigenous language, the Alutiiq New Words Council, an Alutiiq language revitalization effort on Kodiak Island in Alaska, United States provides the most relevant example because the community setting resembles my own community. That being said, both could be useful resources for establishing a new words committee or council.

According to this research, there has been a well-coordinated effort to create new words in the Alutiiq speaking community. There are several dialects existing for their language. In 2009, the Alutiiq New Words Council (NWC) was formed, and membership were made up of only fluent speakers because there were no second language learners who knew the language enough to develop new words without assistance (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). The second language learners played a different role in the NWC. They became associate members and their role was to set up meetings, suggest new words, and learn from the fluent speakers. The aspect of semi-fluent participation in the council was suggested by Larry Kimura, a language activist for the Hawaiian language, who understood that many required "new words" could possibly be outside of the Elders' frame of reference. The experience in sitting in on the NWC would play an important role if they were to be asked to join the council in the future. They would know the steps, protocols and unspoken rules that needed to be applied in creating new words. It was suggested that due to the rapid decline in the number of speakers of the language, traditional or more natural methods of developing new words were in a way lost. Advocates of the Alutiiq language found that many words were forgotten as each fluent speaker passed on. Therefore, the researchers concluded that it was important to include research into any existing terms used historically as part of their efforts to creating new words. Other techniques used in the NWC were describing the sound made by an object or animal and describing the function of the object.

The success of the NWC was in part due to the cooperation and planning of all who were involved. There were a number of steps that were needed. A list of needed topics and words were proposed, potential options were put forward, a discussion of the options occurred and a consensus or vote would finalize the decision making process. In some instances, two different ways of saying a word were adopted. There were three distinct lists of words: *Upcoming Words, In Discussion,* and *Approved Words.* The Elders would receive an agenda with the list of needed words, proposed choices and literal translations a week before each meeting so that they could have some time to consider the options (Kimura & Counceller, 2009).

4.9 Conclusion to Literature Review

This concludes my review of the literature that was considered important in regard to new word formation in Tāłtān, Dene and other Indigenous languages. In creating new words, there have been some important strides and recent research that has been contributed by various Indigenous groups who are wanting to push their language to adapt to the contemporary world we now live in. All of these contributions are important to how we are going to look at the findings of my research.

5. Methodology

When looking at methodology for my research, it was important for me to be informed by methodologies of other Indigenous scholars that closely matched how I intended to conduct my research, which was in a wholistic and respectful manner. I utilized Edōsdi's (Dr. Judy Thompson's) methodology on Tahltan worldview called *Hedekeyeh, Hots'ih Kāhidi – Our Ancestors Are in Us*. I know that I am responsible to both communities, the Tahltan nation and

the academic community. When I talk about our people, our communities and our ancestors, I am talking about all aspects of our nation. Even though I am doing research on our language, this does not mean that I would leave out other important aspects of our culture, ways of being, and ways of knowing. They are all interrelated. I must be accountable to the participants of my research, my community, my ancestors as well as future generations who will be reading my research. I also must recognize each person who has contributed to my journey as a second language speaker. In her article titled *Hede kehe' hotzi' kahidi': My Journey to a Tahltan Research Paradigm*, Edōsdi (2008) talks about the importance of giving respect to all who contributes to your knowledge as a researcher:

> It is vital that I not only tell of my research journey, but that I also honor all my teachers – Ancestors, Elders, family members, friends, university professors, and fellow graduate students – who have helped me and given me gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and support along the way. (p. 24)

Respectful and proper acknowledgement of your learnings from fluent speakers, Elders, participants, teachers, and colleagues are a way to strengthen relationships with the people who you work with and live amongst. Time and time again, these acknowledgements and relationships have been shown to be important to the Tahltan nation.

Respect for my people, my language and future second language learners is of utmost importance in my research process. In her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), Linda Tuhiwai Smith outlines the difference between insider and outsider research with insider researchers being held to a high degree of accountability within their own communities:

> At the general level insider researchers have to have ways of thinking critically about their processes, their relationships, and the quality and richness of their data and analysis. So too

> do outsiders, but the major difference is that insiders have to live with the consequences of their process on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities (p.138).

I need to be neutral and respectful to the Tahltan nation as a whole, including past, present and future generations, communities, language advocates and leadership. The history of Indian Residential Schools, as well as our history of colonization is plenty to have to heal from. I will only use words that will empower my people and strengthen language revitalization efforts. I believe that it takes a community to reclaim a language. We need to work together more than ever to heal from the past enough to want to speak our language freely and without shame again.

Using Edōsdi's Tahltan Voiceability methodology, my intent was to present and share the voices of my participants through my research. I want their voices to be heard, and their realities and ways of knowing to be brought out in my research. As I talked to some of the participants, one participant told me that she could not understand me when I was using 'high words'. She said I need to use smaller words so that she could understand me. That is when I realized that I needed to speak in a way that I could be understood by everyone. One way that I could give back to my community would be to bring my research back in a way that they could connect with and understand.

The study took place in two small communities, Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in, situated in the northwestern part of British Columbia. I carried out my qualitative research study utilizing focus groups, personal interviews and personal experience. The personal interviews included only fluent speakers of the Tāłtān language. I decided that fluent speakers of the language would have the extensive knowledge required to talk about spontaneous development of word creation.

Speakers at this level of proficiency will have conscious access to some knowledge of the grammatical structure of Tāłtān language.

I live amongst three Tahltan communities of Tātl'ah (Dease Lake), Łuwechō (Iskut) and Tlēgo'in (Telegraph Creek) where everyone knows me. In community-based research, being known to participants does not allow me to conduct research without consideration of cultural protocol. It is always important to build trusting relationships with potential participants. I found that I had to spend some time with them, particularly those living in Tlēgo'in, before introducing my research to them. While living in these communities, I noticed that building relationships was very important, and relationships needed to be maintained consistently. Someone may know a person's name but not fully know the person. Out of respect they will talk to you and be polite, but they may not be comfortable with talking to you.

