

**Talking Back, With Reawakened Voices: Analyzing The Potential For
Indigenous California Languages Coursework at California Polytechnic
State University**

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ABSTRACT

The legacy of colonialism in the United States, including genocidal practices and cultural assimilation, has left Indigenous languages endangered. Native peoples, scholars, and activists have been working to revive and heal the languages of America's first peoples, and the cultures those languages speak to, yet more work remains in the field of language revitalization. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo currently does not offer any course specifically teaching or discussing Indigenous languages, even those of the Chumash people who know the San Luis Obispo area as their ancestral homelands. By synthesizing revitalization and Indigenous activist literature with the narratives of Native language experts, the project proposes Native language education coursework for California Polytechnic State University to implement. Insight provided through interviews with these experts indicates that the languages themselves speak against colonialism and assimilation, and provide us with knowledge and understandings of our worlds and cultures beyond what can be conceived of through European languages. While there is no one educational strategy to fit every community, Indigenous language education serves in healing some of the damage done by colonizing practices on Native peoples, and helps reverse the history the education system has had in silencing Native voices. For non-Native students, this enhances a multicultural and social justice education by de-Eurocentrizing the curriculum and introducing worldviews that are too often unheard.

Keywords: Indigenous languages, language revitalization, colonialism, activism, Indigenous studies, Native American studies, Chumash, linguistics, education

Key Terms Explained

Academic literature is frequently dotted with jargon and vocabulary that may be very unfamiliar to many readers, or is not used in everyday conversation to describe the experiences of oppressed peoples. These terms warrant explanation because of their significance to the project and to the theory behind it, and to help break down the power structure between those who make and enforce academic standards, and those about whom the education surrounds. These are the working definitions I will be using throughout this project:

Colonialism – a system of domination by a foreign, usually European, culture in order to profit economically, proselytize new peoples, and conquer a previously inhabited land. This practice still exists today, as the Americas (or Turtle Island, as many know it), Hawai‘i, New Zealand (*Aotearoa*), Australia, Africa, and many other non-European areas of the world remain under control politically, culturally, and economically of their current and former colonizers.

Assimilation – to submit to the dominant culture, and take on their cultural values and norms at the expense of expressing one’s heritage culture.

Eurocentrism – the belief that European cultural production is superior, and the ideal by which we should measure all other ways of life.

Decolonization – the process of dismantling and displacing colonial systems within colonized Peoples, and returning their way of life to the one they so determine.

Sovereignty – a state of autonomy that includes full decision-making capability and the freedom of self-determination for those sovereign peoples.

Indigenous – to be from and rooted in a land, based on generations of heritage relationship to that land; to be of the people originally created or living with that land.

In many instances in this writing, Indigenous and Native appear to be used interchangeably. However, it is important to note that Indigenous is a global term, while Native or Native American refers to those Indigenous to North America, or, Turtle Island.

Chumash – the Native Peoples of the California Central Coast area, this term denotes a broad group of linguistically and culturally similar, yet distinct bands. Most academic work has referred to these Peoples by the Spanish colonial names assigned by missions. When applicable, I will use the name for specific Chumash groups by the name they have for themselves in their own languages, like *S^hamala* instead of *Iñezeno*, to assert the decolonization of the nomenclature.

Where non-English words are italicized, it is to note that the term is not in my most familiar language, as these words are not from my knowledge, but the knowledge of their speakers.

Foreword

Having been born and raised in San Luis Obispo, I have been educated and indoctrinated with viewpoints of the Chumash history from the perspectives of Western society. As a result of my education as a Comparative Ethnic Studies student, I realize now that this perspective and its consequences limit the sovereignty and agency of the Chumash peoples, in a place that is their home. With this project, I would like to serve as a bridge between the Native communities, despite my lack of Indigenous identity, and the non-Native San Luis Obispo/Cal Poly community that falls short in acknowledging the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This is also a time to recognize the crucial role played in the planning and development of my project by my mentors and Indigenous faculty members Dr. Jenell Navarro and Dr. Kathleen Martin, as well as Dr. Elvira Pulitano, Dr. Grace Yeh, and Alicia Moretti. The inspiration I have gleaned from them over the past four years has been crucial in establishing the framework for this project, helping to decolonize the viewpoints I had been so familiar with in my previous education. I would also like to thank Nakia Zavalla, Cultural Director for the Santa Ynez Chumash Tribe, for her openness to working with me, and passion for maintaining the cultural values of her People. Reflecting back on this work, it has been a blessing to have worked with everyone involved in this project, to be embraced as an activist for Native rights, and to have the opportunity to witness this time within the greater movement.

Chapter One: Introduction

While most, if not all, college campuses in the United States offer courses or departments for European or Asian languages, little if any attention or scholarship is dedicated to education regarding Native languages. Cal Poly itself, through its Modern Languages and Literature Department, only allows students the opportunity to learn the languages and literature of Spanish, French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese. Its English department offers courses in linguistics, yet only brief sections of courses from interested professors cover Native languages. Furthermore, the institution offers little recognition of language or culture to the Indigenous Chumash that inhabited the San Luis Obispo area for time immemorial before Spanish conquest. Cal Poly can and should become a place for the reclamation of culture—both for the preservation of history, but also for resistance to political forces to marginalize Native peoples and Native languages. This institution should offer itself as a resource for preservation and cultural revitalization through education to Cal Poly students of the languages and histories of the Chumash Peoples.

As a local born to the San Luis Obispo area, my research has been guided by a desire to reach out to these communities for the wealth of Indigenous knowledge. This traditional knowledge, as well as Indigenous epistemologies, can challenge students to consider knowledge systems outside Western education practices to which many are accustomed. There are no issues in the United States that do not affect Native peoples, and students will have to confront these situations no matter what major they may be. It is thus Cal Poly's responsibility to

prepare its students to navigate non-Western perspectives from a place of understanding and not ignorance. We must also use our privilege of education and educational resources, in being critical of their complicity in colonization, to offer something back to the community and land from which Cal Poly has derived its existence. The first peoples of this land deserve to have a voice and reclaim an aspect of their culture yet to be recognized by the institution: language.

This project develops and justifies a plan for implementing coursework to study the history and significance of California Indigenous Languages. An emphasis is placed on studying the *S^hamala* Chumash language and culture, since there is a developed orthography and pedagogy, but more importantly, there are elders who are eager to teach. The research into how to develop this plan was driven mainly by the research question: *How can we develop community-based coursework for educating a broad audience of students to the significance of Indigenous California languages?* The intention behind developing this project was to give students insight into the existence of Native languages to help spark interest in preserving and maintaining languages, as well as educating students on how culturally important language is for so many people. Frantz Fanon's work showed us that language has historically been a tool of colonization (and education)—a tool that excludes concepts deemed not worthy by Western society, a tool to silence the peoples and cultures colonized, a tool to assimilate minorities to the majority (Fanon 9). The research from Teresa McCarty, Mary Eunice Romero, and Ofelia Zepeda into personal experiences with Native languages reinforces that laws in the United States have specifically targeted Indigenous

languages and made their use a source of shame for Native communities (McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda 36). However, Teresa McCarty's work also assures us that language can be a tool of resistance, of challenging the assimilationist paradigm of the dominant society where only the languages of the colonizer are recognized in a land stolen from its original inhabitants (McCarty, "Schooling, Resistance, and American Indian Languages" 28). It is not merely a means of recognition, but an assertion of sovereignty and resistance to victimhood.

Similar coursework and research to that being proposed has been carried out by UC Berkeley's Survey of California and Other Indigenous Languages, UC Davis' Native American Studies Department, UC Los Angeles' Linguistic Department and linguistic anthropology programs at CSU San Bernardino. With the vast amount of universities in the state of California, to only have a small handful that study Native California languages brings to bear the fact that more can be done to educate students about these languages.

Project Objectives

The specific objectives as a result of my research are to develop meaningful coursework on the history and cultural significance of California Native Languages, with particular emphasis on the *S^hamala* Chumash. Any proposed coursework would be managed by the Ethnic Studies department, with potential collaboration from the Modern Languages and Literature or English Departments. This project is designed to provide a justification for Native language coursework

through: reviewing literature showing the importance of language revitalization, especially given the context of colonization of Chumash land and culture; and analysis of interviews with language experts on their experiences with Native languages, including input from *S^hamala* Chumash elders.

The long-term goals of this project are for the institution to implement:

- Coursework that offers an accurate history of California Native Peoples and their languages, challenging negative stereotypes of these communities as posed by dominant white society. It will encourage students to understand contemporary Native Californians from an anti-racist lens, free of anachronistic characterization of Native Peoples.
- Coursework that allows students to understand modern issues facing the destruction of languages of all Native Peoples, and their context relative to historic issues.
- Opportunities to provide tools for students to take part in restorative projects for local Indigenous communities.
- Significant input and collaboration with members of the local Chumash Peoples on the direction, objectives, and information proposed within the course, with their consent.

This project is significant because our Native languages are gateways to new understandings and are means of reinforcing the sovereignty of our Native Peoples. The data from this project demonstrate how elevating the importance of Native languages and cultures at Cal Poly can help the Chumash community reconnect to and reclaim a piece of their heritage on their land. The results show that Cal Poly has an opportunity to build better institutional relationships with our Native members of the San Luis Obispo area and Cal Poly, and create a more welcoming, supportive climate for Native students.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Language, one of the central aspects of human interaction and experience, is ever changing, everlasting throughout peoples of the world. While in many instances, languages, mostly Indigenous languages, suffer the threat of lost speakers, they are not all lost forever. Languages that have not been spoken in generations have been relearned, revitalized, and reclaimed. That work comes in part by dedicated linguistic scholars, but mostly through driven community members looking to reassert their culture's presence in the face of cultural destruction. California presents a particularly unique scenario in this regard, where there are roughly fifty existing Native languages (out of the 100 or so spoken in 1800) in just one state (Hinton 21). We can choose to see the state of language loss and revival to be in a state of flux, or treat Native languages much in the same way as many inaccurately treat Native Peoples: extinct. Activist Wesley Leonard, building off ideas from Philip Deloria, challenges this notion, asserting instead that Native language use "challenge[s] existing power structures by showing that Indians can and do participate in all aspects of life and will not accept an imposed narrative in which they live(d) only in the past" (Leonard 136). This project aims for a similar goal, highlighting the present states and future possibilities for language reclamation by Indigenous Californians to largely unaware campus environment.

In this section, I will review work in the field of linguistic, sociological, and historical canon regarding Indigenous language, from the history of attempted annihilation, to the value of these languages' existence for the communities and

for languages everywhere, to the efficacy of projects in rebuilding the speaking base of, as Leonard would use, “sleeping” languages (142).

Retelling the History of Assimilation

Any discussion about the present state of languages must draw on the history of the people that spoke that language. Considering the inextricable link between language and culture, no discussion about the history of a Native language can ignore the pervasive influence of colonialism and genocide that has and continues to plague Indigenous Peoples. Considering the placement of Cal Poly on Chumash land, I have decided to focus much of this historical discussion to them, so that their history may be most relevant to this project.

