

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAND

by

Aliana Violet Parker
B. A., University of Victoria, 2008

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

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Indigenous worldviews are essential to successful language education, yet it remains a challenge to integrate them into current frameworks dominated by Western paradigms and pedagogies. This research addresses one aspect of the maintenance of cultural integrity for Indigenous languages as they are taught in a contemporary context. The purpose of this research is twofold: to explore the connections between Indigenous languages and the land, and to see how these connections are reflected in current language education practices. In particular, the study looks at the use of websites for Indigenous language education, with the goal of better understanding the potential for such placeless, global media to represent the inherently place-based nature of Indigenous languages. The study is based on an Indigenist research paradigm and employs the qualitative principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory. It incorporates a synthesis of current literature regarding connections between language and land, personal interviews with Indigenous language and culture experts, and a survey of 14 language education websites from Canada and the United States. Essential ties between land and language are revealed in the words of Indigenous and other writers, and in the thoughts and practices of Indigenous thinkers actively engaged with both land and language. These ties represent an intimate relationship to land that weaves together Indigenous knowledge, spirituality, history and identity. This study contributes to our understanding of the significance of land for Indigenous languages, and the importance of Indigenous worldviews for Indigenous education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*many of us realize that you can't separate land from language,
any more successfully than you can separate mind from body
some things just don't slice apart neatly for nice noun boxes!*
(R. Z. Smith, personal communication, Sep. 27, 2011)

1.1 Introduction

The loss of Indigenous languages is a growing concern throughout the world, and for most Indigenous languages in Canada and the United States the situation is critical. Language revitalization efforts by Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists alike are abounding in response to increased language shift (Hinton and Hale, 2001; Harrison, 2007). While such efforts take a multitude of different forms, the ultimate success of any is dependent on a decolonized understanding of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing (Battiste, 1998; Shaw, 2001; Waziyatawin, 2005). Indigenous languages are an essential part of Indigenous knowledges, cultures and lifeways. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) points to the significance of these connections:

Language is the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their shared experience. For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well. And, as they point out, if the languages of this continent are lost, there is nowhere else they can be heard again.
(Vol. 3, Part 6)

As this statement suggests, Indigenous languages are fundamental to Indigenous knowledges and worldviews. In fact, as Waziyatawin A. Wilson (Dakota) states, “nothing reflects Indigenous worldviews and ways of being more than Indigenous languages” (2004, p. 369). Understanding these ways of knowing is essential for successful language revitalization, as much as language revitalization is crucial to the maintenance and promotion of these worldviews.

A common theme in Indigenous understanding is that Indigenous knowledges and languages come from the land: “From an Indigenous perspective, ways of knowing and

learning are derived from Creation, therefore, knowledge is sacred; inherent in and connected to all of nature, its creatures, and humans” (Graham & Ireland, 2008, p. 33). Similarly, Lewis Cardinal (Cree) states that “the land is paramount for all Indigenous societies. Their relationship to that land, their experience on that land shapes everything that is around them” (quoted in Wilson, 2008, p. 87). This relationship to the land also shapes language, so much that language itself comes from the land. Tia Oros Peters (Zuni) states “We came out of particular places and our specific thoughts and belief systems came from those places as well; we were shaped by the land, our language comes from the land” (quoted in Hildner, 2001). In her keynote address at the 19th annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium, Dr. Jeanette Armstrong (Okanagan) stated: “Language itself comes from how the land expresses itself. Every language comes from the different interactions we have with the land” (2012). This connection to land is a vital element of Indigenous languages and so must also be a fundamental part of language revitalization efforts.

The intent of this research is to contribute to the processes of decolonization and language revitalization by exploring these connections between Indigenous languages, worldviews and the land. Following Waziyatawin, through this research I also seek to challenge, if in a small way, “the powerful institutions of colonization that have routinely dismissed alternative knowledges and ways of being as irrelevant to the modern world” (2004, p. 359), and instead to privilege Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, demonstrating their axial role in the revitalization of Indigenous languages.

The goal of this research is to develop an understanding of the connection between Indigenous languages and the land, and to examine how this connection is represented in online Indigenous language education. My central research question is: What is the significance of Indigenous perspectives of land for Indigenous language education? In order to answer this question, I consider three sub-questions that guide my investigation:

1. What are some ways in which Indigenous languages are connected to the land?
2. What is the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education?
3. What are the ways in which land is represented in websites designed for Indigenous language education?

I approach answers to these questions in an exploratory manner, employing qualitative research principles. Basing the research in an Indigenist research paradigm, I adopt a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology to guide my exploration. This work consists of four parts. I first consider the ways that Indigenous languages are connected to the land through a comprehensive review of the literature on Indigenous languages, cultures and worldviews, as written by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. I then elaborate, expand upon and develop this understanding through personal interviews with six Indigenous language and culture experts. These interviews fill the gap left in the literature by the paucity of Indigenous writings on this topic, and provide a first-hand understanding of these issues. In response to the second question, a secondary literature review explores the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education and highlights the ways that land is essential in the educational process. Finally, a survey of 14 Indigenous language education websites from Canada and the United States responds to the last question, in considering the ways that land is represented in online language education. This technology focus is significant, considering that “the use of technology has become a fact of life. Therefore, it is difficult to expect that the languages of Indigenous people will be able to survive in the 21st century without being supplemented by multimedia technology in this culturally diverse and technological enhanced world” (Galla, 2010, pp. 46-47).

The aim of this research is to explicitly consider the ways in which language and land are connected, and to apply this understanding to one specific area of a language revitalization effort, namely, online language education. Through this work, I hope to move Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing to the forefront, acknowledging their precedence in matters of language revitalization, and inspiring thought about how Indigenous ways of knowing are foundational to Indigenous language teaching. In this regard, I contribute to an emerging body of literature on Indigenous Second Language Learning (ISLL). As described by McIvor (2012), ISLL is a newly developing field of research that focuses specifically on the acquisition of Indigenous languages as second languages. While it borrows extensively from mainstream Second Language Acquisition research, ISLL specifically focuses on the “uniqueness of second-language learning in Indigenous contexts due to the colonial dynamic” (McIvor, 2012, p. 41).

Additionally, this study helps narrow a gap in the current literature by making the connections between language and land the focal point. The review presented in Chapter 3 is one of the first works to draw together the literature on this topic from so many different sources, and to unify the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts from a variety of disciplines and experiences. This thesis contributes to our understanding of the role of the internet and other new media for Indigenous language revitalization. It responds to the need for further research, as pointed out by Galla, on “how Indigenous languages are impacted by global multimedia technology, how these technologies are contributing to language revitalization and education, and how communities are assessing the impacts of these technologies” (2010, p. 221). This work will be of value to all those who are working to maintain and revitalize their languages in the 21st century.

1.2 Introducing the Researcher: Situating Myself in the Research

“...we write about ourselves and position ourselves at the outset of our work because the only thing we can write about with authority is ourselves.”

(Absolon & Willett, in Brown & Strega, 2005, p. 97)

Situating oneself is an essential part of Indigenous research. Many Indigenous scholars, when discussing Indigenous research methodologies, emphasize the importance of the researcher’s transparency. It is, in essence, the same thing as an in-person introduction: sharing who you are, where you are from, and the journey you have travelled. This introduction places you in a context and allows your audience to know you and interpret you. Within a research context, it provides accountability to all those affected by that research (Kovach, 2006).

I am a non-Indigenous Canadian of European descent. I was born in southern Alberta in the traditional territory of the Akainawa Blackfoot nation, and spent 6 consecutive years of my childhood living in different places both within Canada and overseas. This has made the question “Where are you from?” somewhat difficult to answer. However, for the last 16 years I have been a grateful resident in traditional Coast Salish territory on the southern peninsula of Vancouver Island, which I now consider my home.

I first became interested in Indigenous language revitalization during my undergraduate studies at the University of Victoria. Before that time I had almost no

knowledge of the Indigenous languages of Canada and only limited understanding of the issues facing minority languages worldwide. While completing my BA degree in Linguistics, I was inspired by several of my professors to learn more about these issues. I chose to pursue a Masters degree specifically as a way to gain a better understanding of the Indigenous languages of Canada and of the many issues in language revitalization. Throughout this program I have not only been able to research these issues for my thesis, but I have also had the honour of being a part of language revitalization in action, working as a research assistant for my supervisor Leslie Saxon on the Tłı̄ch̄o Multimedia Online Dictionary and related projects. This experience both confirmed and complemented my learning process in my research, and provided me with a valuable ground-up perspective of language revitalization work.

This research became for me a part of the process that Regan (2006) describes as “unsettling the settler within”: a process of becoming aware of my own worldviews through learning the worldviews of another. I have allowed this research to challenge and change me. It began with a simple discussion between me and my supervisor in preparation for a funding application; it has become a life-changing, worldview-shaping journey of “unsettling”. As I have researched and learned about Indigenous ways of knowing and being, I have learned also about myself and my own beliefs. I am very grateful for this learning experience, for the Indigenous experts who graciously taught me so much, and for the opportunity to become a small part of the process of decolonization and reconciliation.

1.3 Clarification of Terms

I have chosen to use the term *Indigenous*, rather than Aboriginal or Native, because it reflects the intrinsic connection to land that Indigenous peoples have. As Deloria and Wildcat noted, “stated simply, *indigenous* means to be of a place” (2001, p. 31). Accordingly, the term Indigenous in this thesis refers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, as well as the Native American peoples of the United States. In using a single term, I do not intend to imply a cultural or linguistic uniformity of these groups, nor do I pretend that my comments apply to all of them. I use the word *peoples* deliberately, as there is vast diversity in the languages, cultures and knowledges of Indigenous peoples throughout Canada and the U.S. However, the themes that I discuss,

particularly the overarching theme of the connection between language and land, appear to be common to most if not all Indigenous peoples in these countries. If there is significant divergence, I have not found evidence of it.

Throughout this thesis the word *language* is used to refer specifically to Indigenous languages. The term *land* is also consistently used with one meaning: it refers to the specific geographical region, landscape and ecology with which any given language is associated. In this way, the term *land* encompasses water, air, flora, fauna and every type of geographical feature. Thus, *land* in this work does not refer to the broad, general meaning of the term as much as it refers to the specific localities and regions in which Indigenous people have traditionally lived, and the particular geography and ecosystems within those regions. In this way, the term may be considered synonymous with *place*, being a specific location with specific meanings, stories and experiences tied to that location.

Finally, this research is framed within the context of North America, specifically the continental area north of Mexico. While I recognize the colonial origins of these distinctions, I choose to use the names Canada and the United States to refer to this area, as these most closely represent the geographical region that is the focus of this research.

1.4 Limitations of this Research

The themes explored in this work are vast and complex, and cannot be completely addressed in a single thesis. Accordingly, the purpose of this thesis is not to provide a comprehensive and complete discussion of these themes, but simply to raise them as worthy of consideration. In particular, the relationship between Indigenous languages and the land is one that cannot be fully described and understood by words alone. The intent in this work is merely to emphasize the foundational significance of this relationship for Indigenous language and culture revitalization and education. It is for this reason that I present a broad, cross-cultural discussion of these issues, referring to characteristics that apply to many, if not all, Indigenous peoples. Obviously there is significant variation in the ways that people of different languages and cultures understand their connections to land. For just like their languages, each group's worldview is as unique as the land on which they live. While looking at these specific variations might be an excellent topic for future research, at present this research is concerned with exploring the common themes

in order to develop a broad understanding of the issues at hand.

It is also necessary to acknowledge that a study of the relationships between Indigenous languages and the land that is written in English is inherently flawed. For while English itself is connected to land in a variety of ways, it cannot fully express the deep and abiding connection to land that is embedded within Indigenous languages. Consequently, this thesis must be recognized as simply the beginning of a discussion on this topic, allowing room for others to add their voices and their experiences to elaborate our combined understanding. It must also be recognized that the intimate connection to land discussed in this work cannot wholly be understood except through personal, physical experience of actually living on the land for a period of time. As I am a non-Indigenous person without this kind of experience on the land, and without previous understanding of these concepts, this work necessarily emerges from my own outsider perspective and so cannot express the experience of Indigenous peoples.

Finally, the context of this work has been limited to the Indigenous languages within Canada and the United States, with a primarily Canadian focus. This was done to control the scope of the research, though it is recognized that the themes explored in this thesis may be relevant for most other Indigenous peoples worldwide.

1.5 Overview of the Thesis: A Reader's Guide

This research is organized around two central themes. The first theme addresses the connections between language and land, and explores these connections in the writings of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, and in the words of Indigenous language and culture experts. The second theme applies this understanding to an educational context, and examines the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education, and in Indigenous language education online. Accordingly, Chapter 2 outlines the methodology of this research, which was conducted using Constructivist Grounded Theory within a guiding Indigenist research paradigm. Chapter 3 presents the literature review that explores the connections between language and land as they are represented in the writings of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors. Chapter 4 outlines the interviews conducted with the Indigenous experts, and the learning gained from those interviews. Chapter 5 presents a secondary literature review that explores the significance of land for Indigenous and place-based models of education. Chapter 6 describes the

survey of Indigenous language education websites that examined how land appears in online education. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a summary and some final thoughts.

This thesis may be of value to readers from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of interests, though each may find different sections more or less useful depending on his or her previous knowledge. It is not necessary to read this work in order from start to finish; readers are welcome to go directly to those sections of most interest to them. The discussion of methodology and corresponding references in Chapter 2 will be of most value to students or researchers who wish to learn more about Indigenous research methodologies. Those interested in learning more about Indigenous languages and worldviews will benefit most from Chapters 3 and 4 which discuss the connections between language and land as they fit within Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Language educators and activists who are working on developing programs in their community may be most interested in Chapter 5, which addresses common issues in Indigenous and place-based education. Finally, those working on developing or expanding websites for language teaching may wish to turn directly to the survey of websites presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2: GUIDING METHODOLOGIES

We need to know our own research story, because if we are doing Indigenous research it is likely that sooner or later an Elder or Community person will ask: Who are you? Why did you do that research? And why did you do it that way? We have to be able to answer these methodological questions honestly and in our own voice. To me, this is about being accountable to community.
(Kovach, 2006, p. 62)

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of Indigenous perspectives of the connection between language and land, and to examine how this connection is represented in Indigenous language education websites. Through this research, I explore themes within Indigenous ways of knowing that will inform an understanding of Indigenous language education. My central research question is: What is the significance of Indigenous perspectives of land for Indigenous language education? My research process is further guided by three sub-questions:

1. What are some ways in which Indigenous languages are connected to the land?
2. What is the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education?
3. What are the ways in which land is represented in websites designed for Indigenous language education?

In seeking answers to these questions, I turn to three key sources of information: the existing literature by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars; Indigenous language and culture experts who have extensive land-based experience; and lastly, websites that are used for Indigenous language education.

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I am acutely aware of my “outsider” perspective on this research, and the non-Indigenous lens through which I filter and understand the subject matter. I am also aware of the long and devastating tradition of outsider research on Indigenous peoples and their knowledges. Several leading Indigenous scholars have called out against research done by Western academics on Indigenous knowledge and heritage (Battiste, 2008 and L.T. Smith, 2002). They, among others, demonstrate how decades of research by Western scholars using Western academic paradigms have

perpetuated the destructive effects of colonialism and promoted an inaccurate and incomplete understanding of Indigenous knowledge. For these reasons, it is very important for me to conduct this research in a manner and with a purpose that both respects and privileges Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge. I have endeavoured to centre this research within an Indigenous paradigm while using a methodology compatible with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Many Indigenous scholars have discussed and outlined Indigenous research methodologies (Brown & Strega, 2005; Gaudry, 2011; Kovach, 2006; McIvor, 2010; Steinhauer, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2007 & 2008, among many others). I follow certain Indigenous scholars before me, particularly Kovach (2006), Pitawanakwat (2009) and Zamluk (2006), in seeking out a meeting point between Western and Indigenous methodologies. I adopt a Western methodology that is consistent with Indigenous values and situate it within a guiding Indigenous paradigm. The Indigenist research paradigm proposed by Wilson (2007), along with Kovach's (2006) four central themes in Indigenous methodological theory, serve as my model for an Indigenous paradigm. Charmaz's (2003) model of Constructivist Grounded Theory serves as my guiding methodology.

As Kovach (2006) discusses, there are two ways to understand the term "methodology". A narrow definition would describe methodology as the particular methods of data collection and analysis that the researcher employs. A broad definition, on the other hand, would include discussion of the theoretical assumptions that inform the choice of these methods (Kovach, 2006). In this chapter I first focus on the broad aspects of the methodology that have framed and guided this research. I then discuss the narrow aspects – actual methods of data collection and analysis – and demonstrate how these fit within the guiding methodologies. I begin in section 2.2 with an outline of the Indigenous paradigm that has guided the principles of my research. Section 2.3 summarizes the qualitative nature of the research, noting the ways in which it fits within the Indigenous paradigm, and section 2.4 describes Constructivist Grounded Theory, the methodology that has guided my data analysis and interpretation process. Sections 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 respectively deal with the specific methodologies employed for the literature review, the interviews and the website case-study.

2.2 An Indigenist Paradigm

In an effort to conduct this research in a manner that both respects and upholds Indigenous values, I have founded this research on what Wilson (2007) terms an “Indigenist research paradigm”. Wilson (2007) outlines 11 research principles that arise from Indigenous ways of learning and knowing. These principles represent Indigenous values in knowledge-creation and knowledge-sharing, and he argues that they are a start towards an Indigenist paradigm. Wilson (2007) uses the word “Indigenist” deliberately, as such a paradigm “can be used by anyone who chooses to follow its tenets” (p. 193); they “do not have to be Indigenous to use an Indigenist paradigm, just as researchers do not have to be “white” to use a Western paradigm” (p. 194). Thus, though I am not Indigenous, I nonetheless seek to uphold these principles throughout my research:

1. Respect all forms of life as being related and interconnected.
2. Conduct all actions and interactions in a spirit of kindness, honesty and compassion.
3. The reason for doing research must be one that brings benefits to the Indigenous community.
4. The foundation of the research question must lie within the reality of the Indigenous experience.
5. Any theories developed or proposed must be grounded in an Indigenous epistemology and supported by the elders and the community that live out this particular epistemology.
6. The methods used will be process-oriented, and the researcher will be recognized and cognizant of his or her role as one part of the group process.
7. It will be recognized that transformation within every living entity participating in the research will be one of the outcomes of every project.
8. It will be recognized that the researcher must assume a certain responsibility for the transformations and outcomes of the research project which he or she brings to the community.
9. It is advisable that the researcher work as part of a team of Indigenous scholars and thinkers and with the guidance of elders and knowledge keepers.
10. It is recognized that the integrity of any Indigenous people or community could never be undermined by Indigenous research because such research is grounded in that integrity.
11. It is recognized that the languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples are living processes and that research and the discovery of knowledge is an ongoing function for thinkers and scholars of every Indigenous group.

(Wilson, 2007, pp. 194-195).

My purpose in this research is to benefit Indigenous communities by promoting the empowerment and decolonization of Indigenous knowledge. I do this by contributing to the growing understanding of the differences between Indigenous and Western worldviews and by privileging Indigenous worldviews in theory and practice. My research questions arise directly from Indigenous experience and the research serves as an exploration of this experience. The chosen methodology, Constructivist Grounded Theory, requires that the researcher's theories arise directly from the data, not from his or her own preconceived ideas. This results in theory that is true to the experience of the subject and in this way the methodology fits well within an Indigenous epistemology. Finally, I have sought throughout all to be informed first and foremost by Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers.

The principles outlined by Wilson are excellent directives for the specific parts of the research process and are further supported by Kovach's (2006) analysis of Indigenous research methodologies. Kovach provides guidelines that direct the nature of the research as a whole. In her dissertation, which examines Indigenous research methodologies in detail, she identifies four central themes in Indigenous methodological theory that guide Indigenous research. These are:

- (1) Decolonizing, Political, Ethical and Social Action aspect of Indigenous research;
 - (2) Personal Narrative and Self-location encompassing the high value of story-telling as a means to acquiring knowledge;
 - (3) Indigenous Languages, Philosophies and Theories as it [*sic*] influences the construction of knowledge; and,
 - (4) Cultural and Traditional Knowledges that encompass the sacred and spiritual.
- (Kovach, 2006, p. 57).

Each of these principles may be applied to this study. The initial and ongoing purpose of the study is to contribute to the decolonization and empowerment of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. My purpose in highlighting the connection between language and land is to promote this Indigenous understanding as both valid and essential to Indigenous language education and revitalization. I hope that my research will move this idea one step closer to being a central consideration in language policy-making and program development.

Regarding the second principle, while I do not write this research as a personal

narrative, I have attempted to remain cognizant of myself and my place in this research throughout the process. Like Kovach, McIvor (2010) also discusses the importance of being transparent and visible within Indigenous research. As she notes, being visible within one's research promotes accountability to both the community and the material. Accordingly, I included in Chapter 1 a personal introduction, situating myself in the research. I have also included mention of myself in first person throughout this thesis in order to maintain awareness of my role as a researcher and interpreter in this work.

The third and fourth principles that Kovach (2006) outlines are implicit to this study which focuses on Indigenous languages, culture and knowledge. Connection to land is essential to Indigenous languages as much as to Indigenous spirituality, and develops within both spiritual and physical experience. Both language and spiritual experience uniquely influence the construction of knowledge.

Together, both Kovach's (2006) 4 themes in Indigenous research methodologies and Wilson's (2007) 11 Indigenist research principles form the Indigenist research paradigm that has guided this research from start to finish. The paradigm itself does not specify types of methodologies that should be used nor does it dictate each successive step in the research process. Rather it serves as a guideline for the research and as the yardstick against which specific methodologies and processes can be measured.

2.3 Qualitative Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design. Creswell (2007) outlines several key characteristics of qualitative research, each of which is demonstrated within this study. Qualitative data is collected in a *natural setting*, as opposed to a contrived setting such as a laboratory. The qualitative *researcher acts as the research instrument*, through data collection techniques such as interviews or questionnaires. Qualitative research employs *multiple sources of data* and *inductive data analysis*, in which patterns, categories and themes are developed from the data. Qualitative research seeks to represent *participants' meanings*, not just the meanings the researcher holds. Finally, qualitative research utilizes an *emergent design*, in which the research process is flexible; an *interpretive inquiry*, in which the researcher makes contextual interpretations of the data; and a *holistic account*, in which the researcher develops a complex and holistic description of the issue being studied (Creswell, 2007, pp. 36-39).

This outline of qualitative research is particularly compatible to the Indigenous paradigm discussed above. The multiple sources of data collected from natural settings remain true to the multiple sources of Indigenous knowledge. The researcher is transparent as the research instrument, accountable to the data and to the community, yet at the same time places all emphasis on the participants' meanings rather than any preconceived hypotheses. The research focuses on the process, rather than the product, as the researcher seeks to learn from experience and interpret the data within a contextual whole. In this way, the very nature of this research, from the question to the process, fits well within the outlined Indigenous paradigm.

2.4 Constructivist Grounded Theory

L.T. Smith (2002), McIvor (2010) and Zamluk (2006) all discuss the blending of Indigenous and Western methodologies, a practice appropriate when the chosen Western methodology is compatible with an Indigenous epistemology. Accordingly, from within an Indigenous paradigm and a qualitative research design, I adopt Constructivist Grounded Theory as a tool to guide my data analysis and interpretive process.

Creswell (2007) describes how Grounded Theory moves beyond Phenomenology – the rich description of a particular phenomenon - to develop an understanding of the phenomenon through theory. In this context, theory may be understood as “plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 278). Charmaz' (2003) model of Constructivist Grounded Theory develops this methodology further to allow for a framework in which the Indigenous paradigm may be respected. Pure Grounded Theory is framed within the principles of positivism and objectivism, which involve “assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, [...] and an objectivist rendering of data” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 250). Yet as Kovach discusses, these principles conflict directly with Indigenous epistemologies which value the subjective and relational nature of knowledge (2006, p. 42). Charmaz' model of Constructivist Grounded Theory moves beyond traditional Grounded Theory, as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1994), and towards a model that is more closely aligned with Indigenous perspectives. This constructivist model “assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subject's

meanings” (2003, p. 250). In this model, there is “more emphasis on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals than on the methods of research” (Creswell, 2007, p. 65). As Charmaz (2003) explains, the model uses Grounded Theory methods “as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic processes” (p. 250) in which the theory developed must fit the data, and not the other way around. In this way, the data is allowed to ‘speak for itself’, rather than being slotted into preconceived ideas.

Constructivist Grounded Theory fits particularly well within an Indigenist paradigm, not only for its endogenous method of theory construction, but also for its explicit cognizance of the subjective role of the researcher. As Charmaz explains, “the researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer. This story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed” (2003, p. 271). The methodology recognizes the multiplicity of worldviews and the processes of knowledge creation. More specifically, it recognizes the researcher’s own position in the research, as well as the relationships between the researcher and the participants; “a constructivist approach recognizes that the categories, concepts and theoretical level of an analysis emerge from the researcher’s interactions within the field and questions about the data” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 271). Thus, “the viewer is part of what is viewed rather than separate from it” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 273). This is reflective of an Indigenist paradigm in which the researcher is in a subjective relationship with the data, and is in line with Kovach’s (2006) theme of self location and transparency within the research. Finally, Constructivist Grounded Theory is a process-oriented model which, similar to an Indigenous worldview, recognizes that the learning process is equally as important as the product.

2.5 Literature Review Methodology

In this study, the literature review on the connections between language and land, as presented in Chapter 3, served a dual role of being both a literature review and also a preliminary form of data collection and analysis. It examined literature by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars on the significance of land in Indigenous worldviews, and on the connections between language and land. All of the literature reviewed came from Canada and the United States and pertained to the Indigenous

languages of these countries,¹ though preference was placed on literature coming from Canada. An effort was made to privilege literature by Indigenous authors in particular, but no restrictions were placed on authorship in the literature collection process.

This literature review served to establish an initial basic understanding of the connections between language and land. The literature was not simply read and synthesized, but was treated as a primary form of data and analysed accordingly. In keeping with the Grounded Theory strategies advocated by Charmaz (2003), the literature analysis began the processes of category development and theory building. It was through the process of the literature review that I began to generate theory about the connections between language and land. In this way, the interviews that followed both continued and completed the theory building process begun in the literature review, as a form of ‘saturation’ and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2003). It was through the analysis of the interviews that the final themes were developed. In the interests of consistency, these themes were applied retroactively to the literature review. The process of applying these themes to the literature review provided additional confirmation of their credibility, as the findings from the literature review sustained these themes.

2.6 Interview Methodology

A central component of this study is first-person interviews with 6 Indigenous language and culture activists. The purpose of these interviews was to build upon the learning gained in the literature review and to learn first-hand from Indigenous experts about the connections between language and land. Moreover, the interviews served to honour the Indigenous research paradigm by privileging Indigenous voice and experience. It is acknowledged that despite all efforts to obtain literature by Indigenous scholars, the bulk of the literature that exists on these matters has been written by non-Indigenous academics. In this way, the overall rhetoric of the literature may not fully represent Indigenous worldviews. By conducting interviews with Indigenous experts, I was able to amend this gap and ensure that this research is grounded in Indigenous experience and is true to those who live out that experience.

In this study I choose to use the term *experts*, rather than *participants* or

¹ For reasons of scope and geographic unity I do not include literature from Hawaii in this review.

interviewees to refer to the Indigenous people who taught me in this part of the study. In using this term, I acknowledge that they are more than mere participants in this research, but have in fact shaped the very core of it. They have acted as my teachers, whether or not they hold the official title of teacher in their daily life. Moreover, the term expert recognizes their extensive knowledge and experience on the subjects of language and land, and the fact that they are considered to be experts in their communities.

Interviewing the Experts: The Process

The interviews were conducted with the approval of the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board for Human Participant Research. An Application for Ethics Approval was submitted and approval received prior to contacting potential candidates. The interviews with experts in the Northwest Territories were conducted with the additional approval of the Aurora Research Institute and a Northwest Territories Scientific Research License.

I attempted to follow Indigenous protocols as much as possible throughout the interview process in order to be respectful of the Indigenous paradigm in which I founded this research. Relationship is an essential element of Indigenous knowledge and a key component of Indigenous research (Kovach, 2006; Wilson, 2008). Because the scope of this project did not allow me the time to initiate and develop trusting relationships with each expert, I relied on my supervisors to stand in for me in building the trust necessary for such an exchange. My supervisors selected experts with whom they had previous relationships and were the first to contact each of these experts in regards to my research. Once the experts had been contacted by my supervisors and had agreed to assist me with this research, I then personally contacted each expert by email or phone to arrange a time for a meeting. For most experts I also emailed in advance the Participant Consent Form and my list of interview questions, as well as an introductory letter that explained who I am and why I was conducting this research. Six experts in total responded to my supervisors' requests and agreed to assist me in this research. Three of the six experts live on Vancouver Island, and I was able to conduct the interviews with these experts in person. The other three experts live in the Northwest Territories, and interviews with them were conducted by phone and Skype. All meetings were conducted in a location and

at a time of the expert's choosing.

In following an Indigenous protocol of respect and exchange, at the first meeting with each expert, I gave him or her a small handmade gift, such as my own homemade jam or a piece of decorative sewing that I had made. (In the instances of the experts residing in the Northwest Territories, these gifts were mailed.) In this first meeting I began by introducing myself and reviewing the Participant Consent Form with the expert. In this consent form, I specifically requested each expert's preferences regarding storage of the data from their interview, as well as if they wished to receive copies of the interview transcripts, audio recordings, or a copy of my finished thesis. I also requested the permission of the experts to inform their respective communities of their participation in my research. Upon their approval, I emailed or mailed letters to their respective communities explaining the research project and providing my personal contact information. Please see Appendices A and B for copies of the Participant Consent Forms and the Community Information Letter.

After reviewing these forms with each expert, I then proceeded with my interview questions. I deliberately tried to make each interview relaxed and open ended. Though I had specific interview questions (as presented in Appendix C), I used these as guidelines only and allowed the experts to tell me what they considered to be important. Thus for some interviews I followed through my pre-determined questions exactly; for others I asked additional questions that had arisen out of previous interviews or my current readings; and for others I needed to ask no questions at all, but simply sit with open ears and learn from what the expert had to say. For some experts, only one interview was conducted, whereas with others two interviews were conducted. I let each expert decide if he or she wished to participate in more than one interview: in the cases where there was a time limitation on the first interview, the experts themselves opted for a second session.

Each interview was recorded with a digital audio recording device (either hand-held, in the case of the in-person interviews, or via downloadable recording software, in the case of the telephone/Skype interviews). Each of the recordings was transcribed and the written transcriptions were used for the analysis. Each expert who requested a copy of the audio recording or transcript was provided with a digital copy on a CD.

In following the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) methods of simultaneous

data collection and analysis, I found that I continuously learned and developed my understanding of the topic as I conducted the interviews. By the time I conducted the later interviews, I had additional questions to ask that were not asked of the first two experts I interviewed. In order to maintain consistency and also to fulfill the goal of saturation as outlined in CGT (see Charmaz, 2003), at the end of the interview process I returned to those first two experts and asked them those additional questions. Their responses were recorded, transcribed and included with their initial interview transcripts.

As discussed earlier, my desire through this whole process was to honour the Indigenous experts and understand their meanings as completely as possible. Accordingly, once all the interviews had been completed and transcribed, and the process of interview analysis was complete, I had an additional meeting with each of the experts. In this meeting, I presented each expert with the excerpts from his or her interview that I included in this thesis, as well as the introduction of that person presented at the beginning of Chapter 4. I requested that the experts review the excerpts and inform me if they wished me to make any changes whatsoever to the content: whether to include or remove any content, or to change any wording. During these meetings I also shared with the experts the learning that I had gained from them, and explained the way in which I discussed this learning in the thesis. I also explained how their comments from the interviews were presented in this work. My intent was to maintain my accountability to the experts, allowing them the opportunity to correct me if I was wrong, or to provide me with any additional input that they wished. These meetings proved to be a very valuable way for me to immediately and directly share my research with each of the experts and also to receive their direct affirmation of my learning.

Learning from the Experts: The Analysis

My relationship with the experts, and subsequently my approach to the interviews, was framed as a teacher-learner relationship: the expert was the teacher, helping me to learn about the connections between language and land. Throughout the interview analysis process I maintained the teacher-learner perspective and approached the analysis as a *learning process*. In this way I sought to honour the Indigenous paradigm by respecting and privileging the knowledge of the experts over my own

position as a researcher.