As the researcher, I am well known in the community of Łuwechō because this is where I grew up. I have been working with the Elders, children and parents of the language nest for the past five years. Prior to this, I have been learning language from the Elders while increasing my proficiency in the Tāłtān language through the Master Apprentice program. Language revitalization work and other culturally relevant activities have been part of my community participation since 2012. This has allowed me to build a trusting relationship with the Elders, fluent speakers, and members of the community of Łuwechō. That being said, this does not exclude me from any responsibility to carry out the research in an ethical manner, which includes following the guidelines from the University of Victoria for all researchers who are interested in working with people.

Initial consultation letters were sent to the Iskut First Nation, Tahltan Band Council, and the Tahltan Central Government prior to commencing the research work. This allowed the Tahltan

leadership an opportunity to present any questions about my study before the research began. Aspects of the research methods, participants, and permissions were open to be adapted during the research data collection and prior to the end of the research at the discretion of the Tahltan Language Authority group, Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣidē. A presentation was given at two Dah Dzāhge Nodeṣidē meetings prior to commencing the research work.

At the beginning of my research, I intended to do personal interviews with several fluent speakers in each community of Tlēgo'in and Łuwechō. However, during my initial contact with fluent speakers in Tlēgo'in during July 2017, it became clear to me that two of the fluent speakers were not comfortable speaking on the topic of creating new words in the language in an interview by themselves. They felt that I would need to include more fluent speakers in a group setting. At that point, I decided that doing a focus group for both the Tlēgo'in and Łuwechō communities would not only be more efficient but would allow the fluent speakers to be comfortable in talking about the topic. After doing my initial focus group for Łuwechō and reading the transcription, I realized that what may have worked or been preferred for the Tlēgo'in participants was not ideal for the Łuwechō participants. Where there was a mixture of fluent and semi-fluent speakers in that focus group, the less proficient speakers may have felt uncomfortable in interactions with more proficient speakers on this topic. I noted this through the limited dialogue and also through body language as I was conducting the focus group. I decided to revert back to my original plan of doing personal interviews with two participants of the Łuwechō focus group. I conducted a total of one focus group and four personal interviews.

During the summer of 2018, when I was to conduct my focus groups and personal interviews, an unrelenting forest fire swept through the Tahltan territory, most notably in the Tlēgo'in area. The Tlēgo'in residents were officially evacuated on August 7th. They continued to

be evacuated from the Tahltan territory to Tātl'ah, Łuwechō, and Terrace, British Columbia for months following this tragic incident. Many homes were lost during this fire, including those of three of my potential research participants. This had a profound impact on the timing of my research. I was not able to follow my timeline of interviews for the Tlēgo'in residents and for one Łuwechō participant who would normally spend a lot of time in the Tlēgo'in area during summer. When trying to continue talks about my research, I felt that the Tlēgo'in residents just wanted someone to listen to them. One potential participant said to me in the language, "It's like someone in my family died, to lose my house and my daughters lost their houses." This was a very tragic situation for all Tahltans living in the territory. I could not bring myself to continue calling the Tlēgo'in fluent speakers to talk about my research. I was reminded by my research supervisor that research participants are not just research subjects, they are people. Therefore, I was only able to conduct two personal interviews with the Tlēgo'in fluent speakers.

Many speakers of Tāłtān language use some language at home with their families and would occasionally speak to their peers at Elders' luncheons or gatherings. Although English seems to be the dominant language of communication for many Tahltans, the participants are still very fluent and would speak the language when asked about it. Participants had already been creating new words prior to joining my research study. As a learner of Tāłtān language, I witnessed them spontaneously create new words in the context of language teaching, as well as at DDN meetings when approval of new words was being discussed.

I conducted one semi-structured focus group with fluent speakers of the Łuwechō dialect in Iskut, BC. The participants consisted of three fluent speakers. Focus group questions covered topics like the steps we need to take in creating new words in the language. The focus group recordings were not fully transcribed. I selectively transcribed the data. This means that I only

transcribed the data that was relevant to the research topic of creating new words and Tahltan worldview. I also left out times where a word or phrase was used repetitively. I confirmed data where more than one fluent speaker provided a word or phrase for an item or role in question. It was important to my research that more than one fluent speaker could confirm the data. I wanted the data to reflect results that were accurate about how words were created.

I analyzed all interview transcript data qualitatively looking for ways in which Tahltan worldview was presented in the language. I also analyzed the transcripts of all interviews and identified suggestions and recommendations about creating new words. The interview questions included asking about the importance of creating new words in the language, the possibility the person would participate in a New Words Committee, what would be the first steps in establishing a New Words Committee, and whether or not any speaker should be able to create new words in the language. I informed each participant in my focus group and personal interview that this was not an exercise where we would be creating new words, it was simply a discussion as to how we should create new words into the future. Questions included those about words that did not exist in the language and that helped to begin discussions about creating new words in the language. It allowed the participants to begin thinking about medical concepts, household items, food and drinks in the language. In addition to focus groups and personal interviews, I also gave the participants a questionnaire to complete. This can be found in Appendix 3. The questions on the questionnaire briefly covered the current numbering system, newly created words, English words in which no Tāłtān word exists, and some Tāłtān grammar. The participants had all been involved in creating new words prior to the study, so the topic of creating new words was not something new to them.

I needed to look at the data with a qualitative lens and accept that I could not be fully objective in my approach to the topic of the Tāłtān language. In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), Linda Tuhiwai Smith talks about both insider and outsider research. She says that previously, any research about Indigenous people is assumed to happen as outsider research. Now that we are beginning to conduct our own research, we need to keep in mind that objectivity and neutrality should not continue to be an automatic assumption or requirement. In her book *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009), Margaret Kovach states that recognizing that the researcher is not a neutral instrument of the research process shows the importance of accepting my own personal background and motivation to the research topic. As a second language learner, knowing that our language is at risk of becoming a sleeping language, this gives me personal motivation for new words to be created in my language. I know that we are at a critical time in reclaiming our language if we are not creating new words in our language for contemporary use. Coming into my research on creating new words in the language, I had already been studying and learning the language for approximately seven years. This allowed me to bring my personal experience into my research. Although throughout my childhood I had been exposed to my language through my dad and teachers, most of my personal experience comes from learning my language as an adult, second language learner. At this stage, I was able to consciously think about grammar forms, Tahltan ways of thinking and how new words have been developed both in the past, and more recently. I attribute my knowledge and experience of the Tāłtān language to the many fluent speakers who have taught me over the years. Without their perseverance to continue to speak and teach, our language would be at a more desolate stage today.