Chumash Peoples are the original inhabitants of the California Central Coast region and have been, since their creation, the caretakers of the land roughly from Paso Robles in the north to Malibu in the south (“History of the Chumash People”). Anthropological estimates place pre-colonization population around 25,000, the decrease of which is directly attributable, like much of the rest of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas and beyond, to disease and genocidal practices of European conquistadores (Erlandson 477). The term Chumash, much like the term Sioux, denotes not one large tribe, but rather related familial, cultural, economic, and linguistic groups with several languages including *Yak Tiʔu Tiʔu Yak Tilhini* (Obispeño), *Kuyam* (Interior), *Shmuwich* (Barbareño), *Sʰamala* (Inezeño), *Micqanaqaʼn* (Ventureño), *ʼAmuwu* (Purisimeño), and *Michumash* (Cruzeño) (Erlandson 477, Golla 194). It is important to note here

that the names in parentheses, which are more commonly used by linguists and historians, are the carryover names from the Spanish mission system, with each one ascribing the language spoken near each mission. There are significant linguistic differences in these groups such that *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini*, spoken around the San Luis Obispo area, is not mutually intelligible with other Chumash languages (Golla 195). While it is important to recognize the placement of Cal Poly within *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini* heritage land, for the current practicality of any Chumash-related language coursework, the focus here is *S^hamala* Chumash, spoken traditionally nearby around Santa Ynez, sixty miles south of Cal Poly. Currently, efforts on behalf of one Coastal Chumash Tribe, the *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini*, to bring back their language and other cultural practices are underway. I would advise readers of this work who may want to continue to enhance Chumash language education at Cal Poly to look into and connect with *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini* language communities, which I was unable to sufficiently do at the time of research.

S^hamala Chumash is a useful start to developing Chumash language curricula due to their federal recognition as well as economic gains as a result of this status that have effected funding for cultural revitalization. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is the only Chumash reservation, federally recognized since 1901, and as such has been able to hire Dr. Richard Applegate to work with tribal linguists to rebuild the language. The rebuild process has included compiling a dictionary, a working vocabulary, and community language classes (“Chumash Culture”). The process of Chumash cultural revitalization has brought

back valuable Indigenous knowledge in a strong affront to colonialism. As put by the Chumash themselves:

The culture of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is deep within the souls of every tribal member and rests within our hearts...[d]espite the many attempts to eradicate our culture, we maintained our connection to our ancestors and to our core identity of being Chumash. We survived because of our strength as a tribe and our spiritual connection to Chumash heritage.

Chumash culture hasn't been erased. Thanks to the revenue from our Chumash Casino Resort, we can now implement cultural enrichment programs that we couldn't previously afford. We can ensure that our culture remains strong within our tribe and is preserved for our children. ("Chumash Culture")

As I emphasized earlier, the culture does not die, but rather lies sleeping within the connection to ancestors who had it before.

While much of the history of the Chumash has not been told from their perspective, Deana Dartt-Newton and Jon Erlandson give an account in defense of Chumash resilience to Spanish, Mexican, and American colonization, critiquing scholars who paint a story of willing subjugation to Mission servitude and destruction. Colonization, they argued, delivered "a series of unprecedented blows" to the Chumash population and lifestyle that recovery is still in the making (Dartt-Newton and Erlandson 416). This included the establishment of the Western-revered Mission system, which ran on Indian slave labor for the benefit

of Franciscan priests and Spanish warlords, and the dispossession of Chumash peoples from their land and cultures by Spanish, Mexican, and American governments (419). Their article is one of few counter-hegemonic works in the anthropologic field with regards to Chumash history. The history of the Chumash (and many other Indigenous Peoples), almost always told by white Western anthropologists, typically serves as a justification or rationalization of Mission and colonial violence. These perspectives attempt to use climatic events or other natural factors as primary destructive forces, with the arrival of the Spanish then seeming like a welcomed event. Dartt-Newton and Erlandson discuss this interpretation as “deflect[ing] away [blame] from Franciscan fathers, Spanish soldiers, and European colonialism and toward the vagaries of nature” and allowing narratives of Native passivity and weakness to persist (417). The authors note, too, that the “Chumash and their ancestors survived for more than eleven thousand years in a dynamic coastal environment, including numerous cycles of drought, El Niños, and other climatic and resource perturbations” without experiencing the population drops they did after 1769 (424). What we see, then, is a historic record that hides the reality of the cultural and physical genocide inflicted upon the Chumash, which can then be linked to the present day state of the Chumash languages, one where there are no first-language speakers and the tribes are in a state of rebuilding itself culturally (Hinton 28). This project intends to utilize narratives such as these that counter normative historical records in order to position the Chumash in a state of power in determining what the future of their culture and language will be.

Language Loss and Genocide: A Dark History

Native language loss, or *dormancy* (to borrow a term from Wesley Leonard, who challenges a statically defined state of language use), is directly tied to the missionary education system in California and across the Americas. As Carol Devens explains in her chapter “If We Get The Girls We Get The Race,” the goal of many legal policies and school procedures was to “[transform] Native peoples into Christian [and Anglo] citizens” so that they may participate in what colonial leaders saw as a more civilized society (Devens 284). This primarily consisted of removing children from their Native families, stripping them (both literally and figuratively) of their culture, and imposing Western Christian ideology into their lives. Those who perpetrated these acts, especially the missionaries, saw that “the abandonment of native ways for Western ones was a creative rather than destructive process,” reifying the genocidal actions they explicitly enacted without any guilt (Devens 285). Since in many cases, mothers and female kin were “responsible for instructing the child in both the practical and ritual activities,” women were targeted to be trained in Western ways, thereby destroying the family tradition transmission of knowledge between generations (Devens 288). Abuses were common, and many Native peoples attest to the punishment inflicted for displaying cultural markers, including the use of their Native tongue. Upon returning home, “those who did remember their first language vowed not to teach it to their children, hoping to spare them the pain they themselves had suffered” (Mithun 19). These had long-lasting effects on the communities the children returned to, where families are left with the scars of

Missionary and Boarding Schools, and few speak the language traditionally used within their peoples.

Tying this into the Chumash community, the Santa Ynez Chumash offer a direct account of their history with cultural genocide:

Over the years, various political and religious groups have tried to take our culture from us. By forbidding us to speak our language, sending Chumash children to boarding schools and forcing us to move away from our traditional native religion, many of our core beliefs were stripped away from us...[t]he pressure has always existed for us to assimilate and forsake our culture. (“Chumash Culture”)

The Central Coast, idyllic as it may be portrayed, is no stranger to the effects of colonization by the Spanish, Mexican, and American settlers. Each has had their own agenda of driving out the “Indian” culture and supplanting it with their own. Part of learning from this history, so that we may prevent its occurrence again, is confronting this history directly and honestly. Language and cultural revitalization are means of moving on, and moving forward despite the pressure to give up.

Today, Native families often wrestle with approaches to teaching their heritage languages to younger generations. As Hinton notes in *Flutes of Fire*, “children often reject their family language at school age, if not before, when they realize it separates them from their classmates,” which is seen in many immigrant families as well (173). Approaches must then tackle how to reach children, and teach the importance of the language in a cultural sense. Speaking the languages now, despite the history, is an act of continued defiance, showing that the

colonialism and abuse of the past were not enough to stifle Native languages completely. Hinton argues that bilingualism represents a choice to speak traditional language that was not given before (192). Choices are an expression of autonomy and self-determination, fundamental human rights that must be afforded to all. In Native communities, the right to choose the path of their future is even more essential, to reverse a history that had seldom offered that choice.

Community Defiance to (Language) Extinction

Strong community leaders can help recapture and reclaim “sleeping” languages. Self-determination of a tribe to reclaim a language is a long, intense process. It involves confronting a tragic history of oppression and cultural destruction, but it opens up room for rebuilding a community. In Wesley Leonard’s study of the Miami language in Indiana, he recounted how Miami was considered a ‘dead’ or extinct language. He argues that the existence of the language defies the expectations of academics who see purity as a reflection of existence, much like Native peoples themselves (Leonard 136). Leonard states, Miami’s contemporary use “contradict[s] common assumptions held within US society regarding how Indian languages supposedly exist,” where bilingualism and modernization are not considered acceptable standards for “pure” language use (137). Extinction in the eyes of some researchers is seen as a final event, where nothing can precipitate creatively beyond it.

The consequence of this position is for the Manifest Destiny narrative to be complete, and Western culture to have assumed the role of the perceived

“weaker” ones. Yet Leonard teaches us that modern uses of Native languages are challenging the idea of their extinction, with Miami as one such example, where “[i]ts active reclamation from historical documentation after a thirty-year period of dormancy reflects a scenario that most would acknowledge is technically possible, but that is anomalous because *extinct* means forever” (137). He demonstrates how Miami people use their language in games, song, and interspersed with English in everyday communication. Adaptation to modern realities is part of keeping the language alive for them, “because the patterns in question demonstrate how we continue to adapt to our environment and to the evolving communicative and cultural needs of our population” (153). As Hinton and Hale put it, “[r]ealism is no less essential in this regard than in relation to the challenges confronting the movement as a whole” (Hinton and Hale 20). Languages are continually evolving and adapting to their environment, which calls for Native language advocates to adapt their strategies for fostering language use to the modern world.

At Beautiful Mountain High School on the Navajo Reservation, Teresa McCarty, Mary Eunice Romero, and Ofelia Zepeda collected the thoughts of youth on their language. As one student put it, “[speaking Navajo] helps me not get too far in, not to lose the identity of who I am, of where I come from” (McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda 35). The stories of children, who often still want to speak languages of their community, speak loudly to the idea that the languages are not only not dead, but demonstrate an active resistance to destruction. Their research shows that language reaffirms an identity, and a *hope* that situations will

improve (emphasis added, 42). As long as there are conversations about the status and use of language, its place in a community, and a desire to speak, languages will continue to resist extinction. McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda demonstrate the importance of language revitalization because despite lingering issues with shame and guilt in using Navajo for these children, and adults as well, “[s]uch narratives have the potential to wedge open spaces of possibility...that can serve as a counter-force to linguistic assimilation” (43). Successful programs are being established now to serve as organized centers for language reclamation. Schools and colleges in Hawai‘i and New Zealand are reversing the trend in many cases of languages loss. According to Mary Hermes, despite official government policies to ban the use of Native Hawai‘ian, preschools to university level institutions are producing fluent speakers and resources in languages thought to be lost (134). These programs provide the *hope* that language programs across the United States can successfully produce similar results in an effort to reclaim languages and re-establish Native identity.

Relevant to the local community, there have been efforts from the Chumash community, both *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini* and *S^hamala*, to revitalize their cultural practices. Both languages are being “rebuilt” from their traditional knowledge, as well as old anthropological notes by the likes of J.P. Harrington, an early-20th century linguistic anthropologist. The Santa Ynez Chumash were able to hire Dr. Richard Applegate to help reconstruct aspects of their language, and compile a working orthography—a testament to the power of Native collaboration with non-Native academics. Santa Ynez offers weekly classes to the community,

and is working to implement language instruction in elementary schools. The *Yak Tit^yu Tit^yu Yak Tilhini* speakers are coming together to comb through archival documentation of their language, and relearning it as well as regenerating to their families. Further evidence of what could be considered a cultural renaissance are the studies produced by Chumash researchers into aspects of their culture and history, including Chumash astrology and the research on advanced arborglyphs (Saint-Onge, Johnson, and Talaugon, “Archaeoastronomical Implications of a Northern Chumash Arborglyph”) and the recreation of the traditional *tomol* canoe, with community sea crossings using modern *tomol* (“Chumash Culture”). This reclaiming of culture and history goes far in showing how the Chumash communities have refused assimilation, reaffirmed their ancestral relationship to their customs, culture, and environment, and pushed back to define who they are as a people.

Imperative for Language Diversity

In the body of literature on Native languages and linguistics, there seems to be a wealth of knowledge, research, and dedication by a small group of people. This begs the question, “Why are Native languages important, and to whom?” In crafting the purpose of this project, this must be the question most thoroughly answered. In Ken Hale and Leanne Hinton’s seminal work *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, they respond that “one important reason people want to learn their language is that they want to regain access to traditional cultural practices and traditional values...[l]anguage is the key to, and the heart of

culture” (9). Hinton and Hale note, “symbolically, language is seen as a factor in *unification* or *separation*. Linguistic minorities see their languages as a symbol of their identity” (emphasis added, 40). Furthermore, it is a matter of human rights, of being able to keep “whole cultures and knowledge systems” intact, of maintaining “cultural and political autonomy” from the colonial forces trying to push assimilation on minorities everywhere (5). Many linguists wish to preserve linguistic diversity for similar reasons, as different languages may convey ideas in ways untranslatable to others.