The interviews were analysed in keeping with the principles and strategies of a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach. Charmaz outlines several specific strategies of CGT, among them being simultaneous data collection and analysis, comparative methods, and memo writing (2003, p. 251). Other conditions of CGT that Charmaz (2003) stipulates are that categories or codes arise from the data itself, and that the data is analysed using a method of constant comparison. I employed simultaneous data collection and analysis as I began analysing earlier interviews before I had finished conducting later interviews. Moreover, as the interviews are understood as a crucial extension of the literature review, the analysis of the literature was continued and developed during the interview process. The categories of analysis² emerged from the data itself, and not from any preconceived hypothesis. Categories were first gathered from the literature review; the interviews were then analysed with those categories in mind, seeking the clarification of those categories while remaining open to any new categories that might appear. Theory development was advanced at every stage: through the simultaneous data collection and analysis in the literature review process and interview process, I continually shaped and reshaped my understanding of the connections between language and land. Finally, as Charmaz (2003) recommends, I utilized memo writing as a way to elaborate categories and define relationships between them. As I analysed each interview, I wrote copious notes on the interviews, commenting on my thoughts and interpretations, the categories I was considering, and questions that arose.

While this process of data analysis fits well within an Indigenous paradigm, there is one method that Charmaz recommends which clearly does not: the process of line-by-line coding (2003, p. 258). In a line-by-line coding process, codes are gathered, grouped and/or organized hierarchically before statements (themes) about the code relationships can be made. This method caters to Western inclinations to decontextualize and deconstruct, and does not fit within an Indigenous paradigm that values a holistic approach. Accordingly, I approached the 'coding process' in a holistic manner and examined each conceptual chunk as a whole and within the context of the entire

² These are typically understood as codes, but this term is not applicable in this context, see discussion below.

interview. This meant that the process of reaching themes for the data was somewhat different. I systematically studied each interview through multiple close readings and consistent memo-writing. For each conceptual chunk within the interview, I first identified the topic. Then, keeping my interview question in mind, I asked myself of each chunk: ‘What is the expert telling me here? Why is the expert telling me this?, and most importantly, What kind of connection between language and land is the expert expressing in this?’ Applying the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2003), the answers to these questions for each conceptual chunk were compared within each interview and then across interviews. Through this comparison, common answers arose that appeared in every one of the interviews. These common answers resulted in the themes that are discussed in the following chapters.

As Wilson (2008) highlights, the priorities of Indigenous research are not reliability and validity, but rather authenticity and credibility. Thus, as discussed above, rather than utilizing methods of intra- or inter-coder reliability for my findings, I instead opted to return to each expert, to present my interpretations and understandings to them and allow them to determine the authenticity of my interpretations.

2.7 Website Survey Methodology

The last part of this research involved a small survey of 14 language education websites from within Canada and the USA. The purpose of this survey was to develop an understanding of the ways in which land is represented in online Indigenous language education. The examination of the websites was based upon the learning gained from the earlier literature review and interviews, and so considered the different ways that the relationship to land appears in those websites. The focus of this survey was on Canadian websites because of the Canadian origin of this research. However, a handful of American websites were included to enrich the examination.

Websites were found through internet searches on the Google search engine, as well as by browsing links on known related websites. Search terms included the names of all major language groups in Canada, as well as “learn X language”, X being filled in with the name of the language. The online version of Ethnologue (Lewis, 2009) was used to find names of languages in Canada. Because of a desire to focus on Canadian websites, no searches were made specifically for American websites. However, any American

websites that were encountered through the searches for Canadian sites were included in the list. Though it is recognized that social network sites, especially Facebook, are becoming increasingly prevalent modes of language education, for reasons of scope and consistency these sites were not included in this study.

Any website found that had language education as a key component was noted in a list. A total of 28 websites were compiled in the final list: 17 Canadian sites and 11 American sites. These 28 websites were then categorized according to the language education elements they contained. Eight educational elements were considered: word lists, phrase lists, dictionaries, language games, stories, metalinguistic discussion, sound files and videos. Of the initial 28 websites, all Canadian websites containing 4 or more of these elements (6 total) were included in the analysis³. Only those American websites containing 6 or more of these elements⁴ were considered (4 total). The four largest First Voices portals were then added to make up a sum total of 14 websites for this analysis. They were determined to be the largest based on the total number of archived words and phrases posted on the welcome page of each portal. Note that First Voices is a specially designed language archiving website that uses a standard template for each language. For this reason, the largest language portals were chosen to be representative of the type of information that can be included in this template.

The websites were then examined to see how land is represented in each site. In order to maintain consistency and to guide the examination, a questionnaire was created that was then filled out for each site. Please see Appendix D for a copy of the questionnaire. This questionnaire made use of the learning gained through the earlier research and so contained questions directed specifically at the four themes of relationship to land, along with the theme of a changing relationship with the land. The questionnaire was organized according to each of the following sections: General Website Information, Language Information, Media Content, Education Content, Living on the Land, Learning from the Land, Belonging to the Land, Respecting the Land, Changing Relationship with the Land, Comments. Once the questionnaire was filled out for each of

³ Note that the goal of this selection process was to simply gain a representative sample of some of the larger websites, not to be a comprehensive listing of all such websites in existence.

⁴ The criterion difference was chosen deliberately to limit the number of American websites included in the total selection.

the 14 websites, the answers were compiled in a spreadsheet document. A separate sheet was created for each section of the questionnaire, with the websites listed on the x-axis and the questions per section listed on the y-axis. It was then possible to look at the answers for all the websites according to each section. Out of respect for the differences in the websites that were examined and the uniqueness of the culture of each community that created them, the findings from the questionnaires were not analysed statistically. Rather, they were compared and summarized, and unique or exemplary inclusions of land were highlighted. The general findings from this compilation and summary are presented in Chapter 6.

2.8 Conclusion

This project, composed of a comprehensive literature review, interviews with Indigenous experts, and a survey of websites used for Indigenous language education, represents a blending of Indigenous and Western research approaches. As a non-Indigenous researcher, the first and foremost concern of my research was to be respectful of Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledge. By framing my research in an Indigenist paradigm and by choosing a design and a methodology compatible with an Indigenous epistemology, I have sought above all to privilege Indigenous ways of knowing. The qualitative approach of this research and the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology were chosen specifically to match the nature of my research question and to fit within the guiding Indigenist paradigm. In this way, the themes and theories presented in this research have emerged directly from Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, from the teachings of Indigenous experts, and from the practice of Indigenous language education websites.

**CHAPTER 3:
LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE,
“OUR LANGUAGE COMES FROM THE LAND”**

“...Indian people came out of the land... We came out of particular places and our specific thoughts and belief systems came from those places as well; we were shaped by the land, our language comes from the land.”

Tia Oros Peters, Zuni Nation (as quoted in Hildner, 2001)

3.1 Introduction

This statement by Tia Oros Peters, a Zuni Indigenous person and director of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, reflects a predominant theme in the literature of Indigenous worldviews: the connection of Indigenous peoples and their cultures to the land. Indigenous peoples have traditionally lived in a close, intimate and co-dependent relationship with the land. Clem Chartier (Métis) explains,

for Indigenous peoples' continued existence — throughout the world — land is a prerequisite. It is essential because Indigenous peoples are inextricably related to land: it sustains our spirits and bodies; it determines how our societies develop and operate based on available environmental and natural resources; and our socialization and governance flow from this intimate relationship. (RCAP Vol 1, Part 2)

This theme of the connection between culture and land is repeated by many other voices in the literature. As WSÁNEĆ⁵ elder John Elliott says, “Our culture is all related to our land and our territory and within it all our teachings” (Swallow, 2005, pp. 53-54). In fact, anthropologist Thomas Thornton suggests that place (i.e. land) “is not only a cultural system but *the* cultural system on which all key cultural structures are built” (2008, p. 4).

If, as many would argue, culture and language are inseparable, then it is clear that for Indigenous peoples, culture, language and land are also inseparable (Akiwenzie-Damm, 1996; Silko, 1981; Maracle et al., 1994; RCAP, 1996; Johnson, 2010; Parsons Yazzie & Speas, 2007; Schreyer, 2009; McGregor, 2004). As author Drew Taylor (Ojibwe) puts it:

There is an old saying in Canada, one I saw on a button pinned to a jean jacket years ago. It said 'The voice of the land is in our language'. I believe that. We sprang from the land and the language (or languages) sprang from us. (2004, p. 19)

⁵ Throughout this thesis I use the SENĆOŦEN alphabet developed by Dave Elliott Sr. for all SENĆOŦEN words.

The Canadian Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) states that "land is absolutely fundamental to Aboriginal Identity [...] land is reflected in the language, culture, and spiritual values of all Aboriginal peoples" (Vol. 2, Part 2). This statement points to the deep and intrinsic connections between Indigenous languages, cultures, and the land on which Indigenous peoples have lived for many generations. These connections are the focus of my research.

This chapter presents an initial exploration into the connections between land and Indigenous languages. The central question that guides this study is: what is the significance of Indigenous perspectives of land for Indigenous language education? In order to answer this I must first ask: what are some ways in which Indigenous languages are connected to the land? In this chapter I thus turn to the literature and look at what has been written by both Indigenous and other scholars regarding the connections between language and land. I pull together common threads from the literature to weave a very basic understanding of these connections within a cultural context.

3.2. Understanding Interconnections

Upon beginning this research, I thought it would be possible to discuss Indigenous languages and the land in isolation, categorizing distinct connections between only those two elements. However, I soon realized that such an approach is artificial at best. Attempting to examine solely language and land, outside of their context within Indigenous cultures, results in a shallow and incomplete description of the relationship between them. The connections between language and land are multi-faceted and complex, and are inseparable from other elements of Indigenous cultures such as knowledge and spirituality. As the First Peoples' Cultural Council states, "Language is at the core of our identity as people, members of a family, and nations; it provides the underpinnings to our relationship to culture, the land, spirituality and the intellectual life of a nation" (2010, p. 61).

The Peoplehood model proposed by Holm (Cherokee), Pearson and Chavis (2003) offers an excellent means to conceptualize these interconnecting elements. The model the authors describe is a holistic matrix combined of four parts that make up a group's identity (see Figure 1).

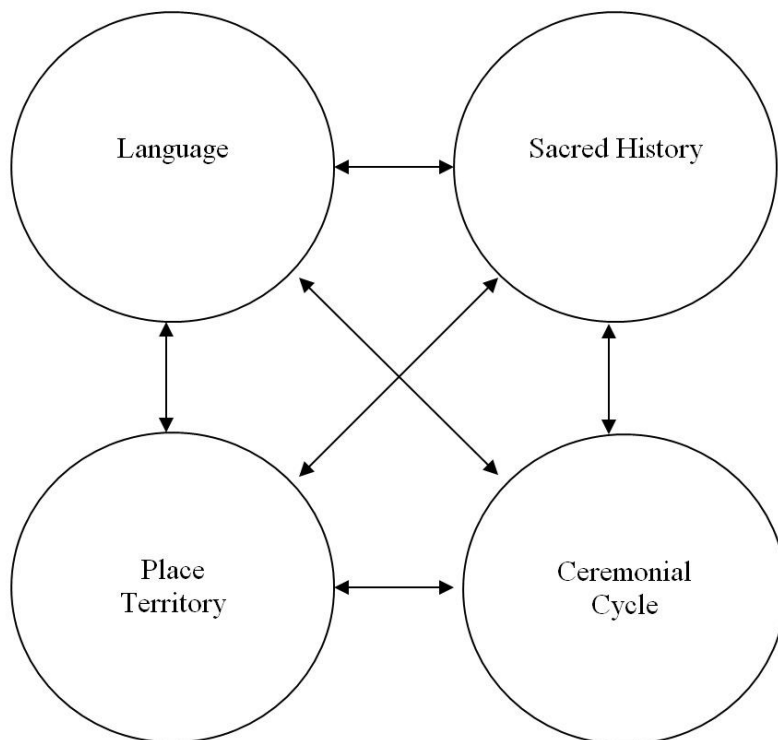


Figure 1: Peoplehood Matrix (Holm, Pearson & Chavis, 2003, p.13)

The four elements that make up the matrix- language, land, ceremonial cycle and sacred history- are understood to be entirely “interwoven and dependant on one another” (p. 12). As the authors emphasize, “understanding the interrelationship of the four aspects of peoplehood is essential. No single factor is more important than the others and all necessarily support each other as well as a particular group’s larger sense of identity” (p. 12). Holm, Pearson and Chavis argue that this model “reflects a much more accurate picture of the ways in which Native Americans act, react, pass along knowledge, and connect with the ordinary as well as the supernatural worlds” (p. 15). They further suggest that the model is thus “universal to all Native American tribes and nations, and possibly to all indigenous groups and could equally serve as the primary theoretical underpinning of indigenous peoples studies” (p. 12).

If nothing else, this model clearly exemplifies the interconnections between all aspects of Indigenous cultures, and demonstrates the futility of attempting to separate out any one of these elements from its web of connections. For this reason, the following discussion centers on language and land within a cultural context and thus includes reference to all other aspects of being including knowledge, identity and spirituality.

3.3. “Our language comes from the land” (Tia Oros Peters)

The following discussion on the connections of language to land is focused around four themes that represent four different ways of interacting with the land. As DeSantis and Ugarriza explain, “a theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its various manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole” (2000, p. 362). Accordingly, the themes introduced in this section unify a wide range of connections between Indigenous peoples, their cultures, their languages and the land. The theme of *living on the land* references the physical realities of a life lived on the land – all of the knowledge and customs that are necessary for obtaining food, clothing, shelter and transportation directly from nature. The theme of *learning from the land* speaks to the knowledge and worldviews that are embedded within the land; the teachings and ways of life that reside in the physical landscape through the stories and place names attached to that landscape. *Belonging to the land* points to identity, and more specifically, the perspective that humans are one part of a large and complex creation; that they belong to the land rather than own or dominate it. Finally, *respecting the land* addresses the spiritual, familial relationship that Indigenous people have with the land, and the reciprocity that sustains that relationship. The connections between language and land can be seen in all of these relationships and are the focus of the following sections.

Living on the land

For most of their remembered history, the Gwich’in people lived in a close relationship with the land and relied on seasonal resources for food, clothing, shelter, tools and medicine. They knew when and where to travel from long experience... They knew the landforms, the creeks, the hills, the lakes and rivers, and the mountain valleys throughout the seasons. They knew the habits and seasons of the animals, fish and birds, edible and medicinal plants and knew where these resources could be found throughout the seasons. (Andre, 2006, p. 12)

As Alestine Andre (Gwich’in) describes, Indigenous peoples hold vast and detailed knowledge about the land on which they live, resulting from generations of lived experience on that land. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (henceforth TEK) is the term given to the detailed, experiential knowledge that Indigenous peoples have of the flora, fauna, climatology and other ecological elements of the landscape in which they live

(McGregor, 2004; Terralingua, 2011). McGregor (2004) defines TEK as an empirically-based body of knowledge that is cumulative and dynamic, having been built up over many generations by a group of people living in dependence on nature. Traditionally, the way of life of the Indigenous peoples of North America has been one of complete and direct dependence on the land. Such a lifestyle is portrayed in many memoirs and autobiographies. For example, Albert Canadien's (2010) personal memoir of life as a South Slavey in the Northwest Territories describes how each day was spent interacting with the land; hunting, fishing, gathering food and using all elements of nature for clothing, shelter, transportation and every other aspect of culture. In the prologue to his book, Canadien explains:

In this memoir, I've tried to convey how we, the Dene children, used to live on the land with our parents before we were put into residential schools. [...] We lived on the land and moved to traditional hunting and fishing areas. We were not confined within an area. We had mobility, which was essential for our traditional way of life. We did not think it was a hardship to paddle fifty miles to a fishing area or travel by dog team for a day or two to reach our trapping area. This was our way of life. (Canadien, 2010, p. vii)

Similarly, in *My Country: Big Salmon River*, Gertie Tom (Northern Tutchone, 1987) recounts stories of her life on the land in the Yukon. Yet another striking example of this intimate connection to the land appears in Therese Remy-Sawyer's memoir, *Living in Two Worlds* (2009). She recalls her traditional Gwich'in upbringing in the Northwest Territories in which she travelled alone on the land and learned how to trap by herself as young as three years old.

TEK has recently gained huge attention from the field of Western science, as scientists have come to value the intimate knowledge that Indigenous peoples have of their land. As a result, there is a vast body of research that addresses TEK both within and across Indigenous groups. The significance of TEK in the context of this research is that it is encoded in language. It has long been recognized that the language associated with a particular geographical region or landscape is the language best developed to discuss that landscape. Language is the medium by which TEK is shared and passed on through generations. The non-profit organization Terralingua is founded on this very connection between language and TEK. As the organization's website states, "Language, knowledge,

and the environment have been intimately related throughout human history. [...] Local, minority, and indigenous languages are repositories and means of transmission of this knowledge and the related social behaviours, practices, and innovations" (Terralingua, 2011). Luisa Maffi, director of Terralingua, has done much work to highlight the link between biological, cultural and linguistic diversity. She demonstrates a clear link between regions of high biological diversity and high linguistic diversity, showing that languages are intrinsically linked to the ecology and therefore the land that surrounds them (Maffi, 2002, 2007). One example of the lexical encoding of TEK is given by Harrison (2007), who discusses how the Hul'q'umi'num Salish people of B.C. categorize certain types of trout and salmon together with a single term; it was only in 2003 that Western scientists performed genetic studies that convinced them of the accuracy of this classification. Examples like this demonstrate clearly how Indigenous languages encode the detailed, specific, and often highly specialized knowledge that results from generations of lived experience on the land.

One of the primary ways in which Indigenous languages encode detailed and specific knowledge about the land is in place names. Indeed, place names are vital to a successful life on the land. Place names are significant because they do more than simply refer to a place; they also encode a vast amount of information about the particular locations they reference, as well as about the history and culture of the language they are part of (Afable & Beeler, 1996; Fowler, 2010; Hunn, 1994; Kari, 1989; Rozen, 1985; Thornton, 1997a & 1997b, among others). The following quote from the Sahtu Heritage Places and Sites Joint Working Group (2000) clearly demonstrates the significance of place names:

Place names function as a significant part of Indigenous knowledge. The land itself is of particular importance in transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next. The Sahtu Dene and Métis landscape is known intimately to elders. Trails, used year round, provide access to a vast harvesting region, and like beads on a string, the trails link thousands of place names, each with a story, sometimes many, bound to the place. Names and narratives convey knowledge, and in this way Sahtu Dene and Métis culture is tied directly to the landscape. Travel across the Sahtu landscape can be easily and clearly described by reference to these names and indeed travel narratives often appear as no more than long lists of place names. (p. 16)

Place names are a vital part of living on the land, for they both describe the land as well as function as trail markers and guides to the land. As Taylor points out, "place names are more than just signposts. They hold keys to information about an area's terrain and plant and wildlife" (2001, p. 42). Many Indigenous place names are themselves detailed descriptions of the landscape. For example, Western Apache has a large inventory of descriptive place names, such as *Gizhyaa'itiné*, meaning "Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills" (Basso, 1996, p. 115). This is a common occurrence in most other Indigenous languages. An example from the Gwich'in language is the name for the Husky River, *Dootat Gwitshik*, which means "A river that flows between the driftwood piles" (Andre, 2006, p. 85). Names like these convey detailed and exact geographical information, encoding knowledge of the land within the name itself. Other types of place names indicate how the land is used, such as names that indicate good berry patches or good fishing lakes. For example, the Gwich'in name *Nichih sree thòò* means "Rosehips ripened by the sun", indicating both a site for picking rosehip berries and the location of that site on the side of a hill (Andre, 2006, p. 86)⁶.

Because of this, place names may function as a guide to the land. Taylor quotes Tłı̄ch̄o Dene elder Joseph Pea'a's words, noting that traditionally "people used the names to chart their way through the landscape, like a mnemonic map" (Taylor, 2001, p. 42). Similarly, Brody notes that, "to move around with safety, to hunt with success, to make the land's resources available and nourishing, the hunter works with a mass of details and the names of many, many places" (2000, p. 35). The place names themselves indicate the geography of the land, as well as routes of travel between locations. In her discussion of ethnoecology, Johnson comments that "Witsuwit'en shares with other Athapaskan languages the way it encodes spatial relationships, surfaces and topographic positions in the construction of place terms and in ways of speaking about places" (2010, p. 65). The specific information about the land encoded within place names is crucial for travellers; Collignon quotes an Innuinnait person who commented that "it is difficult to travel in English" (2006, p. 201).

Thus place names are essential parts of the language, containing detailed

⁶For other examples of such descriptive place names, see Andre (2002), Basso (1996), Castonguay (1979), Collignon (2006) and Cruikshank (1990).

geographical and ecological information. Thornton points out that “as icons, indexes, and symbols of place phenomena, place-names have enormous referential power. They evoke not only material aspects of the landscape but also human tasks, events, emotions and other mental associations tied to these locales” (2008, p. 31). Similarly, Johnson comments that “names are good to think with, adding specificity and precision to one’s recollections of routes and of sites of travel hazard, of sites of specific resources, and through histories and sacred sites, for significant guidance in proper and effective relationships with the land” (2010, p. 153). In this way, place names directly link the language to the land, for the language itself names, describes, charts and explains the land.

In this discussion of place names, it is worth mentioning that the majority of place names work (research and compilation) that has been done over the last several decades has come out of issues regarding land claims. Though a discussion of land claims issues lies far beyond the scope of this work, it is nevertheless valuable to note the effect such issues have had in the stimulation of much research and literature regarding Indigenous landscapes. As Chapin, Lamb & Threlkeld point out, much of the mapping that has been done by Indigenous peoples over the last 30-40 years has been with purpose of achieving political goals, primarily in regards to claiming and defending access to traditional lands and resources (2005, p. 620). Place names play a significant role in establishing both the occupancy and use of land by Indigenous groups, and are therefore essential to these mapping efforts, as pointed out in *Chief Kerry’s Moose: a guidebook to land use and occupancy mapping, research design and data collection* (Tobias, 2000). The Dene Mapping Project (Asch, Andrews & Smith, 1986) is one example of a project that resulted in the compilation of much place names information, and was directly intended for use in land claims issues with the Dene people. That place names have such a big part in land claims issues is testament to the way they encode the use and occupancy of the land – truly, life lived on the land.

Learning from the land

In the past, the souls and bodies of the Dene were so dependent upon the land that the land and what it taught became the language of the Dene. Generation after generation, the language of the land, its spirit, and the

lessons learned from it were passed on orally. (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, 2002, p. 20)

Much like this quote from the *Dene Kede* curriculum suggests, the resounding theme in discussions of Indigenous knowledge is that it comes from the land itself (Akiwenzie-Damm, 1996; Basso, 1996; Battiste, 1998; Maracle et al, 1994; Wagamese, 1994, and others). As McGregor notes, "it is important to understand that in the Aboriginal worldview, knowledge comes from the Creator and from Creation itself" (2004, p. 388). Similarly, Billy (Shuswap), explains that the Secwepemc, "being people of the land, relied on empirical knowledge [...] This knowledge was facilitated by Indigenous peoples' intimate connection with the land and spiritual realm. Hence, the traditional territories of the people are integral to knowledge and they cannot be separated from each other" (2009, p. 31). While TEK and place names certainly form a significant part of Indigenous knowledge, the term "Indigenous Knowledge" itself refers not simply to a body of accumulated facts but rather to an entire worldview; a way of thinking, categorizing, understanding and relating to the world (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Waziyatawin, 2004). As Battiste (Mi'kmaq) and Henderson (Chickasaw) argue, it is "a complete knowledge system with its own concepts of epistemology, philosophy, and scientific and logical validity" (2000, p. 253).

Simpson (Anishinaabe) states that "Indigenous knowledge comes from the land through the relationships Indigenous Peoples develop and foster with the essential forces of nature. These relationships are encoded in the structure of Indigenous languages and in Indigenous political and spiritual systems" (2004, p. 378). In other words, the land is a teacher, and the learning gained from the land is encoded within Indigenous languages. Intimate knowledge of the land, and the knowledge that comes from the land, is an essential part of Indigenous culture (Claxton, 2003; Hess, 1979; Legat, 2007; Swallow, 2005; Wilson, 2003). Language is a key medium by which this knowledge is expressed and transferred: "it is beyond dispute that the most integral of all Aboriginal traditions, societal practices and customs are the various Aboriginal languages and knowledge that contain those traditions and customs" (Battiste, 1998, p. 17). Similarly, Collignon explains that "the [Inuinait] worldview is the foundation of their geographic knowledge and wisdom of the land. [...] These ideas are built into the very structure of all Inuit

languages. When a child learns one of these languages, the ideas come with it” (2006, p. 198).

One of the key ways that knowledge is encoded in language is through place names. In many Indigenous cultures, place names are linked to stories and events that have moral and cultural relevance. As Andrews describes of the Tłı̨chǫ Dene,

the landscape is codified at a variety of levels with place names, and in most instances these names are associated with narratives that relate knowledge pertinent to the rules and moral codes of society, history and mythology, worldview, kinship, relationships with neighbouring groups, relations with other-than-human persons, resources and their distribution, and other aspects of society, culture, and environment. (2011, p. 33)

One of the most well-known works on the multilayered cultural and historical meanings in place names is Basso's (1996) elegant discussion of Western Apache place names in New Mexico. Basso describes his personal experiences of working with Apache elders to learn and understand the significance of places in Apache culture. His discussion demonstrates the power of place names for encoding both the history and the moral and social culture of the Western Apache. Basso demonstrates how, “unavoidably, senses of place also partake of cultures, of shared bodies of 'local knowledge' [...] with which persons and whole communities render their places meaningful and endow them with social importance” (1996, p. xiv). He describes how place names may reference specific historical events or stories, and thus symbolize social knowledge that may be used to make moral and spiritual commentaries in present-day contexts. As Cruikshank comments, “how people think about the land, then, is intimately related to how they think about themselves. In other words, two symbolic resources, language and land, are manipulated to promote compliance with standards of behaviour” (1990, p. 54).

Place names convey such knowledge partly because of their links to histories and stories. As expressed by Dinim Gyet, a Gitksan chief from northwestern B.C.:

You say you own this, your land, most of the place names are all in our language, hey, cause they say that the Creator gave it to us and he give us the names to go with it. Not by accident, but most of them, place names, are almost like totem poles to us. It might be an event that happened - in that certain area, so they just name the whole area. It's like a oral history. [...] Place names are events that happen, so that really happen to them. (Johnson, 2010, p. 29)

Place names themselves are reminders of histories and the knowledge learned from those histories, and thus place names symbolize both the land and experience on that land. Isaac's (Kwak'wala) (2010) MA thesis addresses the way in which knowledge of the land is embodied in stories and oral histories that are passed down from generation to generation. This tradition is an essential way of sharing necessary knowledge about the land. Brody (2000) says of the Dunne-Za nation in northwestern B.C. that "their knowledge of the land and its resources is awesome; their oral culture expresses both this knowledge and the ways of thinking and being that ensure abundance and success" (p. 105). As Cruikshank points out, the land is more important in oral history than dates or time: "while the chronology may be ambiguous, the named locations are not. Clan history is told as a travelogue. Following the content is like following a map where songs and stories become an intrinsic part of each toponym" (1990, p. 60).

In fact, the stories are so connected to the land that they become not only an intrinsic part of the place name, but an intrinsic part of the place itself: the story becomes embedded within the landscape. As Silko (Laguna Pueblo) states, "Our stories cannot be separated from their geographical locations, from actual physical places on the land. [...] And our stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose them - there is a story connected with every place, every object in the landscape" (1981, p. 12). Basso also highlights this connection:

For Indian men and women, the past lies embedded in features of the earth - in canyons and lakes, mountains and arroyos, rocks and vacant fields - which together endow their lands with multiple forms of significance that reach into their lives and shape the ways they think. (1996, p. 34)

Andrews (2011) too, talks about how Tłı̨ch̨o stories are "tethered to their physical context" (p. 42), making cosmology, culture and landscape inseparable. It is impossible to separate Indigenous knowledge from the landscape that it attached to, for the simple reason that it is a part of the land. The connection is such that the destruction of the landscape equates with the destruction of knowledge:

the land forms in the stories are teachings and are reminders to each generation, that the land is at the centre of how we are to behave. The destruction of the story landmarks and natural land forms are like tearing pages out of a history book to the Syilx⁷. Without land knowledge we are

⁷The Syilx is the Okanagan name for the Okanagan nation.

endangered as a life form on that land. (Maracle, et al., 1994, p. 4)

This knowledge which is embedded in the land is expressed through language. The 2005 Department of Canadian Heritage report on the National Gatherings of Indigenous Knowledge emphasizes that "Indigenous Knowledge is tied to place and the people who live in that place. It takes *living form* through the many and diverse Aboriginal languages in concepts and linguistically reinforced relationships reflective of the places where these languages arose" (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2005, p. 5, emphasis added). Thus language embodies Indigenous knowledge that itself arises from place.

Such examples demonstrate how the teachings of the land are wholly incorporated into Indigenous culture, are encoded in language and are passed on through the linguistic traditions of oral storytelling. Language is the core medium for expressing and sharing Indigenous knowledge of the land, and thus connects to the land through that knowledge.

Belonging to the land

That is our original identity. Before anything else, we are the living, dreaming Earth pieces. (Armstrong, 2005, p. 1)

Another important connection between language and land appears within identity. Indigenous identity, like knowledge, comes from the land itself. As the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states, "land is absolutely fundamental to Aboriginal identity" (Vol. 2, Part 2). By dint of a long and intimate connection to a particular place, the land becomes essential to the identity of its inhabitants. Identity is very much a part of culture, and, as Johnson explains, "relationships between land and culture are *mutually constitutive*. Identity and polity are rooted in the ways people understand and act upon land" (2010, p. 217, emphasis added). For this reason, the *Dene Kede* Gr. 7 curriculum comments that "a Dene's identity is tied to the land. Without the land, even today, the Dene cannot continue to survive as a people" (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, 2002, p. 17). Similarly, Wilson comments that for the Anishinaabe, "the land is not just seen as shaping or influencing identity, but being an actual part of it" (2003, p.88). Land is part of identity for the simple reason that people are a part of the land. Akiwenzie-Damm explains: "We belong to this land. The land does not belong to us; we belong to this land. We believe that this land recognizes us and

knows us. In the broadest and most fundamental ways we are inextricably connected to this land" (1996, p. 21). She goes on to emphasize the significance of this: "who you are as an Indigenous person arises from your connection to the land and to all others who share it. Your community thus includes everything that is connected to the land: the human, the natural and the supernatural" (Akiwenzie-Damm, 1996, p. 21). Similarly, Legat notes that, "from the Tłı̨chǫ perspective, the place one belongs to and 'grows from' determines the way in which life is lived, the relations one has, and the knowledge one acquires" (2007, p. 107). Thus, as Basso explains, knowing the land is essential to knowing oneself: "knowledge of places is therefore clearly linked to knowledge of the self, to grasping one's position in the larger scheme of things, including one's own community, and to securing a confident sense of who one is as a person" (1996, p. 34).

This identity that comes from the land is expressed through language. The First Peoples' Cultural Council⁸ state that "language is an expression of people's identity. It is one of the most important ways people identify themselves ... Through language, people are connected with their history, their ancestors and their land" (2010, p. 7). Similarly, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states:

Most people find it impossible to separate language and identity. Language is perceived as the quintessence of a culture. It expresses a unique way of apprehending reality, capturing a world view specific to the culture to which it is linked. But language is connected to identity in another important way: its presence and use in a community are symbolic of identity, emblems of group existence. Using a language is the ultimate symbol of belonging. (Vol 3, Part 6)

These connections between identity, language and land are intertwined: by speaking a particular language, one expresses one's belonging to a particular group. However, because that language comes from the land, speaking the language also identifies one as belonging to a particular land. Thus, using a language is not only the ultimate symbol of belonging to a group, but also of belonging to a particular land.

In this way, it has come to be that Indigenous languages and the land often represent each other in the minds of both insiders and outsiders. And because identity comes from the land itself, Indigenous peoples are very frequently named after the land

⁸ Formerly known as the First People's Heritage, Language and Culture Council.

on which they live (Basso, 1996; Collignon, 2006; Johnson, 2010; Schreyer, 2009). For example, Schreyer (2009) worked closely with two First Nations in Canada that both share names with landscape: the Taku River Tlingit and the Loon River Cree. Johnson too points out that "named places also serve to identify social groups for Athapaskan speakers, particularly terms related to the local hydrology or physiographic regions" (2010, p. 53). The land symbolizes the people as much as the people symbolize the land. Basso (1996) quotes his teacher, Apache elder Charles Henry, who speaks of the various Apache tribes:

You see, their names for themselves are really the names of their places. This is how they were known, to others and to themselves. They were known by their places. That is how they are still known, even though they have scattered and live now in many different states, some in cities far from here. (Basso, 1996, p. 21)

An eloquent and beautiful description of this connection comes from Armstrong's (2005) discussion of the Okanagan language: "The way we talk about ourselves as Okanagan people is difficult to replicate in English. When we say the Okanagan word for ourselves, we are actually saying 'the ones who are dream and land together'. That is our original identity. Before anything else, we are the living, dreaming Earth pieces" (p. 1). Armstrong explains that the Okanagan language encodes this idea by using the same root syllable to refer to both the land and the body. All land is thus a part of the body, as the body is part of the land (Armstrong, 2005). In this way, the people, the language and the land interconnect to form Indigenous identity.