Because of my experiences as a language learner, I asked participants about our current numbering system, which is based on addition and multiplication. Higher numbers in our

language are said with three or four words since it is based on arithmetic. For higher numbers, you would need to add 10's and then 100's. For example, the word for 52 would be *łola'e tsosnān edēs łakē.* This translates to 'five 10's add 2'. For the number 148, you would say *denłolā'e aneht'ē, łēnt'ē tsosnān edēs nastāt'ē.* This translates to 'five persons, four 10's add 8'. As a second language speaker, I was interested to know if it is possible to have an easier system for higher numbers in our language.

I looked at some instances where words were created in Tāłtān. I looked at grammar rules that may have been followed. I looked at the Tahltan worldview and how it could have been embedded in a newly created word. I did some analysis of existing Tāłtān words that were created after European contact (e.g. 'pen', 'chair', and 'ruler'). Some of my reflections were about the ways in which these words were created. Were they descriptive, comparative, verb-oriented (functional), or related to a story or belief (metaphor)?

By looking at words on the First Voices App (http://www.firstvoices.com/en/home), I looked for themes found in other Dene languages for creating contemporary words. I did a comparison of similarities between Tāłtān and other Dene languages using dictionaries. I accepted the fact that I would not be able to note the full extent of similarities with looking at dictionaries alone. There may be other similarities that are not found in dictionaries and only exist in undocumented words and phrases. The last part of my research study was to seek already existing Tāłtān words that are not common knowledge to second language learners. I looked to my focus groups and personal interviews for this.

For the analysis of my data, I used the Grounded Research Theory. This is described as a research method in which concepts or ideas are developed from the data, rather than the other way around. Grounded theory offers a set of guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative

data to come up with a theory that is ‘grounded’ in the researcher’s data (Lew, Yang & Harklau, 2018). In grounded theory-based analysis, the researcher generally analyzes the data by: finding repeating themes throughout the data; coding emergent themes with keywords, phrases or labels; grouping the codes into concepts depending on which is most relevant; and then categorizing these ideas through how each interacts with each other (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, the categories created through this process, as well as the links found between them, are used as the basis for the development of a new way of knowing or seeing the data. In this case it is creating new words in Tāłtān language. Common strategies of Grounded theory includes open-ended inductive inquiry or questioning, which is why I decided my interviews were going to be semi-structured. Another unique feature of Grounded theory is that after initial data are collected, the researcher analyzes that data, and the concepts derived from the analysis form the basis for the subsequent data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This cycle continues on during the data collection of the research process.

5.1 Conclusion to Methodology

My work does not end when my research is completed. My relationship with the participants will continue beyond the research study. I am grateful for the gifts of knowledge that they have given to me. I feel that I need to reciprocate these gifts and give back to the community in a very meaningful way.

6. Findings

The information that I received from my focus group and personal interviews is central to my research study. As pointed out in the Methods section, I interviewed 4 people individually

and 3 people in one focus group for a total of 6 people. One participant was part of both the focus group and personal interview. The interviews were semi-structured and used a set of interview questions to promote discussion (see Appendix 2). I collapsed the findings from the focus group, interviews and questionnaire (see Appendix 3) into four analysis sections. The focus group and interviews gave me an indication about the feelings people had about creating new words. Asking about various items and persons for which no Tāłtān word exists offered me evidence of how Tahltans' way of seeing the world influenced the way in which they created new words. Since not everyone saw my questionnaire, it is a smaller part of my findings.

6.1 Attitudes about Creating New Words

In general, the participants welcomed the idea of creating new words in Tāłtān. Most participants did not seem overly concerned that there were many objects, actions, or concepts which we believe there are not yet words for in our language. One participant stated that in earlier times, they did not know about 'diabetes', 'dentist', or 'cowboy hat', and that is the reason why there may not be words for these items. The participant also stated this:

> Well those days... we don't know about cancer because we lived our life out in the bush. No doctors and we lived in the wilderness. Like we killed our moose and fixed up grease and stuff like that. We didn't use cooking oil or lard. No, we used animal's fat *ek'ah,* to cook for our kids. *Sas tlēye* (bear grease) is the best thing. Berries. It's why we got word for that, because we're using it (Jenny Quock, Łuwechō speaker).

The interview questions began by asking the participants if they think it's important that we have words for 'motorcycle', 'tire', 'sleigh', 'filing cabinet', and 'memory stick'. It was apparent that not all participants knew what a 'memory stick' was. Next questions were about whether it

was important to have words for the following medical terms: ‘diabetes’, ‘pacemaker’, ‘diabetes tester’, ‘cancer’. They were then asked if it was important that we have words for ‘dress suit’ and ‘cowboy hat’.

The topic of dialect was not part of the focus group or interview questions. However, the topic came up in the focus group when talking about the various steps needed in order to establish a New Words Committee. Participants talked about the difficulty in talking about dialect in large groups due to some not being comfortable with the differences in dialect. This topic is discussed further in the New Words Committee section.

One question was whether we should borrow words from another language in order to create new words. At least two participants agreed that if we are going to borrow words from another language, then it should be from the Dene language family. Since these languages are related to Tāłtān, it would make sense to borrow words from these languages. One participant stated that we should keep the already existing words that have been borrowed from other languages like Tlingit and English. The participant stated why she thinks that there are so many similarities between the Tāłtān and Tlingit languages, and why we should keep these:

> There was a lot of intermarriages. That was why that happened hey? There was a lot of intermarriages and trade systems between the Tlingit and the Tahltans. I think that’s how it came to be that the Tahltans ended up using the Tlingit (language). But I think that those Tlingit words that were incorporated into our language should stay as is. I don’t think we have to revamp it. It’s going to be really difficult to revamp it, rather than just going with an existing word. (Angela Dennis, Łuwechō speaker)

It became apparent that this participant would like to keep words that have been borrowed from the Tlingit and English languages that are already in use.