Linguist Marianne Mithun of the University of California, Santa Barbara, explains that, “[i]f languages are compared only through the ways in which their speakers translate English sentences, many of these more subtle differences do not emerge” (Mithun 129). Diversity represents different knowledge systems that we should not accept the loss of. Hinton and Hale argue, “the world stands to lose an important part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used” (Hinton and Hale 5). Native languages provide a resource to the world, and provide a purpose to tribes in transmitting knowledge in ways that colonial systems are incapable of doing. As Mithun concludes, “the disappearance of this magnificent diversity deprives us of opportunities to witness and celebrate alternative creations of the human mind, alternative ways of making sense of experience and passing it on” (Mithun 139). While some may find it is better or at least easier that we all speak one language, to be united together, reflecting on the history of contact with Native peoples reveals the shortcomings of this attitude. Like Hinton and Hale suggest, moving into a future of affirming Native

sovereignty and celebrating Native cultures, reclaiming languages then becomes a political venture in *unifying* the identity of a tribe, and then in *separating* that tribe from the dominant culture of the oppressor (Hinton and Hale 40). The collective effort to reclaim Native languages is a unifying effort in that all involved wish to preserve the integrity, autonomy, and tradition inherent to Native communities in order to not lose the knowledge bestowed upon Native peoples from their ancestors.

The Role of Educational Establishments In Teaching Non-Native Students

The next question to be raised is “how might this project and subsequent course make Native languages important to a predominantly White, Western-thought dominated student body?” This section reviews work on rethinking college curricula from a Western viewpoint, and discusses the roles of universities in the reclamation of Native languages.

In Christine Sleeter’s review of Paula Gunn Allen’s *The Sacred Hoop*, she discusses the impetus to “decolonize curriculum” in education:

What schools should teach and who should decide are issues that lie at the heart of curriculum, and in many cases this is chosen by non-Indigenous administration that may carry their own biases on what subject matter is important based on their (usually White) value systems (194).

She describes much of the college curricula, which mirrors Cal Poly’s campus in near-perfect description as “a market-based view of the world that conceptualizes the good life largely as pursuit of wealth and material consumption within a

highly competitive market-based system” (194). Students are taught that entrepreneurship and profit-driven innovation are the fundamental goals of a university education, while little value is placed on humanities or social justice initiatives. To begin teaching about Indigenous issues, almost all as a result of the colonialist policies of the United States government, we must shift away from this Western paradigm of instruction. Sleeter, using themes from Allen, “challenges us to recognize a much more life-sustaining, equitable, and spiritually whole vision of what society could be, and how life can be lived, by learning from the Indigenous peoples who, although colonized and historically decimated, are still here” (195). Relating this to language, we can use bilingualism as an example of having alternative communication methods, and using them to relate information in non-Western ways (oral history, poetry, etc.). Students can learn the value of language via the use of Indigenous languages, which is preceded by reclaiming these languages.

Teresa McCarty and Sheilah Nicholas, leaders in Indigenous language studies and education at the University of Arizona, argue the root of language shifts to lie in power matrices where those in power set the stage for domination through their use of language, subordinating indigenous languages to a lesser status (McCarty and Nicholas 107). Educational policies have been a major factor in language shifts, from boarding schools to bans on bilingual education. Therefore, language reclamation, as McCarty and Nicholas defend, must have some establishment in the education system (107). They suggest that although many language efforts start in the community outside of schools, “[a]s these

efforts move to the schools, school-based programs often come to serve as supports for family language planning in the home and community” (127). Their research tells us that schools can serve as a place to either establish the importance of a language, or denigrate its existence outright (128). It is then the role of the university to serve as a place to correct (and decolonize) viewpoints on local Native languages—and by extension the Peoples—to aid in the effort to reclaim languages.

Chapter Three: Methodology

What lies at the heart of any instrumental tool for change is listening to the voices of the communities that have historically been silenced. Research in the United States has typically followed from the standpoint that communities of color, particularly our Native communities, hold little valuable knowledge in themselves, and thus are *subjects*, rather than participants or collaborators, for outside observation and testing without considering their contributions or perspectives. As Nakamura observed, “non-Indigenous [researchers] are often insensitive to Indigenous perspectives and, even when they are doing research to better Indigenous communities, this insensitivity often remains” (98). It can be difficult for non-Indigenous scholars to understand the experiences of Native peoples when, in academia, these Peoples are given little sovereignty over defining their past or present, and outside the classroom, they are treated as virtually non-existent. I must acknowledge my standpoint as a non-Indigenous researcher, which is why it is essential to my project to have worked directly with local elders, in my case from the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, to direct the research I collected in their community.

To decolonize research is to remove the Western-centric aspects of data collection, analysis, and framing to reassert, not just consider, the perspectives and traditions of Native communities in the research process, to have the community involved in the research as they want. It is to establish sovereignty over definition and boundaries not otherwise afforded to Indigenous communities politically or historically. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us, “[t]he ways in

which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples" (Smith 1). In performing research, I attempted to use ideas from Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies in approaching language revitalization as best as I may understand them, so that this research could go beyond what Tuhiwai Smith says as "giving voice to things that are intuitively known" to providing some form of concrete benefit to the Santa Ynez Chumash: to provide a resource in language revitalization (3). Language loss is a problem faced by Native communities across the world, and the problem is especially dire in the Santa Ynez Chumash, where only a handful of bilingual *S^hamala* Chumash speakers are present in the Tribe. While this may seem pessimistic, it actually marks the reversal of what scholars considered to be language extinction. Further evidence of that is the idea presented by many language teachers that the languages have always been present in stories and traditional narratives, despite the label of extinction. The data collection identifies common themes in how we can continue to help these languages not only survive, but rebuild, and take their place in education with equal value to the languages traditionally taught.

Methods

For this project, a qualitative research method was implemented so as to best capture the experiences and insights of Santa Ynez Chumash peoples and the scholars that work with Native languages. Their voices are not reduced to numbers and statistics, but rather, have a chance to tell a story in themselves. The

methods are driven by the idea that Cal Poly and the Santa Ynez Chumash could benefit from Chumash perspectives on language education and language history. Furthermore, the data extricated from the research could help to decolonize the institution itself, placing Native language education on par with European languages, not relegating them to a “historic relic” status or a “novelty interest” status. A qualitative approach was imperative in this research because, simply, quantitative data will not be useful in displaying the history, teaching methods, revitalization tactics, cultural values, or contexts surrounding Native language education. This incorporates literature review from Native and non-Native scholars, meetings with *S^hamala* Chumash language teachers and cultural directors, and interviews with Native language scholars. Due to limited time and meeting opportunities, no extensive interviewing with *S^hamala* educators was possible, but informal meeting discussion ideas formed the core of the guiding principles of my interactions with them.

The focus is on the conducted interviews to get a direct knowledge of their perspectives as told by the participants themselves, not secondhand through other texts. This allows the information to remain more intact than if only secondary sources were considered, though it must be acknowledged that the information is conveyed through myself, analyzed and presented in my own ways (with my own biases and ways of thinking). To counteract this, the information was presented and reviewed by all parties involved before proceeding to final publication.

Participants and Collaborators

Research is meaningless when it is told from the viewpoint of an individual. In this case, my own viewpoint is too limited, and lacking in experience or knowledge sufficient to plan out even a very basic course. Luckily, a few people with the knowledge and experience needed to advance the project voluntarily stepped forward to lend their insight, for which I will always be grateful. The Santa Ynez Chumash were contacted in late 2014, before the project was committed to already, in order to make sure they had a decision in whether this project would go forward or not—it is their language, culture, and history after all, and their say is the final one. The participants in this research included language experts of various backgrounds, including Santa Ynez Chumash *S^hamala* language teachers, as well as Indigenous studies or linguistics professors, who for privacy reasons I have kept confidential. All participants were presented with informed consent documentation before interviews are conducted (see Appendix A). Since not all interviews could be conducted in person, email responses proved to be sufficient for participants that had time or distance conflicts. The questions asked were intended to find common themes around which ideas necessary to build the course could coalesce.

The focus of questions asked of university professors was aimed at their experience with the university institution, and the guiding framework of their own teaching methodology. To provide a viewpoint situated outside of the university, yet with more experience within the Chumash tribal setting and a familiarity with

the language, I met with Santa Ynez Chumash members to get detail on the meaning of language and language revitalization, rather than institutional tactics.

Initially, I intended that the common experiences, values and teachings methods of non-reservation teachers, combined with the methods, values, and experiences of *S^hamala* Chumash speakers could coalesce into a framework for a potential course. However, I did not feel there was enough information to sufficiently build a course proposal from what was gathered.

The questions for participants are included in Appendix B. The interviews and responses were collected throughout February and March 2015, with all transcripts sent back and verified by the participants to ensure the transcription was correct. This step was crucial in making sure the participants had an active role in managing the information that is presented on their behalf, and giving the respondents a chance to add or delete any information. This research yielded five interviews, and some guiding tips from the Santa Ynez Chumash Tribal Administration, which came from several meetings both at Cal Poly and at the Santa Ynez Chumash Reservation. The responses came in a variety of forms, including in-depth personal interviews, brief phone interviews, and email responses (see Appendices C-G). In total, there were two personal interviews, one phone interview, and two email responses. For confidentiality purposes, the comments and information from participants are labeled by their assigned identifier, a number one through five.

The Importance of Interviews and Narratives

Rosaline Barbour reminds us of the power of an interview, and the importance of the interviewee: “with qualitative research, [the interviewee] is also invited to comment on the relevance of the questions posed and is also encouraged to expand at length on [their] chosen topics” (114). This allows for participants to have control over the information in the research, not just the researcher. The greater importance of this concept lies in the value of narrative information. Narratives, to put it simply, are people’s stories—or, the way they tell about their lives. Bryan Brayboy informs us that for many Native communities, narratives hold as much (if not more) weight as empirical quantitative data, and should be equally valued (440). Western research has typically discounted narratives, due to their lack of what could be seen as verifiability, or as Brayboy puts it, “proof is thought of in different ways” (440). While this study is not going to specifically analyze traditional Chumash stories, the stories that these language experts tell about their lives, about the meaning of language to them, or their reason to fight to preserve languages are useful and powerful in their own right. Ethnic Studies as a discipline advocates for the importance of the individual’s lived experience, and that understanding those experiences is crucial to understand how we can fight the oppressions that people face.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

From discussions and conversations with my five collaborators, it was clear that everyone involved in this project was invested in the survivance of Native languages. After all, these are some of the people who are teaching the languages, speaking the languages, and helping welcome the languages back to their communities. The driving research question for this project has been: *how can we develop community-based coursework for educating a broad audience of students to the significance of Indigenous California languages?* This project must address the significance of these languages, how it relates to the community, and how we can reach out to a broad, mostly non-Native audience. The responses from my collaborators help to answer these questions, and provide solid justification for creating and implementing such coursework at the university level.

In analyzing the data, several key themes appeared in all of the interviews. Those themes touched on: how students can expand their worldview through Native language study (audience), the educational imperative or responsibility in teaching these languages (significance), how Native peoples can reconnect to and reclaim their culture through language education (community connection), and the institutional barriers to providing this education.

Expanding One's Worldview

"That's why I feel language is important - it's because it's a way of learning about and gaining knowledge of other ways of understanding reality." – Participant Five

Language is just one of many lenses through which we can understand culture. Much of our education in the United States is founded in Western philosophy and ideology, and we usually do not understand this until it is pointed out to us. That is to say, our society is Eurocentric without many people even being aware of it. All of the participants in this project stressed the connection between culture, heritage, and language. Moreover, they acknowledged that an inquiry into Native languages is a chance to understand new worldviews, which is incredibly valuable to the education of any student. Participant Five expressed that:

We need to learn different worldviews, we need to understand more about different ways of understanding the reality of the world than just the one way that it's usually taught...the structure of what we're learning is colored significantly by our background.