Respecting the land

We say the land and our cultures are inseparable. We often express our views by way of confidence in what the land provides to us. This confidence in the land is reciprocated and maintained by being active on the land and showing respectful relations to all life. (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006, p. 15)

This comment made by Dene Nation Chief Noeline Villebrun expresses the fourth and last theme of connection to land and points to the reciprocal relationship with the land held by Indigenous peoples. In many creation stories, the land was given to the people by the Creator, for their benefit and survival. The idea that the land is a gift to the

people, and that people themselves are created beings, has fostered an intimate relationship with the land. Elder Michel Grod-Louis from the Taré Dan Dèh nation (Huron-Wendat) in Quebec explains:

Elders tell us that Aboriginal people have a special relationship to the land, that they belong to the land, which the Creator provided for them and their children. The Creator placed on the land all that Aboriginal people would need to survive in harmony and balance with nature. For Aboriginal people, land is deeply intertwined with identity. (RCAP, Vol. 4, Part 3)

One key idea that Grod-Louis mentions is that the Creator made the land to provide for the people, giving the people all they would need to survive and live in balance with the land. The land is a source of life, health and nourishment. The Taku River Tlingit First Nation's constitution elaborates on the significance of this: "It is from which we came that connects all life. Our land is our lifeblood. Our land looks after us and we look after our land. Anything that happens to Tlingit land affects us and our culture" (as cited in Schreyer, 2009, p. 33). This total dependence on land as a provider has resulted in a reciprocal relationship with the land. The land provides for the people as a parent provides for a child and in return, the people give respect to the land. Legat says of the Tłı̨chǫ Dene that "elders often speak of the *dè*⁹ 'as like our parents, the *dè* takes care of us; the *dè* provides us with everything'. It is the *dè* that furnishes individuals with the experiences they need to grow and develop" (2007, p. 49). As a parent gives life to a child, protects and provides for that child, so the land is a parent, providing everything necessary not only for survival but for rich and meaningful life. Thus, the title of Maracle, Armstrong, Derickson and Young-Ing's (1994) book, *We get our living like milk from the land*, points not only to the land as a source of life for the Okanagan Salish people, but also to the mother-child relationship that they hold with the land.

Many Indigenous authors have either hinted to or directly commented on the depth of this social relationship (Basso, 1996; Dannenman & Haig-Brown, 2002; Hayes, 2005; Legat, 2007; Little Bear, 2009; among others). Legat (2007) speaks of the Tłı̨chǫ Dene tradition of singing love songs to places and Hayes (2005) describes the love of the land as that between a husband and wife or mother and child:

The land and the people that come from the land inhabit a special

⁹*Dè* is the Tłı̨chǫ Yatı̨ word meaning 'land'.

relationship. The land and the people who belong to the culture that emerged from that land have adored one another since time immemorial. They are relatives. They are like mother and child. They are like husband and wife. The people who still love the land are like an old wife who waits at the shore for the husband that everyone else thinks is dead. (Hayes, 2005)

This intimate, social relationship with the land comes at least in part from the recognition by Indigenous peoples that they are a *part* of creation, belonging to the land, having been shaped by the Creator from the same stuff that also constitutes the land. As Johnson says of the Gitksan, "people are *part* of the land, in an inextricable and social relationship with it" (2010, p. 28, emphasis added). Similarly, L.R. Smith (Tsilhqot'in), comments that "the landscapes literally become an intimate part of us and going out on the land is a source of delight, like greeting distant family members or seeing old friends" (2008, p. 2). Dannenman (Anishinaabe) explains this relationship further through the personal example of her relationship with her home of Trout Lake. She emphasizes that her relationship to that land is

characterized by a spirituality and sacredness, an intimate knowledge and huge reciprocal respect and reverence. This very amazing relationship involves a give and take that requires consciousness and constant nurturing. My Trout Lake takes care of me, is very gentle with me, and teaches me everything I need to know; in turn I take care of my Trout Lake to the best of my abilities, and I remain open to learning and growing. (Dannenman & Haig-Brown, 2002, p. 456)

In the W̱SÁNEĆ (Salish) tradition, people are a part of the land for yet another reason. Elliott and Swallow (2009) describe how the trees, rocks, salmon and other significant elements of the land were once people and were transformed by the Creator into their current forms. This strengthens the personal connection to the land, as the land is literally an ancestor, a relative, a family member. John Elliott, W̱SÁNEĆ elder, explains:

we believe that all these things are our relatives. This idea of transformation allows us to communicate spiritually with our relatives. This is why our language is so important. It allows us to remember what we believe, that our trees, islands, fish and deer are like us, a part of us, and we are a part of them. We sense each other. (Elliott and Swallow, 2009, p. 111)

Recognizing that people are a part of the land explains how cultures are so intimately connected to the land. As Akiwenzie-Damm comments, “our cultures and spirituality arise from our relationship with the land” (1996, p. 21). She explains that the land is

a birthright granted to us by the Creator. In return it is our responsibility to care for and protect the land. It is our connection to the land that makes us who we are, that shapes our thinking, our cultural practices, our spiritual, emotional, physical and social lives.
(1996, p. 21)

In other words, in appreciation of the land's provision, the people respect the land by caring for it and protecting it. This reciprocity develops a deep and powerful connection to the land that influences every aspect of Indigenous life, and is encoded within the very fibre of Indigenous languages. As Dr. Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan) expressed in her keynote address at the 19th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium, the land itself *is* the language: “when we think about our territory, it is Nsyilxcən¹⁰. That is where everything that we know the name of, every interaction we’ve ever learned, came from” (Armstrong, 2012). This relationship with the land is expressed in and transmitted through language, so that the language encodes “how the land requires you to be. In other words, how you need to act on the land; what you need to know about it. [...] That’s contained in our language” (Armstrong, 2012).

3.4 Losing the land, losing the language

A discussion of the connections between Indigenous peoples, their languages and the land would be incomplete without mentioning the destructive history of separation from the land caused by colonialism. The history of colonialism and particularly the residential schools have been tremendously damaging to Indigenous cultures and languages. While it is far beyond the scope of this work to provide a full discussion of these issues, I will address two particular instances that were devastating to Indigenous languages and their connection to the land, namely: the renaming of the land and the residential school system.

¹⁰ Nsyilxcən is the language of the Syilx (Okanagan) people.

Renaming the Land

Manore (1998) outlines the vastly differing views of the land held by Indigenous peoples and Western colonizers. Indigenous models of land use were unknown by the Western colonizers and settlers. To them, the land was seen as empty, uninhabited and ‘wild’ (Manore, 1998). Chamberlin (2003), in his eloquent book *If this is your land, where are your stories?*, speaks of the perspective of the new world as “terra nullius”, empty land belonging to no one: “the maps of the time give a picture of the place: rivers and prairies and mountains and lakes... with nobody there” (Chamberlin, 2003, p. 28). This uninhabited wilderness presented an open invitation to the colonizers to claim and tame the land. As Chamberlin notes, “the classification of land as idle – land that is not used for agricultural purposes or owned by someone – has provided the basis for countless colonial adventures in the settlement of aboriginal territory” (2003, p. 29). In the eyes of the colonizers, the land was full of resources, ready to be mined and exploited. Certainly the colonizers did just that, altering the landscape for physical survival, exploitation of resources or simply to make it more aesthetically ‘pleasing’, with little to no regard for the Indigenous ways of life on that land (L. T. Smith, 2002). As McIvor acknowledges, “the combination of confinement to reserves, the colonial destruction of Indigenous territories for distribution among settlers, and the building of towns, railroads, ports, mills, mines, oil extraction facilities, and later, power and gas lines has had, and continues to have, devastating effects on traditional ways of life” (2010, p. 22).

Possibly the most significant part of the ‘claiming and taming’ process of colonization was the renaming of the land: rejecting the traditional Indigenous names for the land and giving it new names in the language of the colonizers. As L.T. Smith (Maori) notes, “renaming the land was probably as powerful ideologically as changing the land” (2002, p. 51). Stuckey and Murphy demonstrate how the renaming was a means of justifying colonization:

The ways in which the colonists understood, spoke and wrote about the land and its inhabitants justified the colonial project, which in turn set in motion processes that reinforced the colonists’ understandings of themselves and the world. In doing so, naming naturalized the process of colonization, reflecting and reinforcing colonial power. (2001, p. 76)

To the Western newcomers, Indigenous names for the land were foreign, often difficult to pronounce, and opaque in meaning (Wonders, 1987). Renaming the land with names brought from home allowed the settlers to retain ties to their homeland and to feel “at home” in the new world (Wonders, 1987). In some cases it would seem that any familiar name would do. Thornton (1997a) quotes from a unpublished manuscript by anthropologist Thomas Waterman, who recounted an instance of renaming:

The chief engineer of a railroad, an acquaintance of mine, was once sitting in a bunk house naming the stations of a railroad he was surveying. Running out of names his roving eye chanced to light on a package of breakfast food. Unhappy town which lacked a name at that moment, has been Ralston ever since. (p. 214)

The new English and French names given to the land were comfortingly familiar, and moreover, exerted a claiming force, transforming the landscape from wild, uninhabited wilderness to claimed, tamed, ‘civilized’ land.

Stuckey and Murphy (2001) discuss three central roles of the new colonial names: classification, imposition and appropriation. In regards to *classification*, the new names allowed the colonizers to map the land in a way that fit with their worldview and concepts of land use. By *imposition*, the colonizers imposed foreign names on the land in order to recreate their home. Finally, through *appropriation*, also known as borrowing, the colonizers adapted existing Indigenous names and adopted the simplified and phonologically-altered versions into their lexicon. Stuckey and Murphy (2001) argue that the appropriation strategy works in two ways. First, “it allows white colonists to play ‘Indian’. They, and not the Native peoples, are the true inhabitants of the place and thus can feel at home in an otherwise alien landscape” (p. 81). Second, “such linguistic appropriations clear the way for the literal appropriation of the land. If the name is a ‘corruption’ of the indigenous original, then the land, while resonating with the original, no longer belongs to the original” (p. 81).

Thom's (2005) doctoral dissertation addresses the significance of renaming in his discussion of the Salish sense of place. He quotes from a conversation with Cowichan elder Abraham Joe, who expressed his frustration over the renaming of the land:

When the white man came along, rubbed off that [place name]. He put his name on there, Butchart. [...] The city of Vancouver, I get so mad when I think of Vancouver. They moved Squamish. Squamish is up north [now].

That's the name of all of Vancouver. The white man came along and said my name is Mr. Vancouver, London, England. I'm going to christen this Vancouver. They did that to every city. Did that to Ladysmith, they did that to Victoria. They did that to my little town Duncan. [...] Every city was taken, rubbed off the Indian name, put their name on there. That frustrates me every time I go to any city. (Thom, 2005, p. 249)

As Thom explains, the result of this renaming has affected relationships with the land, “has fundamentally changed the way that many [Indigenous] people engage and experience the land, from food harvesting to vision-questing, and has left many with a feeling of bitterness over the unresolved disputes” (2005, p. 269).

The process of renaming the land has played a significant role in breaking down the connection of Indigenous peoples to their land. With these new names enforced through schools, maps and public policies, the land no longer holds the same meaning. As the traditional Indigenous names fall into disuse, with them disappear the multitude of stories, histories, events, and knowledges that are encoded in those names.

Residential Schools

Another project of colonialism that damaged the Indigenous connection to land was that of the Canadian residential school system. Milloy discusses how the original, claimed “good intention” of the residential schools was to improve the situation of the Indigenous peoples through education and religious salvation (1999, p.11). Underlyingly, however, “the residential school system was an attempt by successive governments to determine the fate of Aboriginal people in Canada by appropriating and reshaping their future in the form of thousands of children who were removed from their homes and communities and placed in the care of strangers” (RCAP, Vol 1, Part 2). The result, as Milloy writes, has been devastating: “It is clear that the schools have been, arguably, the most damaging of the many elements of Canada’s colonization of this land’s original peoples and, as their consequences still affect the lives of Aboriginal peoples today, they remain so” (1999, p. xiv).

As destructive as the residential schools have been in many ways, inflicting on the children forced labour, abuse and malnutrition (Milloy, 1999), there are two particular aspects of the system that are most relevant to this research. First, the residential school

system removed children from their life on the land, separating them from their families and communities and housing them in enclosed school buildings often surrounded by fences. Second, the system involved mandatory language instruction in English or French, and in many cases made forcible attempt, through abusive punishment, to prevent the children from speaking their own language (Ing, 1991). The First Peoples' Cultural Council reports that "the speaking of [Indigenous] languages was strictly banned within the schools, and was enforced by often brutal means of physical and emotional punishment" (2010, p. 9). The Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states that the attack on Indigenous languages was the driving force of a deliberate effort to erase Indigenous ways of thinking and knowing from the minds of the children, and substitute those with Eurocentric worldviews (RCAP, Vol 1, Part 2).

These two aspects of the system caused two levels of separation from the land: physical separation, by moving the children into school buildings, and intellectual, emotional and spiritual separation, by denying them the language that connected them to land. Regarding such physical separation, the RCAP says:

Isolating people from their habitat breaks a spiritual relationship and compounds subsequent cultural, social, political, economic and health problems. The intensity of the people/place relationship and the severity of the consequences of separation is powerfully conveyed by an Inuk interviewed by Williamson, who defined *nuna* (the land) as 'my life; *nuna* is my body'. (Vol 1, Part 2)

Similarly, McIvor describes how "the schools severed the multigenerational passage of language, weakened children's connection to their land, their culture and their people, and inflicted enduring psychological effects and consequential self-devaluing from being punished for speaking an Indigenous language" (2010, p. 25). Section 3.3 discusses how language and land are intrinsically connected to all aspects of Indigenous knowledge, identity and spirituality. Thus the loss of language and land also caused loss of these other elements. Cajete discusses the significance of such a loss:

The connection of First Nations people and their environments became so deep that their separation by forced relocation in the last century constituted literally, the loss of part of a generation's soul. Indian people had been joined to their lands with such intensity that many of those that were forced to live on reservations suffered a form of 'soul death.' The major consequence was the loss of a sense of home [place] and the

expression of profound homesickness with all its accompanying psychological and physical maladies. The connection of Indian people to their land was a symbol of the connection to the spirit of life itself. The loss of such a foundational symbol led to a tremendous loss of meaning and identity. (1994, p. 85)

Though here Cajete refers to relocation to reservations, his comments nonetheless demonstrate the effect of separation from land which was certainly felt by children forced away from their land and into the residential schools.

Apart from the 'soul death' that Cajete speaks of, Ing (1991) points to another disastrous effect of the system: the interruption of language and culture transmission. She comments that "many Natives who left the residential school system feared to speak their language and so failed to teach the language and traditional ways to their children" (p. 81). Similarly, the First Peoples' Cultural Council states that "because children were removed from the home environment where languages were spoken, and were unable to use their languages in the school setting, many of them lost their languages completely, a loss which was passed on to subsequent generations" (2010, p. 9). Accordingly, the system "caused a vast and devastating interruption of the intergenerational transmission of [Indigenous] languages as a mother tongue" (p. 9). The result was language endangerment and even death due to this disruption of traditional knowledge transmission: "Today, a broken link exists in the chain of oral tradition. The loss and near-loss of some Native languages through the residential school system has created discontinuity in this chain of oral tradition" (Ing, 1991, p. 79). It is clear that the residential school system severely damaged the relationship between language and land and thus in many cases also destroyed Indigenous knowledge, identity and spirituality.

3.5 Conclusion

The connection between Indigenous languages and the land is a theme that echoes throughout the literature and is apparent in all aspects of Indigenous life. In this chapter, I have framed a preliminary understanding of these multifaceted connections between Indigenous languages and land within a cultural context. The connections between language and land can be seen in four elements of Indigenous life and cultures: living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land and respecting the land. Each of these frames a particular facet of the Indigenous connection to land and within each

language plays a crucial role. Finally, in any discussion of Indigenous languages it is essential to acknowledge the destructive consequences of colonialism, and in this context, particularly those that have severely damaged the Indigenous connection to land. Both the renaming of the land and the residential school system were extremely destructive in this regard, and the unhappy legacy of these practices continues to affect Indigenous people today.

Language, identity, spirituality and the land are all interwoven: "you cannot separate the language from the culture, and you cannot separate them from the experience on the land and spirituality" (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2005, p. 15). Thus Indigenous languages are the encoding medium that expresses all elements of the land. Christensen (2006) quotes Washoe elder Alan Wallace: "When the land speaks, it'll speak in a native tongue. So if you want to understand the land you have to speak the language. And if you speak your language to the land it will understand." Indigenous languages come from the land, and the land is expressed and understood through these languages. Together, language and land both embody and express the Indigenous worldview as a whole.

**CHAPTER 4:
LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS,
INTERVIEW RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

“Wherever our tribe came from, as an Aboriginal, I know we came from the land and we are also shaped from the land.”

(Rosa Mantla, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2011)

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to enrich our understanding of the connections between language and land through learning gained from conversations with Indigenous people. While the literature review revealed much about the connections between language and land, the fact remains that the literature is, in general, dominated by a non-Indigenous worldview. With this in mind, I seek to honour the Indigenous paradigm discussed in Chapter 2 by grounding this research in Indigenous experience and epistemology, by learning directly from Indigenous teachers and activists, and by privileging Indigenous voices in this work. For this part of the study, I approached six Indigenous language and culture activists and asked them to share with me how they considered their languages to be connected to the land. The results of these conversations are presented in this chapter.

The goal of this portion of the study was to learn from these Indigenous experts about the ways they understand the connections between language and land. I thus approached the interviews from the perspective of one who is learning from a teacher, rather than of a researcher collecting data. I asked the experts to teach me what they wished about the connections between language and land, and strove as much as possible to learn from whatever they had to tell me. This attitude of learning continued into the interview analysis process, so that I viewed the analysis as a learning process.

This interview analysis / learning process was conducted according to a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach and within the framework of the guiding Indigenous paradigm, as outlined in Chapter 2. While the general principles of CGT guided the way that I approached the interview analysis process, the specific method of coding that forms the groundwork of analysis in CGT does not fit within an Indigenous research paradigm. Though Charmaz (2003) advocates line-by-line coding as the primary method of interview analysis, this method comes from a Western tendency to

decontextualize and deconstruct through analysis, and is contrary to an Indigenous approach which seeks to synthesize and connect. For this reason, rather than using the specific line-by-line coding process that Charmaz recommends, I instead employed a different analytic process in which I examined the interviews in a holistic manner and considered conceptual chunks, rather than lines, within the context of the entire interview. I systematically studied each interview through multiple close readings and consistent memo-writing. As I read and wrote, I asked myself of each conceptual chunk: ‘What is the expert telling me here? Why is the expert telling me this?, and What kind of connection between language and land is the expert expressing here?’ I employed the constant comparative method of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2003) and considered each chunk of each interview in relation to the rest of that interview, as well as in relation to the other interviews.

Through this constant comparison, common concepts arose that appeared throughout all of the interviews. These concepts became the themes of living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land, and respecting the land, as well as the theme of a changing relationship with the land. These themes arose out of the interviews themselves, yet had great explanatory power for what I learned in the literature review. In the interests of consistency, I retroactively applied these themes to the literature review.

While conducting these interviews provided an enriched and more fully-developed understanding of the connections between language and land, it must be noted that this part of the study has its own limitations. As much as the literature reviewed was limited for being written in English, so these interviews were limited for being conducted in English. Moreover, the interviews were based on a set of questions that I created based on my limited understanding of the topic.¹¹ Though I left the interviews open-ended, allowing constant opportunity for the experts to share what they considered of most value, the fact remains that my personality, my level of understanding of the topic, and the types of questions I asked all influenced the nature of their responses. In this way, the interviews are perhaps best regarded as conversations, or as teaching sessions, in which the experts chose and modified their remarks according to who I was as a learner and interlocutor. In spite of these limitations, the experts shared graciously and generously

¹¹ Please see Appendix C for the list of interview questions.

with me, and the resulting transcripts are rich with their knowledge.

This chapter is organized as follows: section 4.2 introduces the Indigenous experts, sharing a little of their background as they shared with me. In section 4.3 I present what I learned from these interviews, following the same themes used in Chapter 2 of the four different interactions with the land: living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land and respecting the land. In section 4.4 I address an additional theme arising from the interviews that relates to a changing relationship with the land. Finally, in section 4.5 I present a brief conclusion.

4.2 The Experts

The six Indigenous experts who assisted me with this study are people who have previous relationships with my two supervisors, who have knowledge of their Indigenous language, and who have land-based experience. Of the six experts only one does not speak his language, yet he is recognized as an elder and teacher within his community. The Indigenous experts are, geographically, from British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, and linguistically, from Salish and Athabaskan communities¹². I introduce the experts according to the order in which the interviews were conducted:

Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton

Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton is a W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich, Coast Salish) person from the Tsawout community, and was born and raised in W̱SÁNEĆ territory. He completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Victoria and is currently pursuing his Doctoral degree in Indigenous education. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton also works as an Indigenous Academic Advisor and Coordinator in the University of Victoria Faculty of Education.

Earl Claxton Jr.

Earl Claxton Jr., FEFÁCTEN, is a W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich, Coast Salish) person from the Tsawout community and was born and raised in W̱SÁNEĆ territory. He is recognized as a teacher and story-teller in his community and actively works with a variety of

¹² Please refer to the discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.6 for the rationale behind participant selection in this study.

organizations, promoting traditional W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge and heritage.

John Elliott

John Elliott, STOLÇEŁ, is a W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich, Coast Salish) person from the Tsartlip community and was born and raised in W̱SÁNEĆ territory. He has worked for many years to save and revitalize the SENĆOFEN language, and is currently the SENĆOFEN language instructor at ŁÁUWELNEW, the local tribal school.

Rosa Mantla

Rosa Mantla is a Tłıchq̓ (Dene) person from the community of Behchok̓ in the Northwest Territories. She grew up on the land in the traditional Tłıchq̓ way of life and is a fluent speaker of Tłıchq̓ Yatıı. Rosa Mantla currently works as the Language and Culture Coordinator for the Tłıchq̓ Community Services Agency¹³.

Alestine Andre

Alestine Andre is a Gwichya Gwich'in (Northern Athabaskan, Dene) woman from the community of Tsiigehtchic in the Northwest Territories. Gwich'in is her first language, and Alestine grew up on the land with her family. Alestine Andre received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Victoria, and currently works as a Heritage Researcher for the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute.

Albert Canadien

Albert Canadien is a South Slavey (Dene) person from the community of Fort Providence in the Deh Cho region of the Northwest Territories. He was born on the land in his family's traditional village Lishamie, and South Slavey is his first language. Albert has extensive land based cultural experiences, as recorded in his memoirs, *From Lishamie* (2010). Albert Canadien currently works as the director of the Official

¹³The institutions for which the experts work have been mentioned in order to provide an understanding of the Indigenous experts and their roles as language and culture activists in their communities. The comments of the experts are their personal opinions and experiences only, and are not intended to represent the opinions of these organizations.

Languages Division of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

4.3 Conversations with the Experts

In the following section, I present what the Indigenous experts shared with me about their connections to land, and the connections of their languages to the land. I have arranged the comments according to the four themes of living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land, and respecting the land, with the additional theme of a changing relationship with the land. As mentioned earlier, these themes arose through the process of interview analysis and so may be considered a credible reflection of what was shared in the interviews. The words of the experts speak eloquently for themselves, so I have included only minimal discussion of their comments.

Living on the Land

... among the Dene people, traditional knowledge is very important because in order to live the way we do on the land, we need to know where we're at, what kind of animals we have. So, over time, the Dene people developed traditional knowledge. It's an understanding of things-of things and animals. It's a local knowledge on fish, plants, the lay of the land and things like that. And this has been acquired with special skill, understanding the local environment. Because in order to live up here in the harsh, cold land, you need to have that knowledge to live off the land. And traditional knowledge is something else also that related to all other concepts of Dene culture. (Albert Canadien, personal communication, Jan. 26, 2012)

Indigenous people have traditionally lived in a close and direct relationship with the land. This relationship involves an intimate knowledge of the land and the ability to use everything on the land for daily life. This life of knowing the land and using the land is what is inferred by the theme "living on the land". As discussed in Chapter 3, the connections between language and living on the land are very evident in Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and in place names. These two elements were common points of discussion in the interviews.

Elaborating on his aforementioned comments about traditional knowledge, Albert Canadien explains his perspective on TEK:

the word subsistence, it's a way of life. It's a way of living that touches on other aspects of the Dene way of life. It touches on understanding

traditional knowledge, understanding the habits of animals that you use, where they go in the fall time, where they hibernate, and when they come out, and things like that. And this is traditional knowledge. So, that's how language comes from the land. (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

As Albert Canadien explains, living on the land requires both a specialized knowledge of the land and highly developed skills to go with it. This knowledge, he says, is related to all aspects of Indigenous culture. As he further points out, this knowledge is encoded in language through terms for flora and fauna, and the names of places:

all First Nations people's language comes from the land. As a matter of fact, all Indigenous people's language comes from the land. And for example, being from Lishamie – being from our traditional area, being the Dene from up here – in our traditional area we have names for all the trees, all the plants, all the animals, all the features of the land, and the rivers, creeks and ponds and lakes in our traditional area. We have names for them. We have names for all these things in our traditional area. And our language comes from there. (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

Rosa Mantla also spoke extensively about how the Tłı̨chǫ language comes from the land and is an essential part of living on the land:

When we think about the language, our Tłı̨chǫ language – or maybe any other languages – that's really been part of the land, all during the time that we grew up living off the land. And many of our languages, [...] like the terms that we use in our language, describe how we use the language from the land. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

In these comments, both Rosa Mantla and Albert Canadien reiterate that their languages *come from* the land itself. As an example, Rosa Mantla talks about colour terms in Tłı̨chǫ. She explains how the colours are “all based from the land itself and the plants and the sky. Like, it all came from the land” (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011). She continues:

So the colours that the ladies know about- the colours really came from the land because in the old days we didn't have all those colours of the paint. They have to make their own colours. For example, when the young women were sewing embroidering in those days, they'd dye their own colours and different types of silk embroidery thread. Sometimes they used different plants to make the colour green, the colour purple. So a lot of it came from the land. (Rosa Mantla, p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

Her example demonstrates the direct and very obvious connection the language has with the land. Colour terms are derived from the names for the elements in nature from which

the dyes themselves are obtained. However, this connection isn't limited to colours alone. The language describes every other aspect of life as well. Rosa Mantla provides another example:

And when we gather spruce boughs for the flooring in the tent, the elders would come and kind of observe what kind of spruce boughs we pick. And we pick white pine, they call it. It has a smell of Pinesol. And they said it smells really good. But the pine spruce, the white spruce, it dries quickly because of the big needles it has on the branch, whereas blue spruce would last longer because it's really fine but it has thicker and short needles. So all those descriptions I learned from the elders like my parents. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

As Rosa explains, the daily activities of living on the land require a detailed knowledge of the land that is encoded in language. Collecting spruce boughs for the floor of the tent requires knowledge of the many different types of spruce that could be used. This knowledge is expressed in the distinct names for each type of spruce. These conversations demonstrate how each language comes from the land and is tied to the land through the TEK of each Indigenous group. As Albert Canadien reiterates, “language is tied to the land. The language comes from the land” (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012).

Place names are another significant example of how language both arises from life on the land and is also a requirement for that very life on the land. As discussed in Chapter 3, place names encode vast amounts of information about the land – including geographical features, routes of travel and locations of resources. As Alestine Andre states, “the Gwich'in place names: there are so many, so many place names that describe the landscape. There's especially a lot of places related to naming of lakes or places on the land for resources, especially food” (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012). She goes on to explain why this is:

the Gwich'in language is used mainly to describe and name important aspects of the land [...] that are directly connected to a traditional way of life on the land. So that's how language is used to describe and name these places. So these aspects relate to specifically and especially survival of the group. So names of places on the land point the way to seasonal food resources. The geographic features are used as markers to the resources, and so the lakes, [...] hills and creeks and rivers, valleys, camps, shorelines and points of land on the river or lake, forested areas and trails guide travellers or people to a healthy way of life'. (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012)

In this statement, Alestine Andre points out that place names are essential for survival because they indicate locations of resources, landscape features, or routes of travel. These descriptive names are vitally necessary for successful life on the land. Traditional methods of navigation relied on these descriptive names to direct travelers through the landscape to places where they could find food and other necessary resources. As Alestine Andre explains,

people lived on the land without maps and without GPS and without what we have today. You know, they have to rely on their memory. [...] They have to rely on oral histories and stories in order to know exactly where to get the fish; where the birds or migrating birds are; and anytime of the seasons, where the animals are. So it has to be a very descriptive place name, one that people will remember. (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012)

Similarly, Albert Canadien notes that “people have names for where they lived or where they hunted, and all creeks and lakes had names so that people know what you’re talking about and what area you’re talking about” (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012). Rosa Mantla too, adds that “people used those place names to follow the direction of their travel” (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011).

Alestine Andre provided multiple examples of Gwich’in place names that described the landscape, indicating locations of resources, landmarks, or travelling guides. She states:

in our Gwich’in language it’s fairly clear and fairly specific how the formation of the land is. It describes it very clearly – how along a stretch of river there is a strong current. And so the language describes through that place name, in this case, how the current could be very fast at a particular place. So anyone hearing the name of the place would know that there is a fast current there. So it's like a marker. (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011)

One of the questions I asked Alestine Andre that was not in my original list, was to give me examples of ways in which the Gwich’in language was better able to describe the landscape than English. Alestine very happily complied, commenting “I enjoy the Gwich’in language because it’s so descriptive of the land” (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012). She proceeded to give me a number of examples that demonstrate the facility of Gwich’in to describe the details of the landscape in a single place name. One example she offered is Chiinuu Naa’ëjj, which refers to “the downstream end of a long bluff on the west shore of the Arctic Red River” (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012). This name depicts a bluff or high hill and the

movement of the body of water below it. It is clearly descriptive of a particular place. Another example she provided is Dzandyee Thidyee. Dzandyee means “muskrat area” and thidyee refers to a “long, curved shoreline”:

Dzandyee Thidyee refers to a long, curved point of land along the Mackenzie River. And people would talk about Dzandyee Thidyee – not so much the point that's important, as the lakes in this area are known for their healthy muskrat population in the spring. So that's just an example of a geographic feature pointing the way to a resource. (Alestine Andre, p.c., Jan. 18, 2012)

Place names clearly depict the use of the land – the way that people travelled, hunted and harvested on the land. And as Earl Claxton Jr. highlights, because of this, place names also function as indicators of land occupancy, marking the traditional territories of Indigenous groups:

My dad said that we know where our territory is because we have a name for it. And so that's how we know where our territory is: because we have a name for there. And we know, when we start coming to Cowichan names, that that's their territory. And we respect that. We know where our territory is. So that was important, to know where those places are. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

Thus knowing the place names equates with knowing the traditional territory – knowing one's own land. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, this is one of the reasons that place names have been invaluable to land claims work.

Yet place names do more than just describe the land. They are also repositories of history through their connections with stories and in this way place names play a significant role in oral tradition. Albert Canadien comments that with “every traditional place name, there's some kind of story behind it” (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012). Similarly, Rosa Mantla notes that “so many of our place names have to do with the legends and what have happened” (p.c., Dec 8, 2011). Alestine Andre elaborates:

I know place names alone can tell stories about events or people, and things that happened at that particular place. Whether the place name is a hill, or whether it's a point of land, whether it's a creek, whether it's a river, whether it's a campsite; [...] whatever name that is known on the land, usually has a story attached to it. (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011)

In the Indigenous way of life on the land, all aspects of life are tied to that land, including history and legend. In this way, language is connected to the land through more

than just descriptive words or place names, but also through oral tradition. As Albert Canadien notes, traditionally Indigenous societies were oral societies, and so all aspects of life were encoded in language: “All First Nations and Indigenous languages are not written down; they are an oral society. In the Dene society language is the sole resource for transmission of traditional knowledge that encompasses all aspects of Dene life. So all aspects of their life interrelate, because of language” (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012). Alestine Andre explains in more detail how stories are connected to the land:

with our Gwich'in place names, the history of our people – the history of the land – is literally embedded in the names of the places that we have on the land. And the trails and the burial sites, and places where there's giant creatures, or places where there's resources – lakes and other places that are good for resources, such as fish and ducks and moose and caribou – and places where something happened... There always seems to be a story attached to everything on the land. (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011)

Because of how intimately stories are tied to the land, knowing the places and knowing the names is an important part of understanding those stories:

When people tell stories, if you know the names of the places on the land, you don't need a map, because the map is already in your head. And you just automatically go anywhere on the land as stories are being told because you know the names of the places on the land. So those places are very vividly ingrained in the depths of your mind. (Alestine Andre, p.c., Jan. 18, 2012)

It is clear, then, that knowing place names is essential to being able to travel on the land and find the resources necessary for daily life, along with understanding the history and oral tradition of one's people. I will leave the discussion here and elaborate on the significance of the stories connected to place names in the following section.