One of the interview questions was whether or not we could just use an English word in place of a word that we don't have in the language. For instance, I asked if we could just use phrases similar to *Banana eninlīnā?* and *Yogurt tube eninlīn?* The two questions translate to 'Do you want a banana?' and 'Do you want a yogurt tube?' Two participants said we should always try to create our own word first before using an English word. One participant believed that hearing other Indigenous languages using English words in their sentences was very interesting and made it easier to understand for them, what the person was talking about.

6.2 Suggestions for New Words

At the start of my study, I reassured the participants that we would not be creating new words as part of my research, but we would discuss how we should create new words into the future. Due to the nature of the research however, I felt that I needed to discuss some words for which no Tāłtān word exists. I was able to generate dialogue about suggestions for creating new words for household items, medical terms, food and drinks. The following suggestions in this section should not be considered as any part of an official process for creating new words. This was an exercise in order to look at the ways fluent speakers think about creating new words for contemporary items. In my findings, there were many word suggestions for certain items, but there were also instances in which little or no discussion resulted.

I asked about words for household items. The word for both 'fridge' and 'freezer' were suggested based on a description of their characteristics. The suggested word for 'fridge' was *kekitʂ sek'atʂ*, lit., 'cold box' from 3 participants. The suggested word for 'freezer' was *kekitʂ eʂtenh*, lit., 'frozen box' from 3 participants. One participant recalled a box in the fish house that

was used to keep foods cool. This is how she had heard Elders talking about this storage box used for food:

> Only fridge we had is like a box. And they put a screen over it and put it in the fishhouse. It stay cool and it never go bad. *Kekitʂ sɐ̲ k'atʂ t'anlē.* They say put that in that cold box. Meat and stuff (Margery Inkster Sr., Tlēgo'in speaker).

I asked about how we could talk about some medical terms in the language, for example, the words for 'diabetes'. They understood diabetes as your pancreas not functioning properly. The word for 'pancreas' in the language is *tl'edze.* The suggested phrase was *metl'edze ghah edū shugā etʂetʂ*. This translates to 'his or her pancreas is why he or she does not eat sugar'. This phrase does not include an exact word for diabetes but is talking about a person who has diabetes. A shorter noun phrase that was suggested for 'diabetes' was *tōtsāne tl'edze.* The word *tōtsāne* means 'barely there' or 'not working properly'. Therefore, the actual translation would be 'pancreas not working properly' or 'pancreas is barely working'. One participant stated:

> Tōtsāne tl'edze. It's what you call that…and it's specially made. That word... just say... Explain it say, "it's especially made for the diabetics". Cause other people, their tl'edze working fine (Mary Quock, Łuwechō speaker).

We moved on to roles that people play in society. How could we come up with a word for 'dentist' or 'doctor'? The suggested word for 'dentist' describes the role of this person. The verb used was 'to pull out' or 'to work on'. Four participants suggested *denghu' kadach'ili*, lit., 'pulls people's teeth'. Only one participant suggested *denghu' gha'iłah*, lit., 'works on people's teeth'. At least two participants suggested *daktā* as the word for 'doctor'. This would be considered a borrowed word from the English language. A similar creation of a word based on the role of a person emerged when I asked about the word for 'Santa'. The suggested word for 'Santa' was

based on a description using the verb ‘to give’. The suggested word was *edōne gha’elēhi*, lit., ‘gives to kids’ from 3 participants. This word would be considered a noun, but it includes a verb as part of the description. There are other instances where a verb is used in the formation of a noun in Tałtān.

There were some strong similarities in suggestions for several words. These were in the words for ‘dentist’, ‘Santa’, ‘fridge’, and ‘freezer’. The similarity with the way these words were suggested demonstrates the Tahltan way of thinking, or Tahltan worldview. Second language learners have admitted to struggling with the Tahltan way of thinking in the language. In my experience in informal discussions about creating new words, there have been times when a second language speaker would suggest a word that did not match the suggestion coming from a first language speaker.

In the language, I noticed there seemed to be no commands or words to describe the verbs for ‘turn it up’ and ‘turn it down’. That is the reason this became part of my interview questions and part of my questionnaire. Table 1 shows suggestions for translating the commands for ‘turn it up’ and ‘turn it down’. The translations in the table are based on the interviewees’ understandings of what the command means. There were some phrases that were translated differently for different speakers. I believe this reflected the differences in dialect or family variation in part.

Table 1. Suggested commands for ‘turn it up’ and ‘turn it down’ and interviewees translations.

Word Needed	**Suggestion 1**	**Translation**	**Suggestion 2**	**Translation**
Turn it up	*Hudege da’ānlē.*	Make it up there.	*Meduka’ denhdīs̲.*	Turn it to open it.
Turn it down	*Huyige da’ānlē.*	Make it down there.	*Hoda’dindīs̲.*	Lock it by turning it.
	Suggestion 3	**Translation**	**Suggestion 4**	**Translation**
Turn it up	*Hut’ī eł anlē.*	Make it with oomph.	*Kadindīs̲*	Turn it up
Turn it down	*Me’ēn eł ant’īn.*	Do away with it.	*Huyige dindīs̲.*	Turn it down there.

For the verbs ‘turn it up’ and ‘turn it down’, there seems to be more room for discussion. There could be some differences based on what object or thing you are turning up or down. There could be different ways of phrasing this depending on if you are talking about music, a stove, a heater or a key. I realized that creating new words that are verbs is more complicated than creating new words that are nouns.

6.3 Suggestions for Existing Words

The word for ‘phone’ was not part of the interview questions, however, this word came up in two interviews. Although previously there have been suggested words for ‘phone’, there has never been an officially designated word for ‘phone’. The suggested words for ‘phone’ are based on functional use, using the verb ‘to talk’. Two suggestions for ‘phone’ were *met’ā hodindēhi,* and *met’āt hodindē.* Both versions translate to ‘you talk through it’. The differences could reflect the differences in dialect.