To get a chance to expand one's worldview would be a benefit to Cal Poly students, considering how our world is becoming increasingly attuned to multicultural pluralism and understanding. Our education is so grounded in Western tradition, in the English language, and the settler colonial culture that a paradigm shift is necessary to better relate to the entire world around us. Participant Five reminds us that "you can't just translate a rough translation and get kind of that idea...because how much of it are you losing?" Our multicultural

education cannot simply approximate the values and concepts of other cultures to that of our own, students must engage the concepts in their intended medium.

Participant Five also remarked that “most non-Native students in this country...really have a limited ability to understand difference.” What we need are, as Participant One puts it, these “very mind-expanding” explorations into new worldviews, in that we can gain cultural understanding through looking at different language backgrounds or structures. Participant Two noted that “few know about” these languages, and that most students in the university system have not even met an Indigenous person. As Participant Three put it, Native language education is also valuable in showing that “Indigenous Peoples are real people,” and the tragic history of language endangerment, so we may facilitate the growth of these languages and cultures into the future, rather than repeat the past.

And while university programs stress sending students abroad to understand new cultures, we are losing focus on the myriad cultures *within* the United States, particularly our Indigenous cultures.

Diversity on campus is a hot debate, especially when demographic information shows that Native students are roughly three tenths of a percent of the degree-seeking undergraduates at Cal Poly (“Campus Facts – Cal Poly”). Cal Poly has been developing its Indigenous Studies in Natural Resources and the Environment minor program, based on the “belief in the need for diversity, and trying to strengthen either Native or Indigenous studies here” according to Participant Five. Campus body diversity, and diversity in pedagogical perspectives is crucial in giving students a chance to interact with and engage the

worldviews that exist outside the campus. Yet more Native coursework, including language, can enhance the approaches students have towards social issues and the environment.

Since most of the participants in this research were linguists, the diversity of knowledge contained in the complexity of Native languages was a key point in discussing how languages help students access new worldviews. With regards to the languages' "rich grammars, morphologies, and sound systems...languages provide a unique window on how to perceive the world around us" (Participant Three). If we think of how language gives us an understanding of the world, we can see how languages encode how we think about our daily interactions and how we can interpret what happens around us. Bilingualism, as mentioned earlier, could be one way of allowing students exposure to multiple worldviews. As Participant One noted, "any inquiry is mind-opening" when looking into Native languages - Native languages help show us other syntaxes, and give us an ability to understand our first languages and cultures. Learning new languages, according to Participant Three, allows students to "learn more about [their] own languages...cultural aspects, history, traditions, world vision...and about your community." It is not only a benefit to the community from whom the language comes, but also to the students in allowing a chance to reflect their understandings of language and culture to themselves. With regard to understanding culture, Participant Five explained that "it's not until we begin expressing it that then we actually learn about it in another way." If Cal Poly currently offers classes that

introduce students to Native art, architecture, and music, why not allow for new paths of understanding culture through language?

Educational Values and Imperatives

“As an American in the United States, it is critical to learn the linguistic history and contemporary needs to understand social justice.” – Participant One

Social justice is one of the key tenets of the Ethnic Studies movement and study. No discussion of Native resistance to assimilation, reclamation of culture, and sovereignty can take place without thinking about social justice. According to a representative of the Santa Ynez Chumash, the justification for bringing their language to a university is grounded in social justice, social responsibility to Indigenous Peoples, and a need to fight colonialist racism and bigotry. She insists that we have a responsibility to educate the community. As Participant One pointed out, much of this education and activism takes place from within Native settings, in Tribal Colleges, in Native communities—by Native Peoples. They proposed that language education can accomplish raising awareness of Native languages (and cultures) in non-Native settings. In these non-Native settings, such as Cal Poly, what place is there for Native social justice? On this campus, there are a handful of incredibly dedicated faculty and staff taking charge to promote Native cultures and issues affecting Native Peoples. It is beyond those teachers’ responsibilities to make the changes and shoulder the burden themselves—the university has a responsibility, both for the quality of education it provides for its students, and for the support of Native Peoples, to assist in the welcoming back of Native languages.

Many participants expressed a concern for protecting the linguistic diversity of our communities. Moreover, they all acknowledged the need for universities to do more. Participant Three suggested that “more programs could be developed to ensure that these languages do not disappear and that they receive the recognition they deserve.” At Cal Poly, we cannot simply hold the position that Native studies are not important or relevant to modern society. We cannot tolerate that form of institutionalized racism. Participant Five questioned this aspect of the use of language in college education, asking, “is that one of the colonizing effects of education that we discount anything that is not in English or easy for us to understand or interpret?”

If Cal Poly is to consider itself to be a premiere institution for education, it needs to value and promote diverse perspectives, particularly advocating for marginalized ones. We are no longer in the era of institutions acting as “benevolent caretakers” for Native Peoples—like Christine Sleeter suggested, we must decolonize our curricula. Language is a human right, and linguistic diversity represents, according to Participant Four, “a reflection of the degree to which widely accepted standards of individual and collective rights are being respected.” Helping Native communities reclaim culture and power is not just a nice offering; it is a civic responsibility. As Participant One argued, “[e]very university has a responsibility to the tribal homeland in which it operates,” which in Cal Poly’s case would be the Chumash, specifically the Northern Chumash or *Yak Tiṭʷu Tiṭʷu Yak Tilhini*.

They also expressed that universities really have a capability, and responsibility to help “disseminate and repatriate knowledge...we have an opportunity to be of assistance” (Participant One) in spite of the fact that “many of these projects are not institutionalized” (Participant Five). This idea drives this project: Cal Poly, a powerful institution of education has an opportunity to break from the tradition of discounting Native knowledge, and assist in its revival.

The last imperative the data shows us is the need to recruit and retain Native students on campus. Part of this includes providing and maintaining a safe, welcoming environment for these students. As mentioned earlier, Native students at Cal Poly comprise a disconcerting small percentage of the student body. This raises a question: why are Native students *not* attending Cal Poly? While the answer may be more complicated than this report can address, we can look to Native language education as an avenue to increase the viability of Cal Poly as a place where Native students want to be educated. As Participant Four explained, “[t]his can be seen as part of broader efforts on campus to create an environment that is welcoming to Native American students, that does not solely focus on Euro-American cultures and values, and hence is part of broader efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate underrepresented minority students.” As Cal Poly seeks to diversify, we can see the opportunity to shift the direction of the overall curriculum to be inclusive to more student communities. Language and culture are “closely linked to one’s identity” according to Participant Three, and much like the teaching of various religions, histories, and vocations, education about aspects of one’s identity helps affirm the importance of that identity. Building off of

earlier commentary, Participant Four concluded that “For Native American students, this can make participation in tertiary education more attractive insofar as it can tie in directly with issues that have immediate relevance in their lives.” Language education can thus bring the relevance of college education back to Native students’ lives, and engage with them directly.

Aside from curriculum change that affirms the important of Native identity, Cal Poly can contribute significantly to Native communities and the revitalization of Native cultures in other ways. Participant One suggested that we can help with legal research, and I would add that our academic databases, which are usually off-limits to the rest of the community, could be valuable resources in rediscovering and reclaiming knowledge. Participant Four added that we can “offer assistance interpreting technical materials like dictionaries, grammars, archival materials, designing orthographies, [and] supporting documentation efforts.” What is important to this infrastructure-building process is Participant One’s idea of “[b]uilding partnerships to give them access to information about their cultures and language...[as a means] to give something back.” Giving back is at the heart of this project, using language education as a path to repatriate knowledge to our Native communities.

Reconnecting and Reclaiming

“It’s not just about studying the theory, we have to find a connection to how and why it can be important to the lives of people.” – Participant Five

Throughout my time in Ethnic Studies, the experiences I have had have shown me it’s all about community. If the community that we work with, study

alongside, or fight for does not benefit from our work, we are not really working for anything. From the beginning of the concept for this project, my intent has been in building relationships with the Chumash community, and finding a way to give back using my own education. The data collected show that language education can be a means of giving Native Peoples the power to reclaim the culture that was left dormant over the years through cultural genocide, and reconnect with the knowledge and culture left by their ancestors. This can help the community heal from the scars of the linguistic genocide that occurred through colonization, and bring the culture back to the people, to the land. Members of the Santa Ynez Chumash informed me that they want the experience of college teaching, and bringing that knowledge to Cal Poly in tandem with K-12 classes and community classes. This extends the opportunity to learn beyond just the reservation and surrounding community into the non-Native community as well to demonstrate the importance of the *S^hamala* language to the entire community living in the area. One *S^hamala* teacher I talked with desires to move beyond just teaching linguistics into demonstrating the cultural connection of the language to the environment by incorporating animal names and traditional stories into courses, in ways that are culturally appropriate.

Repatriating knowledge was an idea expressed by many of the collaborators. Historically, academic institutions and anthropologists have collected and curated knowledge from Native Peoples, keeping it locked away in their archives for further research. We are now coming into an era where there is increased, albeit not perfect, collaboration between Tribes and universities in

sharing this knowledge for the benefit of both communities. An example of these is the “Breath of Life” workshop held at UC Berkeley, where Native language advocates work with students and faculty through old anthropological notes and recordings to relearn and rebuild their languages (“Breath of Life”). Participant Four has taken part in some of these workshops, and is involved with many language advocacy organizations. According to them, “many tribal groups, or individual Native people, are actively working to maintain and revitalize their languages.” They added that:

creating opportunities for people to reconnect with their family’s language is an important part of reclaiming and asserting Native American rights to self-determination...minimally, Native American students should have opportunities to study a language that is important and relevant to their own personal growth and that gives them the opportunity to explore aspects of their history and culture as viewed through the lens of language.

While there is a lot to unpack in these statements, we can note how reclaiming self-determination and reconnecting to one’s ancestry are key to both personal growth and to reinforcing the rights of the community. This project is one such of these opportunities mentioned where we can share knowledge and work together to effect these end goals. Participant One stressed that “building partnerships to give [Native Peoples] access to information about their cultures and language is important *to give something back*” (emphasis added). I would argue as well that it is not just academia that has something to give back, although certainly it should

always be striving to work with and for marginalized communities. The richness of their cultures and languages gives back to the students as well.

As discussed earlier regarding Hinton's thoughts, we need to see the opportunity for choice as crucial to the reclamation of culture and self-determination. It is imperative that we emphasize the Tribe's role in their language revitalization. Participant Four explained, "it is important that individuals and communities be able to make their own decisions about which languages they will use with each other." Moving the power beyond the institution, many other participants echoed the idea that the power to determine language use and instruction needs to come from the Native Peoples themselves. Participant Three said that the program at their institution "has been successful because it is driven by the tribes." Participant One acknowledged that the goal with their work as a Tribal linguist was to get Tribal members to administer the programs themselves. So in the end, it really should not be the university and academics co-opting the language and culture, and reproducing them the way they see fit—this would not be helping with reconnecting for the community, but rather a hindrance to that by continuing the barriers between the two.

Participant Five's testimony can help elaborate on the importance of reconnecting with one's ancestral knowledge. For those that feel distant or disconnected to their cultures, she posed the question, "why do we feel connections to things we shouldn't really have that much of a connection to?" While some may argue that we live in a country that already has well-established culture and language, and that our connections to distant familial culture is

frivolous (assimilationist ideology), there is no denying the inextricable ties we have to our ancestors. With her own family, she mentioned that her education led her to look into her family history. She delved into “the struggles...that some of my family members went through, and why they would never talk about it.” Education was one step in understanding one’s ancestry, one’s community history, and the connections between social events, culture, and ourselves. What is more important is taking our understanding of these contexts and using it to help our communities heal from the traumas of the past. It’s about finding an identity that is waiting to be reclaimed. It’s about connecting to the community of today and the communities generations before us, and embracing that connection.