Learning from the Land

In all parts of nature there's those kind of teachings about how we should live.
(John Elliott, p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

Each of the experts that I spoke with confirmed the intimate connection between Indigenous knowledge and the land, and the way in which the land teaches the right way to live. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton describes how the knowledge that is encoded within

places and place names is integral to the Saanich worldview: “I think there's a whole knowledge, worldview, paradigm all intertwined with place names in our language, and I think that's really important” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011). He goes on to explain:

if you look at that traditional territorial map, I'm sure there's much more stories, teachings, beliefs all connected with those place names [...] if a person knew all of those they would have a real strong sense of identity, of the territory, Saanich beliefs, Saanich culture, teachings, activities, out on the land. You know, there's so much knowledge all intertwined with those place names. (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

As Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton emphasizes, the names of places point to the knowledge in the land, and to the W̱SÁNEĆ culture, beliefs and values that are based in that knowledge. Rosa Mantla highlights how the knowledge that is learned from the land integrates with all other aspects of life:

wherever our tribe came from, as an aboriginal, I know we came from the land and we are also shaped from the land. Because the way people are shaped from the land [...] is through the skills that they have, the traditional knowledge that they gain, and also their spirituality. It comes from the land. [...] And the way we are shaped orally: we have the oral knowledge, the oral teaching and the oral language, all from the land. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

Rosa Mantla points out here that the land is a source of knowledge and teachings, all of which is expressed in language. John Elliott spoke extensively in the interviews about the way that the land is connected with beliefs and laws about the right way to live. He explains:

So, whether it's a plant, an animal; whether it's the rain, or whatever it might be; the ducks, or the elk high up in the mountain; or the salmon swimming through the saltwater here; that's all part of our belief. Part of our belief. And we're very much a part of that belief. And very much a part of what we are and who we are. Because it's all built into the understanding that's within the language of the original ways, how nature came to be. When the laws were laid down, teachings and values were given. And so the land is our Bible- [...] we look at it like our own Bible. Because it could be a mountain that has a story, and tells us how we should be. It could be the deer, or the ducks or whatever it might be that gives us an example of how we should be, and how we should be living within nature, and taking care of it. That's the way that the language and the belief system is inseparable. You can't separate it, because it's one. It's one. And it makes us one. We belong to the land. We belong to that nature. And we live in harmony with it. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

As John Elliott explains, every part of the land is a part of the belief system of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. Every element of the land has some kind of teaching for the people, and is part of their system of laws and values. In this way, the W̱SÁNEĆ can look on the land as their Bible: it is their guidebook and moral code that teaches them the right way to live.

In our conversations, John Elliott told me many stories about different aspects of land and how they are connected to beliefs. I include here one story that he shared with me that exemplifies how W̱SÁNEĆ beliefs and values are contained within the land. This story relates to the creation of the deer. It speaks of a human who, because of his negative actions, was turned into a deer by the Creator, to be a reminder to the people to have only good intentions in their hearts.

It was a first human being who was made into a deer- lived on a place called W̱ENNÁNEĆ, which is a village not too far from here, now known as Salt Spring Island. And the bay of that ÁLENENEĆ village site, that original village site there, is called W̱ENNÁNEĆ. It's now called Fulford Harbour.

So that's where the first deer was made, the male and female. And when that deer was made, it was giving us a law. A law that we shouldn't have in our hearts or our minds to want to hurt anybody. Physically or emotionally or whatever like that, because it's wrong to do that.

And so this young man was intending to kill the Great Spirit when he came around; that's what he said he was gonna do. He was making a knife and he was gonna kill him when the Great Spirit arrived there. And he said he didn't want to be changed because he heard that XÁLS was changing all kinds of people to different things. He said, "I don't want to be changed, so if he tries to change me I'm gonna cut his throat", he said. "And then I'm gonna kill him".

And so the Creator, XÁLS, spoke to him and said "Give me that knife, and give me that shell you're working on". It was a mussel shell that he was making it into a knife. "And give me those arrows." He was making some arrows. "And give me those arrows." And he took the arrows and he held them up in the air like that and it stayed there, hanging in the air. And then, this young man's name was SMÍET, and he said to SMÍET the young man, he said: "It's wrong to have the intention to kill. It's wrong to have the intention to hurt someone in your mind or your feelings, to have that feeling about anybody. And so because of the way you are, from now on you will be the one who will be hunted. You'll be hunted from now on."

And so he changed him into the deer. And he said, "You'll be listening. You'll be listening." And he gave him big ears to listen with.

And they're shaped like a mussel shell. And he said, "from now on, you'll be the one that will be hunted. You'll be the one that's gonna feed the people".

And even when he was younger, when he was being raised by his grandparents, they would try to give him teachings and values to live by. And he wouldn't- he wouldn't let them finish. He'd always interrupt them and say, "you already told me that. You already told me that before. I already know that." And he wouldn't have respect for his grandparents. And so he said, "now you're gonna be one who really listens good, forever". And so that's why he changed him. (John Elliott, p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

This story of SMÍEF, the deer, is not only rich in significance for the WŚÁNEĆ people, it also illustrates their worldview and connection to land. First, it exemplifies how stories are connected to particular places. It ties the WŚÁNEĆ people to these places from the time of Creation. Most importantly, it contains specific teachings about how to live the right way, encoding the moral values of the WŚÁNEĆ people. Significantly, the deer is an important food source for the WŚÁNEĆ, so the teaching in this story is double-edged. As John later explained to me, not only does it teach how to act towards one's human relations, it also teaches right relationship with one's non-human relatives. In other words, it demonstrates that hunting for sport – killing for the sake of killing – is not acceptable in a WŚÁNEĆ relationship with the land. Thus, stories like these, John Elliott states, are

different ways that our language is connecting us to a way of believing. A way of knowing. A way of understanding. A way of providing for now and for the future. And that's all within the plan that was laid out when the laws were laid down by the Great Spirit for our ancestors that lived here long ago. And because they were important laws, they were passed from one generation to the next through ceremonies and through all kinds of ways of honouring different things. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

In this comment, John Elliott reiterates that moral values and teachings on the right way to live come from the land and are encoded in the language, in the stories and ceremonies that are passed on from generation to generation. Albert Canadien also speaks of knowledge being passed down through the generations, and emphasizes how the stories and teachings embedded in the land are essential to learning one's culture and identity:

It's important [...] it creates pride and awareness within the youth, about who they are and where they come from. And this is how they learn. This is how the people [...] used to live. This is how they came about. And it's a history of their people. And this is how they learn how people used to live.

It's part of learning about the history of their people and also understanding certain aspects of their culture. (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

Youth learn by listening to the stories of their elders of their history and way of life; in short, they learn from the knowledge of the land.

The stories and teachings are so connected to land that they are embedded in the landscape itself. Recalling Silko's (Laguna Pueblo) words, she says, "our stories cannot be separated from their geographical locations, from actual physical places on the land. [...] And our stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose them – there is a story connected with every place, every object in the landscape" (1981, p. 12). Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton, among others, gave several examples for how stories are literally embedded in the land. He speaks of how the geographical features of the places are themselves part of the stories and thus physical reminders of the teachings within the stories:

And if you go to that spot when you're fishing, or you're going past it on your travels, there's a big rock boulder there, and you're reminded of that story. When you see that boulder, you're reminded of what would have been a teaching, you know: why the Creator stopped what was happening and turned them to stone. We would be reminded of that. As a way of reminding us how to live in the way the Creator wanted us to live our lives and be. So that's why that's there. So that highlights, I guess, that connection, that place name and why it's significant.
(Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton, p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

Speaking of another story, he adds:

and they were turned to stone, there, right on the beach. And that was again to remind us of that story, and to remind everybody who sees that – those rocks – of that important teaching. And you can still go down there and see them and it looks like people in the rocks. And that's a very real connection to this land. (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

Thus we are reminded of Basso's words, that "for Indian men and women, the past lies embedded in features of the earth – in canyons and lakes, mountains and arroyos, rocks and vacant fields – which together endow their lands with multiple forms of significance that reach into their lives and shape the ways they think" (1996, p. 34). The land itself is a teacher and a physical representation of the stories and place names that speak volumes of knowledge on the right way to live and be.

Belonging to the Land

We don't feel like the land belongs to us. We feel more like we belong to the land and that we were put here as caretakers of the land.
(Earl Claxton Jr., p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

A consistent theme in the conversations with the experts was that of belonging to the land. This notion expresses the identity of Indigenous people: their identity comes from the land for they belong to the land. As Earl Claxton Jr. describes, there is not a sense of ownership of the land, but rather a sense of being part of the land. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton echoes this: “You know, those sort of locations were passed on, and like I said, we belonged to those locations – we didn't say we owned them, and we couldn't sell them” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011). John Elliott also comments that “we belong to the land. We belong to that nature” (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012). In further explaining this concept of belonging, Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton discusses the term *Indigenous* and how it exemplifies this idea of being a part of the land. The word implies for him a connection to the land. Pointing to a tree outside his office window, he comments, “Just like you would say that tree out there is an Indigenous species. It's just something that's always been there. It occurred here naturally. And that's how I think of *Indigenous*. You know, we're sort of- we've always been here since the time of creation” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011).

This connection to the land, this sense of belonging to the land, is also encoded in language. When Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton introduced himself to me, he began by speaking in SENĆOŦEN. He then explained that “saying that in SENĆOŦEN, really, that's the language of the land. My uncle would say it's our language- it's our language that really defines who we are and where we come from” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011). Thus, whenever he introduces himself at a gathering, he does so first in SENĆOŦEN, because it indicates his identity, his place of belonging, to his audience: “...they would know who you are and where you come from, just by the language you're using. And they would know who your family and where your roots are, by the name that you gave” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011).

Similarly, Rosa Mantla mentions that when she or other Tłıchǫ people introduce themselves to a group, they often tell the story of the origins of the Tłıchǫ name and the Tłıchǫ people:

Well, we always introduce ourselves using that legend, to other people, whenever we need an introduction of our culture or our way of life. And why our name is Tłıchq̓ to this day. [...] So this is the legend of how Tłıchq̓ became our name, through the woman and the six pups. So to this day we still have that name, relating to what had happened years ago, the woman who had pups. It's our language! (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

The legend that Rosa Mantla refers to speaks of the connection of the Tłıchq̓ people to the land. Using the legend as an introduction is a way of demonstrating their ties to that land. When Alestine Andre introduced herself, she described herself as a Gwichya Gwich'in person. She later explained that

Gwichya Gwich'in means a person that lives in a geographic area. So we're all known by our geographic location. So in a sense we're from the land, because of our particular- the way we distinguish ourselves, coming from a certain part of the land. (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011)

Thus, as she notes, “being identified with that designation, identifies me as being from the land” (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011).

In a yet more personal connection to land, John Elliott explains how his SENĆOŦEN name, STOLÇEĒ, is also the name of a place:

I'm from Saanich, and my name is from an island. My island place. So it's a place where our people have gone for many years to visit relatives and we have a village near there now too. Far away on the island they call San Juan Island today. And the village name is STOLÇEĒ. [...] STOLÇEĒ. That's my name. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

Alestine Andre also mentioned that Gwich'in people often share names with places: “the names of people are also part of the place names, in many cases” (p.c., Jan. 18, 2012).

Sharing the name of a place is perhaps one of the clearest examples of a personal linguistic connection to the land.

Apart from names or stories, all the experts spoke of an intimate emotional and spiritual connection to the land. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton talked about his experience of living in the United States for a year and mentioned the strong homesickness he felt. He says: “I don't know what it is about First Nations people but there's a strong connection to home” (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011). Earl Claxton Jr. shares this sentiment:

Well, I guess for myself, I feel like I'm a true Saanich, I really do. I have deep roots here. I'll never leave here. I can't. My dad always said that, too,

about WENITEM¹⁴. He says that they can pick up and move anywhere and it doesn't matter to them, he says. But for us, we're here. And I don't feel comfortable when I leave here. If I leave, when I have to go to Vancouver or something, I'm just so happy to get back. [...] I have a real connection to here. I feel like I belong here and I can't go anywhere else. I can't move somewhere else. I have really strong feelings about that. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

These comments speak to a deep and abiding connection to land felt by many Indigenous people that is often expressed through ideas of belonging and identity. These words emphasize the Indigenous worldview of belonging to the land – a worldview that points to deep connections between language and land.

Respecting the Land

And so the elders tell us that we must remember to respect all things around you, whenever you are out on the land. And through this respect you are connected to the land. And that way, the land in return gives you the things that you need. (Albert Canadien, p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

This fourth theme of respecting the land appeared in every interview with the experts. Much like what was discussed in Chapter 3, when the experts spoke of respecting the land, they referred to a personal and reciprocal relationship with the land. Remembering Dene Nation Chief Noeline Villebrun's words, she says:

We say the land and our cultures are inseparable. We often express our views by way of confidence in what the land provides to us. This confidence in the land is reciprocated and maintained by being active on the land and showing respectful relations to all life. (Quoted in Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006, p. 15)

The reciprocity starts with recognizing the land as a provider, for it gives to the people everything that they need to live. As Albert Canadien states,

the entire way of life is related to the land because the land not only gives you sustenance – like the berries, the animals, and the water gives you the fish – but it also provides you with shelter, and food and all other necessities of life. (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

Recognizing and appreciating the provision of the land fosters an attitude of respect and through acting on that respect for the land, the circle of reciprocity is completed. Rosa

¹⁴ WENITEM translates as “white person”.

Mantla describes the receiving and giving of this reciprocal relationship using the terms of *appreciation* and *respect*. One's appreciation for all that the land provides (receiving) is returned by respecting the land (giving):

the spirituality part of it is how you make an offering by appreciating all those things that are given to you from the land. In return you have to respect that. So you don't just throw that into a waste. [...] So anything that is taken is not taken for granted. And that's how you respect the land and that's how the land respects you in return. (Rosa Mantla, p.c., Jan. 4, 2012)

As Rosa Mantla suggests, for many Indigenous people, this reciprocal relationship with the land constitutes a significant part of Indigenous spirituality:

So sometimes people think about practicing your religion as part of your spirituality, but for many of us spirituality is how we live on the land, what we take and what it provides every day. Especially our health. It's spiritual – it's very important. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

This spirituality is expressed in these attitudes of appreciation and respect: “we all have spirituality from the land to appreciate, and also to learn respect through our spirituality with the land.” (Rosa Mantla, p.c., Dec. 8, 2011). In a later comment, Rosa Mantla explains further what she means by the terms of appreciation and respect, and how they relate to spirituality:

Our spirituality as a person, or even as a family: we appreciate all the things we get from the land, and appreciate the work that we do because it's all survival. And also our spirituality lies in the uniqueness of the land day by day because it provides us with health and also our physical being – daily work, our food that nourishes us as we survive day by day. And we have to learn how to respect ourselves as well as our surroundings and the people that we live with. And a lot of respect is through what we gain from each other: what we learn from each other. And it's not something that we take advantage of. And every little part of the animal that we have for food, and for clothing, the tools and our medicine, it was always taken with appreciation. So a lot of that has to do with our spirituality. Our spirituality in our days was [...] all that is connected with what we are given by our land and the environment that we live in. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

Alestine Andre also mentions the spiritual aspect of the land as a provider, commenting: “The land could be spiritual as well, because it provides [...] everything that we need to live” (p.c., Jan 18, 2012).

The experts spoke of several key ways in which they demonstrate their respect for

the land. In the first way, they respect the land simply by using what is in nature. As Albert Canadien reflects: “the thing is that the Creator put all these things on the land for us to use and live on. And we show respect when we use these things that he put there” (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012). More particularly, they respect the land by using it without being wasteful. Just as Rosa Mantla had commented that “you don’t just throw that into a waste” (p.c., Jan. 4, 2012), so John Elliott also spoke of not wasting anything that the land provides. As an example, he describes how WSÁNEĆ hunters would wait in the highlands until there was snow on the ground before they hunted for elk,

because they want to have snow on the ground in order to track those big animals if they’re wounded. It would be almost like a disgrace for our people to lose a wounded animal, and let it just die, because we couldn’t find it. It would be a sad feeling for our people to do that. They respected life like that. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

Remembering the story of SMÍET, the deer, he explains,

There’s a big value in that teaching, of how we should live on the land with respect. And we just don’t go out there to kill; it’s not about killing for the sake of killing, it’s for the sake of survival and for food. And with that food we must share with the people, those teachings and that. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

John Elliott also spoke of other ways of respecting the land, such as by providing escapement for salmon in the traditional WSÁNEĆ reef nets, and by not hunting ducks or deer in their mating season. These actions reflect Earl Claxton Jr.’s earlier comment that the people are to be caretakers of the land. The people reciprocate their appreciation for what the land provides by taking care of it respectfully and ensuring its continuation for future generations.

Another way that respect for the land is shown is through making offerings to the land. As Albert Canadien explains,

I said that because the land provides the necessities of life and living for the Dene people, we are connected to a certain extent to the land. It’s hard to put in English what I’m trying to say. Because it’s a feeling. The best way that I can describe this is that there’s a connection among Dene people to the land because the land provides sustenance for them. And the Creator had put it there for our use. So we respect these things that he had put on the land for us to use. That’s why there are offerings done when things are taken from the land. And this is just a respect that is accorded to the land because it provides what we need to continue living. (p.c., Jan.

26, 2012)

The tradition of making offerings to the land appears in many Indigenous cultures. In some cases the offering might be given either to request or give thanks for safe travel on the land (i.e. Andrews, 2011; Andrews and Zoe, 1997). For example, in *Keeper 'n' Me* the protagonist offered tobacco to the land in gratitude for his safe travels (Wagamese, 1994). In other cases the offering might be given in return for something taken from the land. Legat describes noticing an awl hidden in a tree as a gift from an elder: “He had given it to the tree that had provided, and had used what was provided. [...] He left the awl as a sign of respect in return for using the tree’s bark” (2007, p. 128). Depending on the culture and the situation, these offerings might be tobacco, a willow branch, some kind of useful item such as coins or matches, or simply a prayer of thanks that would be given to the land in appreciation of the land’s provision.

A third way in which respect is shown to the land is by recognizing kinship with the land. Both John Elliott and Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton speak of recognizing elements of nature as being relatives, and respecting the land accordingly:

Some place names of our islands actually refer to the islands as if they were people, which I think highlights another important sort of aspect of our traditional worldview: places, islands, and even animals and plants, everything sort of has human qualities to us, so it’s like viewing them as relatives. And usually when you think about relatives you think of that sort of strong relationship, right? And the way you treat relatives respectfully. So to have that worldview instilled in our people through names, place names, you know, that's a big part of it as well.
(Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton, p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

John Elliott further explains this idea, describing how in the WŚÁNEĆ tradition, the islands were once people who were thrown out into the ocean by the Creator, turned into islands, and solemnly charged to “look after your relatives”:

When they were thrown out there, and all the different ones were thrown out there to make those islands, when XÁLS stopped throwing them out there, he turned to the people that were remaining there and he said to them, “these are your relatives of the deep. TELETÁĆES. Call them TELETÁĆES”. And TETÁĆES means island, and TELETÁĆES means islands, but it also means relatives of the deep. That’s what the islands are called, they're made from our people. And that we should look after them. And they were told to look after us. They were told at that time that they were being thrown: QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN

SĆÁLEĆE¹⁵. They were thrown out near the straits, they were told to look after us and we were told to look after them. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

Like the islands, the WSÁNEĆ people see relatives in all other parts of nature as well. For example, the salmon were once humans who were turned into fish by the Creator. This creates a unique attitude of respect for the salmon that results from acknowledging kinship with them. As John Elliott explains:

So the SĆAANEW, what we call the SĆAANEW, are the salmon. Each one of them has a species name, each one of them has a prayer name. And when we want to speak to the salmon we use the prayer name. We want to speak to it as a human, if we're going to fish it [...] that's what we use. If we're talking about it as a fish we use the species name. So that's the way that goes. But, that puts us a little closer to the fish than if it's just a salmon or just food. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

Returning to the story of the deer, SMÍEF, John Elliott explains how this story demonstrates the people's kinship with the deer and thus results again in that unique attitude of respect:

But when we talk to the deer, we don't call the SMÍEF by the SENĆOFEN human name. We call him 'grandson' because he was the grandson of those people. It reminds us of how we should think of the deer. How we should think of taking life, and that it's actually an act of taking a life when you're hunting, so you should show respect for the future. [...] So, that's why we call the deer, in our prayer language, in our prayer, we call him grandson. And ask him to feed our families. And we promised him that we'll not waste anything. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

This attitude of respect is essential to a healthy, reciprocal relationship with the land. All of the experts spoke of respecting the land in return for what it provided to them. This reciprocity of appreciation and respect is encoded within language at many levels, and is also expressed through language in giving thanks to the land and recognizing kinship with the land.

4.4 A changing relationship with the land

In the conversations, every one of the experts spoke of a change in the relationship with the land. Though I asked no questions directly regarding this, the

¹⁵Translates as "Look after your relatives, look after your relatives".

experts all shared their concerns about the changes they see in their communities. They spoke about struggling to exist in a Western paradigm; of losing their languages; of becoming disconnected from the land; of how the traditional teachings are not being passed on; and above all, how this harms both the people and the land. That the experts spoke about this is not surprising, for it is the reality that most, if not all, Indigenous groups in Canada are facing today. This reality is just one of the direct consequences of the renaming of the land and the residential school system, as described in Chapter 3. Considering the earlier discussion of how everything is interrelated, so both the language and the land are mutually affected in this reality. In this section I present the comments of the experts on this topic of change as it relates to each of the four interactions with land discussed above. The implication is that language loss not only affects the people but because of the many connections of language to land, also directly impacts the land.

Living on the Land

Each of the experts spoke of a change from the traditional ways of life. They all acknowledged that the current way of life of Indigenous peoples is very different from what it used to be. In mentioning this, Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton made reference to the day when his grandfather bought an outboard motor for their canoe:

My uncle was saying, too, that he remembers the day when his dad, my grandpa, brought home a little six-horse Johnson and bolted it on the back of their canoe. And they thought that was the best day ever, the best thing. But then he says, in retrospect, that was kind of like the beginning of the end almost. Like a totally- just a change in lifestyle. (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

As Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton suggests, the introduction of an outboard motor physically illustrated the changing relationship with the land with a change in the way people travelled on the land. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton later spoke about this changed relationship in the larger context of conflicting worldviews:

You know, learning the language is one thing, but all of us sort of exist in this mainstream Western paradigm where we're influenced by technology, by TV, by internet, by everything around us. We're all in this sort of mainstream Western paradigm, right. Work. School. I think all of that is existing and functioning in this Western world. (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

As Nick explains, the different lifestyle he describes is based on a different paradigm or

worldview from the traditional Indigenous worldview and is distanced from traditional activities on the land. Similarly, Earl Claxton Jr. speaks of how people are no longer experiencing the traditional ways of life on the land:

Yes, everything is disappearing. I can remember when I was young that I went, I used to go camping with my dad and my grandmother. And my dad would go out hunting and my grandmother would be making bread and stuff at the camp. And I can remember [...] learning basic survival skills. Just how to survive out in that kind of weather. And our children are not experiencing that. And even I would say some of the parents haven't experienced that. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

He elaborates further, explaining:

Even the things that I know [...] are disappearing fast. All the things that I saw and know are not being shown or taught to our young people. They're absorbed by many of the things that their friends are doing, which is like watching video games and movies and staying inside. They don't go outside and experience the elements. So we say that, when I'm teaching, that the children are cut off, or missing that experience. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

Echoing Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton's comments, Earl here describes a very different lifestyle that involves little direct interaction with the land. 'Living on the land' in the traditional sense is no longer the norm. The result is that the traditional knowledge necessary to live on the land is not being passed on.

Rosa Mantla and Alestine Andre both made reference to the change of people living in communities as opposed to living on the land like they used to. In speaking about this change, Rosa Mantla explains how it affects the language:

So when you're in the community, nowadays a lot of our young people learn just the language that's in the community. It can be slang, Tłìchq, or a mixture of English with it. So that's the reason why we don't have a lot of fluent speakers because whatever they pick up from the community, from their friends, or whatever they hear, that's what they have learned over the years. (p.c., Jan. 4, 2012)

She elaborates on this, saying:

Well, things have changed greatly. Because when we compare to about 10 to 15 years ago, the children and the young parents that live out on the outlying communities, their language is still strong. But because of the TV and the school and the community that they live in, many of their children hear different ways of speaking. (p.c., Jan. 4, 2012)

What Rosa highlights is that this change in way of life has gone hand in hand with language shift and loss. Because language plays a central role in the Indigenous relationship with the land, so language loss greatly affects this relationship.

Learning from the Land

Language shift, together with a changed way of life that is distanced from the land, results in a loss of learning from the land. Several of the experts spoke of how the traditional knowledge and teachings that come from the land are no longer being passed on. Rosa Mantla comments that “all those practices have changed. Because the teachings are not being taught and the practices haven’t been practiced” (p.c., Jan. 4, 2012). She also mentioned:

Well, there are a lot of place names in the areas that are connected to the teachings. But if it hasn't been passed on to other people who want that or need to learn, [...] I don't think it's being taught or shared at all. (p.c., Dec. 8, 2011)

The loss of language is directly related to the loss of learning from the land, “because when you lose a language, you lose ten thousand years or more of history” (John Elliott, p.c., Jan. 25, 2012). John Elliott explains how when the language is lost, the ability to learn from the land through the teachings and stories is also lost:

And the minute we lose our language [...] we start losing our connection to the understanding of all those ways that we're connected to all parts of nature. There's stories of how we should be and how we shouldn't be in every part of nature. And there's all kinds of medicines and healing things there that the people know and understand about. And try in the best possible way to be connected to it. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

Thus as John Elliott explains, without the language it is no longer possible to remain connected to these things in the same way, for the connection comes through language. Because of this, there is a distinct correlation between the loss of language and the loss of the ability to learn from the land.

Belonging to the Land

The immediate result of the loss of traditional ways and the loss of language is a

change in Indigenous identity. Many of the experts spoke strongly about the connections between language and identity, and the effect that losing their language would have on identity. Nick XEMFOLTW Claxton speaks of the identity crisis that he sees facing the youth in his community as a direct result of the loss of their language and change in their way of life:

if you went into our communities, I think you would- at least I see our community, especially kids, sort of in this identity crisis. Kids wanting to be- where do they get most of their influence from? Probably from music, or TV and trying to live like what they see on TV or music videos as opposed to who they really are as Saanich people. And I think a lot of that comes from living and learning and being in that Western paradigm and not in ours. (p.c., Oct. 3, 2011)

As he highlights, this identity crisis comes from a Western paradigm – a way of life and worldview that is disconnected from the land. Earl Claxton Jr. speaks more strongly about the effect of losing language on identity:

It kind of makes me think of what my dad said about the language. He said that if we lose our language, we're just like everybody else- anybody else that's just come here, just landed here. We've lowered ourselves to just to being just like them. And that kind of – like we didn't have anything. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

John Elliott adds to this:

The minute we let go of our language and forget it, then we don't have an identity anymore, as a nation. But when our people can still speak our language, we can still pray in our language each day. When we go on a walk on the land, when we go fishing, when we go hunting, we can speak to nature, speak to the islands, speak to the winds, whatever it might be, in their humans names, then we're still Saanich people. And when we lose that, we're just brown people with brown skin, with no real connection anymore. So we have to keep the language intact, keep it alive and along with it goes all those teachings and beliefs, which are our worldview, our value of how we see this world. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

As John Elliott explains, because the language plays a key role in demonstrating how Indigenous people belong to the land, without the language they lose that sense of belonging and the confidence in who they are on the land. He emphasizes again that because language connects to all the teachings and beliefs in a W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, the loss of the language affects all other aspects of life:

And that's how language connects us to all those things. And it's with respect and honour that we hold that. And the minute we let it go, the minute we sort of put it aside, and say that doesn't matter anymore, and then we've lost ourselves, or we've lost our own identity. Because it's our laws, our beliefs and our ways. It's our culture, and it's our ancestry that we're losing when we put it all aside. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

Thus, as John Elliott explains, putting aside the language means putting aside the web that ties together all things in Indigenous existence: connections to land, history, beliefs, laws and ways of life.

Respecting the Land

As the experts pointed out, the loss of language, traditional teachings and ways of life are compounded most of all in a loss of that personal reciprocal relationship with the land that is based on appreciation and respect. Alestine Andre notes that the shift from living on the land to living in communities has strongly affected that relationship:

Back in the times when people lived on the land – full time, year round – I think people had that special relationship with the land. But as people moved away and moved into the communities, that special relationship seemed to have diminished, as people were not in tune with the land as when they used to live on the land full time, all year round. (p.c., Dec. 9, 2011)

John Elliott expands on this, commenting on the role that technology has had in distancing people from the land and removing their attitude of respect for the land:

And I think what's missing today in this modern- this technological world that we live in today has lost a lot of that. Lost a lot of that value of how we need to just humble ourselves in nature. We've forgotten that humble part of being within the world because we've kind of come off away from the land by science. And it's amazing, I mean all of it – all of the technology today – but we're missing some parts. We're missing some parts to connect to a real good future if we want to look after this place for a long time. Because we're stepping on a lot of the things that shouldn't be walked on. We need to look after it better. Whether it's plants, animals or fish. Whatever it is in nature, streams or creeks. Even a stream or a creek or a lake to us has a life that we can speak to, in our belief. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

In this comment, John Elliott implies that because of these changes, people are no longer taking care of the land as they should be, but rather harming it- 'stepping on a lot of the

things that shouldn't be walked on'. Earl Claxton Jr. also makes reference to harming the land, mentioning as an example how some traditional harvesting places for the W̱SÁNEĆ have become overgrown by invasive plant species. He relates this to a loss of respect for nature that has come through the loss of traditional knowledge and teachings. The reversal of this and the healing of the land, he argues, depends on regaining respect for the land:

But I think that part of that healing has to come through the teachings to the children too. And they- all the children or all society seems to have lost respect for nature. And that's one of the things that I try to encourage is to get back to that respect for nature. (Earl Claxton Jr., p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

As John Elliott emphasizes, reclaiming the language is a part of regaining this respect and this connection to the land:

Because within our language- and that's with each language – with each language it has a special part of understanding nature. And when we lose that connection, when we really lose that holy connection – because the language is a holy thing, it's a sacred thing – when you lose that holy connection, that sacred connection to that part of the land where it came out of, because really, the language is the voice of the land. When you lose that connection then the land is changed. It's changed forever. It's gone. The understanding of how to live in that land is gone. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

The language, as John Elliott explains, is the voice of the land and a sacred connection to the land. The language encodes within it the attitudes of appreciation and respect that are essential to maintaining that life-giving reciprocal relationship with the land.

Losing the Voice of the Land

The comment by John Elliott above highlights one final thought that must be addressed in this discussion of language and land. When the experts spoke of the changing relationship with the land, they suggested that, as John said, 'the language is the voice of the land'. Without its voice, the land is mute – unable to speak for itself or communicate its knowledge. The direct consequence of language loss is thus harm to the land. In considering this, I include here a prayer by the late Tłı̄ch̄q elder Joe Suzie MacKenzie, which beautifully expresses this sentiment:

Dè Gha Masi

Thank you for the land

Joe Suzie Mackenzie, translated by Gabrielle Mackenzie-Scott

Hozì, Dè k'e, edìdaat'ù!

In the barren, on the land, it's very beautiful!

Dq yek'e ààlaada

People work on the land

Dq lq yek'e ààlaada hot'e nà.

Evidently, lots of people have worked on the land.

Dè, ha cho ekì, whatsoð, whe?o làanì.

The land is big, it seems like it's by itself.

Nòhtsì, weyatì wek'e whe?o, ìle làanì.

God's words, blessing, it doesn't seem to be on it.

Hòt'a, dàanìt'a kweèt'ù,

Already, how could it be that, white people,

Dè hahtso, yek'e, eghàlaigeedè.

with the land being very big, they are working on it.

Kweèt'ù, yek'e, haiyaehgeetia, wek'e jò-le.

White people, do they pray on the land, it's not known.