There are words that are not commonly known to all speakers of the Tāłtān language. Part of my findings are regarding words asked about during my focus group and interviews for which I believed no Tāłtān word existed. After the focus group, I realized there are already words for ‘sleigh’ and ‘tire’. I learned the words *ts<u>i</u>k ts<u>i</u>k,* for ‘sleigh’ and *k’ints’ehts’itli* for ‘tire’. The word for ‘key’ was discovered from an interview. One participant had heard Elders talking about ‘key’ when she was a child:

> There is a word for ‘key’. I think I told. I said it to you before. I’m sure. *Me eł dukan ets’ededets<u>.</u> Dukan ets’ededes<u>.</u>* They even drop that *me eł*. Cause I hear it was used for, remember those keys on those canned meats? (Angela Dennis, Łuwechō speaker)

Me eł dukan ets'ededeʂ translates to 'with it you unlock'. The participant commented that it can be further shortened to *dukan ets'ededeʂ*. As is the case for suggesting new words, there are some who would like to shorten existing words.

There was a word that came from my personal interview that I had never heard before. It is the word for '(audio) recorder', which Margery Inkster Sr. said she heard when she was a child. The Tāłtān word for it is *denk'ādadī* lit., 'people talk into it'. To me this proves that it is possible that other words exist that we do not know about. Further interviews could happen, and older audio recordings could be listened to in order find these less common words.

In the interviews, a question was asked about the shortening of words. Most of the participants agreed that it would be good to shorten some words. There were concerns voiced that there are some words in our language that are too long for practical use. One participant, who is a teacher in the local school, talked about how difficult it is to teach children the longer words. In regard to shortening longer words, this participant stated:

> I would love that. I would love that so much because I really don't like saying pencil, table, and chairs to kids cause it's so long, drawn out. To them its like a tongue twister. It takes months to learn it. (Angela Dennis, Łuwechō speaker)

The participant stated that the word would have to be continuously repeated in order to be retained by the students. The words the participant was referring to are *me eł etse gitzi* 'pen or pencil', *dene mekāge etʂetʂ* 'table', and *dene mekāge ʂedah* 'chair'. In general participants were supportive in shortening new words for ease of use. One participant talked about how some words are shortened when the word began with *dene*. Often in our language, there are words that began with *dene*, meaning 'person'. These words are shortened to *den-*. Two examples provided by participants are *denti'e*, referring to 'good person', and *denładit'ē,* referring to the number

'twenty'. The word *denładit'ē* means 'a whole person', and this is in reference to counting the fingers and toes of one person. Another participant talked about the word for 'dragonfly':

> I've heard that word before, dragonfly. Dene tsigha' nidinlē. My grandparents used to use that word. It's the only one I know for 'dragonfly'. Some of these words are old words, from when I was a little girl. (Edna Quock, Tlēgo'in speaker).

The word *dentsigha' nidilē* or *dene tsigha' nidinlē* translates to 'take people's hair' in the language. That is the word that is used to describe 'dragonfly'.

One part of the questionnaire was about the current numbering system. The question was whether or not we should simplify our numbering system so that it is easier to talk about higher numbers in the language. Currently the numbering system is based on basic math. So, in order to talk about higher numbers, you would need to add 10's and then 100's. For example, the word for 42 would be *łent'ē tsosnān edēs łakē.* This translates to 'four 10's add 2'. The person hearing this number would need to do the math to figure out what number you are referring to.

In the questionnaire, it was asked that for our numbering system, could we not just use the numbers sequentially when talking about numbers over 20? So, for the number 67, I would say *nasłige nasłakē*, 'lit. six seven'. After filling out the questionnaires, I found that 4 out of 4 participants believe that the numbering system should not change, and that people who are learning the language just need to put in the effort to learn their numbers. At least one participant talked about the difficulty with numbers in the language. One participant said that there were a couple of people she remembered who were very good with numbers. I wondered to what extent numbers were used in the past. It could be that fluent speakers began using English numbers in place of Tāłtān numbers so the numbering system was the first thing that was shifted to the English language.

When it comes to numbers in the language, most participants were not interested in shortening or making it easier for second language learners. This reason could be that numbers in the Indigenous worldview is part of a system. In the Tāłtān language, we count by our hands. That is why the number 'five' is *łola'e.* The word *łola'e*, has the word *la'* in it which means 'hand'. Once you reach the number 'five', the numbering system restarts with one minor change. See Table 2 below for the Tāłtān numbering system.

Table 2. Example of the Tāłtān numbering system.

English	***Tāłtān***	**English**	***Tāłtān***
One	*łige*	Six	*nasłige*
Two	*łakē*	Seven	*nasłakē*
Three	*tāt'ē*	Eight	*nastāt'ē*
Four	*łent'ē*	Nine	*nasłent'ē*
Five	*łola'e.*	Ten	*tsosnān*

As mentioned previously, the number 'twenty' is *denładit'ē.* This is referring to 'a whole person', and this is in reference to counting the fingers and toes of one person (A. Dennis and R. Louie, personal communication). To say the number 100, you would say *denłolā'e aneht'ē* (Carter, 1994). This translates to 'the amount of five whole persons'. It is possible that the reluctance to change the numbering system comes from the need to maintain the Tāłtān worldview (L. Saxon, personal communication).

6.4 Suggestions for a New Words Committee

The topic of dialect was not part of the focus group or interview questions. However, the topic came up in the focus group when talking about the various steps needed in order to

establish a New Words Committee. More than one participant talked about their reluctance in talking about dialects in a large group due to some not being comfortable with the subject. One participant stated concerns about gathering all the Tāłtān speakers together, considering there are two dialects, and how that could cause problems. At least two participants stated that he or she would feel more comfortable in speaking at a meeting about language if the meetings were held separately in the communities of Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in. For instance, it would be best to have a meeting for the Łuwechō speakers in Łuwechō and the Tlēgo'īn speakers in Tlēgo'īn. One participant suggested that a brief discussion on dialect be done before getting started. This would provide speakers the opportunity to talk about dialect before anything.