Programmatic and Institutional Barriers

“With very few exceptions, Native American languages are relegated to the margins of university life and activities.” – Participant Four

Although the story of going through this project has been inspirational on many levels, there is no avoiding the fact that Western institutions are often not ready to implement Native language education. Cal Poly, as of now, offers no courses dedicated to teaching Native languages, and has no partnerships with local or distant Tribal members to teach their languages. This problem is not unique to Cal Poly either. Each of the interviews and responses identified different reasons universities struggle to incorporate Native cultures and languages into their curricula, and most seemed to conclude that this was a result of resistance at the institutional level. Both as a personal value and through discussion with members of the Santa Ynez Chumash, Cal Poly must implement

respectful and culturally appropriate ways to educate about these languages. This task is best accomplished by putting the power of decision-making and instruction in the hands of the culture's bearers.

Since the context of the education at Cal Poly is not the same as it would be at a Tribal College or in a reservation community class, there are significant distinctions in the environment and the audience. Cal Poly must address Participant One's point that it is a challenge for non-tribal education to serve the needs of both Tribal members and non-Native curious students. For the Tribal members, the education should reflect the culture accurately and provide a space of autonomy for their culture to thrive. For non-Native students, this means not only must they find some benefit from the education, such as expanding their understanding of the world, but should also be given some academic credit for this work as they would any other language course. However, as Participant Five critiqued, it is rare for any sort of mandated language credit to be given for these units—they are more treated as electives. There is little incentive for students outside those in the interested academic sphere of Indigenous studies or linguistics to participate and be involved in these opportunities. The programs can then experience a lack of interest, and then lose the ability to self-sustain as Participant Three has experienced. According to them, the Tribes must then sponsor the courses themselves, putting the burden back on them to save the university money.

Participant Four painted the university administrative environments in a way that was less than inspiring:

There are also many problems that stem from the virtual invisibility of Native American cultures and issues in contemporary American society—there is little public awareness of the languages, and hence a lack public support for programs that might encourage people to study them... for the most part the former hostility to these languages has been replaced by massive indifference (in practice if not in sentiment), part of the broader problem of the general public associating Native American people with a romanticized and long-distant past.

So while there may not be an active opposition to implementing Native curricula, few non-Native scholars press for their academic legitimacy. The truth is that non-Native scholars and administrators have more executive power for curriculum change, and, whether consciously or not, can push Native education to the side for the sake of maintaining the status quo. The goal then is not even to simply bring the languages in—the structures must change so that institutions are designed around generating interest in these languages and cultures. Educational and governmental institutions have served as detrimental agents to culture, and it has been the task of a few progressive campuses to reverse those efforts in collaboration with communities.

Practical barriers also remain. Participants One, Two, and Four all listed the short supply for necessary materials: published material in these languages, dictionaries, accurate orthographies, archival access, funding, and, most

importantly, teachers. In the case of the Santa Ynez Chumash, there is already at least one teacher that wants to spearhead teaching courses at the university level. Questions then also arise as to what qualifications are necessary. Participant Five raised this question, as she noted Cal Poly typically prefers their faculty of record to have at least a Master's degree. With *S^hamala* teachers and many other California languages, recent legislation has been passed in California to validate and credential their knowledge of the language (soon to be language and culture) such that they can teach community and primary school classes (California State Assembly, AB 544). While it does not specifically credential for college, the knowledge they bring is no less valid. And even though there does not exist a dearth of material in the Chumash languages, having more learners, more interested students in the cultures can perhaps lead to an increase in published materials as collaborative projects between students and Native communities.

As with any project that collaborates with Native Peoples, the most important limitation to consider is the role of the university itself in programmatic decision-making. The point cannot be stressed enough that the executive power must remain in the Tribe's hands in how the classes are structured, what material is included, and who is qualified to teach. Participant Four upheld this premise, asserting that "universities must not supplant Native people's prerogative to make decisions about how their language will be taught, in what settings, etc." So while it may be tempting to say we as an institution know better, the fact is that the Peoples themselves must have the final say, as a matter of respect and acknowledging sovereignty. The level of collaboration, consultation, and

agreement should be carefully planned out, and should exceed even the amount done for this project, so that there is clear transparency in the university's operations. While consultation was stressed in Participant Four's interview, historically consultation has ranged from full participation to just a warning for Native stakeholders. These relationships have also, especially with university research projects, been extractive and exploitative—this was also mentioned by Participant Four, but one needs not look far in the history of research and Native communities to see glaring, horrifying cases of this. The coursework should be designed and delivered by Native language teachers, and implemented by the institution. This way, we move beyond consultation and into true collaboration.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Moving Forward

Now that nine months have passed since this project has been underway, what has this research really contributed to Ethnic Studies as a field, and to the department at Cal Poly? From the beginning, I wanted to actually get a course proposal completed, participate in *S^hamala* language classes, and have something concrete to give to the university. However, the relationship-building process cannot simply be completed in the span of only nine months. The result of what I was able to do has become much more of a recommendation report, a justification for why Native language education needs to be implemented now, for our Ethnic Studies department and the College of Liberal Arts to consider for future curriculum planning. Participant One stated best that “resources control education.” Interest drives the allocation of resources, and Cal Poly has the resources to act.

The data presented by my collaborators speaks to the need for a paradigm shift with regards to language education at the university level. The tradition of disregarding and pushing aside Native languages does a disservice to the language’s speakers, potentially interested speakers, and to the cultural diversity of our community as a whole. As Participant Four concluded, “the long history of Native American people being perceived by colonizing forces as impediments to progress has had a detrimental effect on the stability of their languages.” As a counter to this, we must use education as a tool to contribute to the stability of the languages by leveling the language playing field—placing them at the same value as other languages, if not more important as they are the languages of America’s

first Peoples. Other universities in the state as well are teaching Native languages, both at the UC and CSU level (and other states). Cal Poly has a decision to make then: do we stick to our Eurocentric traditions, and become a relic of an institution unwilling to contemporize, or do we embrace the future, a future of celebrating and elevating Native cultures to their rightful place in the higher education system? This movement is not about forcing the Native education into the institution as a means of Westernizing their traditions, it is about the institution acknowledging and celebrating the cultures. The cultures themselves do not need the academic validation; rather, the opportunity to exist in the collegiate atmosphere increases their exposure to the greater public that may otherwise be ignorant to them. Universities can uphold a tradition of exposing students to what would otherwise be covered up by the hegemonic political forces that determine public school education curricula.

This linguistic and cultural renaissance is not only supported by the narratives of my collaborators, but also by recent legislation. On a national level, the federal government is, at the very least, acknowledging the importance for Native languages, and providing some (albeit limited) resources for communities to invest in reclaiming their linguistic heritage. The Native American Languages Act of 1990 not only recognizes that federal policy has significantly damaged these languages, but that there is an imperative to remedy this damage. The bill states:

(1) the status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native

Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages;

...

(6) there is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride, and educational opportunity is clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of, the first language of the child or student;

(7) it is clearly in the interests of the United States, individual States, and territories to encourage the full academic and human potential achievements of all students and citizens and to take steps to realize these ends.

Moreover, it states that it is Federal policy to:

(3) encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support:

(A) Native American language survival,

(B) educational opportunity,

(C) increased student success and performance,

(D) increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and

(E) increased student and community pride... (Native American Languages Act of 1990)

It is not only beneficial to students, both Native and non-Native, to promote Native language education, but it is consistent with decades of federal policy regarding Native American rights to self-determination and cultural preservation.

As mentioned before, California, with Assembly Bill 544, is also moving forward with the credentialing of Native Californian language instructors, and Assembly Bill 163 of the current session could expand the credentialing to recognize cultural instruction in addition to language (California State Assembly, AB 163). While other campuses join the movement, and fall in line with legislative policy, Cal Poly lags behind in providing this education for its students.

The absence of these programs should not serve as justification for their continued lack of existence either. As individuals, we hold incredible power in our relationship to Native languages and cultures. One of my collaborators, Participant Three, indicated that we each have the chance, “as a speaker, to contribute to [the] survival” of those cultures and languages. Students and institutions have a valuable role in maintaining the survival of these languages by participating in using them, studying them, and contributing back to the continuance of them. The cultures do not remain artifacts of a long-dead era, but become as alive as ever, spreading within their communities and beyond—back to the lands they once thrived in.

What next steps need to be taken to satisfy original goals? Currently, Cal Poly has a scattered network of connections to the local Native community. As part of this process, I have met and connected with many of these important elders to see what their needs and desires of the campus are. Each meeting has demonstrated that these elders want more from the university, more education about their cultures, more recognition of their presence, and more opportunities for students to connect with these communities. While Cal Poly may have many

facets of student life that facilitate these connections, such as our Office of Diversity and Inclusivity and our Multicultural Center, there is no coursework that is in direct collaboration with Chumash Peoples. Coursework is at the heart of Cal Poly, and their participation in designing and producing coursework is crucial to determining the direction of Cal Poly. Our relationships must be reciprocal: we as students and as an institution give back to the communities, and their traditions and knowledge give to us.

Moving forward, the course(s) could be housed within the Ethnic Studies department, and funded like any other language course. If the state Native language credential is insufficient by CLA standards, several professors, including linguist Alicia Moretti, have come forward as potential professors of record to facilitate the classes in conjunction with the Chumash language teachers. There are multiple avenues that could be taken, whether the course stands alone or is a special topic for the Ethnic Studies department, and whether the classes want to simply teach Chumash languages or also include Native languages from other areas as well. Participant Five suggested that students not local to the area could benefit from learning languages Indigenous to their home, and into the future Cal Poly could consider this path in a similar way that it teaches multiple non-Native languages concurrently. The program at CSU San Bernardino, managed by Participant Three, could map over well to Cal Poly, as both schools are within the CSU system.

The historical, linguistic, and social value of Native languages cannot be stressed enough. Communities are reclaiming languages long thought to be lost by

Western anthropologists, and are reaffirming an Indigenous presence in communities oppressed by colonial powers. Cal Poly has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to serve its student body, its community, and the ancestral heritage of the land by providing the Native language instruction that is so culturally important, so mind opening, and so valuable. We can see that the diversity of language can facilitate methods of knowledge production and worldviews that have been previously discounted, and can reaffirm traditions of the people who speak them. This education is for our elders, for our children, for the healing of all our communities. Despite the dark history associated with missions, boarding schools, and assimilationist policy, these languages refuse to stay asleep - they are not dead, but wait for active communities to reclaim them once again.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Agreement

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED:
“Talking Back, In Reawakened Voices: Indigenous Languages Education At Cal Poly”

A research project on Indigenous Languages In California is being conducted by Logan F. Cooper, a student in the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo under the supervision of Dr. Jenell Navarro. The purpose of the study is to study the collaborative possibilities between California Polytechnic State University and Indigenous communities in facilitating Native language education.

You are being asked to participate in a confidential research project in which you will take part in an interview that will last approximately sixty minutes about your experience with Native language education in university settings, or the importance of Native languages to their respective communities.

The final project will be reviewed by you in order to make suggestions, add or delete information since transcriptions will not be able to be retrieved after being submitted. Your participation, which includes the interview, interview reviews, and final review of the project, will take a total of approximately ten hours, which will take place at different times and at your convenience. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with or do not wish to answer.

The possible risk associated with participation in this study includes the disclosure of some personal information or history that may be painful or distressing to recount. The disclosure of information may have some personal reactions for the collaborator; if this happens, please be aware that you may end the interview at any time and contact Dr. Jenell Navarro at (805) 756-1467 or jnavar18@calpoly.edu for assistance.