Dè hahtso, Nòhtsì weyatì, wek'e whe?o-le dùi,

God's words, blessings, needs to be on it, not without.

Dàgòht'e, sòm sòm ìndàà gogha.

How will it be like, don't know, don't know, for the future.

Dè, ha, daat'ù, dùi!

The land is very beautiful!

Ha nıwq, eyits'q?ò, haehsì.

This is what I think and say.

(Chocolate, Legat, Mackenzie-Scott, Sprecher, & Zoe, 2000)

Through this poem, Joe Suzie Mackenzie expresses his connection with the land and acknowledges the power of the language, “Nòhtsì weyatì” (God’s words), for the land. He also expresses his doubt that Kweèt’ù (white people) pray on the land, or demonstrate their respect for the land through language. As he emphasizes, the land needs this language; without it, the future of the land is uncertain.

In resonance with the sentiments expressed by Joe Suzie Mackenzie in this prayer, the experts all emphasized that the changes in these four ways of interacting with the land not only harm Indigenous people by separating them from their sense of identity, their

healthy ways of life and their connection to land, but also harm the land. The implication is that the changed relationship with the land means that the land is acted upon in different ways. Without the attitudes of belonging, appreciation and respect that are encoded in language, the way one acts upon the land is changed and the relationship with the land is no longer reciprocal. John Elliott spoke of how the language and teachings ensure the survival of the animals and plants on the land. The loss of the language and the teachings thus directly relates to the loss of the species:

To us, when we teach our children that, then there'll always be deer. There'll always be deer. If we speak to the salmon the way we speak to salmon in our language, then there'll always be salmon. When we lose that, and it's all just about getting the most, or who can get the most, then we lose the value, we lose the teaching, and we lose the future of that certain species, whatever it might be: fish or deer or elk or whatever it might be. (p.c., Nov. 14, 2011)

As John Elliott explains, the language encodes values of respecting and caring for the land. Without the language, these values of reciprocity are lost. The giving back to the land no longer happens, and the land suffers as a result. Albert Canadien also expressed strongly the connection he sees between attitudes of respect and the health of the land:

There's a total disconnect from land. [...] That's why you see there's all kinds of problems down there. Not only down south but across the world. The floods, earthquakes and winds and all these things. People have to come back to their traditions of being respectful of things. Then maybe things will go back to the way they ought to be. (p.c., Jan. 26, 2012)

In this comment, he points to a direct link between the health of the environment and a relationship with land characterized by respect.

It is clear from these comments that not only does the land affect the language but the language in turn affects the land. The experts pointed to a direct link between the health of the language and the health of the land. The phrase 'the language of the land' thus comes to have multiple interpretations. While it certainly refers to the language that is spoken on that land, the experts pointed out that it also refers to the voice of the land. In Chapter 3 I included a comment by Washoe elder Alan Wallace, who said: "when the land speaks, it'll speak in a native tongue. So if you want to understand the land you have to speak the language. And if you speak your language to the land it will understand" (Christensen, 2006). In our conversation, Earl Claxton Jr. repeated this thought in a

different way:

And I kind of kid sometimes, when I'm talking about the animals. I say that the only reason that they're treated the way they are is that they don't speak English. So if they had a voice I know that people would be more responsive to those things. (p.c., Oct. 13, 2011)

The loss of the language means that the land no longer has a voice to speak up for itself. John Elliott also speaks to this. He comments on how the land is changing; how the berry patches that his parents used to go to are now dried up; how the wild blueberries growing on the hills are disappearing; and he links this directly to language: "Where are the blueberries gone on the hillsides here? Nobody mentions their names anymore in a prayer like it was meant to be" (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012). He explains further:

Every sound of a language makes a certain sound in nature. Every bird makes its own sound in nature. Every little part of nature – like the frogs I mentioned, like the crickets I mentioned – they all make a certain sound in nature to create nature. Our sounds that we speak, that we sing, are a part of nature. And our connections to the plant life, to all those things, the fishes, the frogs, whatever it might be, is all a part of what we are connecting ourselves, back and forth between ourselves and them, as nature. When that sound goes out forever, nature suffers. [...] And so I believe, and I always say to my students, that if you want a healthy world, Saanich world, then connect yourself to that world. Put some words out there in our language. Put some words out there in the universe. Speaking to that plant. Speaking to that- whatever it might be- animal, or bird, or duck that never- it's name never gets mentioned anymore. The ,O,ONE, or the SXÁT or whatever it might be. XO,EK or whatever it might be that never hears it's real name anymore. It's just called duck now. It's just called duck. And it's different. The Creator gave those names to it. Not us. So that's why I call it a sacred connection. The language is a sacred connection to all things. (p.c., Jan. 25, 2012)

As John Elliott says, when the language dies – when that sound goes out forever – nature suffers. The land and the language are so intimately connected that their existence and well-being are dependent on one another. In this way Indigenous languages truly are 'the language of the land'.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have deepened the learning gained from the literature review in Chapter 3 with first-hand comments from Indigenous experts regarding the connections between language and land. The conversations with the experts have demonstrated

clearly the connections between language and land. What stands out from their comments is the interconnectedness of *all* things- all aspects of Indigenous life and being. The experts' comments point to four different ways of relating to the land – or perhaps four different facets of one complex relationship – that are expressed in the themes of living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land, and respecting the land. Yet it is clear from their comments that each of these themes blends into the others. For example, their comments on place names demonstrate that place names do not just contain static knowledge about geographical features and resources, but that the names are in fact alive through the stories and histories that tie them to the land. Similarly, the Indigenous sense of belonging to the land is very clearly strengthened by a deep spiritual relationship with the land in which the land is seen as a provider, even a relative. Belonging to the land is thus understood in much the same way as belonging to a family. It is in your blood, part of your make-up, and entails responsibilities of caring for that family. Learning the knowledge that is embedded within the land is essential to developing a strong sense of identity, and is also necessary for understanding how to respect the land in a reciprocal way and participate in a relationship with the land.

This complex, multifaceted relationship ties together Indigenous peoples, their languages and the land in a myriad of ways. The result is that if any of these is changed, that change affects them all. The experts all pointed to this when they discussed the changing relationship with the land that they see happening today. They highlighted the ways in which the loss of the language and daily lived experience on the land affect their cultural values, the knowledge they gain from the land, their identity, and most of all their reciprocal relationship with the land. In speaking of this last change, they implied that the loss of the language results in a loss of the reciprocity of this relationship, and so directly harms the land. Through their words, the experts emphasize the truth that their languages are not merely connected to the land, but are indeed the voice of the land.

**INTERCHAPTER:
RELATIVES OF THE DEEP**

A story told by STOLČEL, John Elliott

At the beginning of the fishing season each year, when the KÁTELČ blooms – which is now called the ocean spray; it blooms a beautiful big plume of creamy coloured flowers – when that blooms it means to us that there's salmon within our waters, travelling to the big river. And because we are Saltwater People, we have no major river flowing in our area where the big salmon runs return. Our people fished mainly within the straits and in between those islands between here and the mainland. And so when those blossoms bloomed, that was a sign in nature that the fishing can begin.

At that time, our spiritualist priest would go on a journey- kind of like a sacrificial journey- without eating a lot, just drinking water. He would paddle out to the edge of the territory. It would take sometimes two days to get there paddling. No food. It was all like a prayer or sacrifice. And each stroke of his paddle was like a prayer for the people, a prayer for the season, a prayer for the fish, a prayer for the land and territory, a prayer for you name it! He was thinking all the way.

And he would rest halfway, at the beautiful spring water. And that place is called YÁIYEMNEĆ. It's over on Mayne Island today. And it's called Mayne Island today; we call that place SKFAK. It means, "it's a pass" where you go through. And he would rest there overnight, drink some nice clean spring water, and that would get his strength back up and he would continue his journey, out towards the edge of the territory to a place called SMOKEĆ. It's now called Point Roberts. And he went that far because that's where we could hear the voice from XÁLS, the Creator, speaking to our people.

So that was where he went and stood at the edge of the territory, and he faced south, facing all of the islands south of there that were out in the straits. And he spoke to them like relatives. He spoke to them like relatives, and he said, "Your relatives will soon be here to be with you. They're gonna be out here, and you're to look after them like you were told."

Because before they were islands, they were human people from Saanich. And they were from here. The Creator went to the top of this little mountain over here, ŁAUWELNEW, and tossed them out from there. And as he threw them out there to the ocean, he told them "QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE". *Look after your relatives, look after your relatives, look after*

your relatives. And they landed in different ways in the water there. Some with their chests in the water; some with their chests up; some facing crossways... And some of them were different parts of the same family, that were thrown out there. And that's how the islands were all named in the language: by how they landed and how they stayed and how they are there now.

And so he would speak directly to them as people. He'd say, "You know, your family is coming to be here with you. Your relatives are to be here with you soon. And you're gonna be ready; you should be ready. And you're to look after them, like you were told, by the Great Spirit. And they're gonna look after you like they were told." And so that marked the beginning of the salmon season, and that part of gathering for the W̱SÁNEĆ people.

And when he was done speaking to the islands, then he'd speak to the spirit of the fish and he would tell them that, and ask them to please take pity on us:

"Take pity on us and feed us once more. And you know that we'll always respect you and show you respect like we always have. We'll respect you and show you the same respect that we always have." It was a promise to the fishes' spirit.

And when he was done his prayers for those things, and for the season of fishing for the people, then he would return back, two days, coming back home. Back home to the land here, Saanich, and he would tell the people,

"I have done my best for you. I have made a sacrifice. I have prayed for you to have a good season. I've prayed for you to look after the land. I spoke to the island relatives and told them you're gonna look after them. And I told them and reminded them they're to look after you, while you're there. And you're to respect them as we were told."

And that's the way it is.

(John Elliott, personal communication, Nov. 14, 2011 and Jan. 25, 2012).

CHAPTER 5: LEARNING IN PLACE, LEARNING ONLINE

Modern education and traditional education can no longer afford to remain historically and contextually separate entities. Every community must integrate the learning occurring through modern education with the cultural bases of knowledge and value orientations essential to perpetuate its way of life.

(Cajete, 1994, p. 18)

5.1 Introduction

In a world where computer technologies and globalized media have become the dominant standard, new ways are being found to reinforce connection to place and to strengthen unique cultural heritage in a multicultural society. The integration that Cajete speaks of – integration of traditional and modern education, of Indigenous and Western epistemologies – is the central challenge facing Indigenous educators and language activists today, and is the focus of the second half of this thesis. This chapter speaks to the challenges of integrating differing worldviews within the educational experience and of blending Indigenous and Western models of education to create culturally relevant pedagogy in a contemporary context.

This chapter is structured in two parts. The first part considers various perspectives of the role of land in education through a brief review of both Indigenous education and place-based education literature. It seeks to answer my second research question, which is: what is the role of land in models of Indigenous and place-based education? A brief examination of models of Indigenous education and place-based education will help develop an understanding of what kind of role land can and should play in the educational experience. These two models of education are not currently the norm in mainstream North American schooling, so this section includes a discussion of some of the challenges facing educators who wish to implement decolonized, place-focused educational programs.

The second section introduces a discussion of language learning online, switching from a place-based focus to an online focus, and offers an introductory discussion of the role of the internet in teaching language. Computer technologies are increasingly prevalent in second language education. While technologies such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and online learning are now almost the requisite standard for

second language teaching of majority languages, the use of these technologies is still relatively new for Indigenous language education. Yet computer media, particularly the internet, are gaining increasing use by communities as part of language revitalization efforts. These media offer many opportunities and advantages for language revitalization and are a valuable tool for both archiving and teaching language. However, their use in an Indigenous context is not entirely straightforward. Computers are primarily a product of Western culture, and the internet especially represents the culmination of Eurocentric globalization. The use of such technology for Indigenous language revitalization thus creates a paradoxical image: languages which are intimately connected to specific places are being taught through a medium that is inherently global and disconnected from any particular place. This discussion raises questions such as: how do web-based media used for teaching Indigenous languages fit within the context of place-based education and the Indigenous connection to land? In other words, how can a technology that is the culmination of Eurocentric globalization be place-focused and support Indigenous worldviews? And finally, is there or can there be a reconciliation between non-global, place-based education and the inherently global, placeless internet?

5.2 Learning in Place

In this section, I extend the understanding of the connection between language and land to the context of Indigenous education. Much of the literature on Indigenous models of education emphasizes the pedagogical value of land. This literature review begins approaching an answer to my second research question, which is: What is the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education? In beginning this review, I wanted to focus on Indigenous models of place-based education. However, as traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and learning are inherently tied to the land (Cajete, 1994; Deloria and Wildcat, 2001), looking for examples of specifically place-based Indigenous education is somewhat redundant. On the other hand, while the literature on place-based education in general does not directly address Indigenous issues, it shares many common themes with Indigenous education and is additionally informative to an understanding of how land might be a central element of education. I thus focus on the common ground between place-based education and Indigenous education and look briefly at commonalities in the theories and models of both. I begin by considering the role of land in Indigenous

education. The foundational role of land arises from a distinct Indigenous epistemology which values land very differently from the Western epistemology that currently governs schooling practice. Many of the challenges facing Indigenous educators today are rooted in this epistemological difference. Similar to Indigenous education, place-based education also places a different value on the pedagogical role of land than current educational models and as a result faces similar challenges to those of Indigenous educators. A brief comparison of these two models and the common challenges they face will be informative to our understanding of the role that land can and does play in education.

Before continuing further, it is necessary to clarify my intended meanings of the words “land” and “place”. As it was used in Chapter 3, the term “land” in this chapter refers to specific geographical regions and the particular landscapes and ecologies within those regions. The specificity in this definition links “land” to “place”. As Casey (1993) notes, a landscape as a whole is rarely named whereas specific parts of a landscape frequently are. The identification of these parts, or places, implies some connection to them, some experience within that place. Gruenewald defines place as “the local cultural and ecological environments of human communities” (2005, p. 263). In this way, place is contextual; it relies on the community for its definition. As Casey (1993) argues, places are more than simple locations in space; they are locations that are defined by experience. Thus, while the term “place” may have a multitude of meanings, encompassing constructed or natural spaces, spaces which are politically, culturally or geographically defined, social or physical spaces, for the purposes of this review, place and land can be considered synonymous, both referring to specific local environments of human communities as defined by experience.

Land in Indigenous Education

Land is a foundational element to Indigenous education. An Indigenous model of education – a curriculum that is built from Indigenous worldviews – is inherently place-based and place-conscious (Deloria and Wildcat, 2001; Cajete, 1994). Such a model of education both arises from the land and teaches about the land; the land itself is a teacher (Kingman, Walters & Wells, 2001) and a place of learning. As Billy explains, “since knowledge takes place on the land, we may say that the land and all it encompasses make

up the essential “classroom”. We learn from everything on the land and water, including animals, birds, insects and plants” (2009, pp. 31-32). Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis revealed land as having primary significance to Indigenous ways of knowing, being and learning. A number of authors have demonstrated that place, being an essential element to Indigenous knowledge and culture, is thus also essential to Indigenous education (Billy, 2009; Cajete, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007; Kirkness, 1999; Marchant, 2009; Michel, 2012; and Swallow, 2005 among others). Cajete’s seminal work on Indigenous education identifies traditional forms of Indigenous education as being inherently place-based: “traditional education for Indigenous people has always been an ecological education” (1994, p. 86). As Indigenous knowledge and culture stems from the land, thus so does Indigenous education. Cajete explains that “for Indigenous people around the world, education in Nature is life. For Native people throughout the Americas, the paradigm of thinking, acting and working evolved *through* their established relationships to Nature. The foundation, expression, and context of Indigenous education were environmental” (1994, p. 87). Similarly, Billy emphasizes that “Indigenous pedagogies are characterized by the important role of the land” (p. 38). Even from a non-Indigenous perspective, Gruenewald acknowledges that “if human experience, identity and culture are intimate with and inseparable from our relationship with places, places deserve much attention in discussions of education” (2005, p. 627). For Indigenous peoples, knowledge, identity and culture spring from the land itself, and thus land and place are the foundations of education.

Differing Worldviews

This way of understanding education is in stark contrast with the Western objectivist worldview that dominates the current public education system and presents knowledge as decontextualized universals rather than contextualized experiences (Gruenewald, 2005). Deloria and Wildcat argue that “the heart of the problems facing Indian education in America is found in the largely abstract metaphysics of time, space, and energy. Western metaphysics yields a very different conception of reality than an experiential American Indian metaphysics of place and power” (2001, p. 30). Central to this different conception of reality is a different concept of what constitutes knowledge.

Many scholars have written on the characteristics of Indigenous knowledge (Battiste, 2002; Cajete, 1994; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999; L.T. Smith, 2002; among many others). For our purposes, Battiste's explanation of Indigenous knowledge in an educational context is particularly helpful:

Aboriginal epistemology is found in theories, philosophies, histories, ceremonies, and stories as ways of knowing. Aboriginal pedagogy is found in talking or sharing circles and dialogues, participant observations, experiential learning, modeling, meditation, prayer, ceremonies, or story telling as ways of knowing and learning. The distinctive features of Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogy are learning by observation and doing, learning through authentic experiences and individualized instruction, and learning through enjoyment. [...] Indigenous Knowledge is both empirical (that is, based on experience) and normative (that is, based on social values). It embraces both the circumstances in a way that is unfamiliar to Eurocentric knowledge systems, which distinguish clearly between the two. As a system, it constantly adapts to the dynamic interplay of changing empirical knowledge as well as changing social values. (2002, p.19)

Indigenous knowledge is significantly different from Western knowledge. Graham and Ireland comment that, “intellectually, Indigenous Knowledge co-exists as a mystery with nature that is celebrated while scientific [Western] knowledge seeks to eliminate mystery by explaining it away. They vary in their association with human action: intimate and subjective interrelation versus formal and objective decontextualizing” (2009, pp. 30-31).

These differences in epistemologies are problematic in an educational context.

Graham and Ireland argue that

Western and Indigenous education can be seen as contradictory. Western education tends to be compartmentalized and operationalized in a decontextualized framework. By contrast, Indigenous people traditionally acquired knowledge through experience with their environment in which details were understood as part of the whole and where laws were constantly tested based on the context of everyday survival. (2009, p. 34)

As Heikkila and Fondahl note, the current system of education does not allow for a “multiplicity of epistemologies, and is thus perceived as problematic by Indigenous peoples who view state-sponsored, introduced western-modeled education as antithetical to the values and knowledges that define their communities’ worldviews” (2010, p. 105). Many of the challenges that Indigenous educators face when attempting to build

programs based on Indigenous worldviews stem from the current epistemological foundation of public education (see for example, Graham & Ireland, 2008; Swallow, 2005; Williams & Tanaka, 2007). In his MA thesis on Indigenous learning in a Salish community, Swallow highlights how knowledge of the land - what the community elders consider to be 'knowledge of most worth' – hardly appears in the grade-school curriculum for the community's youth: "Very little, if any, of what W̱SÁNEĆ people deemed knowledge of most worth is realized within the currently prescribed curriculum" (2005, p. 66). One of his research participants, John Elliott Sr., emphasized that "the way we are teaching and learning does not fit. Students are learning in a false environment. We lived on the land and learned from it. The land was our environmental school" (quoted in Swallow, 2005, p. 85). As Henderson notes, "Canadian educators daily ask that Aboriginal people acquiesce to or fit within the Canadian version of Eurocentrism" (2000, p. 59), which causes almost insurmountable challenges for Indigenous students and inevitably leads to the death of Indigenous knowledge.

Within the context of these differing epistemologies, conflicting perspectives of place present a significant challenge for integrating Indigenous knowledge into Western education. Cajete (1999) discusses the terms *biophilia* and *biophobia* which, he suggests, represent respectively the Indigenous and Western attitudes towards nature. He argues that the Western epistemological foundation for education is infused with biophobia – a fear of nature and relationship to nature:

because biophobia underlies aspects of the prevailing mindset of modernism, it influences the 'hidden curriculum' of modern Western education. Indeed, the evolution of biophobia as expressed in the attempt to control and subdue nature has its own unique historical progression in Western religious, philosophical, artistic, and academic traditions. Biophobia also underpins the epistemological orientation of most Western governmental, economic, religious, and educational institutions. (Cajete, 1999, p. 190)

Casey points out the consequence of this biophobia: "In the past three centuries in the West – the period of "modernity" – place has come to be not only neglected but actively suppressed" (1993, p. xiv). This biophobia and suppression of place have resulted in the current models of education which teach an attitude toward land that is completely opposed to Indigenous worldviews. As Cajete notes,

essentially, modern education conditions us for “consumer consciousness” which in turn supports the notion that land without modern human habitation is devoid of real value and is therefore “empty” territory that becomes valuable only when it is bought, sold, developed, and inhabited. In contrast, Indigenous education is based on a recognition that human interactions with places give rise to and define cultures and community. (1999, p. 193)

Thus while Western models of education engender biophobia, Indigenous education is founded on attitudes of biophilia. As Deloria and Wildcat state, an Indigenous worldview is inherently tied to place: “Stated simply, *indigenous* means ‘to be of a place’” (2001, p. 31). Thus Indigenous education must begin with and be founded on lived experience in place.

Accountability and Standardization

These perceptions of land and place affect multiple aspects of the educational system, including foundational attitudes towards knowledge and the learning process. Kawagley and Barnhardt (1999) argue that in a Western epistemology, knowledge is compartmentalized and decontextualized, whereas in an Indigenous epistemology knowledge is holistic and interconnected. Accordingly, in the Western educational system, competency is measured by testing, whereas in traditional Indigenous learning environments, competency is measured by practice (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999). The measurement of competency in public education is part of a larger system of accountability that demands quantifiable results from educational institutions. This system of accountability currently defines schooling in North America. As Battiste notes, this results in a kind of homogenization that negates the diverse experience of Indigenous peoples and the value of local knowledge:

No single Indigenous experience dominates other perspectives, no one heritage informs it, and no two heritages produce the same knowledge. Therefore, homogenous methodologies for disseminating knowledge in schools are not helpful in the current educational crisis. Schools that attempt to impose homogeneity by standardizing domesticated curricula are a problem, for they are often at a loss as to how to integrate local content into their prescribed standardized curricula. (2002, p. 28)

Forbes (2000) argues that the standards upon which accountability is based are biased

towards Eurocentric views and exclude students of any other ethnicity. They promote a “testing culture”, which, he argues, “negates the unique heritages, dialects, and values of a particular area” (Forbes, 2000, p. 8). Moreover, he argues that the goals of standardization and accountability create a “nationalization process” through the preparation of nationalized tests based on nationalized textbooks. Such a process is “inherently unfair to many racial and ethnic populations, whose representation in the country is uneven or undervalued in certain regions. It is doubly unfair to First Americans who wish to rebuild their heritages and languages” (Forbes, 2000, pp. 8-9). Johnson (2000) also speaks out against the effects of accountability and standardization requirements, which he argues severely limit the amount of local control that communities may have over their education. This is particularly difficult for schools in Indigenous communities that are seeking to implement Indigenous models of education. As well as limiting local control of the educational process, standardization also demands the use of teaching materials that are counter-productive for Indigenous educators. As Johnson notes, the required external materials and textbooks “are based on someone else’s assumptions and someone else’s testing philosophy, which is not usually based on [Indigenous] values or experiences” (2000, p. 132). In short, the nation-wide standards required by the language of accountability are incapable of appropriately representing the diversity of ethnicity and heritage that runs throughout Canada and the United States and so leave little room for the incorporation of place in the classroom.

Some Positive Examples

In spite of all these challenges, there is a growing effort, particularly in Indigenous contexts, to incorporate place into education. Various school and educational boards across North America are working on developing and implementing curricula that incorporate Indigenous values and worldviews. I mention a few of them here to provide some positive examples of the possibilities for approaching decolonized, place-focused education.

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) is an excellent example of a place-based education program that is specifically designed for Indigenous students (Emekauwa, 2004). The AKRSI program is a rural school improvement effort that is

founded on the principles of place-based Indigenous education. It involves 5 key initiatives: 1) the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching into education using native cultural standards; 2) culturally aligned curriculum adaptations; 3) building a comprehensive database of Indigenous scientific (cultural and ecological) knowledge; 4) Elders in Residence and Culture Camps; and 5) village science applications via place-based science camps (Emekauwa, 2004). The positive effects of this program are obvious, as students are more engaged, achieve higher grades and become more connected to the community. As Emekauwa notes,

after nearly two centuries of denial within Western education institutions, the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska’s Natives are being recaptured through the work of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. These knowledge systems, coupled with the best of Western science, form the foundation for a new type of education—one that is place-based, culturally responsive, academically rigorous, and capable of propelling the achievement of Native children forward. (2004, p. 2)

In Canada, the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment has developed Dene and Inuit curricula. *Dene Kede* is a Dene-based curriculum that is centered around four key relationships: the students’ relationship with the land, with people, with the spiritual world and with themselves (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment (NWT ECE), 1993, xxxi). Land plays an essential role in the curriculum, as the Gr. 7 document notes, “A Dene’s identity is tied to the land. Without the land, even today, the Dene cannot continue to survive as a people” (NWT ECE, 2002, p. 17). Language, too, is a foundational part of the curriculum: “the language is taught because it expresses, in a way no other language can, that which is at the heart of being Dene” (NWT ECE, 2002, p. 21). The curriculum advocates experiential and community-focused learning, extensive land-based experiences and Elders involvement. It covers from kindergarten to Gr. 9 and holistically incorporates Dene traditional knowledge and values in all areas.

Inuuqatigiit is a similarly developed curriculum covering kindergarten to Gr. 12 that “focuses on the enhancement and enrichment of the language and culture of Inuit students. It also promotes the integration of the Inuit perspective with the standard school curriculum” (NWT ECE, 1996, p. 3). The curriculum incorporates Inuit culture, values and languages as foundational elements. The goals of *Inuuqatigiit* are to “maintain,

strengthen, recall and enhance Inuit language and culture in the community and the school; create a link between past and present; encourage the practice of Inuit values and beliefs; and encourage pride in Inuit identity to enhance personal identity” (NWT ECE, 1996, p.5). Much like in *Dene Kede*, land plays an essential role in *Inuuqatigiit*. The curriculum is divided into two main themes: relationships with people and relationships with the environment. The second theme focuses on developing experiential knowledge of the land and suggests multiple occasions for land-based field-trips and learning opportunities. Again, the curriculum is centered around experiential learning and community involvement in the educational process.

A final example comes from the Cree School Board in Quebec. The Cree School Board was formed in 1975 so that the Cree nation could “decide the language of instruction, choose the curriculum, select suitable textbooks, hire appropriate teachers and adopt a distinctly Cree school calendar” (Cree School Board, n.d.). The goal was that Cree youth would learn a traditional way of life while being equipped to participate in the modern world. Since its formation, the Cree School Board has “implemented a distinctly Cree curriculum in geography, history and economics, and established in-service training for Cree teachers” (Cree School Board, n.d.). Week-long Cree Culture Camps on the land are held regularly. In addition, the Board’s website states that “efforts are under way to develop a land based Cree hunting and trapping vocational option” (Cree School Board, n.d.).

These are just a few current examples of ways that traditional Indigenous knowledge and place are being incorporated into current structures of education. As awareness of these issues grows, we can anticipate many more such positive examples.

Place-Based Education

In order to broaden the understanding of the role of land in education, I turn now to literature on place-based education in general. Though this literature doesn’t directly address issues in Indigenous education, it is nonetheless informative to an understanding of these issues. As Marchant states, “place-based education is an essential characteristic of First Nations education” (2009, p. 11).

There are many different versions of place-based, place-focused, or place-

conscious education. However, all have as a common goal the education of students about the community or geography local to them in order to raise awareness of local issues and develop connections to local culture. Gruenewald prefers to use the term *place-conscious* education, which he argues depicts a broad “philosophical orientation that embraces place as a construct fundamental to the purpose, process and structure of schooling” (2005, p. 263); thus place-conscious education is “the process of connecting learners and their teachers through direct experience, reflection and action to the geographically specific cultural and ecological dimensions of community life” (p. 263). As Bo-yuen Ngai and Koehn describe, “place-based education focuses on developing skills and competencies in various disciplines [...] through contextualized and experiential learning in and about the place where students reside” (2010, p. 598).

Place-based education may appear as environmental education, outdoor education (such as the Outward Bound Canada programs), or simply as community involvement (Smith, 2002). Each of these types seeks to direct students’ attention to the local places in which they live; both towards the ecological environment as well as towards the community. They strive to move beyond typical text-book based curricula that center on generic knowledge and nation-wide standards, and move toward a style of education that looks to local places for knowledge and learning. Moreover, these types of programs seek to make the learning process and the knowledge gained more relevant to the ‘real world’ – to the actual communities and environments that students participate in in their daily, non-school life. The central goal of place-conscious education is to “extend our notions of pedagogy and accountability outward toward places. Thus extended, pedagogy becomes more relevant to the lived experience of students and teachers, and accountability is reconceptualized so that places matter to educators, students and citizens in tangible ways” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 620).

Smith’s (2002) review of a variety of different place-based education programs throughout Canada and the United States provides some excellent examples of what such programs entail. He discusses five types of place-based education programs: cultural studies, nature studies, real-world problem-solving projects, internships and entrepreneurial opportunities, and induction into community processes. For example, under cultural studies, Smith discusses several different initiatives both in Canada and the

United States that require students to develop local histories of their areas by interviewing older residents and collecting oral histories and important stories. The gathered information in these examples is then put together into a meaningful format that can be shared back with the community, such as through a website or school play. Other examples come from his discussion on nature studies, in which he highlights programs that require students to become actively involved in their surrounding geography through conservation projects such as creating native plant gardens or monitoring local watersheds for contaminants.

Smith uses the examples he discusses to highlight the critical characteristics of a place-based education program: (1) local phenomena are used as a foundation for curriculum development; (2) there is an emphasis on learning experiences in which students are the creators of knowledge and not just the consumers of knowledge; (3) students participate in the creation of the learning agenda so that it is based on their own interests; (4) teachers act as guides and co-learners, not simply as knowledge databases; and (5) the divide between the school and community is lessened (2002, p. 593). The benefits of place-based education programs include increased student engagement, higher achievement, more effective learning, enhanced relationship with the community and heightened awareness of local community and ecological issues (Emekauwa, 2004; Gruenewald, 2003; Smith, 2002; Sanger, 1997).

Comparing Challenges

Significantly, the characteristics that Smith highlights parallel many of the values in Indigenous education. As discussed earlier, Indigenous education values local knowledge based on the local ecology. Moreover, Indigenous education presents knowledge as experience and thus emphasizes experiential learning. Elders and teachers are respected as mentors and guides in the learning process. Finally, Indigenous education reinforces connection to the community. It is a holistic education in which the entire community participates and contributes to the learning process. The similarities between the goals of place-based education and Indigenous education are both striking and informative. Both focus on the development of real-world problem solving skills, on respect for the land and respect for the community, and on experiential learning. Based on

these similarities, it is not surprising that many of the challenges faced by Indigenous educators are much the same as those faced by place-based educators.

Gruenewald (2005), Sanger (1997) and Smith (2002) have all highlighted the central challenge for implementing a place-focused program: the current educational system with its priority of accountability and standardization leaves little room for place-conscious pedagogies. As Gruenewald comments, “a spatial analysis of schooling reveals that its most striking structural characteristic is the enforced isolation of children and youth from culture and ecosystem” (2005, p. 625). In fact, this very characteristic was one of the most devastating for Indigenous children forced to attend the residential schools, as discussed in Chapter 3, as children were literally removed from their traditional learning environment – the land – and placed in enclosed schools fenced off from the land. This characteristic continues today, as the school building is often considered to be the “official” site of learning. Smith notes that this isolation is exacerbated by a standardized curriculum designed for nation-wide applicability: “in schools, especially after early elementary grades, teachers direct children’s attention away from their own circumstances and ways of knowing and toward knowledge from other places that has been developed by strangers they most likely will never meet” (2002, p. 586). Both the physical and intellectual separation from local places results in an ambivalent, even negative, attitude towards place. “In nearly every facet of education, even under the rubric of environmental education, educators teach students that their relationship with their place is marginal, uninteresting, and unimportant – and the quality of the environment demonstrates this marginalization” (Sanger, 1997, p. 4). Gruenewald argues that such models of isolated education

- (a) limit the diversity of experience and perception; (b) cut children, youth, and their teachers off from cultural and ecological life; (c) reproduce an unquestioning attitude about the legitimacy of problematic spatial forms; (d) deny and create marginality through regimes of standardization and control; and (e) through their allegiance to the global economy, function to exacerbate the very ecological problems that they deny. (2005, p. 636)

The language of accountability, and the subsequent need for standardization, has most shaped the current educational system in Canada and the United States, and is most antithetical to a curriculum of place (Gruenewald, 2005). The need for standardization –

through the use of textbooks, standardized exams and national curricula – prevents teachers from being able to teach local knowledge and involve students in activities and projects within their local communities. “Therefore, despite the widespread institutionalization of environmental education, schooling and an ecological consciousness of places are fundamentally at odds” (Gruenewald, 2005, p. 633). Gruenewald (2005) adopts a Foucauldian analysis to demonstrate the failings of the current educational system. He argues that standardization and the spatial organization of schools results in schooling as a site of social control. Thus accountability becomes a type of institutional panopticonism which limits students’ experience of diversity.