All participants except for one were willing to join a New Words Committee if the opportunity arose. One participant was reluctant to agree to join because she thought that others who were more knowledgeable in the Tāłtān language needed to be involved. This participant gave a couple of names of people who she felt knew a lot about the language. I received some suggestions for the steps that need to be taken for a New Words Committee to be established.

The next part of the interviews was regarding the steps that are needed in order to establish a New Words Committee. Most participants stated that older speakers need to be involved. One participant stated the importance of having Elder speakers because they have the knowledge of the language and the Tahltan way of thinking. Another participant talked about the importance of having younger speakers involved so that they could listen and learn from the older speakers who are making up new words.

One participant said that words could be gathered before a New Words Committee meeting. Another participant said that doing some research on other Dene languages beforehand could help in the discussion of borrowing from other languages at these meetings.

One part of the interview was to ask whether any Tāłtān language speaker should be allowed to create new words. Should any speaker be allowed to create new words or only fluent speakers? Should semi-fluent speakers also be able to create new words? One participant stated the importance of having Elders' input into creating new words:

> I really think that we need Elders' input. That's the way to go with it. Because they are the ones who have the knowledge and wisdom of our language. They're actually the carriers of our language and it's really vital to have their input. Especially if they are…it's their first language. You can't go wrong with them; without them, you can. (Angela Dennis, Łuwechō speaker)

At least one participant stated that if there are no first language speakers left, then second language speakers should be able to create new words. At least one participant stated that anyone should be able to create new words in the language.

6.5 Conclusions to Findings

The focus group, interviews and questionnaires in my research helped me to gain an insight into what fluent speakers feel are important aspects in creating new words in the language. The interviews with fluent speakers about creating new words in the language reinforces the Tahltan worldview. Participants were able to give me some feedback as to how a New Words Committee could be established. This leads me to the next section of my report, which is to come up with recommendations for creating new words in the Tāłtān language.

7. Implications and Key Recommendations

The findings from my research and the research of others, combined with my personal experiences as a second language learner and speaker, have yielded recommendations and considerations for future efforts to create new words in Tāɬtān and to do so in meaningful ways that will align with traditional Tahltan ways of thinking, or the Tahltan worldview. My thoughts are organized into subsections with titles as follows: General Recommendations, Importance of Dialect, New Words Committee, Considerations for Second Language Learners, Future Research and Conclusion.

7.1 General Recommendations

Including the Tahltan worldview in the process of creating new words is going to be one of the most important recommendations coming out of my research. In order to preserve the Tahltan way of thinking into the future, we need to create words that align with our worldview. We will learn this from our oldest fluent speakers or from old audio recordings. We need to look into both as ways of learning the Tahltan way of thinking in the language. There is also the opportunity of learning Tahltan worldview from looking at existing words. We could look closely at how these words were made and how the Tahltan worldview is embedded in the language. Some of the words will give us an understanding about how our language changes over time and how it will adapt into the future.

Involving the most fluent speakers of the language is essential to creating new words. Since Tahltan worldview is embedded in the language, first language speakers have knowledge of that worldview. This is especially important when thinking about new words that are difficult to create. As noted in my research, it seems to be more difficult to create new words that are verbs

or are built from verbs compared to creating new words that are nouns. It may be especially important to involve first language speakers when creating new words that are verbs.

When it comes to revitalizing the Tāłtān language, it would be good to try creating new words in the Tāłtān language first, before resorting to just using English words in place of a Tāłtān word. One motivation for creating new words would be to be able to speak exclusively in the language without having to use English for certain words like ‘banana’, ‘TV’, or ‘yogurt tube’. This would ensure that English does not begin to be incorporated into our living language.

The borrowing of words is not new for many Indigenous languages, including Tāłtān. Cultural sharing and cultural relatedness are natural occurrences, since many Indigenous nations traded with one another. Borrowing words is part of that cultural sharing. The cultural sharing and cultural relatedness of many different languages can be seen as a positive aspect of our history. The borrowing of words from related or neighbouring languages could be considered to add richness to languages, and it provides evidence of historical interactions that go back centuries. Borrowing from related or neighbouring languages is one way we could add new words to our language, since this was done historically.

7.2 Importance of Dialect

At the very beginning of my journey in learning my language, I had not given much thought to the question of dialect. All I knew was that I wanted to speak my language and so I began learning. I did not know that I was going to speak the Łuwechō dialect. I also did not know that the people in Tlēgo’in spoke the Tlēgo’īn dialect. I was very interested in finding out more about the slight differences in dialects.

One day, in a meeting I came to the realization of the importance of dialect. There was a fluent speaker who wanted us to stop calling it Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in dialect. They wanted everyone to simply refer to dialects as different variations in our language. I did not know why but deep down inside, I thought it was surprising that someone was asking us to stop considering the differences in dialects. I stated that we should never just get rid of dialects because the differences in the way we speak Tāłtān are important for history as well as for preserving the two remaining dialects, Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in. At the time I felt like no one really agreed with me or felt comfortable agreeing with me. Nearing the end of the discussion I finally said in a very emotional state, "The Łuwechō dialect is part of my identity. It's who I am. If you are wanting to stop talking about the different dialects in our language and change it to variations instead, then you are threatening part of my identity as a Tāłtān speaker. This is why I am strongly against it. There has to be way more discussion on this before you make such a big decision. This cannot only be decided at this table." Finally, I felt like I had been heard and the discussion about getting rid of dialects has never been brought up again. It was not until that day, in that meeting, that I realized that my Łuwechō dialect is an important part of my identity. If we begin to look at dialects as part of our identity, then they will not be seen as a hierarchy of dialects. There is not one dialect that is more important than the other. It is important for us to preserve all dialects of our language.

7.3 New Words Committee

Although the task at hand in creating new words may seem overwhelming at first, developing a New Words Committee could help to provide focus and make progress. Once fluent speakers are in the mindset of creating new words and participating in a group setting, where that is its

main focus, then the task will become easier. When thinking about creating a Tāłtān New Words Committee there are many things that need to be taken into consideration. The structure, timing and members who will be participating in the New Words Committee needs to be decided by the community. Involving community members in this decision-making process from the beginning will ensure the success of a New Words Committee. The community members could incorporate any methods or ceremony, like prayers, in the process of establishing or running a New Words Committee.