This is a confidential research project because, unless otherwise indicated, any private personal information will be omitted from the transcription that may reveal your identity. During the interview you will state your name, and this will be coded by using the word “Interviewee” and a roman numeral, which will be used as reference in the final project will be provided. This code will only be known by the interviewer and the interviewee.

The potential benefits associated with the study may be to expand the breadth of Cal Poly’s curricula, making good on the polytechnic mission of the university, and offering diverse contemporary perspectives on Indigenous cultural rights issues. More importantly, this research can serve to correct some of the historical damage inflicted by educational systems, by the United States and California governments, and by other colonialist systems that have served to suppress Native languages for generations.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Logan F Cooper at (805) 704-1855. If you have concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at (805)

756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Dean Wendt, Dean of Research, at (805) 756-1508, dwendt@calpoly.edu.

By submitting a response, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time, and your correspondence deleted permanently, without penalty.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by signing below. Please keep one copy of this form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix B: Interview Questions List

1. What is your field of study?
2. Why do you study and/or teach Native languages?
3. What do you see as the status of Native languages in United States universities?
4. Do you think there needs to be more space given to Native languages in universities? Why or why not?
5. What successful programs have you seen or been a part of to foster growth of Native languages?
6. What benefits can stem from studying Native languages?
7. Are there any problems with studying Native languages?
8. Have you had conflicts in educating others in Native languages?
9. What are the historical and political contexts of the current state of Native languages?
10. Does your institution have collaborative projects with Indigenous Peoples?
11. How would you assess the relationship between academia and Indigenous communities?
12. Is linguistic diversity important and if so why?
13. What current work is being done to give more space for Native language education?
14. Would you recommend embarking on a Native language program at any university?
15. How does Native language education relate to Indigenous sovereignty?
16. What learning objectives would you think students should accomplish in a Native language course?

17. Are there any materials or readings you would say are crucial to Indigenous language coursework?
18. Is there any information you would like to add that has not been asked about so far? If so, please explain.

Appendix C: Interview Transcription – Participant One

Notes From Participant One Interview
(Non-transcript – no recording by request)

Linguistics lecturer at Cal Poly
Undergrad Degree In Linguistics
Master's Degree in American Indian Studies – Linguistics, Language, and Literature

Has a love for languages, social justice, and heritage languages → learning the languages of one's ancestors

Has a special interest in endangered languages

1. Why do you study and/or teach Native languages?

Cares about vitality of languages
Help support communities with reclamation/revitalization
Many programs are grant-driven, there are few opportunities to get work
(linguists need to support themselves)

Raising awareness of Native Languages in non-Native settings

Second languages help understand first language, culture, worldview
Importance of syntax in other languages
“Any inquiry is mind-opening”

As American in US it is “critical to learn the linguistic history and contemporary needs” to understand social justice

1. What successful programs have you seen or been a part of to foster growth of Native languages?

Most experience as Tribal Linguist

Partnered with Ft. Peck Assiniboine and Dakota → put dictionary from previous work of linguists and elder's knowledge as a resource for students

(They show me the dictionary)

Worked with the Torres-Martinez Reservation – helped to administer ANA grant
Focus on working on spoken languages > goal was to get tribal members to administer program themselves

Must recognize what is feasible/realistic

When it comes to Native language education, Tribal Colleges “are where its at”
Essential for languages – having a space is crucial

Challenge for non-tribal education to serve needs for tribal members/ non-Native curious students

Resources control education → Native languages have few, are in very different states

Some are further along than others (due to individual history)

“Federal recognition is key” → need to get ANA grant

“Every university has responsibility to tribal homeland in which it operates,” making it a challenge for us here with Northern Chumash

We “have opportunity to be of assistance”

Student diversity has influence as well

It is “very mind expanding” – different language structures
We can gain cultural understanding and linguistic inheritance

Any language is worth studying
Native languages have cultural significance
We have a civic responsibility

The UC’s are all doing it

“Building partnerships to give them access to information about their cultures and language is important to give something back”

We can help “repatriate knowledge”

Universities can help with access to legal research

Responsibility of “disseminating knowledge”

Learning objectives

- sounds systems
- grammatical systems
- social use/functions in communities (ethnolinguistics)
- sociocultural contexts

Perhaps it would be useful to compile a reader including literature Native peoples have produced

How much would this cost CP/Chumash?

Appendix D: Interview Transcription – Participant Two

Notes From Participant Two Interview
(Non-transcript – no recording by request)

Professor linguistics UCLA

On their class at UCLA:

It is a class that talks some about social context

Main focus is on students getting a feeling for language structures

Elder comes in from main comparative language once a week to work directly with students

Students work with 4 languages – each pick a language to work on and learn about general context

Native languages are wonderful fabulous languages that few know about
4 different languages, 3 general specific

Many work in Chumash

They cover how to express basic ideas in their particular language, then compare to main language studied

Three different populations served usually:

- linguistics majors
- American Indian Studies students
- Curious others of all majors

No issues getting people to sign up, typically full (~40 students)

One of the best classes at UCLA, says students

After this class, a more in-depth class offers students a chance to write a story and edit it with Participant and an elder

The elders are ones she has known for a long time – lots of previous experience
They are there to facilitate their language – pronunciation/answer questions

Class shows how language is used

They enjoy progress students make

Based on who is available – she provides her own resources

Initially worked with Lakota (primary) and Chickasaw, Pima, and Chickasaw

All present unique aspects of language

“Most students have never even met an Indigenous person”

Value is that Indigenous people are real people and exposing them to sad facts about endangerment

Awareness

Very much learned about language

Chumash is difficult, who would teach?

Students will take/learn from class differently depending on background (Tribal-Cultural, non-Native)

Appendix E: Interview Transcription – Participant Three

Interview Questions

1. What is your field of study? *My field of study is linguistics (documentation of endangered languages, grammatical systems, phonetics/phonology, language contact), and also Spanish.*
2. Why do you study and/or teach Native languages? *I do not teach Native languages, but I facilitate/coordinate a program in California Indian languages at CSUSB. I work with tribal members to schedule the classes and with the instructors the tribes provide to get their classes ready for university-level courses. I study Native American languages, because I'm intrigued by their rich grammars, morphologies, and sound systems. These languages provide a unique window on how to perceive the world around us.*
3. What do you see as the status of Native languages in United States universities? *They are very much underrepresented and more programs could be developed to ensure that these languages do not disappear and that they receive the recognition they deserve.*
4. Do you think there needs to be more space given to Native languages in universities? Why or why not? *Yes, see above. Moreover, these languages encode much of US history and cultural values, stories, etc.*
5. What successful programs have you seen or been a part of to foster growth of Native languages? *Our program has been quite successful since it is driven by the tribes. We do not offer any language unless a tribe approaches us to do so and we always respect their wishes as to who will teach the language. We then work with these teachers to ensure the classes are college-level language or language & culture courses.*
6. What benefits can stem from studying Native languages? *As with any other language you study, you learn more about your own language, you learn about other things*

(cultural aspects, history, traditions, world vision, etc), and you learn about your community.

7. Are there any current problems with studying Native languages? *The only problem is that not enough student are signing up for such classes, if they are being offered, so these programs are not self-sustaining, meaning that the tribes need to sponsor the offerings by paying the teachers.*
8. Have you had conflicts in educating others in Native languages? *No.*
9. What are the historical and political contexts of the current state of Native languages? *Well, you can read about that in many books, from the mission times in California, the boarding schools everywhere to supporting their revitalizations efforts nowadays.*
10. Does your institution have collaborative projects with Indigenous Peoples? *Yes, see above. We also collaborate beyond the languages and have exhibits on campus, and send student interns to certain tribes.*
11. How would you assess the relationship between academia and Indigenous communities? *It is a developing one. More could be done.*
12. Is linguistic diversity important and if so why? *Yes, because each language is unique and encodes a unique way of viewing the world.*
13. What current work is being done to give more space for Native language education? *There are a couple of programs across the US that I know of. Most originate from the tribes.*
14. Would you recommend embarking on a Native language program at any university? *Yes, I would. I assume this questions refers to a student signing up for such courses?*

15. How does Native language education relate to Indigenous sovereignty? *Language is closely linked to one's identity, but preserving the language, one can relate to that identity and culture.*
16. What learning objectives would you think students should accomplish in a Native language course? *Learn about the language as well as to speak the language and thus as a speaker contribute to its survival. Learn about the cultural aspects and history of the group of people speaking the language.*
17. Are there any materials or readings you would say are crucial to Indigenous language coursework? *For California Indian languages, I like Leanne Hinton's book Flutes of Fire, but each program is different and will have his/her own reading materials.*
18. Is there any information you would like to add that has not been asked about so far? If so, please explain. *One questions that comes to mind is how do we ensure that we have qualified teachers for the Native languages? One problem that sometimes comes up with endangered languages is that there is only one fluent/qualified person to teach the language.*

Appendix F: Interview Transcription – Participant Four

Interview Questions

1. What is your field of study?

Linguistics (within Native American Studies)

2. Why do you study and/or teach Native languages?

I'm a linguist and thus am naturally interested in safeguarding linguistic diversity – I feel that a world with more rather than fewer languages is a better world to live in. More importantly, however, I think that creating opportunities for people to reconnect with their family's languages is an important part of reclaiming and asserting Native American rights to self-determination in contemporary American society.

3. What do you see as the status of Native languages in United States universities?

With very few exceptions, Native American languages are relegated to the margins of university life and activities. For the most part there are no opportunities to receive university instruction in Native American languages, even the languages that are indigenous to the site of a given university. It is rare for entrance and graduation requirements to be satisfied by Native American languages. In rare cases one might be able to receive focused instruction in languages that still have relatively large numbers of speakers (e.g., Quechua here at UC Davis, Nahuatl at some universities, Cherokee at the University of Oklahoma), but often the instruction is limited in various ways (no possibility of advancing beyond one year of instruction, a dearth of pedagogical materials, etc.) Often these constraints are due to in part to practical limitations, such as relatively small populations of students who might be interested in studying a Native

American language. But certainly universities could do more to promote and encourage these languages.

4. Do you think there needs to be more space given to Native languages in universities?
Why or why not?

Absolutely there should be. Minimally Native American students should have opportunities to study a language that is important and relevant to their own personal growth and that gives them the opportunity to explore aspects of their history and culture as viewed through the lens of language. This can be seen as part of broader efforts on campus to create an environment that is welcoming to Native American students, that does not focus solely on Euro-American cultures and values, and hence is part of broader efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate of underrepresented minority students. Of course, public universities especially must think carefully about how to avoid appropriating the prerogative to decide when, where, to whom, and by whom the languages will be taught.

5. What successful programs have you seen or been a part of to foster growth of Native languages?

I have participated in the Breath of Life workshops at UC Berkeley (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014) and at the national level in 2011, as well as similar events hosted by the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (AICLS) and the Ahtna Heritage Foundation. I have also collaborated with various groups in California (teachers in Hoopa Valley and Round Valley, and the Kawaiisu Language and Culture Center). I teach courses related to Native American languages here at UC Davis, including one that offers

students the opportunity to spend a quarter studying a Native American language of their own choosing.

6. What benefits can stem from studying Native languages?

This includes the usual benefits that accrue from studying a language other than one's first language – a broader awareness of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity (and threats thereto), and a host of other things mentioned here: <http://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows>. For Native American languages in particular, all students can use the study of language as a means to engage with intellectual exploration of culture, history, colonization and de-colonization, sovereignty, Indigenous epistemologies, and so on. For Native American students, this can make participation in tertiary education more attractive insofar as it can tie in directly with issues that have immediate relevance in their lives.