Because the structures and processes of schooling are based on institutional patterns of isolating teachers and students from places outside school, one can claim that schools limit experience and perception; in other words, by regulating our geographical experience, schools potentially stunt human development as they help construct our lack of awareness of, our lack of connection to, and our lack of appreciation for places. (Gruenewald, 2005, p. 625)

While this may seem a dramatic over-criticism of the current public educational system, it is obvious that there are significant problems with a system that inhibits the inclusion of local place in education. If land, experience on the land, and local knowledge from the land are to be included as an essential part of education, there must be a foundational shift in the current systems of accountability and standardization.

Shifting Worldviews

It is clear that the challenges facing Indigenous models of education arise from the worldviews that underpin the current public education system. Graham and Ireland cite a list of problems with the current educational system for Indigenous learners:

What recent scholarship is confirming is the commonly understood fact that Eurocentric pedagogy and curricula generally disengages Indigenous learners in the classroom; however, the typical and troubling approach to defining problems associated with Indigenous learners often times remains in terms of low achievement, high attrition, poor retention, and weak persistence of the students themselves. This places the onus for change on the individual student and ignores the structural and systemic problems within the education system itself. Moreover, teacher training is rooted in Western philosophy and pedagogy and curriculum is developed using Western concepts. This is further reflected in provincially mandated

learning outcomes and test standards. These factors coupled with increased class sizes, overworked teachers, reduced special needs support and overall funding cutbacks contribute to the on-going marginalization of Indigenous approaches to education from the classroom. In an environment of competing priorities, Indigenous approaches to education are not identified as being a first priority. (2009, pp. 40- 41)

As Graham and Ireland point out, the onus is most often placed on students themselves for their educational success or failure, rather than on the epistemological and pedagogical foundations of the educational model. The vast differences in the epistemologies of current Western education versus Indigenous and place-based education have led various authors to call for a paradigm shift in the way education is structured (Anderson, 2002; Battiste, 1998; Cajete, 1994; Henderson, 2000; Leavitt, 1993; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999; Gruenewald, 2005, among others). As Kawagley and Barnhardt note, the task of Indigenous peoples is to “reorient the institutional infrastructures and practices [...] to make them more suitable to their needs as a people within their own worldview, identity and history” (1999, p. 138). Cajete argues that “modern schooling in this context is simultaneously a major part of the problem and potentially a major part of the solution. Contemporary education must shift its attention from what in reality is essentially a myopic focus on the workplace to a focus on the ‘eco-place’” (1999, p. 192). Gruenewald also calls for a change in the educational system, particularly within the language of accountability that has rendered place-focused models inaccessible. He argues for the development of new systems of accountability that allow different worldviews, particularly place-conscious views, to be recognized and incorporated into the educational system. Both place-based educators and Indigenous educators alike have spoken out on these issues, calling for a paradigm shift in the way we understand education in North America. A complete solution may yet be a long way off, yet it is important to recognize these challenges and the worldviews that underlie them, if only to better understand the true significance of land in education.

5.3 Learning Online

In this section I turn now to the context of education online. Computers are becoming an increasingly prevalent mode of language education, as evidenced by the massive field of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) research. Moreover, the

internet, already embraced as a primary communicational tool for daily life, is now also permeating into educational contexts. Many educators are taking advantage of the relative ease of participation in the online world to use the internet for language teaching and learning purposes. While certainly these adoptions are progressing in leaps and bounds for majority language education (such as in English as a Second Language teaching), many Indigenous communities also see the opportunities afforded by the internet and are beginning to appropriate CALL and online language education practices for their own revitalization purposes. However, the role of the internet for Indigenous language education is not entirely unproblematic. While the internet may offer substantial benefits and opportunities for minority language communities, there are still many questions that need to be answered in regard to the role that the internet can play for these purposes. In this section I present a preliminary discussion of CALL theories and perspectives and then consider more particularly the role of CALL and the internet in an Indigenous context.

What is CALL?

With the advent of computer use for language learning has come a new field of research within Applied Linguistics: CALL, or Computer Assisted Language Learning. CALL refers to any use of computers to assist and facilitate language learning, typically in reference to second and additional language acquisition. Levy and Stockwell (2006) separate CALL into two roles: CALL as a *tutor* and CALL as a *tool*. In the tutor model of CALL use, the computer acts as a language tutor, accepting learner input and then evaluating and providing feedback on that input. In the tool model, the computer acts as an ‘enabling device’ that allows learners to perform interactive activities (Levy & Stockwell, 2006, pp. 22-24). CALL may or may not make use of internet capabilities, but the particular advantage of using the internet in CALL is that it allows for social, interactional activities where students interact and communicate with each other and with other language community members via online media. The development of Web 2.0¹⁶ has begun a new age of not only consuming media via the Internet, but also *producing* it

¹⁶ The term Web 2.0 refers to current internet technologies that facilitate a social and interactional space and allow for user-generated content. Please refer to Anderson (2007) for a complete discussion of Web 2.0 properties.

(Anderson, 2007). This has made it a valuable tool for education. Teachers around the globe are increasingly utilizing web-based media in the classroom, especially in the language classroom. The characteristics of the internet, and particularly the social features of Web 2.0, offer a positive learning environment for students (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Bradley, Lindstrom & Rystedt, 2010; Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; and Mills, 2009).

Benefits of Online CALL

Since the advent of the internet, vast amounts of research have been done on CALL, Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC) and language learning, (see Chun, 1994; Warschauer, 1997, 2007; and Warschauer & Grimes 2007 for further references). Research has suggested that levels of interaction and participation in the language classroom increase in online activities, and that learning via the internet has a positive impact on motivation and learner identity (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Bradley, Lindstrom & Rystedt, 2010; Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; and Mills, 2009 among others).

A number of authors have expounded on the benefits of using computers, and particularly the internet, for language learning. Courville (2011) argues that the use of computers and internet technology can remove physical, geographical and even financial barriers to language learning. Moreover, he points out that the use of the internet in language learning shifts the way that learning occurs from rote memorization and recitation to active research and skill development; transferring the focus of learning “from the retention of knowledge to its utilization” (2011, p. 3). Huang (2011) presents an example of this kind of active language learning that is made possible by internet technology.

Blake (2008) also argues strongly for the benefits of the internet in language learning. For one, he notes that the accessibility of the internet allows for increased exposure to the target language. The text-based nature of the internet increases valuable and necessary attention to form and increases written production (Blake, 2008; Warschauer, 1999). It also creates a low-stress environment for language practice. Various researchers have noticed increased participation and lower stress levels with internet use for students who are typically timid or quiet in a classroom setting (Blake,

2008; Light, 2011; Warschauer, 1999; and others). Returning to Courville's (2011) comments on the interactional nature of the internet in language learning, Blake (2008) also reiterates that the internet is an inherently social form of media and provides a multitude of opportunities for interaction with other users as well as with computer programs themselves.

A final oft-cited benefit of the internet for language learning is that the internet is already a medium used frequently by youth for their own personal learning and communication needs (Arroba, McGrath, Futrelle & Craig, 2010; Blake, 2008; and Cunliffe, 2004). As Blake notes, "84% of teenagers today, who will be the college language learners of tomorrow, use the Internet primarily as a tool for communications through instant messaging (IM) and text messaging" (2008, p. 5). Thus, he argues, "computer technology will be a key component to almost everything accomplished in the twenty first century" (Blake, 2008, p. 14). Similarly, Galla points out that "since technology is so much a part of today's culture, the future of Indigenous languages will depend partly on technology to engage students in learning. [...] Students born in the 21st century are surrounded by a multitude of technology and cannot live without it: cell phones, the Internet, e-mail, blogs, and iPods" (2009, p. 178).

Computers in Learning Theory and Curriculum Theory

The field of CALL research is saturated with commentary on how computers fit within various different theories of learning. Lamy and Hampel (2007) suggest that two distinct theories of learning have dominated the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The cognitive paradigm understands language learning as an internalized process and focuses on the processes within the learner's mind. This paradigm values comparisons of input and output as signifiers of learning. The sociocultural paradigm understands learning as a social, contextualized and interpersonal process and thus focuses on opportunities for learner interaction. While Lamy and Hampel (2007) argue that CALL supports both paradigms, Fotos and Browne (2004) note that the second paradigm has gradually replaced the first, so that the sociocultural model currently dominates the field of SLA and CALL research and increasingly incorporates the internet into CALL practice. Returning to Lamy and Hampel's (2007) distinctions of CALL as a

tutor versus CALL as a tool, Fotos and Browne (2004) trace a historical progression linking learning theories to CALL functions. When behaviourist/cognitivist theories dominated the field, CALL primarily functioned as a tutor that provided drill and practice opportunities for habit formation. As dominant theories shifted to a sociocultural/constructivist approach, CALL became a tool that facilitated interaction and meaning-construction.

The sociocultural paradigm is situated within the context of Vygotsky's (1986) theories of social learning and Wenger's (2000) model of social interactional learning and communities of practice. These theories advocate that learning does not occur in a vacuum but rather as the result of social interaction. In Vygotsky's view, learning occurs through social interaction with others; the knowledge and social practice of peers will facilitate learning and therefore participating in social interaction is key to learning success (Jaramillo, 1996). This idea is further built upon by Wenger (2000) who presents the idea of communities of practice within the framework of social learning systems. Wenger (2000) argues that communities that are internally united under a shared identity, "communities of practice", create the ideal learning environment by providing social interaction of the type necessary to generate learning.

Many researchers have pointed to the interactive and social capabilities of CALL, particularly within internet use. Fotos and Browne argue that CALL is integrative and incorporates learner autonomy, noting that "students learn better when they discover things through their own efforts rather than when they receive knowledge passively through instruction" (2004, p. 6). They suggest that the increased use of technology has coincided with a shift from teacher-centred classrooms to learner-centred classrooms, and that online CALL allows students to take more charge of their own learning while teachers act as facilitators rather than knowledge-holders (Fotos & Browne, 2004, pp. 7-8). Blake (2008) and Chan (2010) also argue that the internet provides great opportunities for interactional, social learning.

In spite of the many advantages that online CALL can offer, Blake cautions against "the misconception that technology itself embodies some new and superior methodological approach to language teaching, although, in truth, all the new digital technologies offer is a new set of tools that can function in service of the language

curriculum with the correct application” (2008, p.8). He argues that “how technology is used – its particular culture of practice – is not neutral; it responds to what the practitioners understand or believe to be true about SLA” (2008, p. 11). In other words, online CALL itself is not inherently interactional; it is the choices of the designers that determine how and to what extent the interactional capabilities afforded by the internet are utilized. Thus, as Blake has pointed out, it is important to consider the accepted learning theories of the designers and practitioners when evaluating online CALL. I add here that it is not only necessary to consider what practitioners believe to be true about *learning*, but also what they believe to be true about *curriculum*. In other words, both the theories of learning and the theories of curriculum that educators and program developers subscribe to will determine how CALL is used in any given context.

Considering theories of curriculum is important when evaluating educational materials, for it is our ideas and beliefs about curriculum that drive the decisions made when designing language learning resources. Theories of learning directly feed into curriculum theory, yet curriculum theory itself is not about *how* people learn, but rather about what knowledge is of most worth and how that knowledge can be transmitted to the learner. These assumptions establish the purpose and the goal of education, which in turn determine how education is carried out. MacNeil (1985) and Schiro (2008) both highlight four main theories or ideologies of curriculum. The Humanistic or Learner-Centered approach to curriculum focuses on the needs of the individual learners. In this theory, learning is seen as a natural developmental process and the goal of education is simply to provide opportunities for learners to have rewarding experiences that will facilitate this learning process. The Social Reconstructionist approach sees education as means for social change. Education is understood to be primarily a social and cultural process and is designed to confront learners with the problems in society so that these learners may then become agents of social change. In the Technological or Social Efficiency approach, education is specifically designed to train and equip learners to function efficiently in society. The curriculum identifies specific objectives to be met and outlines specific processes for meeting those objectives. Objectives are chosen to meet the needs of society so that the educational process transforms learners into efficient and contributing members of the larger society. Finally, the Academic Subject or Scholar-Academic

approach suggests that the purpose of education is for students to learn the accumulated knowledge of academic disciplines. It is primarily concerned with academic knowledge and “the acquisition of disciplinary forms for creating knowledge” (McNeil, 1985, p.60). Thus the curriculum in this ideology is the means of transmitting a body of academic knowledge from a knowledge-keeper to an ‘empty vessel’, who can in turn both contribute to that body of knowledge as well as transmit it to new learners.

These four ideologies represent only four of many approaches to curriculum. Beauchamp (1972) discusses how the term *curriculum* itself is often used in a multitude of different contexts with a multitude of different meanings and so finding consensus on any curriculum theory in the literature is difficult. Nevertheless, these four ideologies serve a purpose of initiating thought about what curriculum is and how we approach it. As we consider issues of Indigenous education, place-based education and education on the internet, we must not only examine the theories of learning that provide the foundation of the education, but also the theories of curriculum that shape its form.

CALL and Indigenous Languages

The benefits for online language instruction and CALL are frequently lauded in the literature. However, this same literature primarily references the teaching and learning of majority languages, particularly English. The question that remains, then, is if CALL or online instruction is any different when used for minority and Indigenous languages. While computer technologies and the internet seem to offer many benefits for Indigenous language teaching and revitalization (Penfield et al., 2006), there are also many concerns attached to their use. As Cazden notes, “there is a paradox in suggesting that technology can be useful in revitalizing indigenous languages and cultures. After all, one kind of technology, television, has been influential in language and culture loss” (2003, p. 53). On the other hand, Crystal proposes that “an endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology” (2000, p. 141). This section consequently addresses online CALL in the context of minority and endangered languages.

The Internet has clearly become a marketplace for teaching and learning majority languages, yet a closer look reveals a steadily growing contingent of minority language

speakers embracing the opportunities afforded by the internet to promote their own languages. As Eijkman (2009) argues, the design of Web 2.0 – the version of the internet that facilitates user-produced material – allows for minority groups to freely access and create information, which makes the Internet a valuable tool for promoting minority causes. Galla explains that this happens through: “1) preservation of the Indigenous language; 2) material development and dissemination; 3) multiple modes of communication; and 4) achieving relevance, significance and purpose” (2009, p. 167).

One of the key benefits the internet provides to minority languages is an easy way to introduce the language into a new domain, one of the goals of Fishman’s (1991) recommended stages for reversing language shift. Since access to the internet and creation of online material is relatively easy, this is an opportune domain in which to expand. Accordingly, Cunliffe suggests that the internet “constitutes a new form of mass media. Where minority language speakers have affordable access to the Web, it offers that language an important opportunity” (2004, p. 1). Cunliffe argues that this is the case because of the little to non-existent state regulation of the internet and because of the ease of access to internet media, making it possible to reach wider audiences at a lower cost as compared to traditional forms of media. Thus, when communities “have the appropriate tools to create content, the possibilities expand beyond simply consuming internet content or communicating through email and chat: minority language speakers can increase their language’s online presence with content that is aligned to their communities’ needs and aspirations” (Cunliffe & Herring, 2005, p. 132). In this way, the internet “has become an important medium for both the production and consumption of minority language content, because it provides opportunities for a low-cost entry to media production, user-generated content, and is largely free of state control” (Cunliffe & Honeycutt, 2010, p. 227). In this way, online language content may help to raise awareness of a minority language by increasing its visibility, and may both promote and facilitate the use of the minority language by learners and speakers (Cunliffe, 2004).

The multimedia and interactional nature of the internet have both been repeatedly promoted as beneficial to Indigenous language learning. Warschauer (1999) suggests that the multimedia possibilities afforded by the internet may make teaching more culturally apt, and that learning online can be more dynamic and experiential than traditional

classroom teaching. In a study of the use of computers for Indigenous language teaching in Australia, Auld notes that the internet can facilitate learners with different skills and needs, “appealing to visual and spatial skills of the children and releasing the children from high level English of non-Indigenous teachers. As a medium the computer is patient, provides instant feedback and provides activities that are fun” (2002, p. 45). Moreover, Auld suggests that the use of the computer shifts the learning environment away from a teacher-centred focus and facilitates the more traditional style of self-directed learning: “the positive benefits of computers with Indigenous Australian students reflect the absences of a formal teacher in their society. Computers give Indigenous Australian students greater control of their own learning and transform the teachers into helpers rather than presenters of information” (2002, p. 45)

Various scholars have pointed to another benefit of the internet for Indigenous languages: the ability to post and share multimedia user-generated material converts the internet to a site of multiculturalism and decolonization (Eijkman, 2009; Eisenlohr, 2004; Wei & Kolko, 2005; among others). Eijkman (2009) suggests that Web 2.0 may allow for a paradigm shift from traditional Western epistemologies to a more multiculturalist view. Wei and Kolko comment that

the many-to-many broadcast structure of the Internet, as opposed to the few-to-many structure of previous mass media forms, inspired theorists in the mid-1990s to first embrace the Internet as a site of multiplicity and diversity, one that would allow marginalized voices to share space equally with the mainstream and that would allow users to explore multiple subjectivities by providing opportunities for varied discursive production and consumption habits. (2005, p. 206)

Eijkman (2009) goes a step further and argues that if postcolonial tradition links power to knowledge production, then the internet can challenge traditional views by changing ways of knowledge production and therefore shifting the balance of power. Eisenlohr (2004) notes that the internet and other electronic technology promotes the ‘ownership’ of revitalization efforts by the language community. The multitude of possibilities “to include local voices and viewpoints in the production of electronically mediated discourse in these languages for purposes of education” allows for greater local input and authorship of material, resulting in the production of knowledge that is locally and culturally relevant (Eisenlohr, 2004, p. 35).

The production and promotion of local knowledge in a public space, Wei and Kolko argue, results in the promotion of national identity: “interactions with the Internet may result in the promotion of nationalism for those seeking out domestically produced web material, and in addition, the Internet provides a space for users to self-express their nationalism using their own words and language” (2005, p. 208). This expression of nationalism is an important part of strengthening a group’s self-identity and strategically promoting that identity to others (Wei & Kolko, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, one final benefit that is often cited for using the internet as a medium for Indigenous language teaching is that most youth are already using this as a medium for self-directed learning and communication in their daily lives. As Cunliffe notes, “the Web is increasingly used as an information source by children in education and in the home” (2004, p. 1). The internet can provide a valuable tool for promoting minority language use and language learning because in many instances the youth who are the target group for language learning are already using the internet in their regular social lives, thus making it no great step to also adopt it as a learning environment. Noori argues for the case of Anishinaabe language revitalization, that “if the goal is to render Anishinaabemowin visible to children who will become bilingual, then Anishinaabemowin words must appear in every place, and in every way, that English words appear” (2011, p. 6). She further proposes that those seeking to teach the language “must use the same methods and resources used by the instructors of the dominant competitor” (2011, p. 6).

Challenges to Indigenous Language use on the Internet

In spite of these benefits, the use of the internet for Indigenous language teaching and revitalization is not entirely unproblematic. A number of scholars have pointed to a range of visible and hidden issues with internet use for Indigenous languages. One of the more visible issues with computer use comes from the different writing systems of Indigenous languages. The writing systems of many languages do not fit within the standardized roman character set that dominates computer media. Prado explains that computers, and the internet, were “originally conceived primarily for the English language. By extension, languages sharing the Latin alphabet were able to find a

comfortable place for expression more quickly than others” (Prado, 2012, p. 43). Yet for languages that use an alphabet distinct from a Latin-based one, font issues remain a significant obstacle to creating computer-based language material (Cunliffe & Herring, 2005; Prado, 2012; Warschauer, 1999; and Wei & Kolko, 2005).

The “Digital Divide” presents another obstacle for computer and internet use (Haythornethwaite, 2007). Traditionally, the digital divide has referred to the economic or physical barriers to using technology. However, Cunliffe and Herring (2005) point out that in the context of Indigenous languages, the digital divide may also refer to issues in the quantity and quality of online services and content in Indigenous languages; the fact that the software used to create minority language content is in English; and the issue of fonts, as mentioned above, that results in language and communication practices being adapted to suit the available technology, rather than the other way around (Cunliffe & Herring, 2005).

These issues point to deeper, culturally-based problems with internet use for Indigenous languages. As Wei and Kolko discuss, despite the internet being promoted as a multicultural venue, it remains dominated by Western worldviews:

Ultimately, the relative ease of publishing a website compared with publishing or broadcasting in more formalized venues contributed to the persistent view of the Internet as a utopian space. This unproblematized view of the Internet suggests that everyone has equal voice and access to an audience. In practice, though, Internet content and interface metaphors have been largely dominated by Western perspectives. (2005, p. 206)

As an example, Prado points out that “English remains the language of programming, markup, coding, communication between servers, and most importantly, the bases of computer languages” (2012, p. 43). The result is that

the internet is not culturally neutral. Its size, its way of representing reality, its topography, its governance, its protocols and norms, remain tied to the English milieu of its birth. The internet thus remains a place where Anglo Saxon culture reigns over familiar territory, but not only because of linguistic dominance. The formats used, the flow of messages, methods of text combining, image and sound, screen size, the use of keyboards, the predominance of written over oral communication, and so on, are all factors that may not always correspond to cultures wishing to appropriate it. (Prado, 2012, p. 47)

In addition, Wei and Kolko highlight other cultural issues that problematize the use of the

internet for minority languages:

Notably, the result of the freedom and lack of regulation of the Internet has been a digital colonization of the Web by Americans, instrumentally affecting its prevailing language, tone, and uses. ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and its power over assigning web domain names has been part of this colonization; in addition, American businesses have been leaders on the Internet and have given much of the Web a commercial flavor both in its application and in its design. Furthermore, the computer and network technologies that support the Internet were largely developed in a Western setting. In other words, the Web was not designed explicitly for use by isolated, peripheral cultures, nor did such cultures participate in its inception or current design. (2005, p. 206)

Apart from these issues of the internet as a culturally-biased space, Eisenlohr (2004) provides a comprehensive discussion of a variety of other concerns that should be considered when thinking about the role of the internet for Indigenous language revitalization. One of the issues he discusses is raised by community elders who may have concerns about protecting the language or forms of the language that should not be shared in public forums. Another concern is that the internet presents a host of new genres of language use which may challenge and change the ways that the language has been traditionally used. A third concern that Eisenlohr (2004) cites is the problems arising from the standardization of the language, and the selection of certain linguistic varieties to be used and presented as norms. Cunliffe and Herring (2005) point to yet other issues which require consideration regarding use of the Internet for minority languages. Among these are issues of interface design and how this influences use; relationships between real-world use and online use; and how the different dimensions of the digital divide affect online use.

It is clear that while the internet may provide excellent opportunities for language teaching and revitalization, it is not entirely unproblematic. There are many issues that require careful consideration in the evaluation of the role of the internet for Indigenous languages.

5.4 Conclusion

Remembering Cajete's comment presented at the beginning of this chapter, the integration of Indigenous and Western worldviews and educational models remains the

key challenge for Indigenous educators and language activists today. This chapter has considered two forms of integration: first, the integration of traditional Indigenous place-focused pedagogy into a modern school system that typically rejects inclusion of local culture or place-based knowledge; and the integration of place-based Indigenous language teaching into an online world that is inherently place-less and dominated by Western worldviews.

In seeking to understand how land can play a role in education, I have looked at two models of education that approach a decolonized ideal – both traditional Indigenous education and place-based education. Each of these models point to the importance of land and place for a balanced and effective educational experience. However, the experience of Indigenous and place-based educators alike has demonstrated that the foundational differences between Western and Indigenous worldviews has resulted in a current model of education that excludes Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. The worldview that currently governs education commodifies land and place, resulting in the perpetuation of biophobic attitudes and the marginalization of Indigenous and local knowledge. Both Indigenous educators and place-based educators alike face imposing challenges from the framework of accountability and standardization that dominates the current schooling system. Though a full discussion of these issues would constitute a thesis all its own, it is important to recognize them here as they serve to inform our perspectives of land and the way these perspectives shape our attitudes and approaches to education.

The discussion of language teaching online revealed a host of benefits offered by online media to Indigenous language educators and activists. Internet-based education presents a unique opportunity to Indigenous communities to create locally developed and culturally focused education. The internet may allow communities freedom from the constraints of mainstream education that devalue local knowledge and inhibit the inclusion of place. Online language education can offer endless opportunities for implementing holistic, place-focused, culturally rooted teaching. Yet even the online world holds many obstacles for Indigenous language education. Both technical and cultural challenges make it difficult to adapt the internet for Indigenous language material. In the end, it depends on educators and developers to recognize the conflicting

worldviews that have inhibited Indigenous education thus far, to face the challenges that have arisen, and to move towards innovative and radical adaptation of current technologies to create culturally grounded models of education. As Dr. Lorna Williams (Lillooet) expressed in her keynote address at the 19th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium, “we have always used every technical opportunity available to us to do our work. If it works, we’ve used it. [...] But we have never forgotten where our languages originate. And that is on our land, and in our hearts, and in our spirit” (Williams, 2012).

CHAPTER 6: LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A VIRTUAL LANDSCAPE

And I see the internet today, and all the modern day tools and digital tools, as an emergency toolkit. It's an emergency toolkit right now, to rebuild and regenerate quickly. [...] So if it's a pen, a typewriter, a computer, a digital phone or an iPad – whatever it is that we need to pull it all back together and find our centre as a people again – we're gonna use it [...] until our languages are being spoken again within our homes where they were meant to be.

(John Elliott, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter, representing the final component of this research, addresses the role of land in online Indigenous language education. The internet is already a common medium of majority-language education, as evidenced by the proliferation of CALL- (Computer Assisted Language Learning), CMC- (Computer Mediated Communication) and ICT- (Information and Communications Technology) focused research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (see Blake, 2008; Fotos & Browne, 2004; Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Levy & Stockwell, 2006; and Warschauer, 1997, 2007 for further references). Many Indigenous communities are also taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the internet to adopt this as a tool for language education and revitalization. As discussed in Chapter 5, the internet is a low-cost and accessible medium of language teaching and so may be a useful and valuable tool for Indigenous communities seeking to promote and teach their languages. However, the internet remains a problematized space in the context of Indigenous languages (see Chapter 5, §5.3 for a complete discussion). Many questions still need to be answered regarding how such a place-less, globalized and non-local medium can effectively transmit very local and place-based languages. It is yet unclear what the full potential is for internet media to realize connections between Indigenous languages and the land.

In many ways, these questions fall within thoughts of how contemporary Indigenous education can emerge from and support Indigenous ways of knowing. Graham and Ireland (2009) have raised similar and corresponding questions about how Indigenous ways of knowing and learning can be appropriately and effectively integrated into Western educational models. In particular, they ask: “How can Indigenous

Knowledge and pedagogy be integrated into an education system that by nature is the antithesis of traditional knowledge and pedagogy?” (Graham & Ireland, 2009, p. 34). Though they refer to the educational system in general, their question is relevant for Indigenous language educators and activists who are seeking to develop online materials for language education. How can the Indigenous connection to land, a fundamental element of Indigenous knowledge and languages, be integrated into an online world that is by nature the antithesis of such epistemology? In spite of these difficulties, it is clear that some kind of integration is necessary between Western technologies and education and Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. As Cajete says,

Modern education and traditional education can no longer afford to remain historically and contextually separate entities. Every community must integrate the learning occurring through modern education with the cultural bases of knowledge and value orientations essential to perpetuate its way of life. (1994, p. 18)

While a more complete discussion of these questions and issues may be found in Chapter 5, this chapter moves forward to examine one small way in which such an integration is occurring. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the third sub-question of this research, which is: What are the ways in which land is represented in websites designed for Indigenous language education? The aim of this part of the study is to begin developing an understanding of the ways in which land can and does play a role in language education, particularly through the medium of the internet. In this chapter I present a small case study that is intended to begin approaching answers to some of these questions. The case study is comprised of a survey of 14 Indigenous language education websites from within Canada and the USA, with particular focus on the way that land is represented in these sites. Through this survey, I hope to address some of the many considerations mentioned above, and highlight some of the ways in which integration of Indigenous knowledge and Western education is possible.

In this chapter I outline the survey and provide a summary of the ways in which the websites examined demonstrate the connections between language and land. I also highlight some of the unique and exemplary inclusions of land that appeared in some of the websites. Note that the purpose of this discussion is not to provide a list of best practices or recommendations for people developing websites of their own, but simply to

explore what is currently being done in this area in order to highlight the variety of different ways that land is incorporated into online language education. Furthermore, I acknowledge that language education websites are most often developed to support existing community programs, and are not intended to provide stand-alone teaching. However, the scope of this project does not allow me to examine the use of these websites within the context of community education efforts. Nevertheless, I hope that this chapter will be particularly useful for language activists and community members who are working to develop or expand websites for their own languages. The discussion that follows should provide some helpful ideas and may function as starting point for brainstorming new ways to create effective place-focused language revitalization programs online.

This chapter is organized as follows: section 6.2 outlines the methodology of this study; in section 6.3 I provide a general discussion of the variety of ways in which these websites represent a connection to land, according to the learning gained from the literature review and interviews conducted in the first part of this research; in section 6.4 I highlight some of the unique and visually powerful ways in which various websites have included connection to land; and finally section 6.5 provides a conclusion.

6.2 Methodology of the Survey

This study is a small survey of 14 language education websites from within Canada and the USA. The majority of the websites (10) come from within Canada, in order to provide a Canadian focus for the study that is in keeping with the general Canadian focus of this research. The websites from the United States (4) are included in recognition that many languages of the two countries span the border, and also to provide a wider range of informative examples. Websites were found through internet searches on the Google search engine, as well as by browsing links on known related websites. Search terms included the names of all major language groups in Canada, as well as “learn X language”, X being filled in with the name of the language. Ethnologue online (Lewis, 2009) was used to find names of languages in Canada. Because of a desire to focus on Canadian websites, no searches were made specifically for American websites. However, any American websites that were encountered through the searches for Canadian sites were included in the list. Though it is recognized that social network sites,

especially Facebook, are becoming increasingly prevalent modes of language education, for reasons of scope and consistency these sites were not included in this study.

Any website found that had language education as a key component was noted in a list. A total of 28 websites were compiled in the final list: 17 Canadian sites and 11 American sites. These 28 websites were then categorized according to the language education elements they contained. Eight educational elements were considered: word lists, phrase lists, dictionaries, language games, stories, metalinguistic discussion¹⁷, sound files and videos. Of the initial 28 websites, all Canadian websites containing 4 or more of these elements (6 total) were included in the analysis. Only those American websites containing 6 or more of these elements¹⁸ were considered (4 total). The four largest First Voices portals were then added to make up a sum total of 14 websites for this analysis. They were determined to be the largest based on the total number of archived words and phrases posted on the welcome page of each portal. Note that First Voices is a specially designed language archiving website that uses a standard template for each language. For this reason, the largest language portals were chosen to be representative of the type of information that can be included in this template.

The websites were then examined to see how land is represented in each site. In order to maintain consistency and to guide the examination, a questionnaire was created that was then filled out for each site. Please see Appendix D for a copy of the questionnaire. This questionnaire made use of the learning gained through the earlier research and so contained questions directed specifically at the four themes of relationship to land, along with the theme of a changing relationship with the land. The questionnaire was organized according to each of the following sections: General Website Information, Language Information, Media Content, Education Content, Living on the Land, Learning from the Land, Belonging to the Land, Respecting the Land, Changing Relationship with the Land, Comments.

Once the questionnaire was filled out for each of the 14 websites, the answers were compiled in a spreadsheet document, with a sheet for each section. It was then

¹⁷ Metalinguistic discussion here refers to any grammar discussions or explanations, and other content such as word paradigms, lists of affixes, etc.

¹⁸ The criterion difference was chosen deliberately to limit the number of American websites included in the total selection.

possible to look at the answers for all the websites according to each section. The following discussion provides a summary of this examination. Note that the websites were examined during the time period of April – May 2012. As the internet is a constantly changing medium, it is possible that these websites will either look different in future, or may be removed from the internet.

6.3 Land in Language Online

The fourteen websites varied greatly in format and content, yet there were many similarities among all of them. In this section I will provide a summary of the website survey according to each section of the website questionnaire, highlighting the similarities and differences between the sites, as well as the variety of ways that land is included in the sites.