Although it is essential to have first language speakers involved during all aspects of creating new words, we also need to involve other Tāłtān speakers. As part of my personal experience in learning Tāłtān language as a second language speaker, I encountered first language speakers who had differing views on creating new words in the language. Some do not want the language to change from the old ways and some are accepting of this. It has been suggested that speakers of a younger generation have a much more open mind when it comes to creating new words (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). They may be more motivated to create new words in the language.

Second language speakers seem to be more active speakers of the Hawaiian language (Kimura & Counceller, 2009). This may also be true for our language, since I noticed a push towards creating new words in the language from the new generation of upcoming Tāłtān speakers, some of whom have graduated from the Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization Program from the University of Victoria. One role that the second language speakers could take on in the New Words Committee is to help the fluent speakers by describing contemporary concepts and use of technology. It is possible to use the language to explain these. Some second language speakers may know how to write in the language, which is an important

aspect of documenting the creation of new words. Including second language speakers and learners of Tāłtān in the New Words Committee would be important. In addition to these roles, they attend meetings to give witness to the work being done, add their experiences to the discussion, learn the process of creating new words and see how the worldview is reflected in this process.

It would be important to involve people from all dialects of the Tāłtān language. In general, all dialects need to be included in current and future language work. First, this is to ensure that all dialects are preserved, and second, it is to consider whether or not there are differences in the way words are created based on dialect. One participant suggested that each community have their own meeting to discuss creating new words. This was to avoid any conflict regarding dialects and variations in the language. However, I believe that when it comes to creating new words in the language, you need to include all dialects.

There needs to be more than one speaker of the Tlēgo'īn dialect present so that there are no barriers such as dialectal differences that could result in the Tlēgo'īn speaker not understanding what word the group is discussing. I think that also spending more time with all fluent speakers and talking about language in general would help ease any tensions about differences in dialect.

The group setting would have to be safe and comfortable enough so that fluent speakers and second language learners from all dialects are able to provide input into the new words. Kimura and Counceller (2009) talk about how consensus within the group allows for an effective new words committee. Consensus means that there is a good understanding from group membership of the goals and the mission of the work. Personality differences should not deter from the overall mission of creating new words. Allowing a safe environment to speak in a group setting would be the ideal situation for generating ideas for creating new words.

Meetings for the New Words Committee need to be considered as well. Effective communication of upcoming meetings, communication of words to be considered and even the taking of meeting minutes are all important aspects that will ensure success. For the Alutiiq language, there was a list of words distributed to each member in advance (Counceller, 2010). There were three categories of words: words to confirm, words in discussion and coming up words (words for future discussion). A similar list should be created for each meeting of the Tāłtān New Words Committee. Following from this, once new words are created, there needs to be a way to communicate the new words effectively to the Tāłtān people. This could be in the form of a newsletter, social media, e-mail or all of these methods.

7.4 Considerations for second language learners

Second language learners first and foremost need to learn the Tahltan worldview. Without knowing the Tahltan worldview it would be very difficult to create new words in the language. In my experience with teaching language to adults, many admit that it was difficult for them to 'think in the language'. I also found it surprising how I did not immediately recognize the Tahltan worldview in some of the language that I was taught. I believe that the Tahltan worldview is something that needs to be taught and considered when learning the language. Applying this knowledge of Tahltan worldview is important when thinking about creating new words.

When creating new words, we need to consider second language learners. This includes the use of new words in sentences. For instance, the new words *me eł etse gitz* 'pen', *mekāge s̲edah* 'chair', *mekāge etz̲ets̲* 'table', and *me eł etse kā* 'ruler' all begin with *me,* which is a pronoun referring to the object itself. If we were to say 'give my pen to him', there will be changes

internal to the word unlike what learners might first think of. That being said, with continued use and explanation, the changes in word forms can still be taught to a second language speaker.

Although at least one of my research participants suggested that the shortening of words would make it easier to teach in the language, this does not mean that we need to shorten all new words in the language. In some other Indigenous languages, there is no shortening of new words. Different people will have differing opinions about the shortening of new words. On one hand there are people who are providing suggestions for and hoping to shorten new words. On the other hand, there are people who would like to keep the longer words. This is something that needs to be discussed at the New Words Committee. There is a tension between, on the one hand, making a word easier to learn and use in speaking the language and, on the other hand, maintaining the Tāłtān worldview. There is also a question of preserving the uniqueness of the language of first language speakers.

7.5 Future Research

Research in the topic of dialectal differences between the Tlēgo'in and the Łuwechō dialects is very limited, if any exists. Once Tāłtān dialectal research is explored, then we can look more closely to see if there are differences in creating new words in the language based on dialect. For example, I noticed that when looking to create a word for 'plane' that the suggested word was *det'ahi* lit. 'to fly', when talking to fluent speakers from Łuwechō. A Tlēgo'in speaker who was not part of my participant group, often called a plane, *det'agi* lit. 'it's flying'. Are there differences in dialect when coming up with new words?

In addition to dialect differences, I, and those who I have discussed this with, have noticed that there are also variations between families in how they pronounce some words in the

language. It seems to me that families have raised children with their preferred pronunciation of certain words in the language. Future research into family variations will likely add to understanding about Tahltan worldview, dialect differences and social interactions.

In the past, words have been created spontaneously by fluent speakers for a very long time. These words are already in use and have not been officially approved by any process. Since there was a long break where fewer words were being created for contemporary items or contemporary concepts, having a language council "approval" for new words was a good way to begin the process of creating new words. In the future, if we consider the spontaneous creation of new words as a sign of language vitality, maybe one day there wouldn't have to be a committee, since speakers will be able to spontaneously create these words and they will catch on and spread to other speakers.