7. Are there any current problems with studying Native languages?

There are many such problems. Although there are some exceptions, most Native American languages do not have well-established pedagogical traditions or materials that can facilitate studying them in group settings. People who want to develop a class or pursue independent study must navigate a host of intellectual and practical barriers: technical grammars and dictionaries prepared by linguists for other linguists, a lack of funding to be able to pursue these goals in a serious way, a lack of published material of any kind, difficulties accessing archival materials (due to geographic distance or a lack of adequate cataloguing), communities of potential learners being widely distributed (in cities vs. rural areas, etc.). There are also many problems that stem from the virtual

invisibility of Native American cultures and issues in contemporary American society – there is little public awareness of the languages, and hence a lack public support for programs that might encourage people to study them. Many languages lack a well-established orthography or agreement within a community about how to deal with issues like dialect and other kinds of variation. Indeed, in many cases variation and other relevant structural details of a language are severely under-described and often under-documented, so decisions about how to approach revitalization often have to be made before the details of what will be taught (whether in classrooms or in other settings) are established. Languages that no longer have any speakers, a pervasive issue in California, have a number of special challenges – there are limits on how much can be learned from a small finite corpus, especially if there are no audio recordings.

8. Have you had conflicts in educating others in Native languages?

I assume that by “in” here you mean “about” (I do not teach anyone using a Native language as the medium of instruction), in which case the answer is no. I mostly work with self-selecting groups of people who I meet at Breath of Life and similar events, or who enroll in one of my classes, who tend to be people who are open to collaboration and sharing knowledge about language.

9. What are the historical and political contexts of the current state of Native languages?

This is a very broad question that is difficult to answer succinctly. Words like “colonization,” “genocide,” “assimilation,” “hegemony,” and “erasure” would need to be part of the answer. The details are different in particular places and at particular times, but clearly the long history of Native American people being perceived by

colonizing forces as impediments to progress has had a detrimental effect on the stability of their languages. In the United States, this has shifted to some extent in recent decades, as reflected in legislation like the Native American Languages Act and modest amounts of public funding available for language maintenance and revitalization programs, but for the most part the former hostility to these languages has been replaced by massive indifference (in practice if not in sentiment), part of the broader problem of the general public associating Native American people with a romanticized and long-distant past.

10. Does your institution have collaborative projects with Indigenous Peoples?

Yes, there are many such projects involving people in my department and various Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Similar projects exist in other departments at UC Davis (e.g., Linguistics). Many of these projects are not institutionalized, however – they involve particular researchers working with particular individuals or groups rather than formal agreements between, say, tribal organizations and the university.

11. How would you assess the relationship between academia and Indigenous communities?

Perhaps better than it was in decades past, but still sometimes fraught. There is a lot of justified distrust of academic research in Indigenous communities due to the long history of extractive research conducted without the communities' interests in mind. This is changing to some extent in some fields, but only slowly (I include linguistics here), and in many fields it's safe to say that very little attention is paid to this issue at all, which further exacerbates the relationship.

12. Is linguistic diversity important and if so why?

As mentioned above, I think that a world with more linguistic diversity is a more interesting world for people to live in. It is also important that individuals and communities be able to make their own decisions about which language(s) they will use with each other and with others (including in relation to contemporary nation-states). This is not an argument for linguistic diversity per se, but rather for linguistic diversity as a reflection of the degree to which widely accepted standards of individual and collective rights are being respected.

13. What current work is being done to give more space for Native language education?

Many tribal groups, or individual Native people, are actively working to maintain and revitalize their languages. This takes many different forms: formal classes, master-apprentice programs, efforts to encourage language use in particular contexts (e.g., ceremonies), programs focused on early childhood education, etc. Their efforts are sometimes supported by academic specialists, who can offer assistance interpreting technical materials like dictionaries, grammars, archival materials), designing orthographies, supporting documentation efforts that feed into revitalization efforts, and so on.

14. Would you recommend embarking on a Native language program at any university?

I think that this would depend a lot on who was planning the program and the extent to which there has been consultation with Native American groups with an interest in the program. As mentioned above, universities must not supplant Native people's

prerogative to make decisions about how their language will be taught, in what settings, etc. Not all universities will be ready to design programs that will be collaborative and make the language accessible to Native community members who might not be enrolled in degree programs.

15. How does Native language education relate to Indigenous sovereignty?

See #12 above. In a nutshell, sovereignty (broadly construed to include personal and collective autonomy regardless of the status of a particular tribal entity) includes the prerogative to decide which language is appropriate for use in particular contexts.

16. What learning objectives would you think students should accomplish in a Native language course?

I don't think there is any one-size-fits-all set of objectives that should be accomplished, and this will depend a lot on how the class is structured (Is everyone studying the same language? How much time is there for the class each week, and for how many weeks?), what resources are available (Are there fluent speakers to work with? Are there pedagogical materials already in existence?), and the goals and background knowledge of the students who are enrolled (whether they already know some of the language; whether they want to be able to speak the language with other people right away, or engage with text material as a way to develop pedagogical materials for others).

17. Are there any materials or readings you would say are crucial to Indigenous language coursework?

At the college level, it can be helpful to include readings related to questions of language endangerment and revitalization, such as chapters from the Green Book of Language Revitalization, the SILS proceedings volumes, and case study articles from sources like the journal Language Documentation and Conservation.

18. Is there any information you would like to add that has not been asked about so far? If so, please explain.

Appendix G: Interview Transcription – Participant Five

Transcription: Participant Five, Cal Poly

Interviewee: I do consent to being recorded

Interviewer: Well thank you. So as you know, the purpose of this project is going to be discussing teaching Native languages at Cal Poly and kind of like how we can design a curriculum and implement a curriculum around Native languages and education for Cal Poly students. I guess just like a few background questions on your experience in the field, what exactly is your field of study?

Interviewee: So, my Ph.D. is in Educational Leadership and Organizations. I have a concentration in Culture, Language and Literacy. And I have a Masters degree in Religious Studies, Native traditions specifically. I have a masters degree in what is called confluent education – it's kind of a small program at UCSB, used to have a PHD in it but by the time I had got there they only had the masters left. Confluent Education was designed to look at how people learn, so not just that we can learn by reading things but so “what does it mean to be you know, a visual learner, or a kinesthetic learner, or an auditory learner?” All the differences that can come up. As well as how our affective responses color or influence our ability to learn in particular situations. So even though we might think “okay, I can take this GE class and I'm going to do a good job no matter what,” if you can't stand the faculty member, you're not going to learn anything from them really. I mean that's how powerful our affective responses are. That they really preclude us from being able to accomplish what we set out to do - they can.

Interviewer: That's actually really interesting.

Interviewee: So then my undergrad degree is in psychology but I was much older when I went back to school, I only had been in college in Minnesota, I was a theatre arts major and was there, I was there about two and a half years, its always hard for me to know exactly cause I tend to be an overachiever so I always took like lots of classes. But I was a theatre arts major with an acting concentration, and dropped out after two and a half years that was in of about the beginning of 1972. Went back to school in 1990, and then decided at that time I mean I thought I was going to go back into the theatre but then I changed my mind and thought “no, I'm just going to get a psychology degree I need to be able to get a job”

Interviewer: So is that why you went back to school?

Interviewee: I went back to school to try to be able to get a job. But as most of the people around here learn if you have a psychology undergrad degree you can't really get a very *good* job. Right?

Interviewer: All those liberal arts degree majors...so kind of, since you said you had your masters in Native studies and traditions, what kind of led you down that path? Like what brought you to that point in your life?

Interviewee: So when I was working on the confluent education degree, I realized that you know they are talking about a lot of these things that influence how we learn, what we learn, all of those types of things, and so what I realized is education is too limiting of a field. That just like what I talk about in the 360 class, we need to learn different worldviews, we need to understand more about different ways of understanding the reality of the world than just the one way that its usually taught. And so I started looking around at UCSB. I had a friend who said "you have to meet Dr. Talamantez she's over in religious studies, she's on leave this year but she'll be back and she teaches Native traditions in the religious studies department. And so I met with her, and I don't even think I had met her first, I decided to take a class from her, and it ended up meeting at her house. And she was kind of surprised that I was there, since it was just students who had already been in kind of the Native traditions masters or PhD program, and so there was this like 2 or three of us out of the ten that hadn't taken any classes with her. So she had us write why we wanted to do it, or why we thought it was important before we proceeded with the class. But that was kind of like the beginning and it was a way of, you know, it really started me on thinking about all of these things that come into play with how we need to be able to learn in different ways. Its also about the structure of what we think we're learning is colored really significantly by our background. And if we only learn one way, like most non-Native students in this country, or most non students of color let's say, then they really have a limited ability to understand difference. And its not until you actually jump into that a little bit more that you can really do it. And it was interesting because then for the next five years I worked with Dr. Talamantez and she was on my dissertation committee and we did a number of things.

...

So anyway I worked with her the next five years she was on my dissertation committee, it really got me interested in looking at my own heritage, and my own background because in the beginning I was adamant: "No, I'm not Native!" you know? But you know she kept telling me you know, "No, you are." And I'm like "No, I'm not." And through my own research work of my own family, Dr. Doug's presentation is really interesting to me because you know, what points us in

particular directions? Why do we feel connections to things we shouldn't have really that much of a connection to? Even for him, I mean, his father coming from Finland doesn't mean that he's going to have any real sense. I mean that would be the assumption. Now we know that's not true, we have a lot of proclivities for things that we don't know about but that lead us in particular directions. And so, just like him, I began my masters thesis in religious studies and Native traditions was on the conflict between whites and Dakota people in Minnesota. And that's what actually led me to my own family history and learning more about my own family history from that area. And some of the struggles you know, that some of my family members went through and why they would never talk about it. And really when we think about all the things we talk about in Ethnic Studies, working to decolonize your mind, working to address some of the issues of oppression that we deal with on a daily basis. I mean, all of that becomes really critical its not just about the studying the theory, we have to find a connection to how and why it can be important to the lives of people. And so, just like reading the Ethnic Studies senior project in class, I mean, that is very theoretical in the beginning, but then we have this very personal interpretation and reorientation of her own life in order for her to be able to achieve what she wanted to do. So that's a really critical study, how do we help other people do that?

Interviewer: Like make those connections between theory and their own personal experiences, and then the experiences of others?

Interviewee: And then be able to move on. Just making the connection isn't really enough. It's kind of like in that handout that I gave you yesterday you have to find a way to move it to action. What kind of actions are you going to be able to take because you found these things or because you've done these things?

Interviewer: Like praxis-oriented methodology?

Interviewee: Well, its not just practice or praxis, its taking the theory its taking personal relations, even its that affective response that was part of my confluent training, and then trying to put that into some form of action. It becomes the "how do you develop your theory of practice, and then how does it come about?" So maybe you're right, maybe that's what it is. I don't know if you remember, but when we were reading in 360, the environmental ethics text, in that text those philosophers are presenting the idea that we don't know the ontology of it, we don't know the ontology of culture, and then how its reflected in language. Or if language came first and then that's what contributes to the culture. So, you know I mean, my belief is that actually it's the culture that comes first but can we really

say that? Because it's not until we begin expressing it that then we actually learn about it in another way. I mean there's a theory of learning that, I think was brought up in 390, of social construction, and really I'm a social constructivist. And because it's only, it's not just that we learn the theory, I, as a faculty member, bring that to the class. It's also that interaction in how the class takes that up that effects my practice, but it also affects you as students, because some of you are going to take it up more immediately than others, some of the ideas, some of the people in class it might not be until after they graduate – that one they're doing something and all of the sudden they go "hey, I think I know about this!" We don't really know what's going to spark those things, but a lot of the times, for people that take those things up right away, what they do is take that information back to maybe another social setting and try to make comparisons there. And then maybe we have to go back again and we have to go back to the class and say "Ok wait a minute, can we go over this again?" You know, it's this back and forth between or among conditions that actually then contributes to our learning. Just like with language. Language is constantly changing, and developing to accommodate what's happening in the culture. And so we might have languages that are maintained to a certain degree, I mean French is kind of like the biggest language, and they're not even as strict as they used to be. Because they want it to be French, they don't want the inclusion of other words. Now English has a lot of inclusion – you can probably think of a whole bunch, persay, you know what does that even mean? We don't really know in English but we know now. So, that's why I feel language is important. Is because it's a way of learning about and gaining knowledge of other ways of understanding reality.