General Website Information

As discussed above, 10 of the 14 websites are Canadian, the other four being from the United States. Table 1 lists the websites examined, with the web addresses:

Table 1: List of Websites Examined

Canadian Sites	
<i>East Cree.org</i>	http://www.eastcree.org/cree/en
<i>Inuktitut Tusaalanga</i>	http://www.tusaalanga.ca
<i>Learn Michif</i>	http://www.learnmichif.com
<i>Mi'kmaq Online</i>	http://www.mikmaqonline.org/
<i>Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal</i>	http://www.pmportal.org
<i>Yukon Native Language Centre</i>	http://www.ynlc.ca
First Voices Language Portals (Canadian)	
<i>Kwakwala Community Portal</i>	http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Kwakwala
<i>Nak'azdli Dakelh Community Portal</i>	http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Nakazdli-Dakelh
<i>Northern St'at'imcets Community Portal</i>	http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Northern-Statimcets
<i>Sliammon Community Portal</i>	http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Sliammon
American Sites	
<i>Anishinaabemdaa</i>	http://www.anishinaabemdaa.com/
<i>The Arapaho Project</i>	http://www.colorado.edu/csilw/newarapprojm
<i>Potawatomi Language</i>	http://www.potawatomilanguage.org
<i>We Want To Learn Alutiiq</i>	http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org/

All of these websites except one were classified as being large sites with 50 or more pages. Only the *Mi'kmaq Online* site was classified as medium sized, with 30 – 50

pages. Most of the websites were authored by a community-based organization except for *The Arapaho Project*, which was authored by the University of Colorado, and *East Cree.org*, which was authored as a partnership between the Cree School Board and Carleton University. Of the 14 websites, only five had no posted copyright date. The rest were dated on or after 2009, and are therefore considered to be relatively current.

Language Information

The languages of these websites come from all across Canada and from Alaska, and represent 7 different language families. The primary purpose of most of the sites (as determined by statements on the sites in the introductory material, or by examination of site content), is language education and documentation / archiving. The *Potawatomi Language* site is unique in being the only site examined that is explicitly designed to connect and inform an existing community of language learners off-line. The site is used by Potawatomi language teachers and activists in the Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community to inform community members of language events, and to provide supplementary learning materials for in-person language classes. As mentioned, *The Arapaho Project* website is designed and maintained by the University of Colorado, in collaboration with the Northern Arapaho Tribe. Although it contains significant language education materials, it appears that the site is designed more for providing general cultural and linguistic information about the Arapaho nation for those who are interested than to be an actual resource for Arapaho learners. The *Yukon Native Language Centre* website is the main website of this organization and is designed as an information and resource site for users of the centre. While the organization's primary purpose is teaching and documenting the native languages of the Yukon, the website is not primarily designed as an educational resource. However, there is sufficient educational materials on this site for it to be included in this study. The rest of the sites were designed by a single community for the purposes of language and culture preservation and education.

The primary language of all the sites is English; only *Mi'kmaq Online* comes close to being fully bilingual. In all of the sites, English is used for menus, introductory content and explanatory content. For example, most metalinguistic discussion is in English. A few of the websites have content that is in the Indigenous language alone,

most often audio recordings of songs, stories or other material that is not translated into English. The *East Cree.org* website contains a database of over 500 stories as audio files which are not recorded or translated into English¹⁹.

Media Content

All of the websites have both audio and visual content. All contain audio media of some kind; most often this is audio recordings of words and phrases in the language that accompany the word lists or language lessons. Many websites include audio narrations of stories, songs, prayers, or dialogues between speakers. Seven of the total fourteen websites include videos. In some cases these are videos of community events, such as annual community gatherings or culture camps. In other cases the videos are narrated slideshows of either pictures or lessons. The *Learn Michif* site contains a number of videos, in English, of elders sharing their stories and memories. These videos are part of a project by Métis youth to interview and record elders in order to document and share Métis history and culture. This site also has four videos that accompany the four language lessons. These show two speakers conversing in Michif using the vocabulary and grammatical structures taught in the lessons. These videos are used as audio-visual reinforcement of the information in the lessons.

The *Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal* is most unique in its treatment of video; it contains a total of 94 videos of fluent speakers conversing in the language. Each of these videos is subtitled and has a full transcript in Passamaquoddy and English. These videos arose from a project that seeks to document public group discourse in order to provide archival information about the language as well as material for language teaching and revitalization. Please see §6.4 for further discussion of this website.

All of the websites, excepting one, contain pictures or photographs of some kind. (The *Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal* does not contain pictures, only videos.) In most cases this is a combination of photographs and drawings that appear throughout the websites, and in most cases these include representations of the land. Most websites

¹⁹ Because this database of untranslated stories comprises a large part of the content of the site, it was not possible for me as a non-speaker of Cree to accurately answer many of the questions on the questionnaire. For this site, informed guesses were made as to content, which were taken into consideration in the survey. These informed guesses were made based on the English titles of the audio files and their topical categorization within the database.

have a picture of the land on the welcome page. Other pictures appear within word or phrase lists, or within stories, lessons or cultural information posted on the sites. The number of pictures on each site varies greatly from less than 5 to more than 30, yet no site appears to contain more than 50 pictures. The pictures vary from being photographs of traditional territory, to general landscape photos, to art drawings of traditional items or activities, to generic clipart.

Five of the total fourteen websites include some kind of map of the language territory. *The Arapaho Project* and the *Yukon Native Language Centre* websites contain interactive place names maps in which the user may click on the name to find a photograph and information on the place. In the case of the *Yukon Native Language Centre* website, this map is a part of the Dàkeyi Southern Tutchone place names project which was originally published in CD format before being posted on the website. The interactive map consists of 10 separate maps of the Southern Tutchone area, each with several marked places that are annotated with information and photographs. This particular interactive map will be discussed further in §6.4. The *East Cree.org* website also includes an interactive map, showing the locations and names of various Cree dialects.

Links to other websites were also considered as an additional form of media, and were included in the questionnaire in consideration of Indigenous values of community and interconnectedness. Links to organizations or websites pertaining to land claims or land activism were considered in the theme of respecting the land, discussed below. All but one of the websites contain links to other pages. In most cases, these are links to the corresponding First Nation's website, to websites for other community organizations, or to other educational or language websites.

Educational Content

While the websites were originally rated by educational content in order to determine inclusion in the study, the selected sites were examined again according to a revised list of educational information. Each of the websites was examined to see if it contained any of the following educational content: word lists; phrases or phrase lists; dialogues; dictionary; games; metalinguistic discussion (i.e. grammatical explanations,

verb or noun paradigms, etc.); songs; stories; and videos. As assured by the website selection process, all of the websites contained at least four of these different educational materials. Thirteen of the total fourteen websites contained word lists; and twelve of the fourteen sites contained phrases, songs and stories. Only five sites contained dialogues; five contained videos; and six contained dictionaries. Half of the total fourteen websites had games of some kind, and eight had some kind of metalinguistic discussion.

The websites were also examined to determine if they offered any kind of option for interactive learning. Nine of the total fourteen websites included some kind of interactive learning option, primarily in the form of language games, interactive practice activities or tests. None of the websites provided chat, message board or blog functionality for social interaction with other learners or teachers.

In considering the educational content within the context of CALL research, I also examined whether each website seemed to adopt a CALL tool or a CALL tutor approach, as discussed in Chapter 5, §5.3. In the tutor model of CALL use, the computer acts simply as a language tutor, providing basic information, accepting learner input and then evaluating and providing feedback on that input. In the tool model, the computer acts as an ‘enabling device’ that allows learners to perform interactive social activities (Levy & Stockwell, 2006, pp. 22-24). Note that the kind of interaction that Levy and Stockwell refer to is not that of person-to-computer games and tests, which fit within an input-output based CALL tutor model, but rather the person-to-person social interaction in which the computer is used as a tool to connect a community of learners and speakers together. Examples of this would be the chat, message board and blog functions previously mentioned. All of the websites were determined as using a primarily CALL tutor approach. The *Potawatomi Language* website most closely approached a CALL tool model in that it is used as a way to connect an existing community of learners. However, even this site did not provide opportunities for communicating online.

Living on the Land

Having surveyed the general content of each website, I then turned to the five themes as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 in order to think about how these different relationships between language and land are represented in the websites. The first theme

is living on the land, referring to the language necessary for daily, physical life on the land. In searching for this theme on the websites, I looked for mention of place names, of any words or phrases that relate to the land (including but not limited to terms for flora, fauna, geographical features, travel, weather, seasons, and cultural materials derived from the land), and any visual or audio media that portrays the land or people on the land, such as photos, videos or nature sounds.

Eleven of the fourteen websites had explicit mention of place names, ranging from only a handful of names mentioned, to more than 60. Place names appeared on maps, in place name word lists, and in the dictionaries. For example, the Dàkeyi interactive map on the *Yukon Native Language Centre* website lists 58 place names, each with a description and 3 corresponding pictures. Of the 3 sites that didn't have explicit mention of place names, it is guessed the names appear in the archived word-of-the-week lists or in untranslated audio stories (as in the *East Cree.org* website).

Not surprisingly, every website contained mention of land-based items or activities, these being the very building blocks of vocabulary. These words and phrases appeared throughout the websites in word lists, phrase books, dictionaries, lessons and games, songs and stories. For example, the four First Voices portals each contain specific word lists for Animals, Plants, and Nature and Environment. There are also phrase lists for Animals; Birds and Plants; Travel; Weather and Seasons; Time and Place; and Aboriginal Culture. All of these word and phrase lists are filled with many direct references to the land.

In considering audio and visual media about the land, I looked for photos, videos and audio media of people on the land, with the goal of seeing how the physical act of living on the land is visually represented. Most websites contained some photographs or pictures of the land or people on the land, but fewer contained video or audio media of the same. *The Arapaho Project* website contains many historical drawings and photographs of people on the land, either posed or engaged in traditional activities, such as tanning hides. The Audio Storybooks on the *Yukon Native Language Centre* website contain many drawings of people on the land engaged in traditional activities. The *Anishinaabemdaa* site includes slideshows of recent language and culture camps, showing community gatherings on the land.

Learning from the Land

The theme of learning from the land points to the many stories and teachings that are associated with specific places and elements in the land. In this facet of the relationship to land, the land is seen as both a teacher and a place of learning. The knowledge gained from the land is transmitted through language. As the *Northern S'tà'imcets Community Portal* states in the introduction, “The lessons of living on the land are a part of the inheritance passed on from S'tà'imc elders to our children” (First Voices, 2011c). In considering this theme, I searched for evidence of any kind of land-based instruction, such as reference to or discussion of how to do things on the land (i.e. tanning hides, fishing, berry picking, etc.), and any other kind of lesson or teaching that related to the land. In looking for these I turned to the stories, songs, prayers and other teachings included on the sites. Most of the sites had some kind of mention of this theme. At least five of the websites included instructions about land based activities in the stories, lessons or videos. These included activities such as making baskets, berry picking, setting traps, and tanning hides. At least eleven of the sites contained other mention of learning from the land, in a variety of ways. These appeared in stories about animals, in prayers and discussion of ceremonies, and in traditional origin or creation stories. *The Arapaho Project* website contains 6 different nature ecosystem pictures (explained in §6.4) with annotations for the different elements in the ecosystem. These annotations contain much Arapaho knowledge that comes from the land, such as uses of different elements for traditional medicine, or traditional stories about these elements. For example, the annotation for the skunk in the Creek ecosystem talks about uses of the skunk in traditional medicine and also gives the story for how the skunk got its stripe.

Belonging to the Land

The theme of belonging to the land refers to the way that Indigenous identity is tied to the land. This sense of belonging appears in many ways, such as in names of Indigenous groups that reflect the land or in origin or creation stories. Three different things were considered in thinking about the theme of belonging to the land: if there was mention of connection to land in the introductory material; if there was an origin story; and if there was a crest or logo that connected people to the land. All but one of the

websites mentioned belonging to the land in at least one of these ways. Many of the websites reference a connection to land in the introductory material, mentioning the traditional land of the people group. For example, the introductions to the different languages included on the *Yukon Native Language Centre* site provide very direct mention of the relationships between people and the land, through language. It says of Gwich'in: "The people of the Yukon Gwich'in community of Old Crow call themselves the Van Tat Gwich'in, or 'People who live among the lakes,'; describing the Crow Flats area" (*Yukon Native Language Centre*, n.d.).

Few of the websites included an origin story in the collections of stories posted as learning materials. The *Anishinaabemdaa* site, *The Arapaho Project* and the *Nak'azdli Dakelh Community Portal* sites all included their traditional creation stories that linked them to the land. The *Nak'azdli Dakelh Community Portal* includes the story *The Little Dwarves and the Creation of Nak'azdli, as told by Dayi Yaz (Louis Billy Prince)*. This story relates the creation of the island of Nak'azdli, and is also an origin story of the Nak'azdli people.

Many of the sites have the logo or crest of the authoring organization, and in every case this logo connected the people to the land. One of the more striking examples comes from the *Anishinaabemdaa* site which contains the logo for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. This logo, showing a river, mountains and birds, represents the intimate connection between this First Nation and their unique territory.

Respecting the Land

The theme of respecting the land refers to a personal and reciprocal relationship with the land in which the land is respected as a provider and is treated with care. As with all the other themes, this theme too is interconnected with the others. Using the land is a way of respecting the land and so land-based activities demonstrate this form of respect. This respect also appears in thoughts of spirituality and in any kind of action that seeks to protect the land, heal the land, or reclaim the land. The theme of respecting the land was perhaps the most difficult to search for in the websites, as examples of this relationship tend to be more subtly intertwined within other themes. In considering this theme, I looked for anything that might represent an attitude of respect for the land, such as in

songs, stories or prayers. I also looked for references to spirituality that connected directly to the land, as well as considered any reference (including links) to land protection or activism, such as land claims issues.

The websites mentioned this theme in a variety of different ways. One way was simply through inclusion of teachings on land-based activities, such as *The Arapaho Project* website's explanation of how to tan a hide. Another way was through the inclusion of discussion of spirituality. The *We Want to Learn Alutiiq* website contains a poster of traditional Alutiiq values, which directly references respect for the land, as well as demonstrates the interconnectedness of all things. The *Anishinaabemdaa* site provides an explanation of the medicine wheel that is an essential part of spiritual understanding and links people to the land. Various videos in the *Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal* website point to this theme through elders' conversations of appreciating the land, or through songs to elements of the land, such as songs about sweetgrass or berry picking.

Several of the websites included either direct mention of, or links to websites about land claims issues. For example, the *We Want to Learn Alutiiq* website has a link to the website of the Koniag organization, which primarily deals with land claims and land issues. The *Learn Michif* website has more explicit discussion on the site about land claims issues, and shares the history of this for the Michif people, including a detailed discussion about a significant court case on this issue.

A Changing Relationship with the Land

The theme of a changing relationship with the land was significant in both the literature and in the conversations with the experts. This theme points to the devastating consequences of colonialism; of residential schools, language loss, and territory loss, among many other things. As discussed in Chapter 4, the loss of language and the disconnection from the land affects all aspects of a relationship to the land. Considering this theme in the context of language education online is slightly ironic, as the very existence of Indigenous language education websites is a direct result of this changing relationship, and is in response to this change. In this way, every website examined demonstrates the community's awareness of this changing relationship to the land and the

coinciding language loss. However, I wanted to see how each website explicitly dealt with this theme. In thinking about a changing relationship to the land, I looked for any overt mention of a change in the relationship with the land. This would include any mention of land claims issues. I also wanted to see if the websites explicitly acknowledged the language shift that inspired the creation of the sites.

In one way or another, almost every site explicitly referenced this changing relationship to the land, though in varying degrees. Some sites made reference to residential school experiences, for example through including videos or stories of elders speaking about their experiences, as on the *Passamaquoddy Maliseet Language Portal* and the *Anishinaabemdaa* websites. Others mentioned how people have moved away into other communities and no longer live in their traditional area. For example the *Learn Michif* website includes considerable discussion about the historical events that separated the Métis from their traditional territory and prohibited their traditional activities on the land. Still other sites demonstrated a changed relationship simply through inclusion of words for trucks, motor boats, air travel and the like. Vocabulary like this points to a change in the relationship with the land through the different ways that people now travel on the land, which reflects the changed ways that people interact with the land. The *Anishinaabemdaa* site includes a discussion of time in the Anishinaabe worldview and how this has changed with the arrival of clocks and watches. The discussion points to this change so as to explain the relatively new Anishinaabe words that are used for talking about time.

Surprisingly, not every site made explicit mention of the language shift that inspired the creation of the site. Only nine sites out of the total fourteen included in the introductory material a mention of the need for the site for language revitalization purposes. In spite of this, there is an underlying recognition that all of the sites exist for this reason, whether or not it is explicitly stated.

6.4 Special Examples

Through the survey of the websites, certain elements of various websites stood out as unique and visually powerful ways of representation the land as a part of the language teaching. In this section I will provide a brief description of a few of these examples. The purpose is not to suggest these as recommendations or best practices, but

rather to highlight them in order to demonstrate the variety of different ways that land is currently represented, and also to generate ideas for the many possibilities for including land in online language teaching. Where pertinent, I have included screenshots from the websites to aid the explanations.

Two of the websites (*The Arapaho Project* and the *Yukon Native Language Centre*) include interactive place names maps. They are quite different from each other, but work in a similar way. The map shows the traditional territory of the nation, with points on it marking significant places. Clicking on a point on the map will either bring a pop-up box or direct you to a page with detailed information and a photograph of the place. In the case of *The Arapaho Project*, this map is quite simple, containing 25 annotated places. Clicking on each place brings up a pop-up box with one picture and some information in English about the place, as well as the name of the place in both Arapaho and English.

The interactive map on the *Yukon Native Language Centre* website is much more complex. It is a part of the Dàkeyi Place Names Project for Southern Tutchone, mentioned earlier, that was originally published as a booklet and CD, and later posted on the website. It is a compilation of 10 maps of the Southern Tutchone area. Each map marks at least three places (often six or more). Clicking on a place marked on the map brings you to a group of pages about the place (see Figure 2). The first page has a description in Southern Tutchone; the second page is a description in English; and the third page provides additional interesting information about the place in English (see Figure 3). In many cases, this third page tells the story of how the place got its English name. Also in this page group are 3 photographs of the place, from three different angles and/or in different seasons. Each picture is annotated with a brief explanation of the view. Each of the 10 maps also has a worksheet that can be printed out and used in a classroom for learning about the different places on that map.

Figure 2: Yukon Native Language Centre, Dàkeyi, Southern Tutchone Place Names Interactive Map

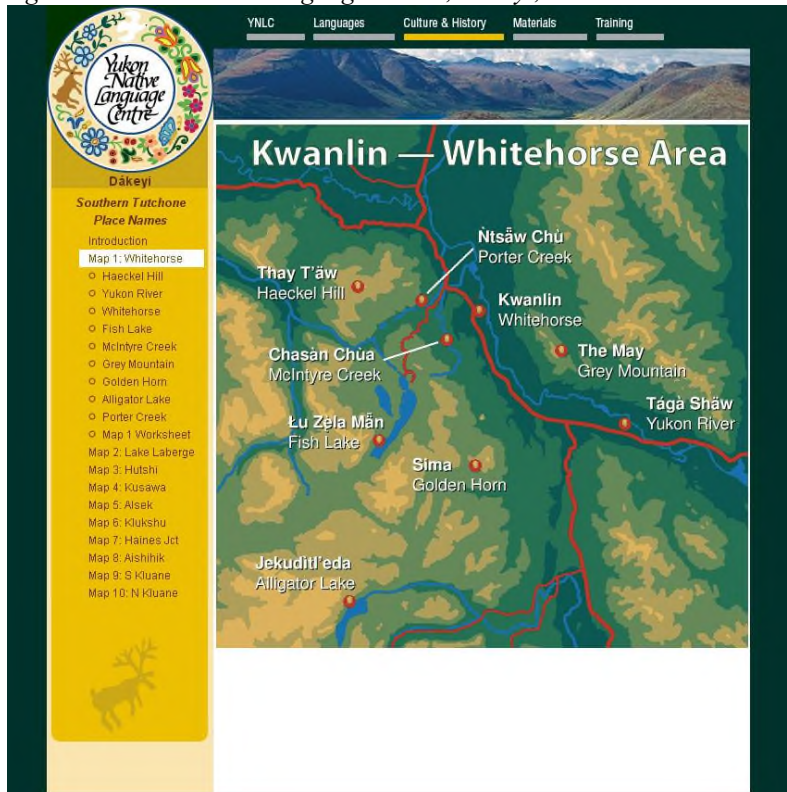
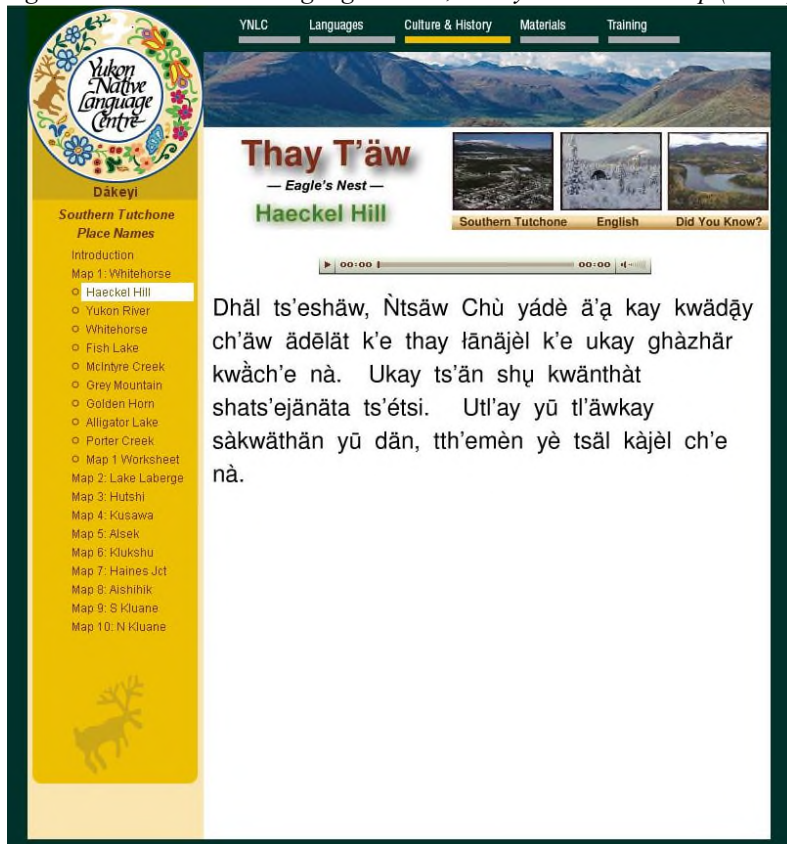
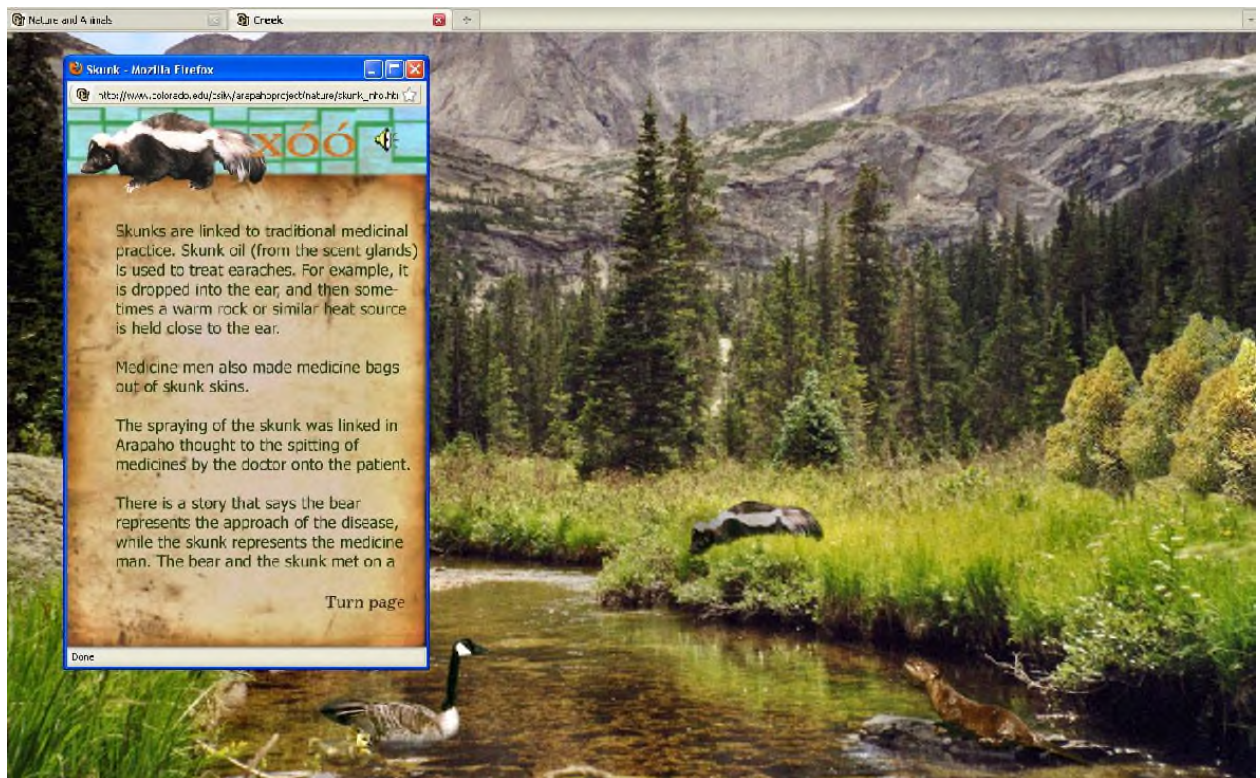


Figure 3: Yukon Native Language Centre, Dàkeyi Interactive Map (detail)



The second example also comes from *The Arapaho Project* website. In addition to the interactive place names map, this site includes 6 different interactive ecosystem pictures. Each picture shows a different ecosystem in traditional Arapaho territory (creek, scrub, forest, hills, prairie and trees), with significant flora and fauna that live in each area. These are linked to additional information about each item. For example, the creek ecosystem picture shows an otter, a skunk, geese, willow trees, sweet grass and mountain birch. Clicking on any one of these items in the picture will bring up a pop-up box with the name of the item in Arapaho and English, an audio file of the Arapaho name, and a description of the traditional significance and/or use of the item. For example, the description of the skunk in the Creek picture includes information about the use of skunk oil in traditional medicine, and a traditional story about how the skunk got its stripe (see Figure 4).

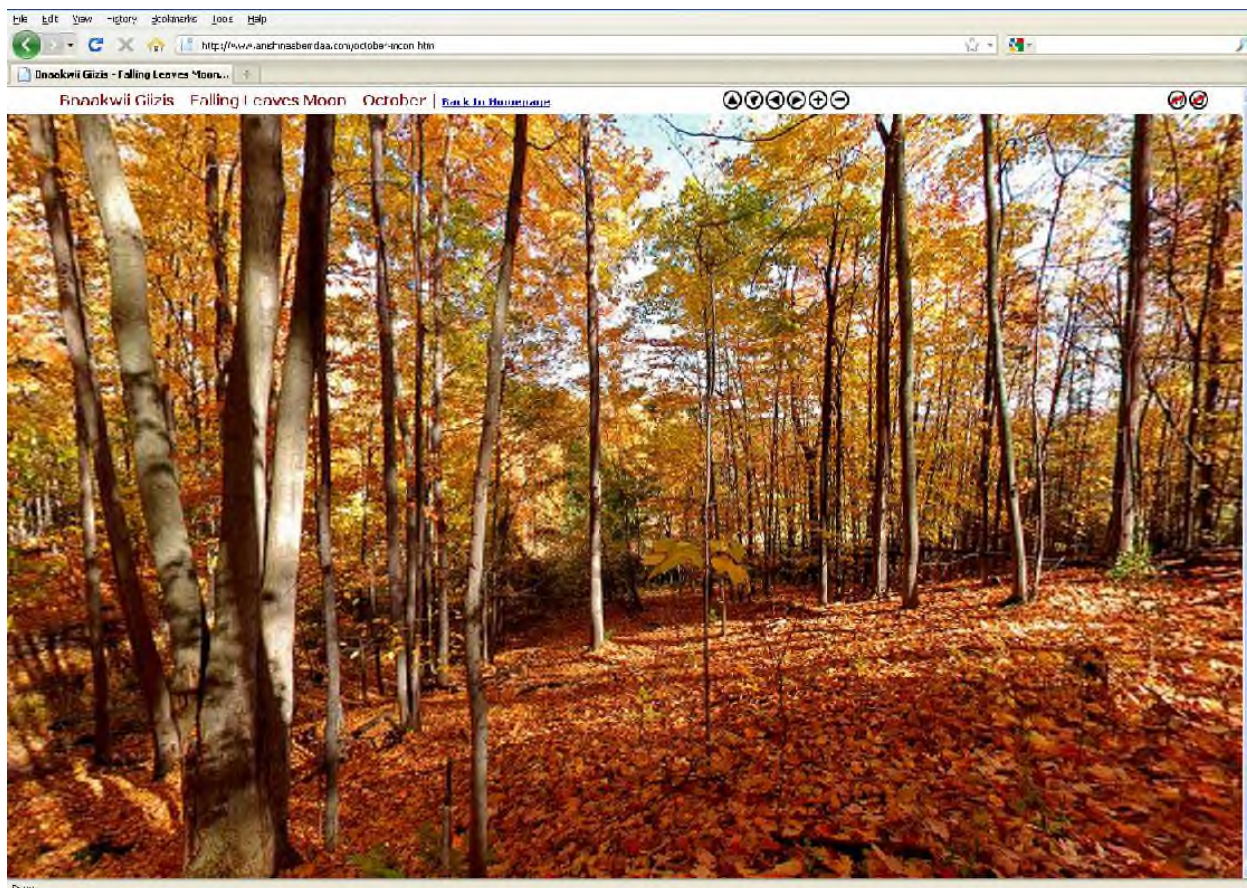
Figure 4: *The Arapaho Project, Creek Ecosystem*



The third example comes from the *Anishinaabemdaa* website, which contains 5 different landscape panoramas. Each panorama provides a 360° view of a place, which can be controlled with the mouse. The viewer can pan around the picture with the mouse.

Each panorama also contains an audio file that plays immediately once the panorama is opened. The audio files are each different, but all contain a short narration of the particular scene in Anishinaabe. A few of the audio files also contain traditional Anishinaabe songs. Three of the landscape panoramas are designed to teach about one of the 13 moons in the traditional Anishinaabe calendar. The screenshot in Figure 5 shows Bnaakwii Giizis, or Falling Leaves Moon (October). The other two panoramas include people in the pictures and have songs and narrations related to traditional teachings.

Figure 5: Anishinaabemdaa, Falling Leaves Moon Panorama



The fourth example comes from the *Passamaquoddy Maliseet Language Portal*. The site was developed by the Language Keepers project, who sought to document public group discourse through making video archives of people speaking together in the language. (Please see <http://www.languagekeepers.org> for more information about this project.) The website is composed of an online dictionary that is linked to a databank of 94 short video clips. Each video clip is of elders and other community members conversing in Passamaquoddy. The video clips on the site come from over 50 filmed

hours of group conversations with 70 different speakers. Each video clip is fully subtitled and has a full transcript in English and Passamaquoddy. Words within the transcript that appear in the dictionary are cross-linked with the dictionary, so that users can switch back and forth between the dictionary and the videos to aid their learning process.

Many of the videos take place outside on the land, and frequently show the community members participating in activities on the land. In the video clip highlighted in Figure 6, the two elders are in a boat, conversing as they go to check their muskrat traps.

Figure 6: The Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal, Video

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Language Portal. The page title is "Let's Go Check Our Traps Part 1". A video player is embedded in the center, showing two men in a boat on a river. Below the video, the subtitle reads: "Etutahqahk nihtol tuhpiyil. Those alders are so big." Below the video player is a table with captions and video information.

Start Time	Passamaquoddy-Maliseet	English
00:51	Etutahqahk nihtol tuhpiyil	Those alders are so big.
00:55	Ya, nihtol nihtol.	Yes, they grow fast.
00:58	Wetaptaq noq paqpit.	That's where the beaver left tracks,
01:00	woci diq diq pit.	from where he's already eaten.
01:04	Tan wih, iyey...	Yes, where (the water)
01:08	phue... u hukie	extends for a long way.
01:10	Ya, yet olqiw.	Yes, over that way.
01:12	U ya.	Oh, yes.

The page also features a navigation menu (Home, Dictionary, Videos, About Us, Contact, Credits), a search bar, and a list of primary links and other resources.