7.6 Consideration for Other Indigenous Languages

Many Indigenous nations are wanting to create new words in their languages. There are many things to consider before starting the process. First you need to establish and maintain a good relationship with the fluent speakers of the language. If you already have a good relationship then you are already halfway there. The next important step is to include speakers of all dialects in your language. If required you will need to hold separate meetings in each community so that everyone will feel safe in the discussion about creating new words.

It would be important to study existing words in the language and how words have been created in your language. As the late Dr. Trish Rosborough stated, "There are many 'beautiful words' that exist in Indigenous languages across the world" (2019). We need to document these so that the many different worldviews could be preserved. The older fluent speakers hold this

knowledge of Indigenous worldview. If there are no older fluent speakers left then you need to look at older documentation of the language, including audio, video and written.

One more resource is to look at what neighbouring languages have done to create new words in the language. How have they created new words? What words have they combined to create new words? What verb forms have they used? In my opinion, the Dene worldview and perhaps even the North American Indigenous worldview has many similarities. Looking at the neighbouring languages could help if you have no fluent speakers left in your language.

7.7 Conclusion

When thinking about creating new words in Tāłtān and any Indigenous language, there are many considerations to take into account. The Tahltan worldview needs to play a key part in creating new words. Incorporating the Tahltan worldview to new words will ensure that this unique worldview is preserved and understood for future generations. The grammar of the Tāłtān language is intricate, because verbs and nouns change depending on details of events and their participants. In speaking, teaching and learning Tāłtān and creating new words we need to recognize and keep these intricacies in mind.

It is important that current and future language revitalization efforts include all dialects so that all can be fully preserved. Any future research on the Tāłtān language should include speakers of both the Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in dialect. It is not acceptable for only one dialect in the Tāłtān language to persist into the future when two dialects exist today. Once words are created, it will entirely depend on whether or not they get used by speakers. Some words may not be used and other words may naturally be shortened for practical use with no official means of acceptance.

There is still much work to be done to reclaim our Tāłtān language. We must create new speakers, and in order to do that, our language must adapt to the world around us so that we can speak Tāłtān in all aspects of our lives. The first step is to establish a committee of language speakers with the task of creating new words. Participant Erma Nole-Bourquin (Łuwechō speaker) says about the task of creating new words:

> I think it would be fun. It would be a good thing to be part of this... creating new words. You know, just think about how much fun we could have. We could have all our jokes around creating new words. I think it would be good and I'm looking forward to it.

Creating new words in the language could be seen as an innovative project or goal that the entire Tāłtān language community could work toward. Now is the time to take up these recommendations that have been voiced by our Tahltan fluent speakers. I look forward to continuing to work with both communities of Łuwechō and Tlēgo'in on the task of increasing the lexicon of the Tāłtān language, one word at a time.

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APPENDIX 1.

Focus Group Questions

1. How important do you think it is that we have Tāłtān words for motorcycle, tire, sleigh, filing cabinet, and memory stick?
2. How important do you think it is that we have words for diabetes, pacemaker, diabetes tester, and cancer?
3. How important do you think it is that we have words for dress suit, cowboy hat, seed, and fridge?
4. How do you feel about shortening some newly created words for ease of use? For example, ***mekāge sedahi*** - chair, ***mekāge etsedzi*** - table, ***jukāge*** - laptop
5. How do you feel about using borrowed words from the English or other languages? For example ***māges, shugā, daktā geshū, gahū, keshā.***
6. How do you feel about creating new words using other Dene languages or other neighbouring languages? ***Togatāł, wakhdānā,*** and ***kakah'ut*** are all words that have been borrowed from the Tlingit language.
7. Do you think that there are some words that we could just use the English version for? For instance should we just say TV, yogurt tube, Santa or banana in our sentences? Examples. ***Banana eninlīn? Yogurt tube meninlīn.***
8. Should we always attempt to create new words before resorting to just using the English word?
9. Do you think any Tāłtān language speaker should be allowed to invent new words in the Tāłtān language?
10. If there is a Tāłtān New Words Committee, would you be interested in being part of this group?
11. If there is a Tāłtān New Words Committee, what do you think its most important steps would be?

APPENDIX 2.

Interview Questions

1. Do you feel that it is important to create words in Tāłtān for motorcycle, tire, sleigh, filing cabinet and memory stick?
2. Do you think it is important that we have words for diabetes, pacemaker, diabetes tester, and cancer?
3. Do you think it is important that we have words for dress suit and cowboy hat?
4. Before creating new words in Tāłtān, what are some important steps?
5. If there was a Tāłtān New Words Committee created, would you be interested in participating in these meetings?
6. Do you think anybody should be allowed to invent new words in the Tāłtān language?
7. How do you feel about shortening some newly created words for ease of use?
8. How do you feel about using borrowed words from the English or other languages? For example ***māges, shugā, daktā geshū, gahū, keshā.***
9. How do you feel about creating new words using other Dene languages or other neighbouring languages? ***Togatāł, wahdānā,*** and ***kakah'ut*** are all words that have been borrowed from the Tlingit language.
10. Do you think that there are some words that we could just use the English version for? For instance should we just say TV, yogurt tube, Santa or banana in our sentences? Examples. ***Banana eninlīn? Yogurt tube meninlīn.***
    Should we always attempt to create a new word for these before resorting to the English word?

APPENDIX 3.

Questionnaire

1. How would you say 49 in Tāłtān?
2. How would you say 110 in Tāłtān?
3. What would you call an airplane in Tāłtān?
4. How do you say, “Turn it up!” in Tāłtān?
5. How would you say, “Turn it down!” in Tāłtān?
6. How would you say doctor (as in medical doctor) in Tāłtān?
7. How would you say dentist in Tāłtān?

Interviewee	**Person A**	**Person B**	**Person C**	**Person D**
How would you say 49 in Tāłtān?				
How would you say 110 in Tāłtān?				
What would you call an airplane in Tāłtān?				
How do you say, “Turn it up!” in Tāłtān?				
How would you say, “Turn it down!” in Tāłtān?				
How would you say doctor (as in medical doctor) in Tāłtān?				
How would you say dentist in Tāłtān?				

etc (use a long piece of paper so there is room to write the answers as you are talking, and leave extra spaces in case there is more than one answer)