Interviewer: I definitely want to write that down, in case there is a recording error.

Interviewee: So I don't know, maybe that was it.

Interviewer: So that pretty much answers my question about why you would study language studies and Native languages. How do you think you would be able to transmit that knowledge to people who maybe don't have as much of a background, like kind of teaching people the importance of language?

Interviewee: You know I would probably never teach a course like that because I don't have the background to teach linguistic theory. So, I probably wouldn't teach that. But I do, I mean, you've taken a few classes with me. You know that I use a couple of different phrases in particular, with language or I try to use some amount of language. Some of my students this quarter complained, I used a few

Lakota terms from the Winona LaDuke text. Maybe it was unfair, but is it really unfair? Were they supposed to have read the material? And even if they didn't know the Lakota word, if I gave them the translation of it, shouldn't they have known the translation?

Interviewer: The meaning of the concept?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, I don't know. Maybe that's a question that actually could lead to one of the important reasons of why you're even thinking about this. Is, you know, do we discount or is that one of the colonizing effects of education that we discount anything that is not in English or easy for us to understand or interpret? So then we don't even pay attention to the translation of it?

Interviewer: Well I think with a lot of cases a lot of people argue that not everything can be translated.

Interviewee: A lot of people do argue that, and it's the truth. Can we really translate you know, I mean the translation article that I gave you earlier when we met in this year, that's a really unusual translation. I presented that at a linguistic conference, even though as for the linguists, I had some of the terminology wrong that they would use, especially when it comes to the difference between a glottal and a glottal stop. Do we care about that? Well yes maybe, but what we're most interested in is that you go through a four-step process of translation in order to try to get at, because you can't just translate a rough translation and get kind of that idea, it's too difficult to read in English but then you have to be careful when you're taking it to the next couple of steps of translation to get it something that's easier to read in English. Because how much of it are you losing? That was the argument of semiotics and why, that was kind of a movement that some people followed and some people still have problems with. So, the fourth level of translation then is you have to look to the cultural attributes to see how they're being reflected within not only the Lakota language but how do they get translated? Does that translation bring forward the interpretation culturally that would be appropriate?

Interviewer: So reflecting back on, or asking back to that culture and saying "is this the best translation that there is?"

Interviewee: You can do that with informants, or in that article what I did was looked at how things were being expressed that I knew about. So in Lakota, when they say *hochoka*, they are talking about going to the center. Going to the center is

not just like in English if we were to say, “Go to the center.” Does that have any meaning to you?

Interviewer: I mean, the first thing I would translate would be to actually move yourself to whatever center there was for the circle. It would really only have some mathematical or special relationship.

Interviewee: Right, and it does have that physical relationship too. In the order, but when you say that you’re going to a very powerful place. And so that center guides all of Lakota interactions. Is how you think about the center. Because you think about it with yourself as a center, you think about it in terms of the directions, you think about it in terms of the placement of tipis traditionally. You think about it in terms of everything. But if we don’t know that and we’re doing the translation, its easy to translate the word *hochoka*, its not easy to know the meaning of it is behind that. And so then we have to go back to Callicott and Nelson’s idea that “what’s the ontology? Is it the culture or is it the language?”

Interviewer: That’s very interesting. I feel like I have so much to learn in all of this. Always going to be learning.

Interviewee: What’s interesting too, its like I was telling you guys in class is, interviewing someone is really an interesting thing because it actually gives the interviewee time to think about things they normally don’t think about or talk about. Especially when you’re going back to their history or what got them to a certain point.

Interviewer: And all of that is important, because if you don’t consider the context of it, it doesn’t have much meaning.

...

So what do you see as the status or how Native languages are seen on university campuses?

Interviewee: You know, I don’t really know the answer to that question. I know what it is on our campus, pretty pathetic that’s for sure. But since we don’t even have a California Indian class, I mean, that’s pretty pathetic. Yeah, I don’t really know. For the tribal colleges that has been in the process for quite some time, since the 1994 Native languages act. But I suspect for people who are in linguistics, part of the field, it’s a very small number. We already know there’s a small number of people who not only teach it but are scholars in the field. It’s not a really big field. So pretty much everybody knows who anybody is.

Interviewer: Yeah, looking at authors for this project, the same ones typically come up over again. And I'm sure people in the field talk to those people, then become scholars themselves. So would you say there needs to be more space given to foster Native language education on campuses?

Interviewee: I don't know if I could really say that, I would say that I think it's important. To make those kinds of decisions, that's a more difficult thing to broach. Number one, you have a limited number of scholars, so then how are you going to do it? Number two, you have a limited number of Native speakers, so you can't even really work with them. Then, you have to deal with the economics of the institutions, and even if you have a Native speaker who's going to teach the language, you still have a problem because the administration usually doesn't want to dedicate money to their training and preparation, and materials, that kind of thing. Unless it's a much more prevalent language with many speakers, that's why we have Italian, we have German. But even if you're looking at Lakota, there's only, there's more and more people learning it, especially on the reservations I don't know what the latest numbers are, but I think it's only about four and six thousand speakers, and Lakota are some of the bigger ones. Same with Navajo...

Interviewer: Or Cherokee?

Interviewee: Well, I don't even know if there's that many Cherokee speakers.

Interviewer: I don't really know the numbers on that, but...

Interviewee: It might be interesting to look it up. And Chumash, I mean....

Interviewer: We're talking about single digits here.

Interviewee: And those are people that learned as adults. Like Pete was saying on the field trip, "my daughters are speaking it to each other, and I can't understand them." And he's not Chumash but still, it's from his family. And I think even Carmen, she's been teaching it as well, she said "you know, we aren't able to have conversation yet." Or when we look at the Wampanoag study, they are really working on learning the language and teaching it to very young children, but there's no Native speakers.

Interviewer: So it's hard to teach people when you have hardly anyone speaking at all?

Interviewee: When you don't have anyone speaking, you have to work on it from the linguistic standpoint. Have you watched that film? You can borrow it.

Interviewer: So kind of reflecting on your experience, teaching Indigenous studies, or teaching on the ontology of language, or culture, have you had any conflicts with teaching classes about that? Whether from the University or from teaching students?

No, but I don't think. I think from most of the students it kind of goes over their head and they don't really pay attention. Because, it's as part of the 360 they know that, okay wait, there might be this culture and language, they usually think, ok language is the marker of difference. Even just the other day, again talking with the 360 students, they are still saying language is the marker of cultural difference. But how could that be, it's just language?

Interviewer: You could still have a world view difference and still speak the same language.

Interviewee: You could, and so it's not in the language itself, its in how the language represents what is culturally important. That worldview. But I've had no conflicts with any of the other faculty here. You're supposed to get curriculum approval, you prepare things and it goes through curriculum committee and all that. But, you know, you still have your classes that are separate from that.

Interviewer: So how receptive has the university been towards Indigenous studies as a whole?

Interviewee: I would say that for the development of the minor, we had really good support. But, not necessarily from the College of Liberal Arts.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah we had more support from the provosts office and the College of Ag, Food and Environmental Sciences. And partly it was because of the belief in the need for diversity, and trying to strengthen either Native or Indigenous studies here from the provost. I think she saw that as significant for a variety of reasons that I can't really say, at least somewhat, and coming from the Dean in CAFES. But we also had someone on the committee that was much more supportive and had a little bit more power within the system that was able to bring that about. And I shouldn't say not just, because it had to go through a CLA

committee curriculum committee, so people like Dr. Valencia Laver, I think she was really supportive and she was chair of that curriculum committee.

Interviewer: Could you speak on the historical and political context for where Native languages are today?

Interviewee: Well, I think compared to 1994, or even 1998, when I was working on the reservation or had been there more often, there's more support for the teaching of language. During those years, I think, after the passage of that act, the Federal government awarded to each tribe to teach their language or for language education, about \$1200 for the year per tribe. So its like nothing. So it was not something supported by the federal government, but I think in a lot of communities, we see the push for learning their language. And even for me, and studying Lakota, even though its different than Dakota, its very close, or different from my heritage, and I think the one thing I found, if we have a heritage relationship with some language, that we actually have an easier time learning it. Even if you're older, you have an easier time working with it. It will make more sense to you, for whatever reason, so then that would go back to that ontology question. I think it's in a number of Native communities its actually doing better than it was in the mid 90's.

Interviewer: Do you think there's something intrinsic to us, that would connect us, or some sort of connection outside of us, or some sort of spiritual connection between the two?

Interviewee: Well no, I don't know. I can't say about that for sure. The one thing I could say is, my daughter has had learning disabilities through school, so she had a hard time, and she went to CSUN as a DRC student, and went there for a semester, and came to me one week and said, "mom, I'm going to go to Germany and study German." She had one semester in German, she had two weeks to apply for this year-long CSU study in Germany, she got accepted, she went over there, she, for the next five years, over an eight year period, she concentratedly worked on learning that language and you know, she could actually write better in German than she could in English. And her, my grandparents spoke German, but they never really spoke it to their kids a lot, my dad's sister said she can understand some of it, but we can't speak any of it. They didn't want to continue that. In WWI, there was a lot of animosity towards Germans, so people stopped speaking it, they stopped teaching it in the town we were from in school. All kinds of things were happening, and even though my grandfather had immigrated he might have been five or six when he immigrated, but I've talked to other

people since then about this connection, this sort of heritage language, this genealogical connection to language. People are saying the same thing. My daughter had a terrible time trying Spanish. She gave up. You think German, much harder, more difficult language, and to be fluent in it is a big accomplishment. How did that come about, as an adult, as somebody in college going to Germany?

...

When I taught that first semester, the Lakota language at the tribal college, I'll never forget the students, and at any tribal college you have very small classes, so there was 8 people maybe, but what was so interesting to me was they were so eager to learn, the excitement to be able to speak to each other a couple of phrases, and some of those students were part of a drum group, were singers and so they already knew some of the language, they were already singing Lakota songs, but not necessarily knowing how to speak it. It was really interesting.

Interviewer: Do you think that it would be worthwhile to teach Native language to students without a Native background like at Cal Poly?

Interviewee: I think that it's always valuable to work on another language. I think we need to change the requirements that if you decide to work on one of those languages, it should count the same as one of the other foreign languages that counts. I personally think that at this point we could teach Samala here. And one of the reasons is, we don't have somebody who is fluent in the language. Even Nakia, and that bill that was going through the state, that allows them to teach K-12 or an extension class with the tribe. It would not qualify them to teach here, like as a faculty member record. And I talked to Dr. Valencia Laver, and she said we have done that, but at least they have a master's. I don't think anyone in the tribe has a masters, I could be wrong though.

Interviewer: So that's a roadblock to trying to get that taught here?

Interviewee: Unless you had a faculty member of record from MLL or who is a linguist, and to have a faculty member of record who can work with a Native speaker. That's part of the problem. The other part of the problem is I don't think there would be enough interest for the course to happen. And then we have to think, what is going to make it so it's going to run? I still think Martha Macri's ideas of having a linguist teach a class where you work in a number of different areas of Native languages is one of the best ways to start and build interest in Native languages. I could be wrong, but think about Cal Poly. How many people do you think will want to take a class on Chumash language?

Interviewer: It might be too specific, and I agree it might be helpful to have a diverse selection.

Interviewee: There might be people from up by Shasta who would like to learn a little Yurok

Interviewer: Or like Maidu, or something like that.

Interviewee: And even if its not California languages, but I think California languages is a good way to separate it out if you are working on devising it, but maybe it could be more general like Martha's class used to be, Native languages study. Remember I'm not a linguist.