These four examples represent the variety of unique and innovative ways that land can be incorporated into online language education in visually powerful ways. Moreover, they are inspiring examples of the many possibilities for creating a culturally relevant, place-focussed space in the otherwise very global 'melting-pot' atmosphere of the internet.

6.5 Conclusion

This website survey has demonstrated the many different ways that land is included in online Indigenous language education. Through an examination of 14 different websites with a language teaching component, we can see that the four facets of the relationship between language and land are represented in a variety of ways. Inclusion of drawings and photographs of landscapes or people on the land are very visual ways of representing this relationship. Word and phrase lists that have a land-based focus are another way of highlighting the relationship to land. Stories, songs and prayers provide language learning opportunities as well as an important cultural foundation for that learning, and are ways of sharing the learning gained from the land in an online context. Place names, too, are valuable ways to ground language learning in a particular place and promote culture- and land-awareness. Literal translations of place names, or other vocabulary items, can both aid vocabulary and grammatical knowledge as well as expand cultural understanding. All of these are excellent ways of promoting and emphasizing the important relationship between language and land in online language teaching.

To a certain extent, because Indigenous languages come from the land, any Indigenous language will retain that connection to land no matter where it appears. However, it is also clear that explicit inclusion of the land is important for creating culturally relevant education that stems from and supports Indigenous worldviews. The internet, as John Elliott has said, is yet another tool in the emergency toolkit for language revitalization. Discovering existing and new ways to explicitly represent the links between language and land and to create a place-centered environment in the online world is just one way to utilize this tool to its full capacity so that it can be the most effective at revitalizing language.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

We must again create the kind of education that creates great human beings. To Indigenize the education of Indian people constitutes a major revolution. To Indigenize contemporary Western education would require a global transformation of proportions we have never seen. Such a gargantuan vision evolves from millions of smaller visions that we individually and collectively consummate. We move mountains by first moving ourselves, and the way we educate makes all the difference in the world. The choice is ours. We make the difference. It is we who decide to live, or not live, our visions. We are the creators of the world and realities we live in. We are the ones who must choose the path of our own learning.
(Cajete, 1994, p. 69)

7.1 Summary of the Research

Indigenous languages are essential elements of Indigenous worldviews, lifeways, and knowledges. In an era of increasing language shift and loss, the significance of this is profound, for Indigenous languages encode the very essence of Indigenous existence. Recalling the statements in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), it says:

Language is the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their shared experience. For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well. And, as they point out, if the languages of this continent are lost, there is nowhere else they can be heard again.
(Vol. 3, Part 6)

Language revitalization is paramount, not simply for the preservation of Indigenous languages, but also for the preservation and empowerment of Indigenous cultures and worldviews. Yet while Indigenous languages are necessary for cultural revitalization, Indigenous worldviews are also crucial to successful language revitalization. Indigenous languages cannot be taught in the same ways as the majority languages of the world, if the goal is to holistically revitalize both the language and the culture. Rather, Indigenous languages must be taught from within a cultural context and in a manner that upholds Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.

The goal of this research has been to consider one cultural characteristic of Indigenous languages, and to see how this is reflected in Indigenous language teaching. Specifically, this research has focused on the connections between Indigenous languages and the land from which they emerged, and subsequently the ways in which land is represented in online Indigenous language education. The central question that framed this research was: What is the significance of Indigenous perspectives of land for Indigenous language education? In order to reach an answer to that question, I asked three supporting questions to guide the research process:

1. What are some ways in which Indigenous languages are connected to the land?
2. What is the role of land in Indigenous and place-based education?
3. What are the ways in which land is represented in websites designed for Indigenous language education?

The first question sought to understand the unique cultural connections between Indigenous languages and land, as this connection is not immediately transparent to many non-Indigenous peoples (including myself as the researcher). The goal of the second question was to bring this connection into an educational context by considering the roles that land can play in education. Finally, the last question sought to examine one way in which land is incorporated into Indigenous language education. Specifically, this question raised the somewhat problematized issue of technology for Indigenous language revitalization through examining the appearance of land in websites that are used for Indigenous language teaching. While these questions stem from several very broad issues, the goal of this work was not to attempt a complete and comprehensive response to these questions but rather to provide a preliminary discussion that will facilitate further consideration.

This study was framed within an Indigenist research paradigm, following Wilson (2007) and Kovach (2006). Through this research, I sought to honour and privilege Indigenous knowledge and understanding, as well as to begin decolonizing my own worldviews and understandings. Within the guidelines of the Indigenist paradigm, I adopted and adapted the methods of Constructivist Grounded Theory as a way to structure my research process. This combined methodology enabled me to explore the themes raised by the research questions in a way that would respect and honour

Indigenous epistemology. Within this methodological framework, the learning gained came directly from the data itself – from the writings of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, from the voices and experiences of Indigenous experts, and from the example of current Indigenous language education websites.

In order to answer my first research sub-question, I turned to two sources of information. The first, as presented in Chapter 3, was a review of the literature on Indigenous cultures, languages and worldviews as written by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors. Through this review I was able to develop a preliminary understanding of the connections between language and land, and more importantly, become aware of the interconnectedness of all aspects of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. It became clear from the literature that the connection between language and land appears in every element of Indigenous existence, including knowledge, identity and spirituality. The peoplehood matrix proposed by Holm, Pearson and Chavis (2003) provided a way to conceptualize this interconnection and the holistic discussion that followed.

The second source of information came through personal interviews with six Indigenous language and culture experts, as presented in Chapter 4. The purpose of these interviews was to build upon the learning gained through the literature review, and to respond to the sparsity of works by Indigenous authors in the literature by gaining a more complete understanding of these issues from an Indigenous perspective. Through these interviews, I developed an understanding of the connections between language and land as being a kind of multi-faceted relationship. The Indigenous experts spoke of four different facets of this relationship to land, described by the themes of living on the land, learning from the land, belonging to the land and respecting the land. The theme of living on the land refers to the practical, physical and daily aspects of traditional life on the land. Language both arises from this life on the land and is vitally necessary for it. Traditional Ecological Knowledge – specialized knowledge about plants, animals, geographic features, and seasons – is encoded within language. Place names describe specific locations, refer to resources at those locations or provide other useful information for travellers. These names are essential for travel and daily life on the land. The theme of learning from the land points to the land as both a place of learning and a keeper of

knowledge. The lessons of the land arise through daily activities on the land and are also embedded in the stories and teachings connected to particular places and corresponding place names. The theme of belonging to the land acknowledges the land as the source of Indigenous identity. The language itself is specific to a particular land, and so the speakers of that language identify themselves with the land by using that language. The idea of belonging to the land also points to the kinship that many Indigenous peoples have with the land, recognizing the elements of the land as relatives to be taken care of, rather than resources to be exploited. Finally, the theme of respecting the land refers to an intimate and reciprocal relationship with the land that is embedded within Indigenous spirituality and is expressed through language. The land is a provider and in return it is respected and cared for. This attitude of respect appears in language through ways of communicating with the land through songs and prayers, of using what the land provides, and of caring for and protecting the land.

In addition to these four facets of the relationship to the land, Chapters 3 and 4 also discussed the changing relationship with the land in which language loss plays a significant role. The devastating history of colonialism in North America has wrenched Indigenous peoples from their land and has dually wrenched their languages from them. The loss of language and the loss of an intimate relationship with the land go hand-in-hand, for this relationship with the land is encoded in and expressed through language. Accordingly, language revitalization efforts must also go hand-in-hand with restoring a respectful relationship with the land.

The second research sub-question was answered through a literature review that explored models of Indigenous and place-based education, as presented in Chapter 5. The purpose of this secondary literature review was to begin exploring the role of land in education. Both Indigenous and place-based educational models advocate the fundamental importance of land in education. The goal of both models is to create an entire curriculum that grounds students in their local area, provides for contextual and locally-relevant learning, and generates both mental and emotional ties to place that will foster place-conscious citizenship. However, both models of education face significant challenges from the current dominant educational framework which promotes national standards for accountability over local knowledge. It was apparent in the literature from

both areas that the current educational system is hostile to place and to local knowledge. Many advocates are calling for a paradigm shift in the educational demands and standards so that place-based, culturally relevant education can become a reality.

Finally, I approached an answer to the third question through a small survey of 14 Indigenous language education websites from Canada and the United States. The goal of this survey was to explore the variety of ways that land is currently represented in online education, based on the four facets of relationship to the land established in Chapters 3 and 4. Every one of these facets, along with the recognition of a change in that relationship with the land, appeared in the websites in a variety of ways. The relationship of living on the land was represented in word and phrase lists that contained words about elements in the land, such as flora, fauna, weather, or place names. The relationship of learning from the land was represented in explanations of land based activities, as well as in stories, songs, prayers and other cultural materials that shared traditional teachings and knowledge. The relationship of belonging to the land was represented through identification of the language with the land; through inclusion of origin or creation stories; and through crests or logos that connected the people with the land. The theme of respecting the land appeared also in songs, stories, and prayers that taught about traditional beliefs or about how to care for the land. This theme also appeared through references or links to land claims issues or land activism. Finally, while each of the websites exists because of the changing relationship with the land, of which language loss is a part, this aspect was represented in acknowledgements of language shift and in discussion of separation from the land, such as through residential schools or territory loss. This survey also highlighted four unique and visually powerful ways of including land in websites. These examples point to the myriad of opportunities available through current multimedia technology to create place-focused spaces in the online world.

Through these last four chapters I have explored ideas of connections between language and land, considered ways that land appears in education, and have suggested answers to each of the three research subquestions that together demonstrate the significance of land for Indigenous language education. Indigenous languages are an essential part of a holistic matrix that connects Indigenous knowledge, identity, spirituality and the land. These connections are so interwoven and interdependent that it

is impossible to separate one element from the others. For this reason, it is clear that land and place have a crucial role to play in Indigenous education. While currently land appears in a variety of ways on websites used for Indigenous language education, there are still more questions to be answered about how such a place-less medium can authentically transmit the place-rooted nature of Indigenous languages.

7.2 Significance and Implications

Through this research I have sought to develop an understanding of the ways that Indigenous epistemologies can and should be essential elements of Indigenous language education. Chapters 3 and 4 very clearly demonstrate the essential connections between language and land that touch on all aspects of Indigenous cultures, identities, knowledges and spiritualities. These connections are of utmost importance for Indigenous language revitalization efforts, and especially efforts to teach Indigenous languages.

This research adds to the small but growing body of literature that considers the role of technology for Indigenous language revitalization. As discussed in Chapter 5, computers and the internet are still problematized spaces for Indigenous languages and cultures. They are, in essence, the inheritance of Eurocentric thought and globalization. As Wei and Kolko (2005) and Prado (2012) have pointed out, computers and computer programs are designed, developed and created in English, making them an inherently exclusive space for any other language or worldview. Moreover, the internet is the culmination of Eurocentric globalization; it is a virtual world that connects places worldwide yet is essentially placeless. This raises the question of how inherently place-rooted languages can be authentically presented in this placeless, virtual space. This question requires much more thought, yet I have sought to add to the current discussion by considering the ways that land currently appears in websites used for Indigenous language education. In particular, I highlighted some outstanding examples that represented land in visually powerful ways. This survey is useful to both demonstrate current practices and to inspire further creativity for the multitude of ways that land can be included online.

This thesis contributes to the literature in several additional ways. First, it is one of the few works coming from North America that presents an in-depth exploration of the connections between Indigenous languages and the land. In particular, this work is unique

in presenting a comprehensive survey of the literature that brings together the voices of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors from a variety of backgrounds to provide a unified discussion on the connections between language and land. Moreover, it builds upon and adds to the small body of literature that explores the theme of technology for Indigenous language revitalization. Finally, it supports and adds to the growing body of literature that explores Indigenous research methodologies and that privileges Indigenous epistemologies in the Western academic context.

This work will be of value to a variety of people. It will be useful for those exploring Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, through the discussion of connections between language and land. It may also be helpful for students or other researchers who are seeking ways to blend Indigenous and Western research methodologies. Most importantly, this work will be valuable to language activists who are seeking to develop culturally relevant, place-focused language programming in their own communities. My hope is that this work will promote Indigenous worldviews so that they become a primary consideration by educators, program developers and policy makers.

7.3 Future Research and Final Thoughts

This thesis has considered many issues and yet there are still many questions that remain to be answered. While I presented an in-depth discussion of the connections between Indigenous languages and the land, I acknowledge that as a non-Indigenous person with no personal experience of living on the land I cannot fully comprehend nor express these connections. There is much more that could be added to the discussion by Indigenous people who can share from their own experience. Future research might also consider the use of websites for Indigenous language education within the context of community language revitalization and education efforts as a whole. Such research could provide a deeper understanding of *how* websites are being used as a tool within communities, and suggest the further potential for such use. Additionally, while I touched on problematized issues of technology for Indigenous languages, there is still much need of future research that explores further how technology can be adapted to support holistic language revitalization.

It is clearly demonstrated now that land is essential to Indigenous languages and that these languages do in every sense come from the land. It is for this reason that many people, including language activists, teachers and elders, advocate for language education to happen physically out on the land. This is unarguably the best way to teach and learn Indigenous languages in a culturally-relevant way. Yet such land-based learning is not always possible for every learner. For example, adult learners who live in cities or distant communities may have few chances to go out on the land. Even those who live in their home communities may find few opportunities to spend time on the land due to the many demands of their daily responsibilities. Schools are frequently constrained by school board and parental permission requirements, and additionally face funding barriers for land-based learning. While there is a growing number of communities and schools that have managed to create opportunities for land-based learning, it still remains a challenge for the majority. It is therefore very important to think about how we can “bring the land inside”. In other words, we must consider ways in which the Indigenous language education that occurs in a classroom or through a website can still be land-based and culturally grounded. This thesis has pointed to a few of the many opportunities and possibilities to create culturally relevant, land-based education within classrooms and on the internet. Thus, in response to Cajete’s (1994) rally included at the beginning of this chapter, this thesis presents a small vision for educational transformation that, when joined with many other small visions, will truly revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures through Indigenized education.

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**APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORMS**

Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria
PO Box 3045 Victoria BC V8W 3P4

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Learning the Language of the Land:
The Representation of Land in Web-based Indigenous Language
Education

Researcher: Aliana Parker, Graduate Student
Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr. Leslie Saxon
Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria

Funded by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
University of Victoria Faculty of Graduate Studies

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this research is to understand how Indigenous languages are connected to the land, and to see how this connection appears in language teaching material on the internet.

Importance of the Research:

This research is important because it will help scholars and teachers understand how to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into language teaching curriculum. This is of great value to Indigenous language revitalization efforts.

Participation:

You have been requested to participate in this study because you are an Indigenous person who speaks an Indigenous language and is familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary; you do not have to participate if you do not wish to. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how you will be treated. Moreover, your choice to participate will in no way affect your relationship with my supervisor, _____ (name of supervisor).

Procedures:

Your participation will involve an interview about language and land. You and I (Aliana) will meet at a time, date and location of your choosing for a 1.5 – 2 hour interview. If you have no preference of location, I will arrange for a quiet location at UVic. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your experience with the connection between language and the land. I will tape record the interview with one digital audio recorder. After the interview is over, I will transcribe the recording. I will then contact you again and request to meet to discuss what I learned from our interview. This optional meeting may also be at a time, date and location of your choosing. At this meeting, I will bring the transcript of the interview for discussion. I will tell you what I learned from the interview and ask if you have any questions or concerns regarding the transcript or my understanding of it.

Duration: 1.5 – 2 hours for the initial interview; 1 hour for the follow-up meeting

Location: To be determined.

Benefits:

This research has several benefits. It will benefit general society as well as First Nations and other Indigenous communities because it will offer a better understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing may be incorporated into education. It will also benefit language revitalization efforts as it will inform language activists and practitioners of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing for language teaching methods and materials. This research will benefit society and the state of knowledge, as it will help non-Indigenous people understand the connections between Indigenous languages and the land. Finally, it is possible that this research will benefit you as you may choose to have copies of the research results returned for your own use (please see below).

Inconvenience:

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you because of the time commitment involved in participating in an interview, and the travel involved to and from the interview location. It may also be inconvenient because this is the traditional food gathering time. I will work with you to schedule all meetings at a time and location of your choosing. Please do not hesitate to let me know if any meeting scheduled will be inconvenient to you so that we can reschedule that meeting.

Withdrawal of Participation:

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without explanation or consequence. If you withdraw, I will request your permission to use the information I gathered from you in our interview. If you consent, I will use this information in my research. If you do not consent, I will destroy this information immediately.

Continued Consent for the Research Process:

As mentioned, this research process will involve several meetings with me. Your participation in this research signifies your implied consent to these meetings. If at any point you are unable to or do not wish to meet with me, please let me know.

Confidentiality:

Because you will be sharing with me your valued knowledge of the land and your language, I would like to acknowledge you and give you credit in my research results (thesis). This means that I will not keep your participation in this research confidential unless you request it. I will protect your privacy by keeping the interview recordings and transcripts in a safe, private location accessible only to me (i.e. a password-protected folder on my private computer). If you request confidentiality, I will use a pseudonym to refer to you and your responses in the results of the study and I will not identify your community. However, even if you request confidentiality, it will not be possible to keep your identity confidential from my supervisors. Moreover, because I must identify the language you speak and the general geographical area you are from, it may be possible for readers to discover your community and perhaps your identity. If this is a significant concern for you, you may withdraw from the research.

Please complete **one** of the following:

<p>WAIVING CONFIDENTIALITY I agree to be credited in the results of the study, and I agree to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results. _____ (Please initial)</p>	<p>REQUESTING CONFIDENTIALITY I do not agree to be identified by name or credited in the results of the study. Please keep my name and participation in this study as confidential as possible. _____ (Please initial)</p>
--	---

Consent to Inform Your Community

I would like to respectfully inform your community of this research project and your participation. If you consent, I will send a letter to your community band office informing them of this research project and your participation. However, in the interests of confidentiality, I will not inform your community if you do not wish so. Please indicate if you consent for me to inform your community of this research by completing one of the following:

<p>YES, please inform my community of my participation in this research. _____ (Please initial)</p>	<p>NO, please DO NOT inform my community of my participation in this research. _____ (Please initial)</p>
--	---

Research Results:**Storage:**

The audio recording and transcript of our interview will be kept in a password-protected file on my personal computer. How would you like the data (the recording and transcript) to be dealt with?

(Please check all that apply)

- Aliana may keep the data indefinitely.
- Aliana should destroy the data after ____ years.
- Aliana should provide me with a copy of the transcript.
- Aliana should provide me with a copy of the audio recording.

- Aliana should provide a copy of the transcript/audio recording/thesis (circle) to:
-

Dissemination:

The research results will be immediately used in my thesis, in which I may quote directly from our interview. I may also use themes or ideas that arise from our interview to inform the creation of a website analysis tool that will be used in another part of this research project (please see below for details). Finally, I may also share this research in a published article, a class presentation, or a presentation at a scholarly meeting.

I would also like to share this research with you. Please indicate if you would like this research returned to you:

- I would like to receive a copy of the thesis.
- I would like to receive a copy of the website-analysis tool that Aliana will develop through her research.

Language Website Analysis Tool: My interview with you represents only a part of this research project. The second part of the project involves an analysis of Indigenous language education websites to determine the role of land in this medium of language learning. The tool used for this analysis will be developed separate from our interview and no specific reference to our interview will be included in this tool. As this tool will be designed to help us understand how the land is represented in language education website, you might find it useful in your own language teaching projects.

Questions or Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns, you may:

- contact me using the information at the top of page 1
- contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

**Learning the Language of the Land:
 The Representation of Land in Web-based Indigenous Language Education**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Learning the Language of the Land: The Representation of Land in Web-based Indigenous Language Education* that is being conducted by Aliana Parker. Aliana is a graduate student in the department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by phone at [phone], or by email at [email].

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Applied Linguistics. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Leslie Saxon. You may contact my supervisor at [phone].

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Victoria Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to understand how Indigenous languages are connected to the land, and to see how this connection appears in language teaching material on the internet.

Importance of this Research

This research is important because it will help scholars and teachers understand how to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into language teaching curriculum. This is of great value to Indigenous language revitalization efforts.

Participants Selection

You have been requested to participate in this study because you are an Indigenous person who speaks an Indigenous language and is familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary; you do not have to participate if you do not wish to. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how you will be treated. Moreover, your choice to participate will in no way affect your relationship with my supervisor, _____ [name of supervisor].

What is involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will involve an interview about language and land. You and I (Aliana) will arrange for a mutually convenient time and date on which to have a 1.5 – 2 hour interview over the telephone. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your experience with the connection between language and the land. I will tape record the interview with one digital audio recorder. After the interview is over, I will transcribe the recording. I will then contact

you again and arrange to for another telephone meeting to discuss what I learned from our interview. This meeting may also be at a mutually convenient time and date. I will review with you the transcript of the interview, will explain what I learned from it and ask if you have any questions or concerns regarding the transcript or my understanding of it.

Duration: 1.5 – 2 hours for the initial interview; 1 hour for the follow-up meeting

Benefits

This research has several benefits. It will benefit general society as well as First Nations and other Indigenous communities because it will offer a better understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing may be incorporated into education. It will also benefit language revitalization efforts as it will inform language activists and practitioners of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing for language teaching methods and materials. This research will benefit society and the state of knowledge, as it will help non-Indigenous people understand the connections between Indigenous languages and the land. Finally, it is possible that this research will benefit you may choose to have the research results returned to you for your own use.

Inconvenience and Risks

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you because of the time commitment involved in participating in an interview, and the travel involved to and from the interview location. It may also be inconvenient because this is the traditional food gathering time. I will work with you to schedule all meetings at a time and location of your choosing. Please do not hesitate to let me know if any meeting scheduled will be inconvenient to you so that we can reschedule that meeting.

Withdrawal of Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you withdraw, I will request your permission to use the information I gathered from you in our interview. If you consent, I will use this information in my research. If you do not consent, I will destroy this information immediately.

Continued Consent for the Research Process

As mentioned, this research process will involve several meetings with me. Your participation in this research signifies your implied consent to these meetings. If at any point you are unable to or do not wish to meet with me, please let me know.

Confidentiality

Because you will be sharing with me your valued knowledge of the land and your language, I would like to acknowledge you and give you credit in my research results (thesis). This means that I will not keep your participation in this research confidential unless you request it. I will protect your privacy by keeping the interview recordings and transcripts in a safe, private location accessible only to me (i.e. a password-protected folder on my private computer). If you request confidentiality, I will use a pseudonym to refer to you and your responses in the results of the study and I will not identify your

community. However, even if you request confidentiality, it will not be possible to keep your identity confidential from my supervisors. Moreover, because I must identify the language you speak and the general geographical area you are from, it may be possible for readers to discover your community and perhaps your identity. If this is a significant concern for you, you may withdraw from the research.

Consent to Inform Your Community

I would like to respectfully inform your community of this research project. If you consent, I will send a letter to your community band office informing them of this research project and your participation. However, in the interests of confidentiality, I will not inform your community if you do not wish so. Please tell me if you consent for me to inform your community of this research.

Research Results:

Storage:

The audio recording and transcript of our interview will be kept in a password-protected file on my personal computer. Please inform me of how you would like the data (the recording and transcript) dealt with:

- Aliana may keep the data indefinitely.
 - Aliana should destroy the data after ____ years.
 - Aliana should provide me with a copy of the transcript.
 - Aliana should provide me with a copy of the audio recording.
 - Aliana should provide a copy of the transcript/audio recording to:
-

Dissemination:

The research results will be immediately used in my thesis. I may also share this research in a published article, a class presentation, or a presentation at a scholarly meeting. I would also like to share this research with you. Please inform me if you would like a copy of my thesis or the website-analysis tool (see below) that I will develop as a part of this research project.

Language Website Analysis Tool: My interview with you represents only a part of this research project. The second part of the project involves an analysis of Indigenous language education websites to determine the role of land in this medium of language learning. The tool used for this analysis will be developed separate from our interview and no specific reference to our interview will be included in this tool. As this tool will be designed to help us understand how the land is represented in language education website, you might find it useful in your own language teaching projects.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Aliana Parker

Leslie Saxon

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria.

By completing the interview, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Please retain a copy of this letter for your reference.

**APPENDIX B
COMMUNITY INFORMATION LETTER**

Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria
PO Box 3045 Victoria BC V8W 3P4

***Letter of Information for
the Community***

**Learning the Language of the Land:
The Representation of Land in Web-based Indigenous Language Education**

A member of your community has been invited to participate in a study entitled *Learning the Language of the Land: The Representation of Land in Web-based Indigenous Language Education* that is being conducted by Aliana Parker. Aliana is a graduate student in the department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by phone at [phone], or by email at [email].

As a graduate student, Aliana is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Applied Linguistics. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Leslie Saxon. You may contact Dr. Saxon at [phone].

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Victoria Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to understand how indigenous languages are connected to the land, and to see how this connection appears in language teaching material on websites for Indigenous languages.

Importance of this Research

This research is important because it will help scholars, teachers and curriculum developers understand how to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into language teaching curriculum. This is of great value to Indigenous language revitalization efforts.

Participants Selection

A member of your community has been selected to participate in this research. This person is _____ (hereafter “the participant”), and has been selected because he/she is an Indigenous person who speaks an Indigenous language and is familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and should have no effect on his/her position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how he/she will be treated.

What is involved

This research involves an interview about language and land. Aliana will interview the participant and ask questions related to his/her personal experience with and connection to the land. Please see the attached page for a copy of the interview questions. The interview will be followed up with another meeting in which the transcript of the interview will be discussed and confirmed. The audio recording and transcript from the interview will be offered to the participant for his/her use.

Benefits

This research has several benefits. It will benefit general society as well as First Nations and other Indigenous communities because it will offer a better understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing may be incorporated into education. It will also benefit language revitalization efforts as it will inform language activists and practitioners of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing for language teaching methods and materials. This research will benefit society and the state of knowledge, as it will help non-Indigenous people understand the connections between Indigenous languages and the land. Finally, it is possible that this research will benefit your community as the participant may choose to have the research results returned to him/her for future use.

Risks

There are no identified potential risks to the community by this participant's participation in this research. All risks to the participant will be addressed immediately by the researcher.

Withdrawal of Participation

Participation in this research is to be completely voluntary. The participant may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If he/she withdraws, I will request his/her permission to use the information gathered from our interview. If he/she consents, I will use this information in my research. If he/she does not consent, I will destroy this information immediately.

Confidentiality

Because the participant will be sharing with me his/her valued knowledge of the land and language, I would like to acknowledge the participant in my research results. This means that I will not keep the participant's name, his/her Indigenous language, or geographical area confidential in this research unless the participant requests it. I will protect the privacy of your community by not referring to your community by name, unless you request it. I will also keep the interview recordings and transcripts in a safe, private location accessible only to me (i.e. a password-protected folder on my private computer).

Research Results:***Storage:***

The audio recording and transcript of our interview will be kept in a password-protected file on my personal computer. I will follow the wishes of the participant in how to deal with this data, (e.g. I may keep it indefinitely, or I must destroy it after a certain time

period). A copy of the audio recording and transcript will be offered to the participant for his/her use.

Dissemination:

The research results will be immediately used in my thesis. I may also share this research in a published article, a class presentation, or a presentation at a scholarly meeting. I would also like to share this research with you. I will give the participant the opportunity to inform me if he/she/your community would like to receive a copy of the research results, including the thesis and/or a copy of the website analysis tool I will develop as a part of this project.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Aliana Parker

Dr. Leslie Saxon

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, please contact me immediately.

Please retain a copy of this letter for your reference.

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Preamble:

As you know, I am interested in learning about the connection of Indigenous languages to the land. The connection between language and land seems to be a very common theme and I have noticed it appear more frequently as I learn more about Indigenous languages. As an English-speaking Canadian who travelled a lot as a child, the idea of this connection is unfamiliar to me. Though I have learned a lot through reading about this topic, especially by reading articles and books written by Indigenous people, I feel that I still do not fully understand all the ways in which language and land are connected. I would like to ask you questions which I hope will help you share with me what this connection between language and land looks like, and what it means to you. Please feel free to answer the questions as you think best and to tell me about your opinions and ideas on this topic.

Questions:

- Could you please introduce yourself to me. (I.e. Name, origin, language, etc.)
- Please tell me about a special memory you have of the land, and why that memory is important for you.
- Do you remember an experience where you learned something from the land or about the land? Can you tell me about that experience and what you learned?
- Tia Oros Peters is a Zuni Indigenous person from the southwest USA, and is the director of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development in the United States. She once made an interesting comment in an interview. She said: "*...Indian people came out of the land... We came out of particular places and our specific thoughts and belief systems came from those places as well; we were shaped by the land, our language comes from the land.*" What do you think about this comment? What do you think she means when she says "our language comes from the land", and do you relate to this in any way?
- I have learned that place names have a lot of meaning and are very important for Indigenous people. Could you tell me about a place name that know in your language? What does the name mean, and how is it important to you? Could you tell me about an experience you had at that place that reminds you of the name, or vice versa?
- As I have mentioned, in my research I want to understand how land is or should be represented in language education. If land is connected to language, then it follows that land should somehow play a role in language teaching. Do you think that someone who wants to learn your language needs to know about the land? What would they need to know?
- Do you think that someone who wants to get to know the land where you are from should also know anything about your language?

- I am also learning about place-based education, and how language can be taught to students through being on the land, rather than in a classroom. Do you think there is an advantage for students to learn your language while being on the land, rather than in a classroom? Why?
- Do you think that it is important for children and youth in your community to have experiences on the land? Why?
- What do you consider to be your spirituality? How is it connected to land? To language?

APPENDIX D WEBSITE QUESTIONNAIRE

General Website Information

Name of website:

Web address of homepage:

Date accessed:

Copyright date/Website date (if any):

Size of site (# of Pages: Tiny 1-5; Small 5-20; Medium 20-50; Large 50+)

Website Author / Promoting organization:

Language Information

Indigenous Language name:

Indigenous Language family:

Indigenous Language location:

Primary language of site: [English / Indigenous / Fully Bilingual]

Primary purpose of site: Language education / Other:

Is there monolingual content? [Yes / No]

English:

Indigenous Language:

Media Content

Does the website have sound files? [Yes / No]

What type?

Does the website have videos? [Yes / No]

What?

Does the website have pictures? [Photographs / Drawings / Both]

Are there pictures of the land?

[Drawings / Photographs / Both]

What?

How many?

Where do they appear? [Primary page / Secondary page]

Does the website have map(s)? [Yes / No]

Does the website have links? [Yes / No]

To what?

[Community organization / First Nations sites / Language sites / Educational sites
/ Other]

Education Content

What educational resources are on the website?

- Word lists
- Phrases / phrase book
- Dialogues
- Dictionary
- Language games

- Metalinguistic discussion (ie. grammar explanations)
- Songs
- Stories
- Videos
- Other:

Are there options for interactive learning or posting user-generated material on the website? [Yes / No]

What?

Do the educational resources use a [CALL tutor] model or a [CALL tool] model?

Living on the Land:

Are Indigenous place names mentioned on the site? [Yes / No]

How many?

Where do they appear?

Is there mention of activities on the land and / or items related to the land (i.e. travelling, hunting, fishing, harvesting food; plants, animals, geographic features, weather, cultural materials obtained from the land)? [Yes / No]

What?

Where do they appear?

Are there photographs or pictures of people on the land? [Yes / No]

What?

Where do they appear?

Are there videos of the land or people on the land? [Yes / No]

What?

Where do they appear?

Is there audio media about the land (i.e. songs about the land, environmental sounds, etc.)? [Yes / No]

What?

Where do they appear?

Learning from the Land:

Are there instructions about how to do things on the land (ie. hunting, fire starting, cooking, etc.)?

[Yes / No]

What?

How many?

Where do they appear?

Are there songs, stories or other oral traditions about the land (incl. place name stories)?

[Yes / No]

What?

How many?

Where do they appear?

Belonging to the Land:

Is there mention of the land in the introductory material (i.e. a direct or indirect reference to the people's connection with the land)? [Yes / No]

What?

Is there an origin story of the group that connects to the land? [Yes / No]

What?

Where does it appear?

Is there a crest or logo that connects the people to the land? [Yes / No]

What? [Picture of landscape / Small area / Flora / Fauna]

Respecting the Land:

Are there any stories, songs, videos, or other educational material that demonstrate the attitude of respect for the land? [Yes / No]

What?

Where do they appear?

Is there reference to spirituality that is connected to land? [Yes / No]

What?

Is there any mention of protective attitudes towards the land, land claims, or links to pages of land activism?

[Yes / No]

What?

Changing Relationship with the Land:

Is there any material on the website that demonstrates a changing relationship with the land? [Yes / No]

What?

Is there reference on the website to the need of the website because of changes in the language status?

[Yes / No]

What?

Comments: